

**NANTUCKET ODYSSEY: A  
JOURNEY INTO THE  
HISTORY OF NANTUCKET**

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Nantucket Odyssey: A Journey into the History of Nantucket by Emil Frederick Guba

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# NANTUCKET ODYSSEY

A JOURNEY INTO THE HISTORY OF NANTUCKET

BY

EMIL FREDERICK GUBA, Ph.D.

*Emil Frederick Guba*

WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

1951

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

BERTHA KUPLENT GUBA

1874-1950

*this book is most affectionately dedicated*

773/67

## PREFACE

There is a voluminous literature on Nantucket. However, this volume has been written to give you a factual and straightforward acquaintance with the origin, growth, prosperity and decline of this island and its people, and the re-discovery of the place by summer visitors. For emphasis and variety the episodes are supplemented with numerous poems and quotations.

The forefathers came bent upon building an industry on whale oil. The industry flourished until man's ingenuity found something better and cheaper in petroleum. If you climb the walks on Nantucket, explore the historical centers, and survey what was built on the wealth of the oil of the harpooned whale brought here from all the oceans of the world, you will become inspired with great enthusiasm for the place and those who made it.

The story of Nantucket and its people is the story of the growth of America, of adventure, hardship and toil, human sacrifice, and free enterprise in a friendly, unostentatious society. The spirit of peace and restfulness still pervades the island, but the odor and industry of whale oil are gone.

The writer was attracted to Nantucket to explore its fascinating fungous flora and by an organized interest there in the island's natural science. The old landmarks, the narrow streets and the old houses of weathered gray shingles prompted him to inquire into its past. He was inquisitive, but he never intended to neglect his Nantucket botany to write this patchwork quilt of episodes of the island and its former people. Nevertheless it happened.

"There's a spell in Nantucket well known to bewitch,  
Which exerts the same charm o'er the poor and the rich;



If you go to the Island you'll quickly learn why  
When you look at her moorlands, her shores, and her sky;  
And you'll say that you love her if never before  
When the wild breakers dash in their might on the shore.  
O thou lovely Nantucket, fair Isle of the sea!  
With sweetest of memories my thoughts turn to thee."  
From "The Magic of Nantucket" by I. H. Folger

Use of the facilities of the Boston Public Library, Harvard College Library, Massachusetts Archives, Massachusetts State Library, New Bedford Free Public Library, and the Waltham Public Library is gratefully acknowledged.

I am especially indebted to the large family of Nantucket writers and to the Nantucket Historical Association for their admirable and vast literature of the island. I add this volume to their industry and accomplishment.

E. F. G.

WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

*August 15, 1951*

## CONTENTS

✓1.	THE NANTUCKET LEGEND . . . . .	1
2.	SALE OF NANTUCKET TO A WATERTOWN MERCHANT . . . . .	5
3.	PURCHASE BY A COMPANY OF SALISBURY SETTLERS . . . . .	7
4.	EXODUS TO NANTUCKET . . . . .	9
5.	MOTIVES FOR THE REMOVALS TO NANTUCKET . .	11
6.	NANTUCKET INDIANS UNDER MAYHEW . . . .	20
7.	ORGANIZATION OF THE PROPRIETORS . . . .	23
8.	A POLL OF EARLY INHABITANTS . . . . .	25
~9.	DEGRADATION OF THE INDIANS . . . . .	28
-10.	FIRST BIRTHS AND DEATHS . . . . .	33
✓11.	THE POPULATION EXPANDS AND BECOMES SELF-GOVERNING . . . . .	35
12.	BEGINNING OF CIVIL STRIFE . . . . .	38
13.	NANTUCKET CEDED TO MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY . . . . .	48
14.	THE LAND QUESTION . . . . .	49
15.	FOREFATHERS BURIAL GROUND AND MONUMENT	51
16.	OLD NORTH AND OTHER BURIAL GROUNDS . .	60
17.	INTERMARRIAGES AMONG FIRST FAMILIES . .	63
18.	ILLUSTRIOUS SONS AND DAUGHTERS . . . .	67
19.	PRIDE OF NATIVE HOMELAND . . . . .	74
20.	BEGINNINGS OF ORGANIZED RELIGION . . . .	77
21.	INFIDELITY OF STEPHEN HUSSEY . . . . .	80
22.	FIRST FRIENDS BURIAL GROUND . . . . .	81
23.	SECOND FRIENDS BURIAL GROUNDS . . . . .	83

CONTENTS

24.	WINTER EVENINGS ON OLD NANTUCKET IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	88
25.	THE QUAKER SOCIETY . . . . .	92
26.	A NANTUCKET QUAKER MARRIAGE CONTRACT . . . . .	99
27.	RISE OF OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS . . . . .	103
28.	EPISODES OF THE SCHOOLS . . . . .	108
29.	THE QUAISE ASYLUM . . . . .	117
30.	WHALING AND PROSPERITY . . . . .	120
31.	NOTABLE EVENTS IN THE WHALE FISHERY . . . . .	127
32.	EMIGRATIONS FROM NANTUCKET . . . . .	131
33.	THE DECLINE . . . . .	138
34.	THE REDISCOVERY . . . . .	143
35.	OVER THE MOORS TO MADAKET . . . . .	149
36.	EAST TO SIASCONSET . . . . .	152
37.	QUIDNET, WAUWINNET, POLPIS AND QUAISE . . . . .	154
38.	JOURNEY'S END . . . . .	156