NANTUCKET ALGONQUIAN STUDIES #4.

HISTORIC INDIAN HOUSES OF NANTUCKET

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ABSTRACT.

County documents and recorded purchases of English building materials establish the approximate locations of about 42 houses and the existence of an additional 18 houses, which belonged to Nantucket Indians between 1679 and 1764. In addition to dwelling houses, historic Indians used small huts along the south and east shores for shelters, while seasonally employed by the English in whaling and fishing. As the Indian population declined, Englishmen acquired Indian houses and relocated them. Indian dwelling houses may have been moved to the town of Nantucket, and the evidence suggests that the small whale and fish huts were moved to the villages of Siasconset and Sasacacha (whence to Siasconset). Some houses owned or used by Indians may therefore still exist on Nantucket.

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HISTORIC INDIAN HOUSES OF NANTUCKET.

Between 1679 and 1764, Nantucket Indians owned dwelling houses as well as other structures on the commons. In addition, Indians used and may have owned some of the small whale houses and fish houses along the shores of the island. After presenting documentation for these two categories, I can, from the locations given, map the sites of about 69 houses used by Indians for dwelling houses, whale, and fish houses. An exploration of the migrations of houses in the late eighteenth century provides evidence that, after the Indian sickness of 1763-1764, houses that had been used by Indians were removed from their original sites, and that some may still exist in today's town of Nantucket and village of Siasconset.

HOUSES OWNED BY INDIANS.

An analysis of the colonial lifeways (Little 1980) of historic Nantucket Indians sheds light on a forgotten Indian culture on the island. With enthusiasm, the eighteenth century Nantucket Indian played a leading role in the beginnings of the American whale fishery (Crevecoeur 1782; Macy 1835), and from the well-known economic rewards of oil industries, many Indians purchased English goods, including house building materials. We report here the existence of between 38 and 60 hitherto unknown wooden Indian houses on the commons of Nantucket in the eighteenth century, with their owners, dates, building materials, and locations, where known.
SOURCES.

We have looked at many sources for information about Indian houses on Nantucket. The data range from the apparently garbled tradition that "Rose Cottage" in Siasconset had once been an Indian wig-wam (Hussey 1912:26), to an account book which lists the purchase by Joe Scoutquary in 1720-1734 of enough boards (Starbuck 1683-1766:1) to build the house at Sascacha which he deeded in 1762 to John Meader (NCD 6:471).

Historians.

Obed Macy, who wrote a major history of Nantucket in 1835 (Macy 1835), introduced a vaguely inconsistent view of Nantucket Indian dwellings. He reported that "they had no town and no place where they lived that would even bear the name of village" (Macy 1842), and "as their places of residence were constructed of frail materials they were easily removed from one place to another..." (Macy 1842). However, he also said, "Their dwellings were mostly wigwams; some few English built houses toward the latter part of their being called a people..." (Macy 1842), and, "Some of them patterned after the English in many respects; they built neat framed houses, kept cows, horses, and other domestic animals, and lived comfortably" (Macy 1835:45).

Crèvecoeur, who may have visited the island (Keeshan 1980), reported that "the posterity of (the aborigines) still live together in decent houses along the shores of Miacomet pond on the south side of the island" (Crèvecoeur 1782:101).

Zaccheus Macy, who lived through the eighteenth century on Nan-
tucket, recorded a great amount of information sympathetic to the Indians, and actually bought several Indian dwelling houses (see Table 1), but had nothing to say on the subject of houses except that "some [of the Indians were] good carpenters" (Macy 1792b).

Needless to say, this coverage hardly equals that given the houses of the English settlers on the island (see Lancaster 1972).

**Probate Records.**

With Obed Macy's impressions of Nantucket Indians in mind, we studied Nantucket Indian probate inventories from the Registry of Probate (Little 1980) with some surprise. Most of these lists of possessions show an entirely English inventory, including dwelling houses, barns, corn cribs, and even warming pans. Most significantly, several Indians had remarkably sophisticated carpenter tool kits. For example, the inventory of Micah Phillips in 1750 (NCP 2:158) included: 4 chisels, 1 gouge, 1 hand saw, 2 augers, 2 spike gimlets, 1 joynter, 1 foreplane, 1 smooth plane, 1 shave, 2 hammers, 1 joint-rule, 9 small gimlets, 2 pair iron compasses, 1 broad ax, and 1 carpenter's adz. In other words, not only did he own a dwelling house valued at 180 pounds old tenor, which was similar in value to many English houses of the period, but he clearly had the tools to have built it himself. We shall assume then that some Nantucket Indians, "good carpenters" (Macy 1792b), built timber framed houses, seven of which we have documented from probate inventories.

**Registry of Deeds.**

Nantucket County deeds constitute the primary data for our study, establishing the existence of 34 eighteenth century Nantucket Indian
houses. Although many Indians sold their houses to other Indians, one of the most significant findings has been that at least 19 Indians deeded their dwelling houses to Englishmen. One doubts the English purchased wigwams.

Indians sold their houses to the English in the last half of the eighteenth century because, after the death of 222 Indians in 1763-1764 (Little and Sussek 1979), the remainder either died, moved away from the island, or simply vanished from the records as Indians. The last phenomenon introduces uncertainty in our data for Indian houses after 1764.

Proprietors' Records.

The Nantucket Proprietors' Records at the Registry of Deeds, although a mine of information about the details of life on the island in the eighteenth century, do not give as precise locations as one would like. However, among items like the annual choice of a turnip planting field, we have found eight otherwise unrecorded Indian houses.

Account Books.

At least four sheepskin bound books of accounts between 1683 and 1766 in the manuscript collection of the Foulger Museum, Nantucket, provide first hand data about Nantucket Indian lifeways (Starbuck 1683-1766; Macy 1707-1760; Hussey 1724-1734; Coffin 1738-1761). From these account books we find 23 Indians who, soon after having earned substantial credits from fishing, fowling, farm labor, or whaling, proceeded to purchase some of the following: glass, brick, nails, shingles, laths, oak slit-work (possibly lath, see Forman (1966:191)), timbers, hinges, sleepers, lime, and boards. A small house, such as exists on
Nantucket today and measures approximately 10 feet by 17 feet by 6 feet, plus a roof, would have required about 500 feet of boards (a board foot is a square foot). Twelve Indians (Table 1) purchased enough boards to have built small wooden houses. Although some of these houses clearly had timber frames, shingles, and brick chimneys, others, from the evidence of recorded purchases, may have been built only of boards (with sapling frames?). This possible range of architectural styles will complicate our analysis of Indian houses and their history.

Archaeological Finds.

A site in Herrecator Swamp, excavated in the 1940's by Ripley P. Bullen and Edward Brooks (1949) produced evidence for a colonial habitation as well as prehistoric materials. Lead quarrels for window glass, a French coin dated 1719, a latten spoon, clay pipes, and various kinds of buttons, indicated a date in the eighteenth century. On the basis of its geography, this site probably held an Indian dwelling.

During the 1978 prehistoric site survey on Nantucket (Little 1979), we located at least two eighteenth century Indian dwelling sites. At one of these may have stood the dwelling house of Sesapana Will, who died before 1715, and at another we attribute the cellar hole to Benjamin Tashime's dwelling house (Table 1). Confirmation would require archaeological procedures. Other out-of-town sites have also produced colonial artifacts or refuse heaps (Little 1979).

On the strength of the data presented in this paper, I believe that colonial archaeological evidence found on the commons may well represent Indian inhabitants rather than wandering Englishmen, and ought
to be given a great deal more attention than it has had heretofore.

INDIAN HOUSES: TABLE 1 AND FIGURE 1.

County records on Nantucket, with the exception of one court case (NCD 3:117), do not use the word "wigwam". The reason for this usage undoubtedly derives from the difficulty of appraising a dwelling which had no market value for the English. Therefore, I infer that the usage "where he dwells" or "land lately occupied by" refers to wigwams, which are not included in this study.

If we can document the word "house" or "dwelling house", or if a man bought building materials for a house, we list the owners name in Table 1. If the English never used the word "house" for a wigwam, as I suspect, then all the "houses" in Table 1 were wooden houses. The houses most probably wooden, however, would have been those bought by Englishmen, "English-built", listed on a probate inventory, or belonging to the purchaser of more than about 500 feet of boards. Small purchases of building materials recorded in account books could imply barns, small huts, or brick chimneys for wigwams, and present problems of interpretation.

In Table 1, I have classified houses by villages or regions, Occawa (A), Wannisquam (B), Squatesit (C), and Miacomet (D). Table 1(E) contains houses for which the location is unknown, or for which the data are inadequate.

In the instances where the sources, coupled with field investigations, provide enough information to locate a dwelling site precisely,
we shall inventory the sites with the Nantucket Historical Association and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, as a first step in the conservation of these archaeological resources. In order to preserve these sites, the map given in Figure 1 is deliberately imprecise, but suggests in a general way the location of historic Nantucket Indian houses.
Figure 1. Approximate sites of dwelling houses of Nantucket Indians 1679-1765 (Table 1 (A,B,C,D)).
TABLE 1. NANTUCKET INDIAN HOUSES WITH DOCUMENTATION.

A. OCCAWA (Cook 1674:104).

Abel, Benjamin: 1717 Eben Abel bought 150 shingles, nails (Starbuck 1683-1766:31); 1741 dwelling house (NCD 5:10,49); 1748 "English-built" dwelling house sold to Jonathan Paupamo (NCD 5:156).

Cowkeeper, James (Quidonsap): 1686 house (NCD 3:48, 112).

Dequain, James: 1686 house (NCD 3:112).

Esop, the weaver: 1712 house (NCD 4:12); 1737 dwelling house sold to John Esop (NCD 4:157); see Tashime.

Jethro: 1717 house (NCD 4:9); 1778 house (NPR 1:154).

Meeting House: built in 1698 (Rawson and Danforth 1698); 1770 Peleg Swain moved it to town for his dwelling house, until 1838 (Macy 1842).


Tashime, Benjamin: 1727 one half a house from grandfather John Spoon-merchant (John Asherman) (NCD 3:25; 4:58, 7:11; Rawson and Danforth 1698); 1770 dwelling house (NCP 3:165); see Esop and J. Tashime.

Tashime, John: 1727 one half a house from father John Asherman (NCD 3:25; 4:58, 7:11); 1743 1140 feet of boards (Starbuck 1683-1766:120); 1756 dwelling house to son John Tashime (NCD 7:265, 266); 1778 granddaughter Sarah Tashime Esop sold house at Occawaw to Robert Carr (NCD 9:362), see B. Tashime and Esop.
B. WANNISQUAM (Little 1976).

Chegin, Samuel: 1747 his father's English-built house to Chapman Swain (NCD 5:130).

Ezeke: 1745 dwelling house to Eben Cain (NCD 5:121; 3:42); 1768 "formerly Barnabus Coleman's" (NFR 1:118); possibly moved (NCD 6:84).

Japhet, Obed: 1725-1731, 518 feet of square edged boards, nails (Starbuck 1683-1766:36); 1753 dwelling house to Titus Ezeke, Jr. (NCD 5:227); 1761 to William Aldridge (NCD 6:291); probably moved (NCD 5:249).

Kenaway, Aaron: 1710 house at Wesachinnus (?) to Joshua Sevella (NCD 3:24); part of Swain-Sevella house at Polpis, burned 1902 (Worth 1906); see Forman (1966) for photographs and measured drawings. Moved (NCD 3:26).

Pedwegin: 1750 Nicholas Meader obtained from John Meader a house frame formerly belonging to Pedwegin and Beriah, his son (NCD 5:179).


Sesapana Will: 1686 dwelling house (Mass. Sup. Ct. Jud. #2455); after 1715 his cellar hole was a landmark (NCD 3:91).

Scoutquary, Joseph (Joe Quady): 1729-1734, 674 feet of boards, nails, slitwork, lime (Starbuck 1683-1766:1); 1762 dwelling house sold to John Meader, then to Zaccheus Macy (NCD 6:471,472).

Selew, Phillip: 1736 dwelling house to Nathaniel Clark (NCD 3:88,113; 4:92,150; 5:6).

Titus (Joshua Eseca): 1746 dwelling house (NFR 1:66); 1764 "formerly of Titas" (Titus Ezeke, son of Ezeke (NCD 6:473)) sold to John

Washamon, Jacob, the weaver: son of Washamon and husband of Wannataguamow, squaw sachem of half of Nope (NCD 2:52), had a house at Wunnisquam, 1679-1690, sold to William Bunker in 1690 (NCD 1:53, 55; 2:56). This is the earliest Indian house documented.

Wooso, Isaac: 1729 built a brick chimney, bought shingles (Starbuck 1683-1766:146); 1745 dwelling house to Paul Pease (NCD 5:84).

C. SPOTSO COUNTRY, SQUATESIT (Gookin 1674:104).

Quary, Abraham: early nineteenth century dwelling house (NPR 2:33); see portrait with house interior at Nantucket Atheneum; until 1855 (Guba 1966).

Small, Jonathan: 1713, 700 bricks purchased by Ben Small (Macy 1707-1760:35) ; 1764 dwelling house of Jonathan Small sold to Caleb Stratton (NCD 6:467; 7:15; NPR 1:147); 20 New Street 1980?

Spotso, Barney: 1741 dwelling house (NCD 5:17).

Spotso, Josiah: 1748 dwelling house, shop, cellar, barn, to Barney Spotso (NCD 4:41; 5:11,49,147); 1775 to Abishai Polger (NCP 4:105; NPR 1:150).


Caleb, Jonathan: 1757 house (NCD 6:29); 1763 dwelling house to Josiah Coffin (NCD 6:470).

Dimon (Diamond), John: 1728-1729, glass, shingles, boards, rails, posts (Starbuck 1683-1766:138); 1762 my house (NCD 6:474).

Duch, Peleg: 1747 dwelling house to Eben Cadoode (NCD 5:118; NCP 2:2); 1759 to Peter Micah (NCD 6:231); 1778 to proprietors "land whereon my dwelling house formerly stood" (NCD 9:414).

Miacomet Meeting House: 1732 built with 1500 feet of boards, shingles, nails, hinges, sleepers, timber logs (Starbuck 1683-1766:133); 1762 and 1763 (NCD 6:342,474); 1782 (Macy 1842).

Micah, Mattequecham: 1740 "house that he dwelt in" (NCP 2:35,36); 1768 dwelling house from Jonathan Micah to Peter Micah to Jonathan Micah (NCD 7:263).

Monkey, George: 1736 dwelling house to Eben Cadoode (NCD 5:118); 1750 dwelling house to John Potter, Indian (NCD 5:118,177).

Mooney, John: 1762 house (NCD 6:474); 1770 willed estate to Reuben Paddack (NCP 3:131).

Musaquat, Peter: 1733 dwelling house (NCP 1:180); 1789 cellar (NPR 1:162).

Orange, Micah: 1767 house (NPR 1:115).

Secumnet, Joseph: 1763-1766 house (NCD 6:342; NPR 1:113).
E. MISCELLANEOUS STRUCTURES.

(I: insufficient evidence for house; U: unknown location; Indian?: lacks positive evidence of Indian owner.)


Apatas, Micah: 1731, 100 feet of boards, timbers, nails, posts, rails (Starbuck 1683-1766:138). (I,U).

Aron: 1733 "to moving house" (Hussey 1724-1734:263; NPR 1:27). (U).


Corduda: 1713 two pieces slitwork, labor about your house (Macy 1707-1760:33). (U).

Gibs, Joel: 1683, 514 feet of boards (Starbuck 1683-1766:77). (U).

Hews, Ishmael: 1726 bricks, nails (Hussey 1724-1734:137); 1745 dwelling house (NOD 5:88). (Indian?).

Hooden, Joseph: 1800 "where Joseph Hooden's house stood" (NPR 1:205). (Indian?).


Natt: 1735, 212 feet of boards, logs, sleeper, glass, nails (Starbuck 1683-1766:126). (Small for a house). (U).

Pocana, James (also Pock, Codpocana): 1704-1738, 500 feet of boards, 8 oak posts, hinges, oak slit-work, shingles, nails, bricks, two timbers (Starbuck 1683-1766:118,123,144). (U).

Pone, Tom: 1734 boards, nails, hinges, glass, posts, two timber logs (Starbuck 1683-1766:9). (U).


Stub: 1720 Stub's House (NOD 3:144); 1723 William Stub's house sold to George Brown (NCD 4:19). (U).

Towarry (Towaddy, Toward): 1698-1711, 466 feet of boards, hinges, nails (Starbuck 1683-1766:7,74). (Minimal, U).

Towarry, Joseph and Abram: 1732-1742, 1677 feet of boards, shingles, hinges, sleepers, rails, posts, lath, nails, clapboards, and timbers (Starbuck 1683-1766:66,69,124). (One large or two small structures?, U).

Tuckanuck Dave: no date, house (NCD 2:18). (U).

Washamon, Jacob: 1674-1676, dwelling house at Wesco, bought from John Savage, sold to Samuel Bickford (NCD 1:63;2:11; NPR 1:103,210).
FTISH HOUSES AND WHALE HOUSES.

According to Macy, for "the people" who were whale fishing and cod-fishing, "small huts were...erected near the sea-side, for shelter in cold and boisterous weather" (Macy 1835:30). I observe that the people who were cod-fishing in May and October, and whaling in the winter, were primarily Indians (Starbuck 1683-1766; Macy 1792a; Macy 1835:30). Because of this Indian use, these small huts must be included in any study of eighteenth century Indian houses on Nantucket.

Table 2 gives a summary of documentary data for small houses at fishing stages and along-shore whaling stations before 1765, which has been obtained from the Nantucket probate court records. These data have not before been reported.

a). Fish Houses.

Cod-fishing provided a source of income for approximately 80 Nantucket Indians, especially between 1683 and 1720 (Starbuck 1683-1766; Fig. 5A). However, there is no evidence for large clusters of houses at any fishing stage before 1720. By the mid-eighteenth century, the documentary records (Table 2) establish the existence of four English fish houses at Sasacacha, and perhaps five at Siasconset. In addition to two fish houses at Squam, four existed at unknown locations.

Since Macy recalled fish houses also at Sankaty and Weweder (Macy 1835:252), our records of approximately 15 fish houses are incomplete. However, Crevecoeur (1782:99) reported only a few houses at Sasacacha, a few at Sankaty,
and a few at Siasconset before 1782. There was in 1758 some interest in having
the proprietors lay out Sasacacha, Siasconset, and "all places between that
are convenient for the fishing" (NPR 1:96), but the vote "passed in the neg-
ative" (NPR 1:97).

To the fish houses of Table 2 we add two at Weweder and two at Sankaty
to satisfy Macy's (1835) recollection, and show the location of 15 fish houses
in Figure 2a. Note that the sites of fish houses tended to be on the east side
of Nantucket.

Fish houses were designed to shelter the boat crews, which consisted
primarily of Indians (Crèvecoeur 1782; Macy 1835). For example, Hussey (1912
:26) stated that "Auld Lang Syne", one of the oldest houses at Siasconset,
belonged to Micah Coffin (the grandson of James Coffin whose fish house is
listed in Table 2), and recalled the tradition that Micah Coffin employed
several Indians to fish for him, while he remained ashore to do the cooking.
In at least one case (William Bunker, Table 2), a fish house had started life
as an Indian house (Washamon, Table 1).

b). Whale Houses.

The south shore of the island, not the northeast shore, was the focus
for along-shore whaling, which began on Nantucket in 1690 (Macy 1792a; Fig-
ure 2b). In 1792 Macy recalled, "...the Hummock Pond, where we once had a
great number of whale houses with a mast raised for a lookout, with holes
bored through and sticks put in like a ladder, to go up; then about three miles
eastward to the said Weweder Ponds, stood another parcel of whale houses..." (Macy 1792b).

For the first time, we have been able to document whale houses (Table 2).
Between 1721 and 1758, the Bunkers at Tuckernuck, Paul Coffin at Weweder, and
Joseph Coffin (unknown location) owned whale houses, according to county re-
TABLE 2. FISH HOUSES, HOUSES AT FISHING STAGES, AND WHALE HOUSES.

**Sasacacha:** Stage or fish house of John Swain and heirs, 1682-1769
(NCD 2:10, 74, 151, 445; 3:97).

Stage or fish house of John Gardner and heirs, 1682-1784
(NCD 2:10; NCP 3:442; NPR 1:97).

Stage or fish house of Richard Gardner and heirs, 1682-1737 (NCD 2:10; NCP 2:125; 3:41).

Stage or fish house of George Bunker and heirs, 1743-1760 (NCP 2:70, 89, 408).

**Siasconset:** Stage and fish house of James, Joseph, James (II) Coffin, and 1 1/2 acres of Micah Coffin, 1720-1783
(NCP 1:73, 80; 2:51; 3:384).

Half a fishing house and stage of Paul Coffin, 1734
(NCP 1:186).

House and stage of Peter and Bartlett Coffin, 1749-1762
(NCP 2:191; 3:6).

Fish house and stage of Matthew Jenkins, 1758 (NCP 2:324).

Half a fish house of Zachariah Bunker, 1758 (NCP 2:303, 360; NCD 6:183).

One fourth of a fish house of Nathaniel Allen, 1781
(NCP 3:343).

**Squam:** Washamon's house, fish house of William Bunker and heirs, 1690-1747 (NCD 2:56; NCP 1:92; 2:89; Table 1).

Fish house of William Worth, 1722 (NCD 4:13).
(Table 2 cont'd.)

Weweder: House of Benjamin Barnard, 1735 (NCP 1:190).

One seventh of whale house of Paul Coffin, 1734 (NCP 1:186).

Polpis: Half a small house of Joseph Swain, 1769 (NCP 3:97).

Tuckernuck: House of Thomas Brock, 1750 (NCP 2:188).

One fourth of a whale house of Thomas Bunker and heirs,

1721-1760 (NCP 1:92; 2:303).

Unknown: Part of stage house of Nathaniel Barnard, 1719 (NCP 1:5).

Part of whale house of Joseph Coffin, 1726 (NCP 2:218).

Little house of Daniel Hussey, 1750 (NCP 2:218).

Fish house of John Macy, 1752 (NCP 2:205).

Stage of Joseph Coleman, 1756 (NCP 2:267).

Fish house of Ebenezer Gardner, 1764 (NCP 3:41).
Figure 2a. Sites of cod-fishing stages and fish houses at Nantucket, 1682-1760 (Table 2; Macy 1835:259).
Figure 2b. Sites of whaling stations, whale houses, and lookout masts on Nantucket, 1690-1760 (Table 2; Crèvecoeur 1782; Plate II; Macy 1792b).
cords. In addition to these whaling stations, Crèvecœur (1782:154) mentioned the ruins of an ancient whale house at Siasconset (see Plate II).

Strangely, the proprietors' records do not mention houses or land laid out at Hummock Pond. At Weweder we have documented only Paul Coffin's whale house, a house of Benjamin Barnard, and perhaps the dwelling houses of the Indians, Duch, Micah, and Hooden (Table 1; Table 2). If a "great number of whale houses" (Macy 1792b), or a "considerable number of small huts" (Macy 1835:30) existed at the south shore, they are as yet undocumented.

Although I have found only three whale houses in the probate records, I propose that about 27 whale houses once existed. My reasoning is as follows. As there were 27 shares in the proprietary of Nantucket, land was always laid out in 27 shares (Worth 1904). Indeed, there were 27 owners of shares at Miacomet in 1732 (Macy 1707—1760). Macy (1792a) mentioned 30 whale boats engaged in along-shore whaling at one time, and in 1726, the peak year for along-shore whaling, 27 English and one Indian whaleboat captains caught whales (Starbuck 1924:356; Macy 1835:31). Therefore, if every whaleboat crew had a whale house, there must have been about 27 whale houses in 1726.

From the documented whaling stations, and our estimated number of whale houses, we sketch the sites of whale houses in Figure 2b.

As with fish houses in the early eighteenth century, the primary function of Nantucket whale houses was to provide shelter for Indians, who constituted five out of the six men in a whaleboat crew (Crèvecœur 1782).

Possibly some whale houses correspond to some of our unlocated Indian houses, especially to those documented only by purchases of building materials and not by deeds (Table 1E). Documentary support for this possibility is
clearly hard to find. However, Indians often died with debts (Little 1980), which provided a legal mechanism by which the English could repossess Indian houses without deeds. That this in fact took place is confirmed by complaints of the widows of Indian whalemens (Mass. Archives 32:287). In order to assign undocumented whale houses to Indian owners with confidence, we need to search for whale houses among English grantor-English grantee deeds. If this search proved fruitless, I would be inclined to argue that most whale houses lacking deeds belonged to Indians.
MIGRATIONS AND CHANGING FUNCTIONS OF NANTUCKET HOUSES IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Nantucket houses have been extraordinarily mobile. In the town of Nantucket, called Sherburne until 1795 (Lancaster 1972:6), many houses date architecturally earlier than the recorded layout of the houselots, and the reason usually given is that the houses had been moved in the eighteenth century from their original sites west of the present town (Lancaster 1972:10; Forman 1966; Figure 3). Many of the old houses in Siasconset, too, are said to have arrived there from other places, particularly Sasacacha, before 1835 (Hussey 1912; Underhill 1888; Forman 1966; Figure 3).

Between 1679 and 1765, we can locate at least 42 Indian dwellings (Fig. 1), 15 English fish houses (Fig. 2a), and three English whale houses (Fig. 2b). In addition, we have found about 18 unlocated Indian structures (Table 1E), as well as a "great number" (Macy 1792b) of whale houses (Fig. 2b), categories which may overlap. The approximate sites of all these houses with Indian functions before 1765 are shown on the map in Figure 4.

By 1838, these houses used by Indians were no longer on the commons (Fig. 3b). What happened to them? After the Indian sickness of 1763-1764, which
began a rapid population decline among the Nantucket Indians, Christopher Starbuck (1797) wrote that the wigwams and the contents of houses in which all the inhabitants had died, were burned. I interpret this statement to exclude houses from deliberate burning. Although accidental fire and old age have claimed many of the oldest houses, Indian as well as English, I propose, on the basis of frugality, that most of the Indian houses were moved from the commons and put to use elsewhere. Thus, I suggest, some Indian houses may exist today among the many eighteenth century houses preserved on Nantucket.

**Peripatetic Indian Houses.**

Among the Indian dwelling houses of Table 1, the Kenaway, Japhet, and Titus houses probably existed on more than one site. Moving houses was, of course, an old Indian custom (Williams 1643), but moving a wooden house was not quite as simple as moving the mats of a wigwam. When the English in 1741 decided to fence their land at Squam and place cattle on it, they voted: "that the propriety will be at the charge to Remove such Indian houses from Squam whose owners cannot do it themselves" (NPR 1:62). The scarcity of timber on the island surely contributed to this widespread practice of house moving.

Where did the Indian houses go? The growth of the whaling industry in the eighteenth century (Figure 5C) would have required an influx of seamen and housing for them. Therefore, one possibility is that some Indian houses were moved to Sherburne, especially to the south part of town, where many mariners bought houses in the late eighteenth century (NCD 51:420; NPR 1:180). On the evidence of deeds, the house at Quaise which Jonathan Small sold to Caleb Stratton in 1764 (Table 10) may stand today at 20 New Street (Lee W. Saperstein, personal communication).

Another possibility is that the English moved some of the Indian houses
Figure 3. Sites of Sherburne (called "Nantucket" after 1795), Siasconset, and Sasacacha (archaic spelling), about 1795. Arrows indicate the traditional migrations of Sherburne houses eastward in the eighteenth century, and Sasacacha houses to Siasconset in the early nineteenth century.

Figure 4. Sites of houses on Nantucket before 1760, including Indian houses (Fig. 1), fish houses (Fig. 2c), whale houses (Fig. 2b), and English dwelling houses schematically represented in the urban area of Sherburne.
Plate I. "Nauticon" in 1980 is an example of a Siasconset house which in part dates from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. The original house is to the left of the chimney, and has been altered by the addition of "warts", changes in the door and windows, and the addition to the right of the chimney (Forman 1966:86,99,144,145).
they had purchased first to Sasacacha and then to Siasconset. Nicholas Meader, the son and heir of John Meader who bought Pedwegin's, Scoutquary's, and Titus's houses (Table 1B), owned a dwelling house on Orange Street (at $3300), and also a small house in Siasconset (at $150) in 1836 (NPR 1834-1837:543). Brought from Sasacacha between 1814 and 1820, Meader's Siasconset house is today known as "Nickanoose" (Forman 1966:194). On this deed evidence, "Nickanoose" could be in part an original Indian house.

Ex-Indian dwellings may have gone to other places on the island. For example, the seventeenth century Kenaway house almost certainly formed a part of the eighteenth century Sevella-Swain house in Polpis (Table 1B), and recognition of this could help clear up the architectural questions surrounding the house, which burned in 1902 (Worth 1906:224; Forman 1966:257).

**Indian Population Decline, 1763-1764, and Corresponding Migrations of Whale and Fish Houses.**

Between 1760 and 1795, whale houses, fish houses, and Indian dwelling houses disappeared from the commons, and the town of Sherburne, as well as fishing stages at Sasacacha and Siasconset, grew rapidly. I propose that the coincidence between the Indian sickness of 1763-1764 and the sudden appearance of many houses which pre-date 1760 (Forman 1966) at Siasconset and Sasacacha, suggests that whale houses and fish houses (and probably some Indian dwelling houses) were moved to Siasconset and Sasacacha after 1764 (Plate I).

Figure 5 quantifies some attributes of Nantucket life as a function of time between 1659 and 1835, and I shall use it to correlate some of the changes which occurred on Nantucket about 1763. Indian cod-fishing (Fig. 5A) began about 1683, and had terminated by 1766. Along-shore
whaling, which began in 1690, terminated about 1760, when whales became scarce around the island (Fig. 5B). By 1718, whaling in sloops had commenced (Macy 1792a), and the growth of pelagic whaling is shown by the growth in the number of whaling vessels owned at Nantucket (Fig. 5C). The Indian population declined abruptly after 1763 (Fig. 5D). By 1792, Macy used the past tense for whale houses at the south shore (Macy 1792b), and in 1835 Macy (1835:260) said that fish houses no longer existed except at Siasconset. By 1795, many of the Indian dwelling houses of Table 1 had been sold to Englishmen.

Table 3 shows that Sasacacha, which had been a small fishing stage since 1682, increased in size to thirty houses sometime after 1764. Siasconset, which can have supported a small fishing stage and whaling station only after 1691, when the English bought the land from the Indians (NCD 3:51), began to expand about the same time as Sasacacha, as the digging of a well at Siasconset in 1776 (Forman 1966:42) suggests. By about 1795 (Plate III; Fig. 6a; Table 3), both Siasconset and Sasacacha contained 30 houses. Very likely, much of the growth of these two fishing stages occurred as a result of the virtual embargo on the import of provisions to the island during the Revolutionary War (Macy 1835:81). Between 1792 and 1835, Siasconset, "where our people go for their health" (Macy 1792b), or "the first summer resort in America" (Forman 1966:3), absorbed all of the Sasacacha houses (Figure 6b).

From all the trends discussed above, in Figure 7 I estimate the number of fish houses, whale houses, and Indian dwelling houses, as well as the number of Siasconset and Sasacacha houses as functions of time. The fish, whale, and Indian houses vanish between 1760 and 1780, just as the number of houses at Siasconset and Sasacacha increases dramatically.
Figure 5. Codfishing (A), along-shore whaling (B), off shore whaling (C), and Indian population (D), at Nantucket as a function of time.
Plate II. Sketch of Siasconset in 1775, looking west (NPR 1:135).
TABLE 3. NUMBER OF HOUSES AT SASACACHA AND SIASCONSET AS A FUNCTION OF TIME.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SASACACHA:</th>
<th>SIASCONSET:</th>
<th>REFERENCE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER</td>
<td>YEAR</td>
<td>NUMBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1720-1760</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1764-1781</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;a few&quot;</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>~1795</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>~60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>~56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plate III. Lithograph of Staascooerl about 1774, looking east (A View of Staascooerl, a picturesque village on Narragansett Bay).
Figure 6a. Sites of houses on Nantucket about 1795. Siasconset and Sasacacha have grown to 30 houses each, and Sherburne, now "Nantucket", has grown.

Figure 6b. Sites of houses on Nantucket about 1835. Siasconset has absorbed the Sasacacha houses and grown to about 50 houses. Gone from the commons are Indian houses, whale houses, and fish houses (Fig. 4).
Figure 7. The number of Siasconset and Sasacacha houses as a function of time (see text for sources); the number of Indian houses documented at a given time (allowing 10 years of house life for each isolated citation); and the postulated number of whale houses, together with the documented number of fish houses, as a function of time. Some Indian houses may have been whale houses. The exact date of the peak at Sasacacha is estimated.
Figure 8a. Nantucket Island map, 1764-1781 (Holland 1781).

Figure 8b. Nantucket Island map, 1838 (Mitchell 1838).
Actual maps of the island (Figures 8a and 8b) generally confirm my analysis. Around 1770, Figure 8a shows the remains of the Indian village of Miacomet, only seven houses at Sasacacha, and no houses at Siasconset. In 1838, Figure 8b shows no houses at the original sites of Indian dwellings, whale and fish stations, and the fully developed village of Siasconset.

Figure 8b also shows approximately 15 houses along the shores of the island which I assume (Macy 1835:260) were recent additions in 1838. Two of them in 1807 were Humane Society huts, erected "for the relief of shipwrecked seamen" (Freeman 1807:26). Although these huts may have nothing to do with Indian houses, they do illustrate some of the problems we face in attempts to document small houses on Nantucket.

Summary.

While there are traditions that most Siasconset houses had originally been whale or fish houses, and that many of the Siasconset houses originally came from Sasacacha (Macy 1835:30,260; Forman 1966), in this paper I have explicitly determined the original south and east shore sites of these small huts (Figures 2a and 2b), and the approximate dates of their migrations to Sasacacha and Siasconset (Figure 7). In addition, I call attention to the historical implications that whale and fish house occupants were primarily Indians, and from this I conclude that many Siasconset houses originally provided shelter for Indian whalenmen and fishermen. These conclusions are supported by the coincidence between the Indian population decline of 1763, the disappearance of Indian, whale, and fish houses, and the sudden enlargement of Sasacacha and Siasconset. Although additional details will show this hypothesis to be too simple (house moving has been a continuous activity at Nantucket), I hope that architectural historians will begin to look for the Indian heritage of some old houses on Nantucket.
Siasconset Architecture.

Although some Indian houses of the eighteenth century probably did not differ architecturally from some English houses of the eighteenth century, Siasconset houses (Plate I) have a unique architectural style. Therefore, if some Siasconset houses were Indian houses, we must ask if all of them could have been Indian houses.

Siasconset houses originally had a small, rectangular floor plan (Figure 9; Macy 1835:30,260; Forman 1966). A single room, open to the purlins (horizontal roof supports), included two bedrooms partitioned off at the end opposite the hearth. The frame often consisted of saplings. Vertical boards formed not only the partitions, but also the roof. Vertical or horizontal boards sheathed the frame. Originally, some of the houses had earthen floors, with open hearths and wooden smoke holes in the roof, although tradition says that cooking was done outside (Forman 1966:95,100,113,118,180, 183,268).

Unique details of Siasconset houses abound. The doors always opened outward (Forman 1966:105); all the houses face east (Forman 1966:38); and the roof pitch, at 35°, is smaller than that of most other early buildings of New England (Forman 1966:103). Essentially all of the chimneys were on the north end of the houses (Plate III), and the houses today show a strong residue of this orientation.

Forman called the Siasconset houses "whale houses" (Forman 1966), and derived their style from the architecture of England and Wales (Forman 1966:82). Lancaster saw similarities to the architecture of the Dutch in New York (Lancaster 1972:18), and Kimball found analagous houses in early Plymouth, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Georgia (Kimball 1922:6,7). I suggest that on Nantucket we must consider Indians, not only as carpenters and occupants, and, as we have shown, possible owners, but also as possible architects of whale houses.
Figure 9. Early eighteenth century plan of "Columbia Cottage", Siasconset, after Forman (1966). The ladder provided, and in some cases still does, access to a sleeping loft over the chambers.
Could Indian architectural concepts applied to English building materials have produced the Siasconset architectural style? Although some of the Indian houses of Table 1 clearly incorporated timber frames, a number of Indians bought only a large quantity of boards. The virtual treelessness of the island in the eighteenth century gives these purchases significance. The Indians would have had sapling poles for their wigwams, and board covered wigwams could easily have developed into the "small huts" (Macy 1835:30) that were the whale houses of Hummock Pond and Weweder Pond. For "Rose Cottage"'s origin as a wigwam, see Hussey (1912).

The origins of whale house architecture, like the beginnings of American along-shore whaling, may lie at Cape Cod (Macy 1792a), or at eastern Long Island, where whaling was organized by the Dutch and English, but carried on primarily by Indians as early as 1650 (Edwards and Rattray 1932). Hence, our argument for an Indian influence on Nantucket whale houses finds support in a description of Long Island whale houses as "small thatched huts or wigwams" (Furman 1875:247).

In summary, some of the 56 Siasconset houses of 1835 architecturally could have originated as Indian houses. "Nickanoose" and "Rose Cottage" apparently did, and, although both time and "medieval" (Forman 1966) building practices have confused the details, Forman (1966) claimed a common architectural heritage for most of these small cottages.
CONCLUSIONS.

In this study, I have documented 42 located and 18 unlocated historic Indian houses. In addition, I have found references to roughly 42 fish and whale houses used by Indians in the eighteenth century on Nantucket, about half of which belonged to Englishmen. Some undocumented Indian houses, recorded only in account books, may correspond to some of Zaccheus Macy's (1792b) great number of whale houses.

I present arguments to show that after the Indian population decline of 1763-1764, Indian dwelling houses, fish houses, and whale houses, no longer needed for their original functions, were moved to new sites. Some Indian houses may exist in the town of Nantucket today, especially since not all old houses can have come from old Sherburne. Fish and whale houses went to the villages of Siasconset and Sasacacha (whence to Siasconset), where many may still exist.

The unique architectural style of Siasconset houses calls our attention to the possibility of Indian influence on whale and fish house architecture.

This documentary data on Nantucket Indian houses and analysis of their migrations provides a framework for deed studies of old houses, especially small ones, as well as for archaeological studies of colonial sites on the commons of Nantucket. Many colonial Indian sites are relatively undisturbed and contain valuable and unique cultural remains of the historic Indians of Nantucket. The data presented here, by identifying these resources, can help in efforts to preserve them. Although bits of glass and brick may not seem valuable in themselves, they can help tell a story which until now has been entirely forgotten.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

The Nantucket Historical Association and the Nantucket Registry of Deeds have provided gracious assistance for this study. Also, I acknowledge with pleasure the contribution of Dr. Forman, whose work on the architectural development of the Siasconset houses (Forman 1966) provided much of the background for this paper. I thank Dena F. Dincauze and Valerie Talmaze for comments on a draft of this paper.
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