

*"If you stroll the cemetery roads and paths and scrutinize the names on the stones, you will find material and to spare for the ancestral role call of the island."*

Florence Bennett Anderson wrote the above words about Nantucket's Prospect Hill Cemetery in *Through the House-Hole: the True Story of a Nantucket Whaling Captain*, the biography of her great-grandfather Captain Seth Pinkham.

## Tuck't In

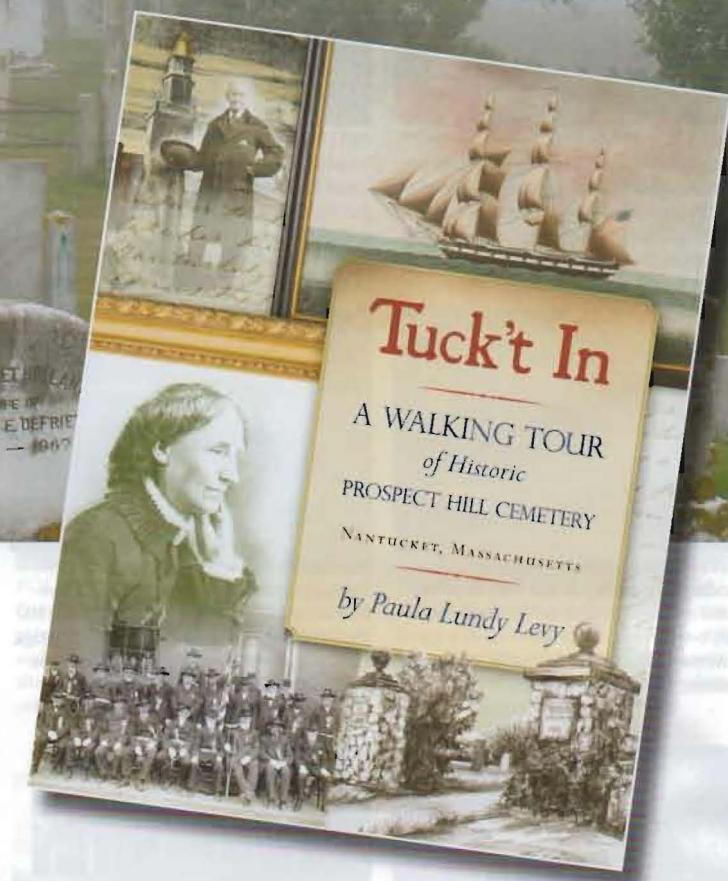
### A Walking Tour of Historic Prospect Hill Cemetery

Earlier in my life, I criticized the notion of cemeteries as a waste of land and misplaced sentiment for loved ones who have died. Then I visited Paris.

In the City of Light's great cemeteries Père Lachaise and Montmartre, I saw what must be among the most concentrated and exuberant expressions of what the living put into monuments to those who've died. In the grave markers, tombs and superb statues of those cemeteries, those who lived on erected what are sometimes astonishing monuments to the dead.

Intricate carvings on tombstones represent paintbrushes, ballet slippers, fountain pens, motorcycle gears and much more. At the time of my visit, ballet slippers were piled on the gravesites of dancers buried in Montmartre. Oscar Wilde's tomb in Père Lachaise bore hundreds of red imprints from lipstick kisses planted on it. A taciturn, around-the-clock guard watched over rock star musician Jim Morrison's grave in the same cemetery.

You probably won't find granite kissed by visitors or clothing piled on gravesites in Nantucket's cemeteries, but you will find markers that memorialize the island's founding families, whaling ship captains, leading merchants, artists, those who served in our country's armies and forgotten citizens. For the most exuberant



guide to those monuments, this year's new book *Tuck't In: A Walking Tour of Historic Prospect Hill Cemetery*, now serves as the current and future bible.

Author Paula Lundy Levy has compiled a rich and engaging volume that encompasses many of those who have lived and died on Nantucket over the last two hundred years and who contributed to making the island the historic and memorable place it is today. Using the records of Prospect Hill Cemetery Association, which benefits from sales of the book, and dozens of images from Nantucket Historical Association and other sources, Levy has created a book that should occupy readers for many hours. Graphic design by Eileen Powers, along with editing by Lenore Riccio and copy editor John Riccio, make it an easy read. In this month's Nantucket Home, we offer a look at *Tuck't In* through a sampling of its entries. These are only a few of the hundreds of Prospect Hill grave sites documented in Levy's book, available at Nantucket bookstores. For more information, visit [www.prospecthillcemetery.com](http://www.prospecthillcemetery.com) and [www.nha.org](http://www.nha.org).

~ William Ferrall, Editor

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# Tuck't In

## A Walking Tour of Historic Prospect Hill Cemetery



Edouard A. Stackpole in 1990, by Rob Benchley

*Hunters: The New England Whalemen During Two Centuries, 1635-1835; The Loss of the "Essex": a thrilling tale of the sea when a Nantucket ship was sunk by a whale in mid-ocean: the suffering of the crew as related by the survivors of the tragedy. The horrors of cannibalism that any might live; Nantucket Doorways: thresholds to the past; Mutiny at Midnight; and Nantucket Rebel.*

Mr. Stackpole bequeathed his collection of manuscripts, books and maps to the Nantucket Historical Association. Without his research and extensive collection in the NHA Research Library, it would not have been possible to create the chronicles for many included in *Tuck't In: A Walking Tour of Prospect Hill Cemetery*.

### Lot 36 Mount Vernon

#### *Edouard A. Stackpole* (December 7, 1903 – September 2, 1993)

Edouard was a renowned Nantucket historian and author. He served as director of the Peter Foulger Museum and president of the Nantucket Historical Association.

On April 16, 1951, Edouard received a Guggenheim Fellowship Award for his whaling history research, and, on January 2, 1953, he was appointed curator of the Mystic Seaport Maritime Museum. In the same year, he was given a "day" in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on June 8 in honor of his publication *The Sea-Hunters*. In his review of the book for *The New York Times*, Orville Prescott wrote, "Everything about whaling that Herman Melville couldn't cram into 'Moby Dick' is now crammed into 'The Sea-Hunters.'" Stackpole was employed by and served as the editor of *The Inquirer and Mirror*. He resided at 84 Main Street, a home that was once owned by George S. Coleman and Susan Bunker Coleman (lot 326). A prolific writer, Stackpole was the author of numerous fiction and non-fiction books on maritime and Nantucket history: *Life Saving Nantucket; Rambling Through the Streets and Lanes of Nantucket; The Sea-Hunters: The New England Whalemen During Two Centuries, 1635-1835; The Loss of the "Essex": a thrilling tale of the sea when a Nantucket ship was sunk by a whale in mid-ocean: the suffering of the crew as related by the survivors of the tragedy. The horrors of cannibalism that any might live; Nantucket Doorways: thresholds to the past; Mutiny at Midnight; and Nantucket Rebel.*



### Lot 60

#### *Eliza Starbuck Barney* (April 9, 1802 – March 18, 1889)

Eliza was the third of ten children born to Joseph Starbuck (shipowner, merchant, and builder of the Three Bricks) and Sally Gardner Starbuck (lot 90). Eliza was eighteen years old when she married Nathaniel Barney on May 8, 1820, and they had three children: Joseph, Sarah, and Jethro. Eliza worked on a genealogical record of more than 40,000 Nantucket families spanning two and a half centuries, a work begun by Benjamin Franklin Folger. This record is a valuable genealogical resource to this day and served as one of the sources Prospect Hill Cemetery Association used to determine the dates of births and deaths if records were incomplete or markers missing.

Eliza was deeply involved in both the women's suffrage and antislavery movements. In the summer of 1851, Eliza and her husband, Nathaniel, attended the first Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts. She served as secretary to Nantucket's Anti-Slavery Society. Frederick Douglass was among the many prominent guests at 100 Main Street, the Barney's home. They shared the house with Eunice and William Hadwen until the Hadwens built a home at 96 Main Street. The Barney's continued to live at 100 Main Street until 1862 when they moved to William Hadwen's second home at 94 Main Street, before relocating to Poughkeepsie, NY, to be near their daughter and son-in-law, Sarah and Alanson Swain.

Eliza moved back to Nantucket after the death of Nathaniel. She stayed with her son Joseph until the home he built for her at 73 Main Street was completed in 1872. Eliza was eulogized as a "lifelong Quaker, liberal in her views and tolerant of the tenets of others."



### Lot 1146

#### *Nathaniel "Nat" Goddard Benchley* (November 13, 1915 – December 14, 1981)

Nathaniel was the older of two sons of Gertrude Darling Benchley and author, humorist, actor, critic, and one of the founding members of the Algonquin Roundtable, Robert Benchley. Nathaniel, an author, journalist, humorist, critic and screenwriter, married Marjorie "Marge" Bradford in 1939. They had two sons: Peter, author of *Jaws*, and Nathaniel Robert, an actor.

Nathaniel spent his boyhood summers on Nantucket, where he developed his love of the island and the sea. In 1938, he graduated from Harvard, giving the Ivy Oration, as did his father. Nathaniel resided in New York City and, in 1971, moved permanently to Nantucket. Nathaniel served four years in the United States Navy during World War II, two of those years as an officer aboard submarine chasers. Nathaniel was a journalist at the *New York Herald Tribune* and *Newsweek*. He published many children's books: *Sam the Minuteman, Red Fox and his Canoe, Small Wolf, and The Deep Dive of Stanley the Whale* to name a few. He also wrote biographies of his father, Robert Benchley, and his friend Humphrey Bogart as well as numerous novels, two of which were made into motion pictures: *The Off Islanders* became the motion picture *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming*, and *Xanadu* was filmed as *Sweet Hostage*. Nathaniel died at New England Deaconess Hospital in Boston at the age of sixty-six.

Nathaniel Benchley, ca. 1950s

The following verbatim excerpts are presented in the order they appear in *Tuck't In*, but are reprinted here in greatly truncated form, with corresponding cemetery plot numbers as illustrated in the book. See *Tuck't In* for complete entries.



*Maria Mitchell, 1851*, by  
Herminia Borchard Dassel

#### Lot 411

**Maria Mitchell** (August 1, 1818 – June 28, 1889)

Numerous books have been written about eminent astronomer and educator Maria Mitchell. The following chronicle is a brief life sketch of Nantucket's notable daughter. Maria was the third of ten children born to William Mitchell and Lydia Coleman Mitchell. Born a Quaker, Maria was disowned from the Friends monthly meeting in September 1843 after she stated to Eliza Coffin and Rachel Gardiner that "her mind was not settled on religious subjects and that she had no wish to retain her right of membership." Maria attended the Unitarian Church on Orange Street.

Maria began to assist her father in his astronomical and mathematical investigations when she was twelve years old. At age seventeen, she helped her father with his Coast Survey work and opened her own school for girls. She worked for *Nautical Almanac* and, in 1836, was appointed the first librarian of the Nantucket Atheneum, a position she held for twenty years. Maria was elected an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1848, the first woman to receive this honor.

After leaving the Atheneum, Maria was companion to Prudence Swift, the daughter of H. K. Swift, a banker from Chicago. Maria chaperoned Prudence during a year of travel, first to the west and south of the United States and then to Europe. During this tour Maria met and befriended Nathaniel Hawthorne. In her August 5, 1857, diary entry she wrote about their first, brief meeting in Liverpool, after the author had received a letter from Maria.

Maria is best known for the discovery of a comet. While making observations on October 1, 1847, Maria saw a star five degrees above the North Star, where there had been no star before. She recorded the comet's coordinates. The following evening, October 2, 1847, the star had moved. She was certain it was a comet. Two days later, Father Francesco de Vico of Rome observed the same comet. His location being closer, his information arrived first, and he was awarded the prize. When the king of Denmark learned of Maria a year later, he awarded the medal for the discovery to her. The comet was named *Miss Mitchell's Comet*.

In 1861, a few months after her mother's death, Maria and her father moved to Lynn, Massachusetts. In 1865, Maria accepted the position as professor of astronomy and director of the college observatory at Vassar College. In 1869, she went to Burlington, IA, with some of her students to observe the total eclipse of the sun. That same year, she was elected one of the first women members to the American Philosophical Society. In 1873, Maria embarked on another European journey, visiting people and places she had seen on her previous trip abroad and adding Russia to her itinerary. Following her three-month trip, she returned to her work as a professor and astronomer at Vassar.

Maria was one of the founders of the American Association for the Advancement of Women, serving as president from 1874 to 1876. Ill health caused her to resign her position at Vassar in 1888. The trustees named her Professor Emeritus and offered her a home for life at the college. Maria did not accept, choosing instead to return to Lynn to be near her family. Maria died in Lynn, Massachusetts, at the age of seventy. Maria was brought back to Nantucket and interred in the family plot on June 30, 1889.

Maria's legacy lives on with the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association founded in 1902 and incorporated in 1903. The lunar crater Mitchell and World War II liberty ship SS *Maria Mitchell* were named in her honor.



*José Formosa Reyes, ca. 1940s*  
by Louis S. Davidson.

#### Lot 1173

**José Formosa Reyes** (September 15, 1902 – December 24, 1980)

José was born in Ilocos, Santa Maria, Philippines, the son of Eugenio and Maria Reyes. Educated as a child in his small village, he then attended Washington High School in Portland, OR. José went on to Reed College, where he met his future wife, Elizabeth "Betty" Ham. José received a master's degree in education from Harvard.

In 1941, José joined the United States Army and was appointed Secretary to the General Staff. In 1945, after the Philippine Liberation, José and his family moved to the United States, and, in 1947, he became a United States citizen. During the summer of 1947, José and his family arrived on Nantucket to visit his mother-in-law, Adeline Ham of Cambridge, Massachusetts. He fell in love with the island and decided to live on Nantucket. At first José tried to find a teaching position at Nantucket High School, and when that did not work out he became a house painter. He knew how to weave and learned the craft of lightship basket making from Clinton "Mitchy" Mitchell Ray (lot 11). José introduced a new form of basket, a covered ladies handbag called a "friendship" basket. In 1948, he produced his first handbags and displayed them on a stand in front of his house on York Street.

José's baskets were built around a form of the original lightship baskets. Mitchy Ray had given some of his old forms to José.

Nantucket scrimshaw artists Charlie Sayle, Aletha Macy, and Nancy Chase created the ivory pieces that adorned the Reyes lightship baskets. Queen Elizabeth II received one of José's baskets on the occasion of her coronation. In 2011, his son, Paul Reyes, donated his father's shop to the Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum.

José was a Rotarian, Mason, member of the Men's Club and an attendee of the Old North Church, where he sang in the choir. José's baskets were known throughout the world. *The New York Times* of December 25, 1980, published his obituary.

— Nantucket Home