

Thomas Mayhew

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Thomas Mayhew was baptized at Tisbury, Wiltshire, England, April 1, 1593. His parents were Matthew and Alice (Barter) Mayhew². After apprenticeship, he became a mercer in South Hampton (Banks "post", I, 108, 110; III, 300)³. He left England in 1631 during the Great Migration that brought 20,000 persons to Massachusetts⁴. Before 1632, he settled in Medford, Massachusetts as a factor for Matthew Cradock, London merchant, for whom he built a mill at Watertown, later acquiring and operating it himself⁵.

On May 14, 1634, he was admitted a freeman of the Bay Colony. He engaged rather unsuccessfully in mercantile ventures, acting also as agent for Cradock who, becoming dissatisfied, ended this relationship about 1637⁶. From the first, Mayhew served on responsible committees appointed by the General Court. He was deputy from Medford in 1636, and between 1637 and 1644 from Watertown, where he served locally as selectman and commissioner and built a bridge across the Charles River⁷.

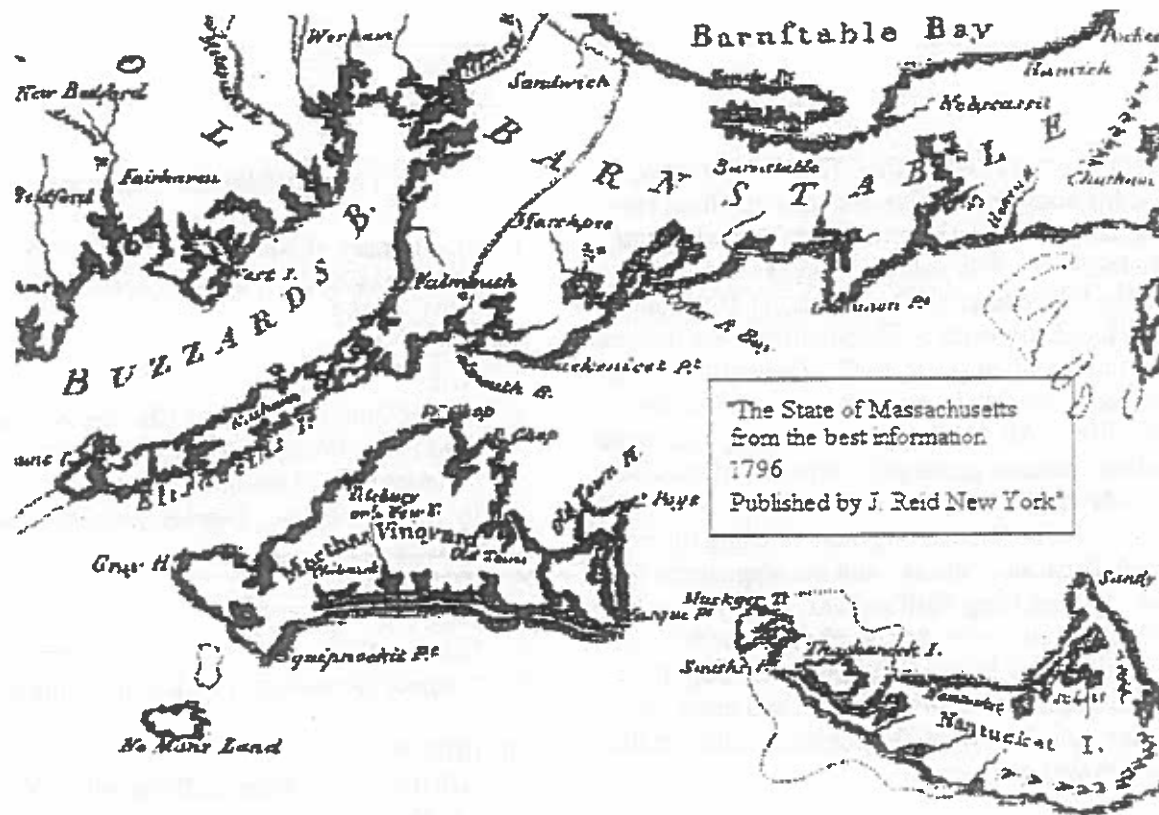
Thomas Mayhew was married first in England to the mother of his son, Thomas Jr. (1621-1657), and second about 1665, to Jane Gallyon Payne (Paine) widow of Thomas Paine, a London merchant. Four daughters were born of this second marriage⁸, including Martha Mayhew, born in Watertown 1638, died in Sandwich 15 Nov. 1717, married 27 December 1661 to Capt. Thomas Tupper, born in Sandwich, Mass. 16 January 1638⁹, son of Thomas Tupper and his third wife, Anne Hodgson¹⁰.

In September 1641, he purchased under Lord Stirling's Patent, **Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and the Elizabeth Islands**, also securing under the Gorges' Patent a more valid title to the Vineyard, where his son, Thomas, settled with others about 1642.

(Dukes County Deeds, VIII, 83; Experience Mayhew, "post", p. 80; see also R. C. Winthrop, "Life and Letters of John Winthrop", vol. II, 1867, p. 152)¹¹.

Martha's Vineyard is an island of 100 square miles located four miles south of Cape Cod¹². Through a maze of conflicting land grants, changing political allegiances, and settler unrest, Thomas Mayhew, self-styled "Governour Mayhew", ruled his island with an iron hand for 40 years. The most serious threat to his control came in 1665 when Martha's Vineyard was included in the lands placed under the Duke of York. After much delay, a settlement worked out in 1671, confirmed the Mayhew Patent and named Thomas Mayhew "Governour and Chiefe Magistrate" for life. At the same time, a Patent was issued erecting the Manor of Tisbury in the southwestern part of the island. The Governour and his grandson were made "joint Lords of the Manor of Tisbury", and the inhabitants became manorial tenants subject to the feudal political jurisdiction of the Mayhews. This full fledged feudal manor appears to have the only such institution actually established in New England¹³.

Another source describes the purchase in more detail. "By the charter and grant to William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, in 1635 and by decree of King Charles I, Long Island and the adjacent islands belonged to the Earl of Stirling. In 1641, the name of Nantucket appeared in the deed granted to Thomas Mayhew, his son and associates, by James Forret, agent for William Alexander, Earl of Stirling. For this title, Mayhew paid forty pounds. By the Charter and Grant to Sir Ferdinando Gorges by King Charles I on April 3, 1639, Nautican Island belonged to Gorges. Both Lord Stirling and Ferdinando Gorges shared in the division of the territory of the Council for Affairs of New England or Plymouth Company which was organized in Plymouth, England, November 3, 1621. King James I in the Charter to this company, dated November 23, 1621, granted it all the territory in America between the 40th and 50th parallels not already settled, which included the islands south of Cape Cod, Mass. Subsequently, the claims of each were conflicting¹⁴.



“To secure his patent to the islands, Mayhew paid Richard Vines, agent of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, Lord Proprietor of Maine, an undisclosed sum of money. As the result of the combined purchase from Alexander and Gorges, represented in the execution of three deeds, two from Forret, one from Vines, dated October 13,23,25, 1641, Thomas Mayhew, Puritan Watertown merchant and his son, Thomas Jr., acquired 16 islands south of Cape Cod comprising Nantucket, Martha’s Vineyard, and the Elizabeth Islands. Stirling according to documents had no legal claim to any of these islands, and Thomas Mayhew always held that his best title was derived from Gorges. Up until September 27, 1666, Nantucket was regarded as a part of the Providence of Maine. Richard Nicolls was the first Governor General of the newly captured providence of New Netherlands in 1665. Nicolls acknowledged to Mayhew, “that the power of these islands was proper in ye hands of Ferdnando Gorges”, and as late at 1663, he regarded the Province of Maine as the legal authority over the island of Nantucket. As late as March 13, 1677, Nantucket was included in the deed of Maine to John Usher by Sir Ferdinando Gorges”¹⁵.

In 1642, the first white settlement was established at Great Harbor, Martha’s Vineyard by a small band of planters under the leadership of Thomas Mayhew, Jr., then 21 years of age and the only son. He acted as Governor until the arrival of the senior Patentee approximately 1645¹⁶. Nantucket was not adapted to farming and it was not forested. Here were 30,000 acres of island, of which some 1050 were ponds and 750 peat swamps, a heap of glacial drift with a coastline of seventy-five miles. The soil was sandy, and there was no wood worthy of note. The climate was temperate and healthy, but marked by frequent and very unpleasant storms. These were the conditions confronting settlers. They found the island so universally barren and so unfit for cultivation that they mutually agreed not to divide it, as each could neither live on nor improve that lot which might fall to his share. Circumstances compelled them to turn to the sea for their livelihood. Here they found an abundant source of food, a commercial enterprise (whaling), and potential source of great wealth¹⁷. Here upon their arrival the settlers found some seven hundred Christian Indians peacefully disciplined and under the religious teaching influence of the Mayhews and Hiacoomes, Pastor of an Indian church on Martha’s Vineyard.



**How To Have the
NSSAC LOGO
On Your Bank
Checks**

Society members have the opportunity to have the Society's logo printed on their personal checks through an arrangement Treasurer General Edward R. Lief made some years ago with the Deluxe check printing company. When adding the logo to the Society's checks, he reserved that opportunity for Society members as well.

The logo is printed to the left of the member's name and address. Although the price varies slightly from back to bank, it is usually between four and five dollars, which cost is included in the total check order fee by the bank. Please note that the logo is available only at banks which order their customers' checks from **Deluxe**.

To include the NSSAC logo on your next order of personal bank checks, please do the following:

1. Verify that your bank does order its customers' checks from Deluxe.
2. Send a letter of request **including the name and address of your bank to:**
Edward R. Lief, Esq.
NSSAC Treasurer General
P. O. Box 3300
Butler Quarter Station
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0300

In response, the Treasurer General will prepare an authorization to your bank with the appropriate coding establishing your eligibility to have the logo on your checks. The authorization will be mailed to you for you to present to your bank when placing your next check order.

Treasurer General's Report

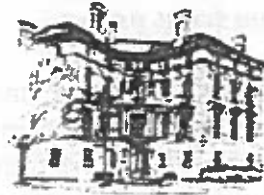
**For the period January 1, 2002 through
December 31, 2002**

Balance on Hand	\$18,171.97
 INCOME:	
2000 General court Dinner	\$1,885.00
Dues and Application Fees	1,630.00
Life Membership purchases	800.00
Interest (Time Certificate)	279.98
General contributions	255.00
Contributions to Flag Fund	135.00
Contributions to Publication Fund	75.00
Interest (savings account)	13.26
Rosettes	12.00
Interest (NOW checking account)	10.26
	\$5,095.50
 1/01/02 Balance + 2002 Income	 \$23,267.47
 <u>Expenses</u>	
2002 Membership Directory (\$506.94 Printing at Insty-Prints, \$359.75 postage, Labels and envelopes, \$300.00 editing Fee to Arthur Louis Finnell)	\$1,166.69
 2002 General Court Dinner at The Washington Club (payment to our sponsor, Ms. Florence Stanley)	 1,000.00
 Direct Mail Printers (generic letterhead And envelopes suitable for all officers)	 391.22
 The Newberry Library (annual donation Of books to Local and Family History collection)	 306.80
 Registrar General's Fees and Expenses	 289.70
National Park Service (annual gift of a Cherry Tree in memory of Thomas Jefferson Bond, Jr.)	250.00
Public Storage (payment for storage of Society's archival records for the 2nd half of 2002)	150.00
Insty-Prints (500 brochures for prospective Members)	109.45

Continued.....

NOTE: Minutes below cover the General Court of the year 2002 which have not been previously published. Minutes for the General Court 2003 will be published in the next issue of the *Colonial Sun*.

**Minutes of the Sixteenth General Court
The Washington Club
Washington, District of Columbia
April 13, 2002**



The Washington Club

The Governor General, Peter Arrott Dixon, called the Sixteenth General Court to order at 5:30 P.M. Members attending: Peter Arrott Dixon, Ronald L. Schaeffer, John Hallberg Jones, Graham Denby Morey, Dr. Philip W. Bernstorff, Carroll Collins, Dr. David R. Curfman, Grantham Wood, and Duane L. C. M. Galles.

The Governor General declared a quorum was present and the business of the General Court continued. The minutes of the Fifteenth General Court were read by the Secretary General Schaeffer. The Governor General called for corrections. The minutes were approved as read.

Reports of the General Officers:

Registrar General, Arthur Louis Finnell's report was read by the Secretary General, copy attached. Applications for nine new members had been approved since the last General Court. Discussion followed. It was moved and seconded that the nine proposed members be elected to the Society. Motion carried.

Treasurer General: In the absence of Edward R. Lief, Treasurer General, copies of his report were distributed to those in attendance. Copy attached.

Membership Status: Three new Life Members, one resignation and five notices returned by the Post Office as undeliverable. Copy attached. Discussion followed. A check for \$100.00 will be presented to the National Society, Children of the American Colonists. A check will be sent to Miss Florence Stanley, sponsor for the Society at the Washington Club, to reimburse her for bill rendered to her by the Club for the General Court dinner. The Treasurer's Report was filed for audit.

Librarian General: In the absence of James Cummings, the Governor General announced that the annual gift of books to the Newberry Library, Chicago, IL, were available for examination by the Members. The books will be shipped to the Newberry Library following the General Court.

Unfinished Business:

It was moved and seconded to allocate \$300.00 to Arthur Finnell for compiling and editing a new edition of the Society Membership Directory. Discussion followed. John Hallberg Jones stated he would follow-up on this project with Mr. Finnell. Motion carried.

There was general discussion on the Society setting up a web site. No action taken.

New Business:

There was general discussion regarding a proposed Flag for the Society. No action taken.

There was general discussion on the possibility of printing a Summer Issue of the *Colonial Sun*. The cost for the summer issue including first class would be approximately \$400.00.

A motion was made by Dr. David Curfman to have the First State Bank, Bayport, MN, continue to serve as the banking facility for the Society. Motion was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by the Governor General at 6:00 p.m.

Ronald L. Schaeffer
Secretary General