

**MVM Hurricane Materials**  
(Finding aid at bottom of document)

**Newspaper Clippings – 1938**

New Bedford Standard Times October 1, 1938. Huge damage New Bedford, Fair Haven,, CC Canal; nothing on MV

**1938 Hurricane Pictures**

With a Brief Story and 400 Views of Destruction in New Bedford and Vicinity (A Few of New London and MV). Reyonolds Printing, New Bedord, MA.

Includes a nice description for 1815 that I copied. Also 1635 that this compares to 1938. Photos 8386-8388.

**Vineyard Gazette**

*September 22, 1944.* 1944 storm

MV Sounds Lightship went down off the tip of Cuttyhunk. 5 men.

Uncle Seth's Pond p[rovided water for Lambert's Cove residents – in this heavily wooded section.

Oak Bluffs – Waterfront damage, car swept into Farm Pond, Sea View house swept off foundation; Many uprooted trees; some East Chop houses destroyed;

West Tisbury – “lovely wooded town”; two silos blown down; camp on Tissa carried away; only one camp remaining on the south shore;

Editorial – Plant a Hurricane Tree. For 300 years MV has had beautiful trees; elms etc.plant one looking ahead 20 years or more.

*September 15, 1944*

2 men died; ; few boats total loss; greatest single damage to MV Shipbuilding Company

“1938 Blow was a Zephyr Compared with This – Wind and Wave Damage Incalculable” “Edgartown Waterfront is Wrecked”

Tide not as high as 1938. Damage at Menemsha not as greta as 1938.

*September 11, 1954*

MV Gazette “Hurricane Slashes the Vineyard, Inflicts Deep Wounds Everywhere”. Edna. Sept 11. Passed over Menemsha.

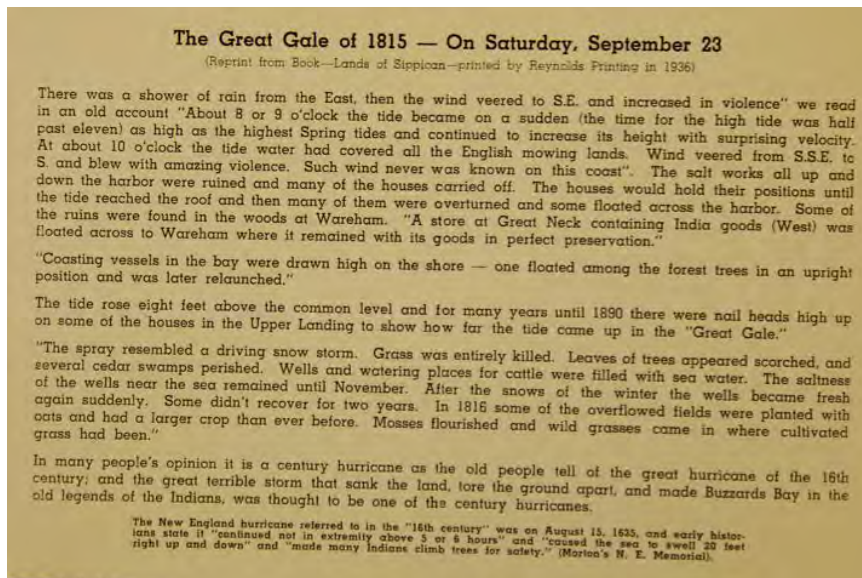
Sengekontacket merges with sound; bluff at East Chop undermined;  
Lambert's Cove topo changed – many trees blown down and most dunes gone

### *Hurricane Bob*

Bob – Gusts to 112 mph (98 mph officially) ; scores of boats in E harbor driven into shore; rebuild telephone and electric on Middle Rd and North rd from scratch; surge broke barrier beach at Katama; houses torn form foundations; worst wreckage since 1954; few houses damaged; no people; 15 boats capsized or sunk; 84 flung into walls and on beach; tree damage great – N road, Middle Road; trees lost leaves but back by Labor Day;

Micro bursts damaged MCSF; estimated 2 million board feet down;

Fear fire danger. “Officials Survey Storm Loss: State Fears Forest Fire Danger”  
Sept 17, 1991; Varkonda “If it does get out of control...I’m afraid it will burn all the way to the water”



### **1898 Nor'easter – Henry Norton Account**

Henry Norton wrote this account of the 1898 Nor'easter, also known as the Portland Storm "The most disastrous storm ever known on the island commenced on Saturday night November 28, 1898, and before daybreak of the 29th one of the worst northeast snow blizzards was raging. Vineyard Haven harbor was for many ships a port of refuge from the storm. The next morning found over fifty in a wrecked condition. The number of lives lost were few in comparison with the number of ships destroyed, because of the bravery of Isaac C. Norton, Alvin H. Cleveland, Frank Golart, Stanley Fisher and F. Horton Johnson. Cleveland and Golart, with Norton as captain, dared the wind and sea in

a dory. They first went out to the schooner Hamilton, which was ashore near the breakwater, rescuing five sailors. The boat was unable to make the western shore so they went across the harbor, landing near the Standard Oil tanks. The half-frozen sailors were taken to Chadwick's blacksmith shop where they were revived sufficiently to be conveyed to the Marine Hospital. A schooner was ashore near the old Norris wharf at Eastville. The people on land could see the men in the rigging. The dory was launched again, with Fisher, Johnson and Cleveland as crew, Norton in command. This time the dory was towed far to the windward of the schooner and let go by a tug. They managed to get to the Thurlow and save five men, one having frozen in the rigging. These sailors were taken to homes at Eastville where they received the best of care. By this time the storm was at its height, and against the judgment and protest of all, Norton, Cleveland and Golart went out the third time and rescued five more sailors, thereby showing the daring and bravery for which their forefathers were noted when they came to this cold and inhospitable climate and made their homes.”

The History of Martha's Vineyard, 1923, Henry Franklin (H.F.) Norton

## Quotes for Hurricane Chapter

“And at that time provision was so scarce, (by reason of a great hurricane that spoiled much of their corn, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August that year,) that they knew not where on the sudden, to find means to victual out an hundred men, which the expedition would require.”

“For a conclusion of the memorable accidents during this lustre, it will not be unworthy the reader's consideration to take notice of a sad tempest that the year 1635, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August; when such a sudden dismal storm of wind and rain, as the like was never in this place known, in the memory of men, before or since ; so universal, which passed through the whole country, overturning sundry houses, uncovering divers others, beating down their Indian corn to the ground, which never rose any more, which if it had not been very near the harvest all the corn had been utterly lost, to the undoing of many poor families. Some thousands of trees were torn up by the roots thereby, others broken in pieces, and wound about like withs, though of considerable bigness. The monuments of which sad storm were many years after visible in some parts of the country; nor were the effects of it less terrible on the sea, where it raised the tide to twenty feet in some places right up and down; forcing some of the Indians to climb up the trees to save themselves from drowning, which others not being able to do, perished in the attempt; as befel eight Indians at Narrhaganset, as was credibly reported. And in other places it was observed that the tide was brought into the land twice in twelve hours, or else that it never ebbed all the time that storm lasted, (which was five or six hours,) or was brought back before the ebb was half made.”

General History of New England. Photo copy from the  
American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA.

“(Mo. 6 Aug. 16) The wind having blown hard at S. and S. W. a week before, about midnight it came up at N. E. and blew with such violence, with abundance of rain, that it blew down many hundreds of trees, near the towns, overthrew some houses, (and) drove the ships from their anchors. The “Great Hope,” of Ipswich, being about four hundred tons, was driven on ground at Mr. Hoff's Point, and brought back again presently by a N. W. very strong, and, it being then about high water, by nine the tide was fallen about three feet. Then it began to flow again about one hour, and rose about two or three feet, which was conceived to be, that the sear was grown so high abroad with the N. E. wind, that, meeting with the ebb, it forced it back again.

This tempest was not so far as Cape Sable, but to the south more violent, and made a double tide all that coast.”

Excerpt from Governor Winthrop's Journal.

### *Hurricanes*

1635: “This year, on Saturday, the fifteenth day of August, was such a mighty storm of wind and rain, as none now living in these parts, either English or Indian, had seen the like; being like unto those hurricanes, or tuffins, that writers mention to be in the Indies. It began the morning a little before day, and grew not by degrees, but came with great violence in the beginning, to the great amazement of many. It blew down sundry houses, and uncovered divers others; divers vessels were lost at sea in it, and many more in extreme danger. It caused the sea to swell in some places to the southward of Plymouth, as that it arose to twenty foot right up and down, and made many of the Indians to climb into trees for their safety. It threw down all the corn to the ground, which never rose more, the which, through the mercy of God, it being near the harvest time, was not lost, though much the worse; and had the wind continued without shifting; in likelihood it would have drowned some part of the country. It blew down many hundred thousands of trees, turning up the stronger by the roots, and breaking the high pine trees, and such like, in the midst, and

the tall young oaks, and walnut trees, of good bigness, were wound as a with by it, very strange and fearful to behold. It began in the south-east, and veered sundry ways, but the greatest force of it, at Plymouth, was from the former quarter; it continued not in extremity above five or six hours before the violence of it began to abate; the marks of it will remain this many years, in those parts where it was sorest. The moon suffered a great eclipse two nights after it.” (Morton, N.E. Memorial, Mayflower History CD)

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“This year, y<sup>e</sup> 14, or 15 of August (being Saturday) was such a mighty storm of wind & raine, as none living in these parts, either English or Indeans, ever saw. Being like (for y<sup>e</sup> time it continued) to those Haurricanes and Tuffins that writers make mention of in y<sup>e</sup> Indeas. It began in y<sup>e</sup> morning, a little before day, & grue not by degrees, but came with violence in y<sup>e</sup> begining, to y<sup>e</sup> great amasmente of many. It blew downe sundry (211) houses, & uncovered others; diverce vessells were lost at sea, and many more in extreme danger. It caused y<sup>e</sup> sea to swell (to y<sup>e</sup> southward of this place) above 20. foote, right up & downe, and made many of the Indeans to clime into trees for their saftie; it tooke of y<sup>e</sup> borded roofe of a house which belonged to the plantation at Manamet, and floted it to another place, the posts still standing in y<sup>e</sup> ground; and if it had continued long without y<sup>e</sup> shifting of y<sup>e</sup> wind, it is like it would have drowned some parte of y<sup>e</sup> country. It blew downe many hundred thousands of trees, turning up the stronger by the roots, and breaking the hiegher pine trees of in the midle, and y<sup>e</sup> tall yonge oaks & walnut trees of good bignes were wound like a withe, very Strang & fearfull to behold. It begane in y<sup>e</sup> southeast, and parted toward y<sup>e</sup> south & east, and vered sundry ways; but y<sup>e</sup> greatest force of it here was from y<sup>e</sup> former quarters. It continued not (in y<sup>e</sup> extremitie) above 5. or 6. houers, but y<sup>e</sup> violence begane to abate. The signes and marks of it will remaine this 100. years in these parts wher it was sorest; the moone suffered a great eclips the 2. night after it.”

*Youngs Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers* Published by Little & Brown, Boston 1841

Excerpt from Bradford's History "Of Plimouth Plantation"

Referring to the 1815 Hurricane. "At Buzzard's Bay, which almost separates Cape Cod from the mainland, the peak of the winds coincided with high tide, and the waters swelled within 15 inches of covering the narrow isthmus and creating a natural canal where the Cape Cod Ship Canal later was to be dug."

Ludlum, D. M. 2001. *Early American Hurricanes 1492-1870*. American Meteorological Society, Boston, MA.

## **Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum**

### **Record Unit 265**

Hurricanes Collection

By Julia Novakovic & Will Joyner

Descriptive Summary

Repository: Martha's Vineyard Museum

Call No.

Title: Hurricanes Collection

Creator: various

Quantity: 1 cubic foot

Abstract: The Hurricanes Collection holds many newspaper and magazine articles

documenting the aftermath of major hurricanes that affected both Martha's Vineyard and overall southern New England during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also included in this collection are published "hurricane souvenir" booklets of photographs, personal memories of the storms, and a government report on the Hurricane of 1938.

### Administrative Information

Acquisition Information: The materials in the Hurricanes Collection were acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century by various donors.

Processing Information: Julia Novakovic & Will Joyner

Access Restrictions: none

Use Restrictions: none

Preferred citation for publication: Martha's Vineyard Museum, Hurricanes Collection, Record Unit 265.

### Index Terms

- Hurricanes
- Martha's Vineyard
- Great Hurricane of 1938
- Hurricane of 1944
- Hurricane Carol, 1954
- Hurricane Edna, 1954
- Hurricane Donna, 1960
- Hurricane Bob, 1991
- Hurricane Eduoard, 1996

### Series and Subseries Arrangement

Series I: Newspaper Clippings

Subseries A: 1938

Subseries B: 1944

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Subseries C: 1954

Subseries D: 1960

Subseries E: 1991

Subseries F: 1996

Series II: Publications

Subseries A: 1924

Subseries B: 1938

Subseries C: 1944

Subseries D: 1954

Subseries E: Historical Over-View

Series III: Personal Memoirs

Series IV: Government Publications

Series V: Drawings

### Historical Note:

The deadliest hurricane ever to strike above the North Carolina coast was the New England Hurricane of 1938 [September 20, 1938]. Every record for wind speed, barometric pressure, and tidal surge in Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts was set during this massive storm. With winds of estimated 115-120 m.p.h. at landfall, New England coastal towns had little chance of surviving unscathed.

The Red Cross estimated 600-700 dead, with more than 3500 injured and 75,000 buildings damaged.

Six years later, Martha's Vineyard dealt with its most damaging natural disaster. The 1944 "Great Atlantic Hurricane" [September 14, 1944] killed 390 people—nearly all of them at sea. The "Vineyard Lightship," serving in the Vineyard Sound, was destroyed and its crew lost. Island homes were pulverized by the 85 m.p.h. winds and the main roads in Edgartown and Vineyard Haven were flooded.

In 1953, the World Meteorological Organization [WMO] began "naming" hurricanes in order to differentiate specific storms. The U.S. National Hurricane Center prepared lists of names [using all letters except Q, U, X, Y, and Z], alternating male/female. Soon after, Hurricanes Carol and Edna hit Martha's Vineyard on August 31 and September 11, 1954 respectively. Names of particularly damaging storms [either financially, of human casualties, or both] are retired by the National Hurricane Center. Both Carol and Edna were retired. Other destructive hurricanes affecting Martha's Vineyard include Hurricane Donna in 1960 and Hurricane Bob in 1991. Additionally, both of these hurricane names have been retired from circulation.

### Scope and Content Note:

The Hurricanes Collection is an artificial compilation that is the result of many donors throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of this collection is of newspaper articles that documented the hurricanes affecting southeastern Massachusetts from 1938 through

1996. Of interest are the "hurricane souvenir" books that are housed within the second series, Publications. The report from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, published in 1938 and listed under Government Publications, gives a thorough and interesting history of major storms that hit Massachusetts from the colonial period up through the Hurricane of 1938. For photographic images of the hurricanes and their resulting damage on Martha's Vineyard, please consult Photo Files 148, 246, 345, and 545.

### Series Descriptions

#### Series I: Newspaper Clippings

This Series contains printed information on the major hurricanes that hit Martha's Vineyard throughout the twentieth century. Newspapers included in this section include the Vineyard Gazette, Boston Globe, New Bedford Evening Standard, and the Martha's Vineyard Times. Storm chronologies, images, and details of damages are in these articles.

#### Subseries A: 1938

Box 1 of 2

Folder 1: Newspaper Clippings: 1938 Hurricane.

#### Subseries B: 1944

Box 1 of 2

Folder 2: Newspaper Clippings: 1944 Hurricane.

#### Subseries C: 1954

Box 1 of 2

Folder 3: Newspaper Clippings: 1954, Hurricane Carol.

Folder 4: Newspaper Clippings: 1954, Hurricane Carol.

### **Subseries D: 1960**

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Folder 5: Newspaper Clippings: 1960, Hurricane Donna.

### **Subseries E: 1991**

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Folder 6: Newspaper Clippings: 1991, Hurricane Bob.

### **Subseries F: 1996**

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Folder 7: Newspaper Clippings: 1996, Hurricane Edouard.

## **Series II: Publications**

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This series contains “souvenir” booklets and other informative pamphlets regarding major storms to hit southern New England. The majority of these booklets contain photographs of the destruction of storms from 1924 until 1954. In addition, an article from 1987 appearing in Cape Cod Life gives an excellent photojournalistic essay of hurricanes that struck the Massachusetts coast throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Subseries A: 1924**

Box 1 of 2

Folder 8: Publications: Pamphlet, 1924, “Pictures of the Worst Storm in New Bedford History.”

### **Subseries B: 1938**

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Folder 9: Publications: Booklet, 1938, The Great Hurricane and Tidal Wave, Rhode Island.

Folder 10: Publications: Booklet, 1938, The Complete Historical Records of New England's Stricken Area, 21 September 1938.

Folder 11: Publications: Pamphlet, 1938, When the Great Hurricane of 1938 Swept Connecticut.

Folder 12: Publications: Booklet, 1938, 1938 Hurricane Pictures and supplement.

### **Subseries C: 1944**

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Folder 1: Publications: Booklet, 1944, September 14, 1944 Hurricane, Southeastern Massachusetts.

Folder 2: Publications: Essay, 1944, Hurricane of 1944 by Martin Meigs, Sr.

Folder 3: Publications: Article, 1944, “1944 Hurricane,” in Life Magazine.

Folder 4: Publications: Booklet, 1944, Martha's Vineyard Hurricane, 1944.

Folder 5: Publications: Booklet, 1944, The Great Atlantic Hurricane, September 14, 1944.

### **Subseries D: 1954**

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Folder 6: Publications: Booklet, 1954, Hurricane! 1954.

### **Subseries E: Historical Over-View**

Box 2 of 2

Folder 7: Publications: Article, 1987, “Hurricane Tracks,” Cape Cod Life, Aug/Sept.



1987.

### **Series III: Personal Memoirs**

This series contains personal memories of experiences during the hurricanes that struck Martha's Vineyard. Of note is a transcribed copy of the ship *Seawolf*, which found itself out in the water in the middle of the hurricane of 1954.

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Folder 8: Personal Memoirs: Log of Ship *Seawolf* from 1954 Hurricane.

Folder 9: Personal Memoirs: 1938 Hurricane, from Virginia's Journal by Virginia Berresford, 1989.

Folder 10: Personal Memoirs: 1954 Hurricane, "Two Hurricanes in Eleven Days" by Lawrence Saunders, 1954.

### **Series IV: Government Publications**

This series contains a report from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regarding the Hurricane of 1938. The first half of the government report deals with a history of storms that hit New England from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century up until the Hurricane of 1938. The second half of the paper shows illustrations of the 1938 storm's path and other logistic diagrams.

Box 2 of 2

Folder 11: Government Publications: "Cyclonic Storm of September 21, 1938" by Joseph C. Knox, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 1938.

### **Series V: Drawings**

This series contains printed drawings of the aftermath from the Hurricane of 1944 that affected Martha's Vineyard. Subjects are mainly from Edgartown, with a few other Island town drawings mixed in. The artist is Mary Drake Cole, whose sketches were later produced en masse as a series of postcards.

Box 2 of 2

Folder 12: Drawings of Hurricane of 1944.