

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## WEST TISBURY

Report Date: 1984

Associated Regional Report: Cape Cod and the Islands

**Reconnaissance Survey Town Reports**, produced for MHC's Statewide Reconnaissance Survey between 1979 and 1987, introduce the historical development of each of the Commonwealth's municipalities. Each report begins with an historic overview, a description of topography, and political boundaries. For the purposes of the survey, the historic period has been subdivided into seven periods: Contact (1500–1620), Plantation (1620–1675), Colonial (1675–1775), Federal (1775–1830), Early Industrial (1830–1870), Late Industrial (1870–1915), and Early Modern (1915–1940/55). Each report concludes with survey observations that evaluate the town's existing historic properties inventory and highlight significant historic buildings, settlement patterns, and present threats to these resources. A bibliography lists key secondary resources.

Town reports are designed for use together with a series of town maps that demarcate settlement patterns, transportation corridors and industrial sites for each historic period. These maps are in the form of color-coded, polyester overlays to the USGS topographic base map for each town on file and available for consultation at MHC. For further information on the organization and preparation of town reports, readers should contact MHC.

Users should keep in mind that these reports are now two decades or more old. The information they contain, including assessments of existing knowledge, planning recommendations, understanding of local development, and bibliographic references all date to the time they were written. In some cases, information on certain topics was not completed. No attempt has been made to update this information.

Electronic text was not available for digital capture, and as a result most of the reports have been scanned as PDF files. While all have been processed with optical character recognition, there will inevitably be some character recognition errors.

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# MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: 1984

COMMUNITY: West Tisbury

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## I. TOPOGRAPHY

The town of West Tisbury is located on the island of Martha's Vineyard, lying between 70° 50' and 70° 25' longitude and 41° 95' and 41° 30' latitude. The island covers approximately 249 square kilometers and is covered by a hilly upland with a maximum elevation of 92 meters, averaging 59 meters; and coastal plain with elevations sloping gently southward from about 29 meters to sea level. West Tisbury is located in the roughly center portion of the island bounded by the Vineyard Sound and Tisbury to the west, north, and east, Edgartown in the east, the Atlantic Ocean to the south, and Chilmark to the southwest. Major physical features in the town include Tisbury Great Pond, James Pond, Mill River (Brook), and old Tiasquin River.

The uplands in the town are within the bounds of the Nantucket Moraine, a hilly and rocky area covering the northern coastal area in the township. The moraine is composed largely of coarse or medium sand and boulders of varying size (Latimer 1925:10). In general, soils are sandy and not stratified. The southern areas of the town are within an outwash plain. Outwash areas are sandier and stratified. Drainage is generally subsurface, although some streams, brooks, and ponds are present. Elevations average 150 feet or less along the moraine and 50 feet or less along the coast and on the outwash plain. Nearly the entire town is within an oak/pine vegetation zone. Some oak/maple is present in the north and dune vegetation in the south.

## II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

First Middletown purchases were made from natives in 1669, with one mile square in the northwest set aside as Christiantown Indian reservation. Middletown was incorporated as "Tisbury Towne" in 1671 under New York jurisdiction. Northern "Chickemoo" territory was purchased in 1659, and annexed to Tisbury Manor (later Chilmark) in 1671. These lands were annexed to Tisbury in 1736. Boundary disputes and land rights litigation over Christiantown territories continued through the 18th century. New northeast boundary was established in 1892, with the separation of Vineyard Haven (formerly Holmes Hole) settlement as "Tisbury," while larger, western territory was renamed West Tisbury.

## III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

West Tisbury is a residential and agricultural community on central Martha's Vineyard, with both northern and southern coasts. First European settlement occurred ca. 1666, with 17th century home lots and early regional mill focus on Mill Brook corridor, with second mill focus on Tiasquam River. In 1670, native lands in the

northwest hills were set off as Christiantown reservation, with pre-1680 meetinghouse. Late 17th century Tisbury meetinghouse site was established at South Road burying ground. Dispersed agricultural settlement continued through the 18th century, with separation of Holmes Hole as East Parish Tisbury in 1796. Civic center shifted south with 1833 meetinghouse, and mid-19th century center village developed along Mill Brook corridor, including Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society Fair site. Baptist focus shifts to mid-19th century North Tisbury hamlet, and Methodist center develops at Lamberts Cove in the north. Tax controversy with Vineyard Haven/Holmes Hole led to separation of western agricultural community as West Tisbury in 1892.

Dispersed 18th and early 19th century farmsteads survive, with several areas of functional agricultural landscape. West Tisbury Center retains a mix of 18th and 19th century components, set in the rural context of the Mill Brook valley. Late 19th century Christiantown chapel survives next to earlier burying ground. A large eastern tract is now controlled as Martha's Vineyard State Forest. New suburban development has been dispersed, with new concentration at North Tisbury. Future growth may threaten unique regional survival of historic rural landscape.

#### IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

##### A. Transportation Routes

At least two major island native trails may have crossed the West Tisbury area. One trail probably paralleled the Vineyard Sound coastline connecting village and coastal areas in present-day Tisbury and Oak Bluffs with the Chilmark and Gay Head area. A southern coastal trail also probably existed extending east/west north of the Tisbury Great Pond area. This trail may have connected coastal areas in Edgartown and Chappaquiddick Island with the native trail reported in the South Road area of Chilmark. Interior secondary trails were also probably leading from main coastal trails.

##### B. Population

Little direct information is present on which systematic estimates of Native American populations during the Contact period can be made. Furthermore, when estimates are given they are often contradictory with considerable variation. For example, Ritchie (1969:3) estimates the Wampanoag population on Martha's Vineyard in 1600 A.D. at 1,500 individuals. Yet, in 1642 another author estimates the native population at 3,000 individuals (Collections of the Mass. Historical Society Vol. III, p.92). Estimates of native population are further complicated by the fact that the plague of 1616-17 undoubtedly drastically altered existing populations and areas of settlement. Thus, it appears likely that native populations for the entire island were probably more in the range of 1,500 individuals than 3,000, at least during the late Contact period.

West Tisbury may have had one of the larger native populations on Martha's Vineyard during the Contact period. The area was known as Takemmy to the natives and was ruled by one of the four major sagamores of sachems in authority on Martha's Vineyard during this period. The importance of this area to native populations is further indicated through the presence of a preferred settlement area on Tisbury Great Pond along the southern coastline and by the fact that native populations were still present in 1765. Indian populations in the West Tisbury area during the Contact period probably numbered in the vicinity of a few hundred individuals, particularly at the close of the period.

### C. Settlement Pattern

European settlements did not exist in West Tisbury or on Martha's Vineyard during this period. However, some contact between natives and Europeans in the Martha's Vineyard area undoubtedly took place as European explorers, traders, and fishermen frequented the area from early in the 16th century, long before settlement. Most notable were Gosnold's voyages through the islands off the Cape and settlement at Cuttyhunk in 1602.

Native Americans had settled the West Tisbury area for some time prior to European contact. Late Woodland period site are not known in the town, but should exist. The coastal environment along the Vineyard Sound and southern coast in West Tisbury conforms to areas of site locational preference identified elsewhere on Martha's Vineyard and in southern New England. Coastal ponds, inlets, coves, and other landforms are common, particularly along the southern shore. Known sites are present along Mill Brook, but they are of unknown cultural affiliation.

No evidence exists at present to identify specific Contact period village sites. However, it seems probable they existed, since the West Tisbury area was originally called by its Algonquian name, Takemmy, led by one of the reportedly more powerful sachems on Martha's Vineyard during this period. A native presence in the West Tisbury area is further indicated by the fact that many of the areas of purchase and initial settlement were purchased from local natives. Native place names for Martha's Vineyard and the West Tisbury area also provide clues to the extent to which natives either inhabited and/or used the area. For example, the Tiasquin River, Watcha Cove, Tississa neck, Seconquet neck, and numerous other locations derive their name from Algonquian roots and attest to the importance of coastal areas to local natives.

Thus, while specific Contact period village sites are unknown for the West Tisbury area, expected Late Woodland period sites locations, the extensive presence of native place names and the fact that early settlers had to purchase the rights for settlement land indicate that sites of the Contact period should exist. Native settlement for West Tisbury during this period should follow regional and island trends for settlement preferences in coastal areas along ponds, estuaries, and rivers or streams.

Inland sites should also be present, although not to the extent of coastal sites.

#### D. Subsistence Pattern

European settlements were not present on Martha's Vineyard during the Contact period. Thus, any transient Europeans in the West Tisbury area probably followed subsistence patterns similar to native inhabitants in the area. While some food was undoubtedly carried with early explorers, traders, and fishermen, the bulk of their subsistence was probably secured through hunting, fishing, and the gathering of wild plants and shellfish, and the trade, stealing, or purchase of agricultural products (corn, beans, etc.) from the local natives.

Native American subsistence in the West Tisbury and Martha's Vineyard area was probably similar to that practiced in other areas on mainland Cape Cod. The combined use of wild and domesticated food resources formed the basis of the subsistence system. It is unknown at present exactly when agriculture, or more specifically, horticulture, was introduced into the Cape and islands area. However, on Martha's Vineyard, carbonized corn kernels were found at two sites: the Peterson site in the town of Edgartown, and the Hornblower II site in Gay Head (Ritchie 1969). At the Hornblower II site, carbonized corn kernels were C14 dated to A.D. 1160  $\pm$  80 years (Ritchie 1969:52), placing corn agriculture well within the Late Woodland period. Thus, some form of agriculture may have been practiced on Martha's Vineyard for some time prior to the Contact period. Furthermore, by the Contact period, sufficient quantities of corn, beans, etc. were being produced for storage and at times for sale or trade to English settlers. Shellfishing, fishing, and hunting were also important subsistence pursuits. On Martha's Vineyard, virtually all of the existing Algonquian place names and suspected village areas are located along the coast, particularly in estuarine locations near extensive shellfish beds and anadromous fish runs.

Mixed shellfish populations in the West Tisbury area are present mainly in the area of Tisbury Great Pond along the southern shore. In the past, shellfish species may have included quahog, bay scallop, soft shell clam, mussels, and oyster. Alewife runs are now present in Blackwater Brook and the Tisbury Great Pond estuary. Other areas may have supported runs in the past.

In addition, other species of marine life were also available in the West Tisbury area. Saltwater fish such as striped bass, bluefish, swordfish, porgie, tautog, eels, mackerel, flounder, codfish, haddock, and others were present in coastal and estuarine areas. Lobster, crabs, snails, and possibly various species of terrapins were present. Sea mammals such as whales and seals would also have been available in coastal areas. In freshwater ponds, trout, perch, bass, and pickerel were present.

The wetlands and forested areas of Martha's Vineyard and West Tisbury provided numerous species of mammals and birds for hunting. The heath-hen, or pinnated grouse, was available in upland areas with numerous species of ducks and geese available in coastal locations. Several mammals were also available which today are not necessarily present. They included: deer, bear, lynx, fox, otters, beaver, rabbit, raccoon, and others.

Numerous types of flora were also present and available for subsistence. These included beechnuts, walnuts, acorns, sassafras, grapes, strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, huckleberries, and others.

## V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

### A. Transportation Routes

Contact period native trails continued to be used as well as European paths linking new farmsteads after 1666. Scotchman's Bridge Road may also have been laid out with the original division of land in ca. 1666, as it connected the original home lots.

### B. Population

Native American populations were still present in the West Tisbury area during the Plantation period, although in declining numbers from the early Contact period. Exact figures are unknown.

European populations were not present in the West Tisbury area prior to 1670, when the land was opened up for settlement. From 1670 to 1680 approximately 120 residents settled the area (Banks 1911:5).

### C. Settlement Pattern

Native settlement of the West Tisbury area during the Plantation period probably followed similar trends of coastal settlement noted for the Contact period. However, settlement density was probably in decline, particularly after the 1616-17 plague. No known native sites of this period are reported, although land purchases were made by Europeans from the natives in the area prior to white settlement. In 1659 the sachem Josias of Takemmy gave four Christianized natives a square mile of land on the north shore for a praying town. The town was known as Christiantown and located in the general area between Great James Pond and Backwater Brook. Little is known regarding the actual layout of this town, although it probably followed patterns of other praying towns of a dispersed homestead nature. European-type houses may not have existed.

West Tisbury was incorporated as part of Tisbury in 1671. It was not until 1892 that West Tisbury was formed apart from Tisbury. West Tisbury had no known white settlement before 1670, when the First Purchase was made and the four proprietors of the land opened it for settlement. Home lots were declared at 40 acres each for a full share in the territory bordering on the Old Mill

River north from the Tiasquin. This was the area selected for mutual settlement with most early lots located on the west side of the brook. The general name for the new settlement was Middletown, deriving its name from its relative position between Great Harbor and Nashowakemmuck. By ca. 1672, the proprietors of Tisbury were in possession of all the present lands of West Tisbury except the Christiantown and meadows or necks eastward of Tississa to the bounds of Edgartown, and to the south of Mill Path (Banks 1911:117). The Chickemmoo area was also in dispute.

#### D. Economic Base

Both Christianized and traditional native populations in the West Tisbury area probably continued the combined use of wild and domesticated food resources as a subsistence base, much the same as they had during the early Contact and possibly Late Woodland periods. Little specific information is present regarding these activities, but hunting, fishing, and the gathering of shellfish and floral resources combined with some form of corn agriculture were pursued.

European settlers in the West Tisbury area probably hunted, fished, and gathered much the same way as the native residents did. However, agriculture and husbandry were of much greater importance. Hay and "turkey wheat" or Indian corn were major crops to the early settlers, followed by rye, oats, as well as some barley. Salt grass and meadow grass were highly valued for cattle. Apple orchards may also have been planted during the period. Domesticated animals were also brought over during the first period of settlement. These included cattle, hogs, horses, sheep, goats, fowl, and possibly oxen.

One mill may have been built in West Tisbury during the Plantation period before settlement. The grist mill built by Benjamin Church of Duxbury by 1669 had possibly been as early as ca. 1651-52 on the Tiasquin or Old Mill River. No other industries are known for the period.

### VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

#### A. Transportation Routes

Contact and Plantation period native trails and paths probably continued in use as well as European paths established late during the Plantation period. The earliest reference to a roadway in West Tisbury is found in 1699 when the Mill Path leading from Edgartown to the Old Mill Brook was laid out. The School House Path was also laid out at the same time as a continuation of the Mill Path to the Chilmark line. Scotchman's Bridge Road was the first highway noted in West Tisbury as early as 1671. Other routes developed during the period included the Holmes Hole Path (ca. 1700), Meeting House Way (ca. 1700), the Back Road (1726), Pow-wow Hill Way (1700), and Lamberts Cove Road (1751).

## B. Population

Native populations continued to decline during the Colonial period. In 1765, the first Provincial census was taken, listing 39 natives (15 males and 24 females) in the town of Tisbury which West Tisbury was still a part. No natives were listed at the time of the first federal census of 1790.

No known European population was present in West Tisbury before 1670 when the area was opened up for settlement. Between 1670 and 1680 approximately 100 persons settled the town (Banks 1911:5). By 1694 the Simm Athern map shows 22 houses in the town which might approximate 25 families of 125 individuals, followed by approximately 150 persons in 1700 (Banks 1911:5). By 1757, muster lists show 132 men listed for military service possibly representing 660 persons by that date. In 1765 the first Provincial census listed 838 persons in Tisbury.

West Tisbury was formed from Tisbury in 1892. By the 1895 census, 460 persons are reported for West Tisbury and 1,002 persons for Tisbury. Thus, West Tisbury population figures can roughly be approximated at one-third of the Tisbury statistics.

## C. Settlement Pattern

By 1736, all the present bounds of West Tisbury were in possession of the town of Tisbury. By 1683, all the necks in the southern portion of town were acquired. In 1736 the Chickemmo area (now split between West Tisbury and Tisbury) was annexed to Tisbury from Chilmark. Natives in the area were living in the Christiantown and in other areas. Records indicate a town meeting was held at Christiantown in 1735. One meetinghouse is reported to have existed before 1680, another in 1695. An Indian school also reportedly existed by 1714. The natives in Christiantown were under the direction of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel throughout this period. Eighty-two residents are reported in 1698, 54 in 1762 and 40 in 1790. Christiantown lands were held in common until 1828 when the General Court divided up lands between the existing descendants of the Praying Indians. Little is known regarding the day-to-day lives of the Christiantown natives.

European settlement developed quickly after the period of initial settlement in the late Plantation period. By 1694, 22 houses and a meetinghouse were reported in the town of Tisbury mostly in the southern part of town in the Mill Brook area north of Tisbury Great Pond. Two houses are also reported in the Chickemmo district. By ca. 1701 a second meetinghouse was built on the West Bank of the Old Mill River and was replaced by a third in 1733.

## D. Economic Base

Fishing, rather hunting, was probably important to both natives and Europeans during this period. The gathering of wild plants and shellfish may also have been important. Otherwise, West



Tisbury's economic base continued to build on foundations established during the Plantation period. Farming and husbandry formed the economic base of the community. Maritime trade such as coasting, the whaling industry, and the fisheries also probably gained in importance.

Mills were also gaining in importance in the West Tisbury area. At least one early grist mill was built on the Tiasquin River during the later Plantation period. In addition, by 1760 or earlier another grist mill was built on the Old Mill River. An older mill is also reported for which no record exists. A later mill was also constructed farther up the Mill River from the shore mill. All mills were apparently grist mills.

After 1700, taverns or inns were also gaining in importance. By 1701, Robert Cathcart was licensed as a taverner in the present village of West Tisbury on the west side of the Old Mill River. By 1722, two additional licensed inn-holders were present; one inn possibly combined with a general store. In all, eight licensed inn-holders were present in West Tisbury between 1701 and 1776.

While still a part of Tisbury at the end of the Colonial period, the present town of West Tisbury was an active community containing the remnants of a native praying town, an active farm community, stores, school, inns, and a concentration of mills.

#### E. Architecture

**Residential:** The known surviving Colonial period dwellings are story-and-a-half, interior chimney, five bay, double-pile, center entry forms; few are documented to the period.

**Institutional:** The town built a meetinghouse in the village by 1694; in 1700 a new one was constructed "after the manner and dimensions of the meetinghouse in Chilmark west of the Mill Brook near the cemetery." In 1733 a third was constructed, 30 x 35 feet with 18-foot stud height, a double door in the long side and one smaller door in each end; in 1768 it was cut through the middle to add 15 feet plus two feet on the back side. Schools were ordered for the village and Chickemoo in 1737, 20 x 16 feet and 6 1/2 feet in height with a chimney. At Christiantown meetinghouses were constructed in 1680 and 1695, and a school in 1724.

### VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

#### A. Transportation Routes

The primary roads connecting Tisbury Center west to Chilmark (South Road); east to Edgartown (Edgartown-West Tisbury Road); and northeast to Holmes Hole (Old Vineyard Haven Road) continued in use. A loop was improved through North Tisbury (Vineyard Haven Road), with a north branch to Lamberts Cove.

## B. Population

West Tisbury's population figures are inseparable from those of Tisbury until 1892. However, based on Freeman's 1807 enumeration of Holmes Hole (estimated at about 430 persons), what is today West Tisbury probably had about 770 persons in 1810.

The growth in population at Holmes Hole led to the division into two parishes in 1787. The town held a number of Baptists who engaged in a long struggle at meetings over ministerial taxation and use of the meetinghouse. Itinerant Methodists visited here from Holmes Hole and established a class in 1820. In 1828 a portion of the communally-held land at Christiantown was divided among descendants of the original praying villagers; at that time those in residence in the town numbered ca. 50.

## C. Settlement Pattern

West Tisbury remained the meetinghouse center (of West Parish Tisbury after 1796), with 18th century church at the burying ground north of Edgartown Road. A Baptist meetinghouse was located nearby on South Road at Four Corners in 1821. The village mill focus continued on Edgartown Road at Mill Brook, with new residential additions. Second mill focus developed on Tiasquam River to the southwest with residential additions on South Road. Dispersed inland and coastal settlement continued, with mill sites in the Lamberts Cove area.

## D. Economic Base

Most of West Tisbury's population made their living from the land. Sheep raising continued to be an important activity for which fulling and carding mills were erected by local entrepreneur David Look (1766-1837). Look's store, and grist and woolen mills gave to the mill village at the confluence of the Tiasquin and Mill brooks the closest approximation to a mainland mill village of any of the towns in the study unit.

## E. Architecture

Residential: Surviving buildings from this period are primarily a story and a half in height with interior chimney; both four- and five-bay examples survive. Smaller numbers of 2 1/2-story houses are known.

Institutional: After sharing the Congregational Society's building for several years, the Baptists built their own in 1820-21 near Scotchman's Bridge Road.

# VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

## A. Transportation Routes

North Road from Chilmark to North Tisbury was officially laid out in 1849, although an earlier road almost certainly existed along

this route. Tiah Cove Road loop was laid out south of Edgartown Road.

### B. Population

There are no statistics separating the population of West Tisbury from that of Tisbury. However, with the growth of Holmes Hole, it was probably in the latter part of this period that West Tisbury's population was overtaken by that of the present Tisbury. (By 1892, West T. would have less than a third of the total combined population.) If Chilmark's history is anything to go by, West Tisbury's population growth probably peaked about 1855-60, beginning then a slow decline.

The Baptists became an independent society in 1832; a secession occurred in 1852 and the group worshipped on Edgartown Road. Dukes County Academy was formed ca. 1833. The Agricultural Society of Martha's Vineyard was formed in 1858 and was based here.

### C. Settlement Pattern

The fourth Congregational meetinghouse, built in 1833, was located to the south on South Road at Music Street. The same year, the Dukes County Academy building was built at an adjacent site. The Academy building was replaced in 1850, and again in 1869. In 1859, an Agricultural Hall was added to this civic focus. Residential development continued in the village area: east of Mill Brook on Edgartown Road and north on Old Vineyard Haven Road; south of the church on South Road; and west on Music Street. In 1847, a new Baptist church was relocated to the north at Middletown (now North Tisbury), where a secondary residential cluster developed along Vineyard Haven Road. A Methodist chapel was located at Lamberts Cove east of James Pond.

### D. Economic Base

In 1845 the mariner and Holmes Hole whaling merchant Thomas Bradley purchased the Look woolen mill. There he turned out a popular brand of satinet ("Vineyard Satinet") favored by whalemens. The most significant event of the period was probably the arrival of Dr. Daniel Fisher (1799-1876), the Edgartown oil manufacturer. Believing that wheat could be grown and flour made on the island, Fisher built five large stone dams on Mill Brook for storage reservoirs. At the lowest, the site of Athern's early mill, he erected in 1860 one of the most complete mills "in the U.S." for grinding wheat and bolting flour, "containing every appliance known in these days for perfect milling" (Grinnell). His project to grow wheat, however, did not flower, and he was forced to import all his wheat from Maryland. After Fisher's death in 1876, the mill ground only corn.

The combined Tisbury/West Tisbury had 125 farms in 1865, the same number as Edgartown, but it had more than twice the number of people employed in farming, and it had more than half of the number in the county. The same year, old Tisbury also had over 80%

of all the firewood harvested in the county, ranking fourth in the study unit. The town's 553 tons of English hay also was more than any other town in Dukes County. Though cranberries were not a major crop by study-unit standards, the town's 20 acres made up 60% of the county acreage.

### E. Architecture

**Residential:** With the greater clustering of structures in the village, more houses are known from this period. Town builders adopted the gable front form building, primarily of 1 1/2 stories in height, three bays in width. Two examples added lateral ells, and two more were four bays in width. Most were treated in Greek Revival ornament, although Italianate examples are known. These last included larger houses with facade gables, ells, and a two-and-a-half-story example. One 1 1/2-story house had the exceptional features of facade gable and double interior chimneys.

**Institutional:** Each denomination built a new meetinghouse during the earlier years of the period. First the Congregationalists (1833) built a gable front church with a wide porch entry two stories in height with center door, square tower straddles back and porch and has a spire; it was moved to its present location in 1865. The Methodists built a small house on Lamberts Cove Road (1845-46), gable front with entry into a square tower of two tiers. The Baptists built a second house of unknown appearance in 1847.

The forming of Dukes County Academy meant a number of buildings would be added to the village. In 1833 the first were built; a larger structure 40 x 26 feet and 12 feet in height was constructed in 1849. The Agricultural Society Hall was built in 1859. It is a gable front structure of 2 1/2 stories; its first floor porch supports a second story larger than the first, and it is ornamented by bargeboards.

**Commercial:** A hotel known first as Travelers Home began as a 1 1/2-story, three-bay house with cross gables and later additions; it is now a residence.

Alley's Store is a 2 1/2-story, gable front structure with cross gables and porch.

**Industrial:** The frame woolen mill of 1846 was 1 1/2 stories in height under a wide gable.

## IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

### A. Transportation Routes

The 19th century roadways continued in use.

## B. Population

West Tisbury's population probably continued a slow decline. In 1895, the first census year after incorporation, there were 460 year-round inhabitants, of whom 3% were Portuguese. By 1905, this percentage had doubled, while the population declined slightly. In 1915, West Tisbury reported 441 residents.

## C. Settlement Pattern

Little new development occurred during the period. In 1870, the schoolhouse at Christiantown was converted to a chapel.

## D. Economic Base

Farming remained West Tisbury's chief occupation. The products of her dairy farms in 1915 made the town the leading town on the island for milk, and the third highest product value in the study unit. In vegetable growing, the town also led the rest of the county.

Most of the town's mills closed during this period. The satinet mill, advertising "the real old fashioned Vineyard satinet" in 1873, closed not long after.

## E. Architecture

Residential: As the town's population continued to fall, few new dwellings were required. The gable front form remained popular with few elements of ornament remaining.

Institutional: The Academy was rebuilt in 1870 in the Second Empire style designed by Hariph Smith; the main building is three stories in height and rectangular in form. The dormitory/study hall was two stories with center entry.

## X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

### A. Transportation Routes

The main roads through North Tisbury and West Tisbury were paved and improved. These included North Road-Vineyard Haven Road, Lamberts Cove Road north loop, South Road-Edgartown West Tisbury Road, and the north-south connector between North Tisbury and West Tisbury. By period's end (?) the Martha's Vineyard Airport was established in the east at the Edgartown border.

### B. Population

West Tisbury's population continued to fluctuate downward: from 441 in 1915 to 260 in 1940. Slightly less than 10% of the 1940 residents were foreign born, of whom the largest number were probably Portuguese.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Some dispersed coastal summer resort development took place, in the north at Lamberts Cove, and in the south at Tiah Cove. Martha's Vineyard State Forest was established in the region east of West Tisbury Center.

### D. Economic Base

Very little evidence of economic activity in identified sources. Farming probably remained principal source of livelihood for most full-time residents.

### E. Architecture

No new individual structures are known from this period. The townspeople continued to use their mid-19th century building stock.

## XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

The inventory in process has focused on the village of West Tisbury and therefore overrepresents institutional buildings. The large number of dirt and private roads make access to the dispersed homesteads difficult, particularly in the Tisbury Great Pond area.

## XII. SOURCES

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