



RESTORING THE HANCOCK-MITCHELL HOUSE

“That’s wrought iron. That’s three hundred years old,” said Brian Cooper, stooping down to pluck a spike out of a door frame. He explained how the spike was made from bog iron, and the silicates in the ferrous bog deposits made the finished metal resist corrosion. “Look how long that’s lasted, right here next to the ocean, with the salt spray and the wind!”

And that was before Mr. Cooper even set foot in the house.

With his next step, Mr. Cooper crossed the threshold of the Hancock-Mitchell House at Quansoo Farm in Chilmark. On this day, July 10, 2012, so began Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation’s effort to restore this antique house.

The Hancock-Mitchell House at Quansoo Farm is thought to be the second-oldest, or perhaps the oldest, house on Martha’s Vineyard. The oldest is generally thought to be the Vincent house, once located at Kanomika Neck in Edgartown but now found on the grounds of the Dr. Daniel Fisher House and carefully preserved by the Martha’s Vineyard Preservation Trust. Portions of both the Hancock-

Mitchell House and the Vincent House date back to the 17th Century. Both houses are historic, “first-period” early American structures. The Hancock-Mitchell House features “wattle and daub” walls, where a mixture of mud, clay, dung and straw is packed around the “wattle.” The wattle is a series of dowels arranged in ladder fashion between the studs. Though the age of the structure and the construction method make the Hancock-Mitchell House noteworthy, it is the surrounding landscape, though, that lends the house a special significance.

The Hancock-Mitchell House stands upon the sweeping outwash plain of Quansoo, an expanse of little bluestem and goldenrod and switch grass that stretches to the marshes of Black Point Pond and to the Atlantic Ocean, just beyond. The landscape surrounding the Hancock-Mitchell House has changed relatively little over the past three centuries, and it is this quality that makes this historic house so unique. Having stood in place at Quansoo for so long, the house itself has become a very feature of the landscape.



Brian Cooper and Foundation supporters

Kelley Hickie



Brian Cooper *Alison Shaw*

restored in place, in its Quansoo setting.

On a visit to the Hancock-Mitchell House in 2008, historic preservation expert and Vineyard summer resident Bob Vila pointed out the importance of this landscape and its role in the preservation of this historic house. Mr. Vila stressed that so few early American houses still remain in landscapes that appear as they likely did when the houses were built, and he strongly recommended that the house be restored in place, in its Quansoo setting.

Mr. Vila’s opinion helped to shape the Foundation’s approach to its stewardship of this antique house. Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation is, after all, a local land trust and not a historic preservation organization, and some donors have legitimately questioned why Sheriff’s Meadow should undertake a historic preservation project.



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Henry Beetle Hough and
Elizabeth Bowie Hough

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Foundation Elects Officers and Directors

The Sheriff's Meadow Foundation Board of Directors is pleased to announce that five new Directors have joined the Board and that three former Directors have been appointed as new, Honorary Directors.

At the Sheriff's Meadow Foundation Annual Meeting of the Board on June 15, 2012, the Board elected Michael Berwind, Susan Crampton, Peter Getsinger, David Grain and Bill Howell to three-year terms as Directors. Brief biographies of each new Director follow. The Foundation also welcomed back longtime Director Edo Potter, past President April Hamel and past President Rez Williams as Honorary Directors.

At the same meeting, the Board also elected Officers to one-year terms and reelected Directors to second and third terms. Reelected as Officers were John Schaefer, President; Rob McCarron, Vice-President; Terry Guylay, Treasurer; and Alley Moore, Clerk and Assistant Treasurer. Reelected to a second, three-year term as Directors were Chris Alley, Susannah Bristol and Kathy Ham.

Reelected to a third, three-year term as Directors were Emily Bramhall, Christian Halby and Lil Province. Executive Director Adam Moore was reappointed to a one-year term as a voting Director.

The Annual Meeting ended with the Board bidding farewell to Sarah Brooks Foehl. In June, Ms. Foehl completed a decade of dedicated service on the Board of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation, and term limits required Ms. Foehl to step down. Ms. Foehl faithfully served Sheriff's Meadow in many capacities. During her tenure, she served as Clerk, chaired the Personnel Committee, served on the Executive and Property Management Committees, co-chaired the Summer Benefit Committee for the 50th Anniversary celebration and guided the organization through a time of great change and transition.

Sheriff's Meadow Foundation welcomes new Directors to the Board, welcomes back the Honorary Directors, and extends its sincere gratitude to Ms. Foehl for her years of service.

Blazing the Trails

Those hiking or bicycling Sheriff's Meadow Foundation trails this fall will spot something new – fresh paint blazes. In an effort to properly and clearly mark each Sheriff's Meadow Foundation trail, volunteers and staff are blazing each trail with different colors of paint. The colors on the trails correspond to colors depicted on maps, and the color-coded maps are now posted on trailhead kiosks and on the Foundation website.

"The paint blazes are modeled on those used on Connecticut's Blue Blazed Hiking Trail System," said Executive Director Adam Moore. Mr. Moore previously served as Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, whose volunteers have maintained the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System since 1929.

"The Sheriff's Meadow trails had been marked with color-coded signs, but the signs were too scarce, and peo-

ple often became lost at unmarked trail junctions," said Mr. Moore. "Proper blazing of trails, with distinct blazes of paint at appropriate intervals, is essential to good management of conservation land."

The blazes themselves are two-inch by six-inch rectangles, and are painted onto the bark of trees beside the trail. Signs will still be used to indicate turns. Trail color-coding schemes have also been corrected, as in some cases, such as along what had been the "white trail" at Cedar Tree Neck, there were four separate trails marked with white signs at the same junction. The new color schemes eliminate such confusion.

The blazing effort has been made possible through the diligent efforts of the dedicated volunteers of the Sheriff's Meadow Trails Committee and by the Sheriff's Meadow staff. Those interested in joining the Trails Committee or in becoming Trail Monitors are encouraged to contact Chairman Jim Miller at jiminmistry@yahoo.com.

Executive Director's MESSAGE

Conserving Character

To the land, there is a language. To describe the Vineyard, we use such words as kettlehole, bog, neck and moraine. With every new endeavor, in fact, comes a new vocabulary. In taking a seamanship class, I encountered an armada of new terms: abaft, beam, bowsprit, jibboom. In working on the Hancock-Mitchell House, I am learning the language of the carpenter: mortise, tenon, purlin, girt.

Yet I thought I had mastered the lingo of land. That is why, on peering into the edge of a rolled-up sea chart in the attic of the Hancock-Mitchell House, I was intrigued to find such odd words: firth, skerries, kyle, loch.

Clearly, this chart portrayed a foreign shore, and "firth" and "loch" strongly indicated Scotland. Though tempted, I did not peer further. Instead, bound for the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, one winter day I placed the maps in a satchel, hoisted it over my shoulder, walked down the streets of Vineyard Haven and boarded the ferry. I looked across the harbor at the Shenandoah, and then glanced at the satchel. Then, I shivered. The last time these charts were at sea, I realized, they were with the captain to whom they belonged.

They belonged to Captain Hancock. When the charts were restored, the signature of Captain Samuel Hancock of Chilmark was found on the back. The charts themselves depict the Orkney Isles, the Coasts of Spain and Portugal, the British Channel, and the West Coast of Ireland. Of the Captain, articles in the Dukes County Intelligencer relate fascinating tales of his life. Born in 1773, Samuel Hancock took to the sea.

At age 24, Captain Hancock was master of the *Madison*, a ship owned by John Skinner & Sons of Boston. Through a letter dated October 28, 1797, Captain Hancock was ordered to sail from Rotterdam to Cadiz, Spain. There he was to sell the *Madison* for £1800, if that price could be obtained. If not, he

was to buy a load of salt and return to Rotterdam. Hinting at trouble, the letter advised him on the movements of an English squadron that might prevent his arrival at Cadiz, and the letter further advised him that, should he find himself in a French port, he should contact Mr. Richard Skinner at L'Hotel Boston, Rue Vivienne in Paris.

Captain Hancock sailed as commandeer. Unable to sell the ship, he bought the salt and set sail for Rotterdam. He sailed, however, in a troublesome period known as the French Spoliation, a quasi-war between the United States and France. On January 19, 1798, the French privateer *Le Requin (The Shark)*, captured the



Quansoo

Adam Moore

Madison in the British Channel. Captain Hancock was imprisoned and the salt and the ship were confiscated as prizes. Tried in L'Orient, Captain Hancock was found guilty of having a faulty passport. His case was twice appealed without success. Perhaps Captain Hancock did indeed contact Richard Skinner, for he managed to free himself. He made his way to Liverpool, England, and there met and married Frances Thompson. Returning to Chilmark, the Hancocks raised five children, perhaps dwelling at the Hancock-Mitchell House at Quansoo, which the Captain ultimately owned. He continued to sail merchant vessels and was even captured again, this time by the British during the War of 1812. Again, he was ultimately set free, and eventually settled down to retire in Chilmark, even serving on the Board of Selectmen.

Captain Hancock's correspondence

reveals him to be a devoted family man, a man of faith, and a man who valued the education of his children, daughters and sons alike. A successful businessman and respected community leader, the Captain was also a courageous ambassador of a new nation. He commanded vessels on the high seas, conducted business in St. Petersburg, Rotterdam, London and Cadiz, and was taken prisoner twice simply for being an American. What most struck me about Captain Hancock, though, is what his character indicates about the high quality of the people of Martha's Vineyard of that era.

There is a language to the land, certainly, yet the land offers more than just a broader lexicon. Perhaps the land can help shape character. Our minds evolved to learn and recall the lay of a landscape very quickly, as survival once depended on it. Not long ago, humans needed to quickly find water, find game, and tell the poisonous berries from the edible ones. We remember, quite clearly, our outdoor experiences and the landscapes we have visited. If the land readily forms memories, perhaps the land also helps to form character. If so, then this is cause for hope. For at Quansoo, and at conservation lands across Martha's Vineyard, the same landscape that Captain Hancock saw still remains.

Just as one may study the charts that Captain Hancock navigated by, one may also walk the very land that he walked. The same winter gales still storm over the plains and wrest the gnarled limbs of doughty oaks. The same driving sleet still pelts the windowpanes of the same old house. The same lonely dunes still beckon to those who long for the embrace of far-off family and friends. The same sun still sets, over a land pastoral and wild, in a blaze of violet and vermillion.

Conserving the character of Martha's Vineyard is Sheriff's Meadow Foundation's mission. Perhaps, though, conserving the character of the Vineyard also builds character in the Vineyarders themselves.

— Adam R. Moore

With special thanks to Mrs. Shirley Wilcox, a direct descendant of Captain Hancock.

RESTORING THE HANCOCK-MITCHELL HOUSE

From Page One

ect at all. The answer is that restoring this house, within its historic Quansoo landscape, is a project that is consistent with the Foundation mission, and strongly so. The mission of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation is to conserve the natural, beautiful, rural landscape and character of Martha's Vineyard for present and future generations. Restoring the antique Hancock-Mitchell House at Quansoo Farm clearly meets the "rural landscape and character of Martha's Vineyard" portion of the Foundation mission.

Restoring the house also matches the intent of the donor of Quansoo Farm, Mrs. Florence B. "Flipper" Harris, whose will listed "historic" values among those for which the land should be managed. The many letters of Mrs. Harris indicate that she was very fond of the old house, and admired how it stood sentinel on such an inspiring landscape. Over many years, Mrs. Harris bought the lands that now comprise Quansoo Farm and the Land Bank's abutting Quansoo Preserve, and donated or bequeathed that land to Sheriff's Meadow Foundation. Mrs. Harris allowed the Mitchell family to live in the house until 2000, and the family did live seasonally in the house until that time. After 2000, Mrs. Harris and Sheriff's Meadow Foundation tried at first to renovate the antique house for use as an executive director residence. That effort was ultimately dropped, as the required renovations would have destroyed too many historic features of the house. The executive director residence was built nearby, and since then the Foundation has grappled with just what to do with the antique house.

Just as Mr. Vila provided expert guidance in the stewardship of the Hancock-Mitchell House, so also did Chris Scott, Executive Director of the Martha's Vineyard Preservation Trust. Mr. Scott visited Quansoo Farm on many occasions, and encouraged Sheriff's Meadow Foundation to restore the house within the

Quansoo landscape. He also encouraged the Foundation to design for the house

Chilmark Historical Commission, which has strongly supported efforts to study and restore the house and to list the house on the National Register of Historic Places. The Foundation has begun the process of listing the structure on the National Register, and hopes to achieve a status of "national significance" for the house. Over the years, Jon Scott and Dick Burt have provided expert analysis of the house and have shared their thoughts and research with Sheriff's Meadow Foundation.

Though the physical work of restoration shall

begin with Mr. Cooper, the process of preparing the house for assessment and restoration began some years ago with artist and Quansoo neighbor Laurie Miller. In the winter of 2010, Mr. Miller was hired to clean the house, as the house was in dire need of it. Mr. Miller went to work with drive, ridding the house of decades of raccoon dung and sundry modern junk. Mr. Miller also worked very carefully, and in a thorough examination he



The pantry

Kelley Hickie

an appropriate, limited program of use, as all structures must be used if they are to survive. The Hancock-Mitchell House is not an appropriate structure for the Martha's Vineyard Preservation Trust to restore, as the remote location of the building renders the building unfit for the regular, public use that the Trust requires of its properties.

"The Preservation Trust applauds SMF for taking on this very important preservation project," said Mr. Scott. "The Mitchell House is a very rare surviving example of a first-period residence, still in its original location. As stewards of the 1672 Vincent House in Edgartown, the Preservation Trust shares the responsibility with SMF for keeping these irreplaceable links to our history for future generations to experience and learn from."

Sheriff's Meadow Foundation has also benefited from the interest of the



Wattle and Daub, in west wall

Brian Cooper

probed corners of the house that, save for the raccoons, had lain forgotten for perhaps a century or longer. For example, atop the ceiling of an attic room, beneath raccoon droppings six inches thick, Mr. Miller found a union suit, a pamphlet from a Martha's Vineyard Livestock Show and Fair of 1873, an old Farmer's Almanac, a whiskey bottle, buggy doors, the rem-

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nants of a parasol, a bonnet, various other Victorian era items and, notably, four nautical charts.

Rolled up and backed in a blue paper, the four sea charts were brought to the attention of the Martha's Vineyard Museum, which recommended that Sheriff's Meadow Foundation consult the Northeast Document Conservation Center of Andover, Massachusetts about preserving the maps. In March of 2011, Foundation Executive Director Adam Moore took the maps to the Center for their preservation. The Document Conservation Center restored the original maps, cleaning them and placing them upon a new, Japanese wheat-grass backing. The Center also created very high-quality digital and printed facsimiles of the maps.

Signatures on the maps revealed them to have belonged to Captain Samuel Hancock. Captain Hancock was a Chilmark resident and master mariner. He owned the Hancock-Mitchell House and surrounding land at one time and is believed to have lived in the house with his wife, Frances, who was affectionately known as "Fannie," and their five children. The maps them-

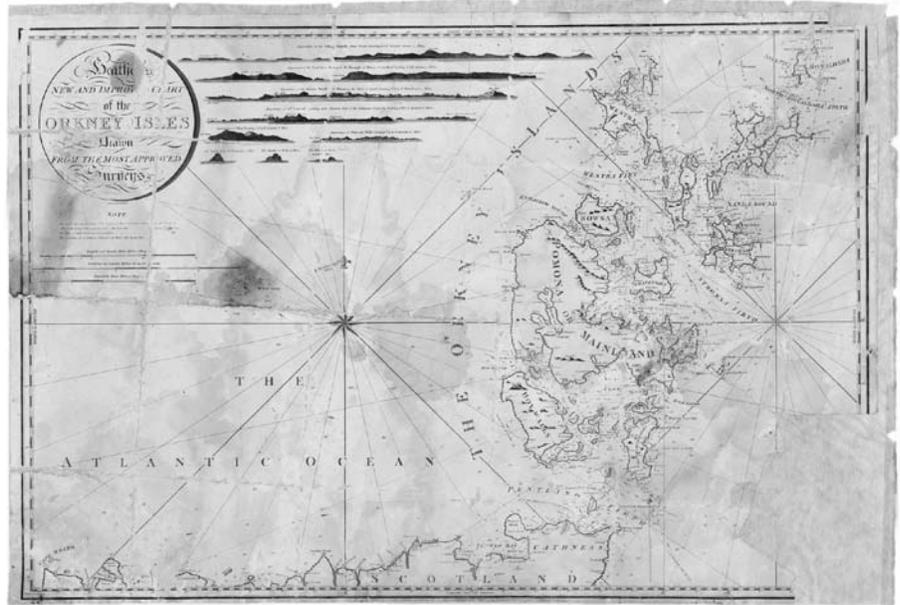


Chart of Orkney Isles

William Heather, 1804

selves depict the Orkney Isles north of Scotland, the Coasts of Spain and Portugal, the West Coast of Ireland, and the British Channel. The maps date from the late 1700's. The cartography on the charts is exquisite, particularly the detailed descriptions of the shores and the sketches of the profile of the seaside hills. The chart of the Brit-

ish Channel is nearly eight feet long. While the facsimiles of the sea charts may be displayed in the Hancock-Mitchell House in the future, the originals ought to be properly displayed by an interested museum or library which has the ability to display and care for them. Sheriff's Meadow Foundation is discussing the disposition of the maps with the Martha's Vineyard Museum.

With the house cleaned and the maps cared for, Sheriff's Meadow set about finding a knowledgeable professional to guide the future restoration of the house. At the recommendation of Foundation Board member and architect Phil Regan, Sheriff's Meadow asked Brian Cooper of Early New England Restorations, LLC, to visit Martha's Vineyard and inspect the house. Mr. Cooper did so in July 2012, and in his visit displayed a commanding knowledge of and enthusiasm for historic structures.

"Touring the house

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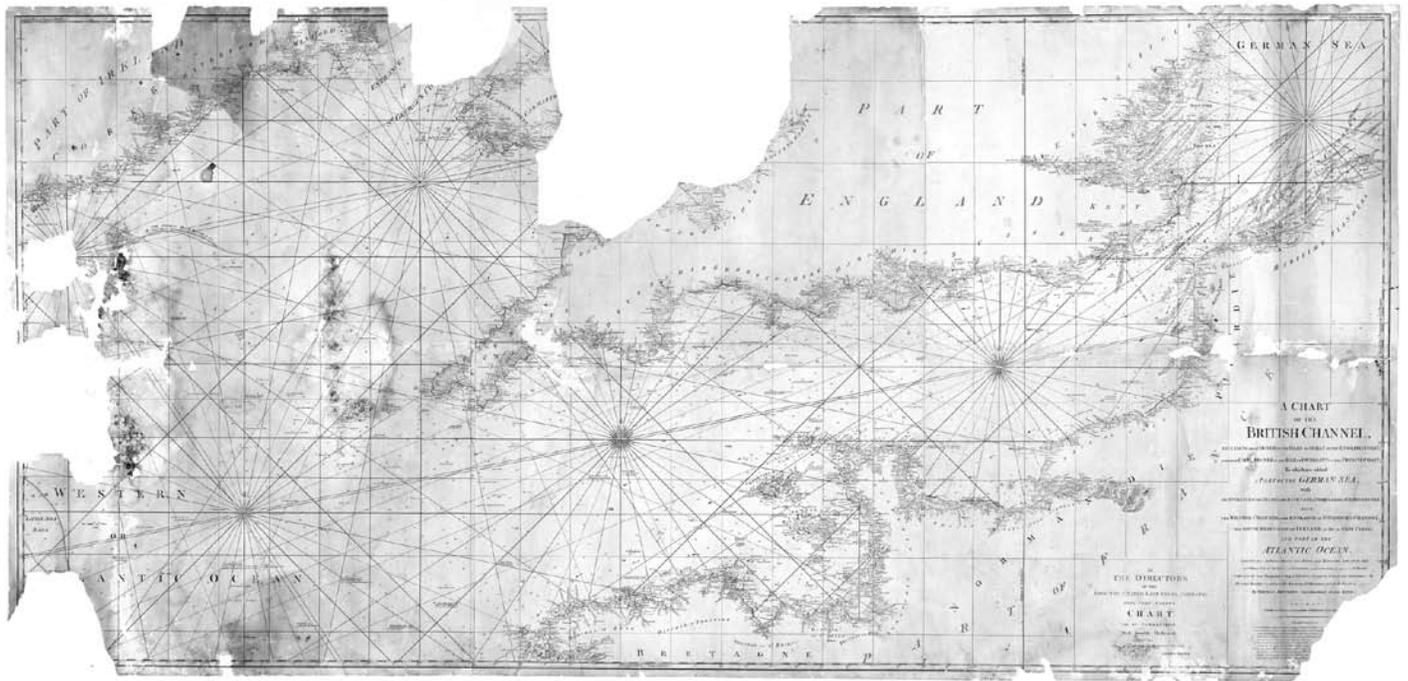


Hurricane bracing

Alison Shaw



RESTORING THE HANCOCK-MITCHELL HOUSE



A Chart of the British Channel

Laurie and Whittle, 1794

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with Brian was eye-opening,” said Mr. Moore. “Brian found leather washers, wrought-iron hardware that is centuries old, wooden door latches, and grooves in doors caused from centuries of wear. On the walls he found drawings of ships, one vessel after another. He found signatures in cabinet doors and on boards beside the attic stairs. He said that, in old houses such as this one, he sometimes has seen drawings of lotus flowers made by children tracing a compass. He predicted that we might find such a drawing in this house, and then walked up into the attic, shone a flashlight, and found the very thing drawn on the wall.”

Impressed by the initial visit, the Foundation hired Mr. Cooper to assess the condition of the house and create a scope of work. Sheriff's Meadow also held two events on the lawn of the Mitchell House to introduce interested people

to the Hancock-Mitchell House and to Mr. Cooper. Melissa Moore prepared the food for both events, the first, an August evening cocktail party and the second, a lunch on the Sunday of Columbus Day weekend. During that period, Mr. Cooper and his firm completed the assess-

ment of the house. He determined this by uncovering the shingles and sheathing surrounding the girt on the west side of the house. He found that the girt extends 27 feet from front to back, right to where it meets the rear ell. This girt features seven numbered studs that

fit into the girt perfectly, and it also features wattle and daub walls along its entire length. Mr. Cooper also found evidence of a single window in the front of the house, which gives credence to the theory that the original house featured fewer, casement, diamond-pane windows.

The assessment is now being reviewed by the Board, and, if accepted, will serve as

the basis for a capital campaign to fund the restoration.

“I am very excited about the prospect

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Wattle and Daub and hurricane brace, west wall

Brian Cooper

ment of the house.

In his assessment, Mr. Cooper discovered that the original house was probably actually a $\frac{3}{4}$ Cape, and not a simple,

Restoring the Hancock-Mitchell House

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of restoring this beautiful house in its Quansoo landscape,” said Mr. Moore. “If we do this correctly, the restoration gives us an opportunity to connect our lands with our buildings. For example, where



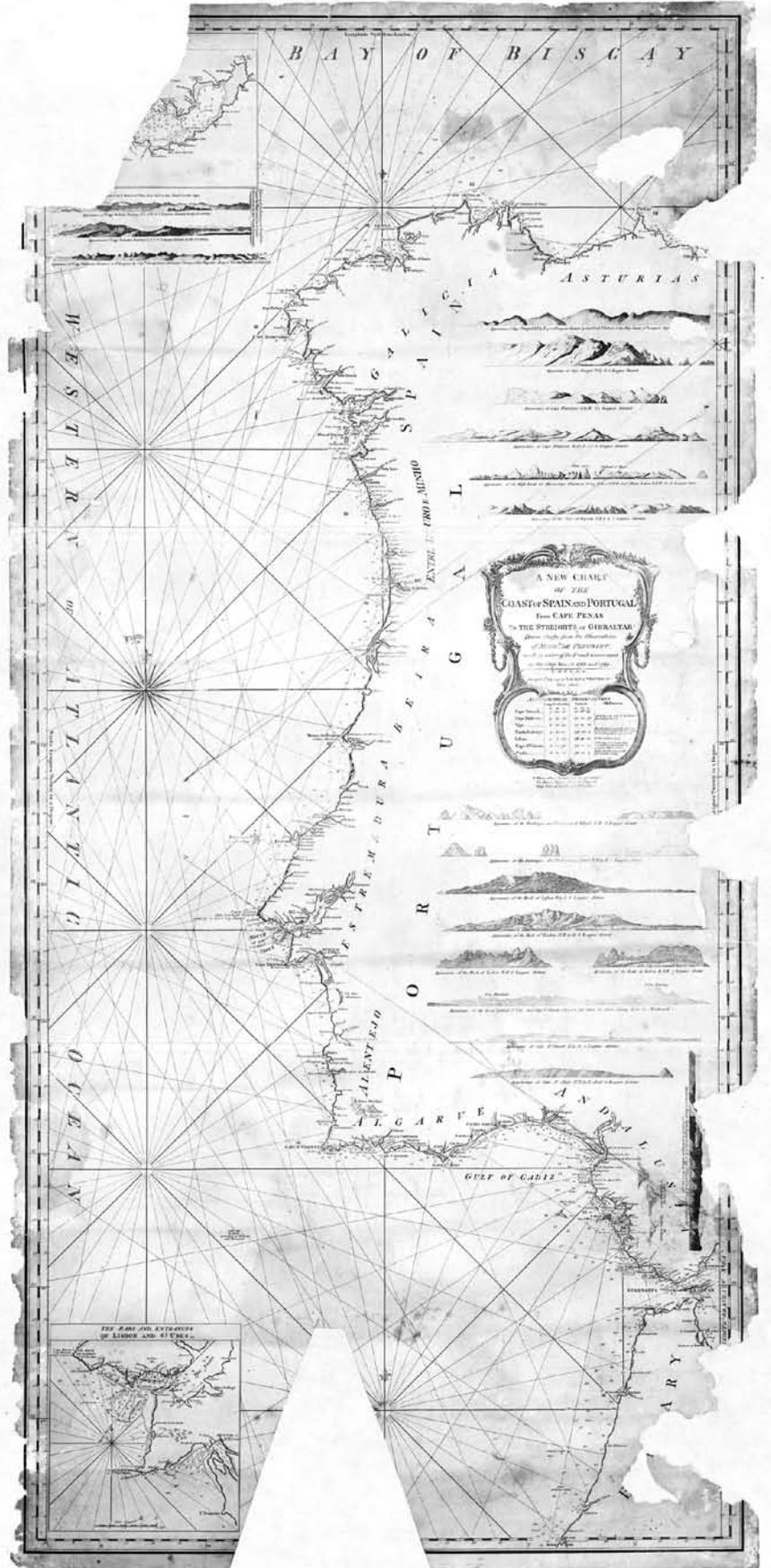
Working on the south wall *Alison Shaw*



Evidence of casement window *Alison Shaw*

new oak sills are needed, those can be cut from oak trees growing on our own properties. If more daub is needed, we can mix it right at Quansoo and patch the wall. We can rive our own lath, and make plaster out of oyster shells. This gives us a great educational opportunity to demonstrate the connection between our homes and nature, a connection that we often overlook today.”

Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation encourages anyone interested in the restoration of this house to contact the office at moore@sheriffsmeadow.org or at (508) 693-5207.



Coast of Spain and Portugal

Laurie and Whittle, 1794

Sheriff's Meadow Foundation Welcomes New Directors



Susan Crampton

Susan Crampton has been a seasonal resident of Hines Point, Vineyard Haven, since 1971. A CPA by training, she has worked in public accounting and government and has served on many boards including currently serving on the Board of Martha's Vineyard Hospital. She and her late husband Steve also lived for many years in Vermont, enjoying the outdoors both there and on the Vineyard. Steve was President of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation from 2006 to 2008.



Bill Howell

Bill Howell was first introduced to Martha's Vineyard 25 years ago by his wife and moved the family full-time to Oak Bluffs in 2007. He has worked for Silicon Valley Bank for 15 years in various roles and geographies and now leads the Boston-based healthcare team, which is focused on early and growth stage life science companies. Prior to Silicon Valley Bank, Bill worked for Brown Brothers Harriman & Co. in its Boston office. Born and raised in Pennsylvania, Bill has a B.A. from Colgate University and is a veteran of the U.S. Army. He is active within his church, at his kids' school, as a coach and as a Board member for MV Youth Soccer. In any spare time he likes to read history, ski, hunt, fish and travel with his family. Bill is married to Nina Howell and has three children, Courtney, Jake and Kate.



David Grain

David Grain is the Founder and Managing Partner of Grain Management, LLC and the CEO of Grain Communications Group, Inc. Prior to forming the Grain entities, Mr. Grain was President of Global Signal, Inc., had been the Senior Vice President of AT&T Broadband's New England Region and had spent a decade in the financial services industry. Mr. Grain is extensively involved in national civic affairs and has served on many public, private and non-profit boards and committees. Among other affiliations, he currently serves as President Barack Obama's appointee to the National Infrastructure Advisory Council, as a Trustee on the Board of the College of the Holy Cross, and as the Chairman of the Investment Advisory Council for the Florida State Board of Administration. Mr. Grain graduated from the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, received a B.A. from the College of the Holy Cross in 1984 and a MBA from the Amos Tuck School at Dartmouth in 1989. Mr. Grain resides with his wife, Lisa, and their children in Chilmark and in Sarasota, Florida.



Peter Getsinger

Peter is the third of five generations to summer or live year round on Chappaquiddick. His grandparents (the Bunkers) arrived on Chappaquiddick in 1927, and fostered a love for Chappy that continues. With time and as the family expanded over the years, they eventually looked to Sheriff's Meadow to help resolve the generational issues that often arise. Peter founded Nexstar Capital Partners in March 2004 and has primary responsibility for managing the assets of the Fund. Prior to forming Nexstar, he was head of global investment banking for Latin America at Deutsche Bank, held the same role at Bankers Trust and previously served as senior vice president at Lehman Brothers. Peter currently is a board director for Electro Dunas S.A.A. (Peru) and previously served on the board of GPU Argentina Holdings, Inc. He is a past co-president of the Chappaquiddick Island Association, a trustee of Kent School in Kent, Connecticut, and board member of the Featherstone Center for the Arts. He graduated from Williams College with a BA in American Civilization.



Michael Berwind

Michael Berwind is a fifth-generation family investor who oversees the family's portfolio of businesses. An avid mountain biker and hobbyist photographer, he and his wife, Carol, reside in Edgartown, Massachusetts.

Plovers Fledge at Cedar Tree Neck

For the first time in at least 20 years, a pair of piping plovers nested at the Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary Beach and successfully fledged two chicks. This success was the highlight of a busy shorebird season for Sheriff's Meadow Foundation, where both Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary and Little Beach hosted many nesting pairs of birds considered by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program to be "threatened" or of "special concern."

On April 7, 2012, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation's Director of Stewardship, Kristen Fauteux was out walking Ruby, her black Labrador retriever, on the Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary trails. To her surprise, on reaching the beach she spotted a pair of piping plovers there, courting. Delighted to have spotted the birds, she quickly brought Ruby back home and began monitoring the pair.

Ms. Fauteux monitored the pair on a daily basis, observing the birds' courtship behavior and noting their activities. It takes more than monitoring, though, to help this threatened species to breed. Successful breeding requires ensuring that Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary was exactly that – a sanctuary. Part of providing sanctuary meant the prohibition of all dogs from the Sanctuary until either any plover chicks fledged or the nest conclusively failed.

Dogs needed to be prohibited from the Sanctuary for two reasons. The first reason has to do with the interaction between dogs and plovers. The mere presence of a dog on the beach stresses the parent birds. Parents may leave the nest to ward off the dog, thereby leaving the eggs vulnerable to poaching in the sun, chilling in the breeze, or becoming an appetizing treat for a nest predator. Dogs can also simply eat chicks or eat eggs, never mind the attempts of an adult plover at distraction.

The second reason for prohibiting dogs has to do with the behavior of dog owners. Originally, Sheriff's Meadow tried to continue to allow dog-walkers

to enjoy the Sanctuary while also trying to protect the plovers. The Foundation posted signs at the parking lot and on the trails with bold lettering explain-



Piping Plover chick and parent

Page Rogers

ing why dogs must remain leashed and why dogs could not be allowed on the beach. After at least half a dozen people were observed letting dogs run loose on the beach, despite having read the signs and the rules, the outright prohibition became necessary.

With dogs prohibited, Ms. Fauteux and Sanctuary Rangers Christian Quebec and Will Powers monitored the plovers



Chick and parent

Page Rogers

daily throughout the spring and summer. By May 6, 2012, the plovers had laid three eggs, but on May 7, all of these eggs had been eaten. Crow tracks in the sand identified the likely culprit. The plovers tried again, however, and by June 14 they had laid four eggs. This time, the Biodiversity Works team of Luanne Johnson and Liz Baldwin exclosed the nest with a protective wire structure.

This worked. After a few weeks of incubation, on July 9, 2012 three piping plover chicks hatched. Though ecolog-

ists typically retain a clinical detachment from the plants and animals that are the subjects of their care or study, Ms. Fauteux found herself quite drawn to the plover family.

"I found myself becoming very attached to them," said Ms. Fauteux. "I became really devoted to their success."

Through the month of July, the plover adults and chicks foraged on the water's edge, darting back and forth on the sand with the rhythm of the Vineyard Sound waves. One chick lasted just four days, but the other two survived, and continued to grow. Finally, on August 3, 2012, the two surviving chicks fledged. The fledging of plover chicks marks a successful effort at providing sanctuary and is truly the result of devotion.

For Little Beach in Edgartown, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation contracted with Biodiversity Works to monitor and care for all the nesting birds on that property. Shorebird stewardship here included the installation of wire fences to keep out skunks, raccoons and dogs, the posting of signs to ask people not to bring dogs beyond the fence, and the monitoring of the nests. Both the signs and the fences were effective: people honored the rules about dogs and skunks and raccoons were deterred. Peregrine falcons did prove a problem, however, as these raptors appear to have eaten the plover chicks that did hatch here, and ultimately no plover chicks fledged here despite two attempts by two pairs of plovers.

Least terns did successfully breed at Little Beach. Though one colony of nesting terns was washed out by a storm on June 4, the terns nested again, and the second effort succeeded. Some 150 pairs of least terns nested on the property, and the chicks did not fledge until August. Little Beach also hosted two pairs of common terns, both of which fledged chicks, and three pairs of American oystercatchers, all of which also fledged chicks.

Harleys Host Spectacular Summer Benefit

As the sun set over Ashakomaksett Farm and the wooded coves of the Edgartown Great Pond, Ellen and Edwin Harley hosted nearly 400 supporters of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation for the Foundation's Annual Summer Benefit. The benefit was held on the evening of July 16, 2012, a lovely night that ended a bright summer day. Due to record support from many generous sponsors, the event proved to be Sheriff's Meadow's most successful fundraising event to date.

As guests arrived, horses galloped across a nearby pasture, and the slanted rays of the afternoon sun shone on the grassy plain that stretched out to the south. Guests trod a meadow path to reach the dinner tent, and admired the beautiful flower arrangements prepared by Lil Province and Kathy Holliday. Hanging in strategic locations throughout the tent were framed, high-quality facsimiles of four antique sea charts that were found in the Hancock-Mitchell House at Quansoo Farm.

Following the reception and cocktail hour, President John Schaefer wel-

comed all those present and thanked them for their generous support. Mr.



Schaefer noted that the Foundation relies almost entirely on individual charitable contributions for its operat-

ing revenues. A dinner of local foods prepared by Jan Buhrman of Kitchen Porch followed Mr. Schaefer's remarks.

After dinner, Executive Director Adam Moore addressed the gathering. Mr. Moore spoke of Foundation accomplishments over the past year, and then drew attention to the work to be done in the year and years to come. In particular, Mr. Moore spoke about the planned restoration of the antique Hancock-Mitchell House at Quansoo Farm. Referring to the sea charts displayed around the tent, Mr. Moore told a hushed crowd the stories of Captain Samuel Hancock, the owner of the charts and a former owner of the Hancock Mitchell House and Quansoo Farm.

When Mr. Moore completed his remarks, the lights dimmed and Johnny Hoy & the Bluefish took the stage. For the remainder of the evening, Mr. Hoy and his band played, guests danced, and all enjoyed a convivial gathering beneath the stars.

Sheriff's Meadow Foundation expresses its sincere gratitude to Ellen and Edwin Harley for hosting the 2012



Summer Benefit. The Foundation also thanks The Nature Conservancy for the use of its land, all sponsors and ticket-purchasers, all volunteers and all the vendors for a successful and enjoyable evening.

All event photos by Sara Piazza.



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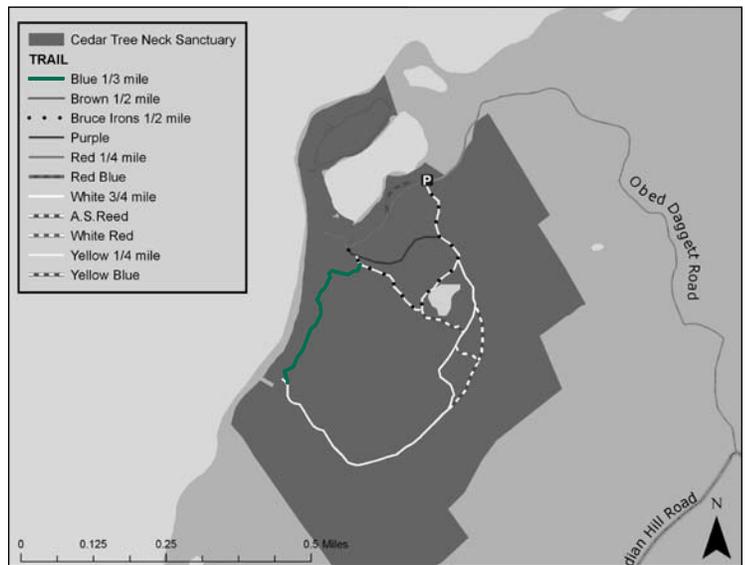
NEW TRAIL AT CEDAR TREE NECK SANCTUARY

Seeking a rugged autumn ramble, with glorious views of Naushon? Try the new “blue trail” at Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary. At approximately three-quarters of a mile in length, the blue trail skirts the edge of the bluffs and connects the white trail to the yellow. Having hiked it, many Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary devotees have declared the blue trail to be their favorite, and one of the finest hiking trails on Martha's Vineyard.

At its terminus with the white trail, the blue trail begins above the large Sanctuary bog. The trail winds along the ruffled bluffs, tumbling down here, ascending sharply there, ever varying in terrain. At vantage points the path curves out of the woods, affording the walker a view of the length of Vineyard Sound and the profile of the Elizabeth Islands.

Those fond of the familiar stunted beeches along the red trail will enjoy the

similarly gnarled groves along the blue trail, too. The blue trail passes through one stand of beetlebung s, where exposure to the winds has dwarfed and wizened each of the trees. After passing through the groves of beetlebung and oaks, one emerges into the open, and walks amid the windswept heather and the reindeer moss. From the heath, the path plunges again into the forest and the shade, meeting the yellow trail among the cinnamon ferns by the stream.



New “Blue” trail highlighted in green, above

Those hiking the blue trail should prepare for a vigorous hike over rugged terrain. Please pose any questions to the Sheriff's Meadow office at (508) 693-5207.