

Private Circulation

The Bulletin for Proposals

EARLY VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY ¹

“From this place,” continues the narrator, “we sailed round about this headland, almost all points of the compasse, the shore very bolde; but as no coast is free from dangers, so I am persuaded, this is as free as any; the land somewhat low, full of goodly woods, but in some places plaine; at length we were come amongst many faire Islands, which we had partly discerned at our first landing; all lying within a league or two one of another, and the outermost not above sixe or seven leagues from the maine.” It is evident that Gosnold had doubled Cape Cod and coursed along in Nantucket sound and gone outside, through Muskeget channel, as the safest direction, to prevent a possible entrance into a bay with uncertain water.

The narrative continues: “But comminge to an anker under one of these (i.e., islands), which was about three or foure leagues from the maine, Captaine Gosnold, myselfe, and some others, went ashore, and going round about it, we found it to be foure English

miles in compasse, without house or inhabitant, saving a little, old house made of boughes, covered with barke, an old piece of a weare of the Indians, to catch fish, and one or two places where they had made fires.” This was the present Nomans Land which they explored, but in the margin of the text is this legend, opposite this description: “The first Island called Marthaes Vineyard.” Thus appears for the first time in any printed or written record the name which is now attached to our island [present-day Martha’s Vineyard]. The journalist then describes the flora and fauna of this islet, noting “an incredible store of Vines, as well in the woodie part of the Island, where they run upon every tree, as upon the outward parts, that we could not goe for treading upon them.”

He then speaks of “a great standing lake of fresh water, neere the sea side, an English mile in compasse, which is mainteined [sic] with the springs running exceeding pleasantly thorow the woodie grounds, which are very rockie.” It is only fair to say that no such “lake” now exists on Nomans Land, and it may be that Gosnold’s journalist was drawing on his imagination for the benefit of the



English reading public, or that the narration was purposely erroneous to deceive rival navigators of the French and Spanish nations. It will be understood that at this time there was great jealousy among the maritime peoples as to priority of discovery, and each explorer was bound to mislead the competing captains of his rivals, and it was a common thing for them to give wrong latitude and other points for this purpose [Brereton says the latitude was 43, which would take us up to Portsmouth, N. H. The actual latitude of Cape Cod is 41.32 to 42.05.].

DISCOVERY BY GOSNOLD, 1602 ²

This island, situated two and three-quarters miles to the southward of Gay Head, enjoys the distinction of being the first land touched by Gosnold in 1602 and receiving from the explorers the name of "Marthaes Vineyard." This title, as we know, became attached to the present island bearing the name, although the reasons for the transfer of nomenclature are not understood. When Gosnold and his companions landed here it was "a disinhabited island," but the two journalists of the voyage give detailed accounts of their investigations of its natural features. They found it "full of wood-vines, gooseberry bushes, whortleberries, raspberries, eglantines, etc. Here we had cranes, steames, shouters geese and divers other birds which there at that time upon the cliffs being sandy with some rocky stones, did breed and had young. In this place we saw deer; here we rode in eight fathoms near the shore where we took great store of cod, as before at Cape Cod, but much better." [Archer, Relation of Captain Gosnold's Voyage, 4.]

The subsequent history of the island, after this elaborate introduction to the world, is practically a blank for over half a century, and but for its appearance on the maps of this period nothing is known of it.

SUCCESSIVE CHANGES OF NAME

The christening of Gosnold did not stick to this lonely isle of the sea, and it came to have a variety of titles in the maps of the seventeenth century. The second name it bore was "Hendrick Christiaensen's Eylant" in 1616 and "Ile de Hendrick" in 1646, both having reference to the Dutch explorer of that name who probably visited it. The curious name of "Dock Island" appears on a map of 1675, but it was not repeated in later charts.

After its inclusion in the jurisdiction of New York it came under other influences, and in 1666 was first called "Nomans Land," also the Isle of Man. The origin of the name "Nomans" is not known. It is usual to attribute it to a combination of two words, No Man's Land, as descriptive of its ownerless condition, but while this is the easiest conclusion it does not seem to be the correct one. The word

is scarcely ever divided and its almost universal spelling is Nomans Land from the earliest times. There was a great Powwow on the Vineyard called Tequenoman residing here when the English came and it is possible that he had jurisdiction over, or ownership of, this small island which came to bear the last half of his name, (Teque) nomans Land. This name became attached to it at the time above noted and has been its sole title ever since. The Indian name (1666) was Cappaquit.

EARLY OCCUPANCY ³

The first record of any settlement here is in the early part of the 18th century. Judge Sewall in 1702 says of Nomans Land, that the "Inhabitants (are) mostly of the 7th day Indians," i. e., Sabbatarian Baptists. It is probable that with the purchase by Norton in 1715 the first Englishmen came here to live. His son Jacob came here to reside soon after and in 1723 was granted a license as innholder of Nomans Land. Doubtless he continued a resident with his family till his death, and Samuel Norton who married his sister, Mary is called in 1740 "of Nomans Land." These two families numbered twenty souls in 1750, and there may have been others living there besides. They were probably engaged in fishing, as at that time the surrounding waters were considered "the only certain places for Fishing for Cod." It is not supposed the place was valuable from an agricultural point of view, though in 1745 it was testified that the island was valued at £10,000, old tenor. Another early settler was Israel Luce, [b. 1723, d. 1797], who removed to Nomans Land as a young man and spent the rest of his life there as a resident and was buried there. His sons Daniel, Thomas, and Ebenezer remained on the island with their families until their deaths. George H. Butler was a resident about forty years (1860 to 1898), and Henry B. Davis with his family are the only inhabitants of the island at the present time.

ANNEXED TO CHILMARK

The status of this island up to 1714 was an anomalous one, though being practically unoccupied except by Indians, it gave little concern to the people of the Vineyard. In the act of Oct. 30, 1714, when Chilmark was made a township, "an Island called No Mans Land" was included in its corporate limits. Two years later, for some reason, not now understood, the new town petitioned to have "an Island call'd No Mans Land" added to it and the General Court, on Nov. 30, 1716, passed the necessary resolve. Since this time the island has remained a part of Chilmark, though it has always occupied, until recently, a negligible share in the concerns of the town. It is scarcely mentioned in the proceedings of the annual meetings for years at a time.

BUYS NO MAN'S LAND.

Joshua Crane, Polo Crack, to Make
It His Country Home.

BOSTON, March 1.—No Man's Land, the most isolated inhabited spot on the New England coast, is to be stocked as a fish and game preserve, and made the country home of Joshua Crane, former national racquet champion, and a prominent polo player, it was announced today. Mr. Crane is now in London.

He has purchased the little island, which is three miles in circumference, and lies about six miles off the southwestern extremity of Martha's Vineyard. An artificial harbor capable of sheltering a small fleet of yachts is to be built.

A movement has been started to have the Federal Government erect a light-house on the island, which has been the scene of many wrecks.

SEIZE PRIVATE HARBOR.

Sixteen Boats Enter Joshua Crane's
Port on Massachusetts Coast.

WESTWOOD, Mass., Aug. 28.—The story of the seizure of Joshua Crane's private harbor on the island of No Man's Land, off the southern Massachusetts coast, by swaggering seamen who manned a small nameless steamer and more than fifteen motor launches was told by Mrs. Crane at her home here today. Mrs. Crane said that the intruders did not cause much trouble but that they refused to vacate the harbor when ordered out and threatened the farm superintendent, Samuel Batty, who delivered the order.

"Word was sent out by a launch from No Man's Land to revenue authorities," Mrs. Crane said, "and a coast guard cutter put in an appearance. Apparently members of its crew searched the craft and found nothing in the nature of contraband. Officers of the cutter said that they could not force the men to vacate the port, so we sent for police officers. Before they arrived most of the craft had disappeared."

Mrs. Crane said that reports that her superintendent had been threatened with firearms and harpoons when he started to cast off the intruders' lines from Mr. Crane's buoys were probably true. Fishermen in the neighborhood, according to Mrs. Crane, take a strictly neutral stand on the liquor running business said to be carried on near the island.



A T L A

2095000
YARDS

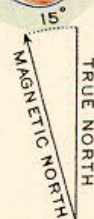
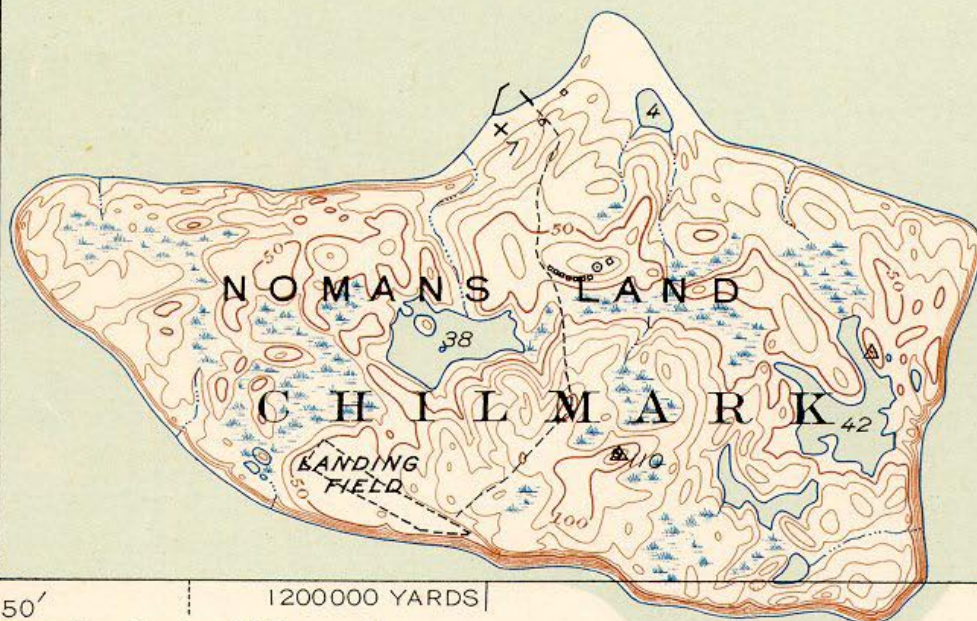
RESTRICTED AREA

41°15'
70°50'

1200000 YARDS

47°30''

Topography by J.L.Twombly,
and J.L.Watkins
Surveyed in 1942
Revised in 1951



APPROXIMATE MEAN
DECLINATION, 1951

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty ——— 4 LANE 6 LANE Light-duty ———
Medium-duty — — — 4 LANE 6 LANE Unimproved dirt =====



U. S. Route



State Route

RISK REDUCTION ACTIVITIES AND UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXO) ASSESSMENT

Nomans Land Island served as a military aerial bombardment and gunnery range from 1943 through 1996. In April 1975, one-third of the island on its eastern and northeastern side was designated a No Fire Zone managed under joint agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Navy. This area was restricted from bombardment after 1975.

In June 1998, under the provisions the land transfer component of the Base Reallocation and Closure Act (BRAC), the entire island was transferred from the U.S. Department of Defense to the Department of the Interior. The U.S. Department of Interior conveyed to USFWS the management responsibility for the island. USFWS now operates Nomans Land Island as an unstaffed National Wildlife Refuge. Signs posted on the island by USFWS make known that the refuge is closed to public access [see figure 2]. Uses of the island and surrounding marine resources are not authorized.

Public awareness of the activities at Nomans Land Island increased following the issuance of a directive from President Clinton that addressed the Vieques Island Bomb Range in Puerto Rico. The directive referenced the UXO clearance protocol at South Weymouth Naval Air Station (Nomans Land Island) as the “Weymouth Standard,” which would be applied at the Vieques site. The so-called Weymouth Standard has not been defined.

An aerial magnetometer survey was conducted for the Navy by Oak Ridge National Laboratory personnel and completed in October 2001. The objectives of this survey were to identify the distribution patterns of subsurface ordnance and ordnance debris and to correlate this information with existing environmental data to help determine the course of further environmental investigations.

The U.S. Department of Navy has conducted UXO assessment and removal, including a Release Abatement Measure (RAM) that focused on the surface removal of ordnance items and related debris. Note the picture above and left [figure 8] taken after the 1998 surface clearance activities. It represents beach debris that remains on the island and could be mistaken for UXO. The item above and right [figure 6] represents a piece of spent ordnance that may or may not have

been unexploded. This item and those pictured below [not shown] were removed during the 1998 surface clearance activity.

Pictured above and below [figures 5 and 7, others not shown] are examples of over 11,000 pieces of ordnance and ordnance debris that were removed from the surface of the island. Cleared items included: MK76, MK106, MK41, and MK15 practice bombs; MK7, MK117, MK124, MK81, MK82, and MK83 bombs; 40mm, three- and six-inch projectiles; and, assorted rocket warheads and rockets. The Navy has indicated that UXO removal is complete to the extent that is required for the island’s use as a restricted wildlife refuge closed

to public entry. The UXO removal areas did not include inaccessible or sensitive wetland areas. The shallow near-shore waters, where trespass is known to occur, were visually inspected from a small boat during the 1998 UXO RAM, but these areas were not cleared of UXO or debris. Restricted near-shore areas are popular locations where fishermen are known to fish or to approach the beach to retrieve lost equipment.

The Department of Environmental Protection has been working with the Navy and with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the current risk from remaining UXO and spent ordnance waste, such as the

items pictured below [not shown]. Assessment of chemical contaminants associated with range activities is ongoing. Other types of ordnance may have been used, as several service branches used the island for target practice, although none were discovered within the area of the surface clearance.

At present, posted signs that remain from the Navy’s ownership indicate the presence of live bombs [figure 3]. Other signs refer to the island’s status as a USFWS Wildlife Refuge and are posted Closed to Public Access. Aeronautical and maritime navigation charts [see page 16] indicate varying extents of either restricted waters or danger zones around the island that were prompted by the Navy’s use of the island as a bombing range.

The island remains officially closed to public entry. However, the Navy and USFWS acknowledge first hand accounts from residents of Martha’s Vineyard that trespass has been extensive for years.



Alexander Crane, *Cliffs at No Man's Island*, Oil on canvas or linen, 25 x 30 inches. Not signed. Circa 1930–1940. Prior to WWII, No Man's Island was for many years owned by the Crane family.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

NOTES

1. Dr. Charles Edward Banks. *The History of Martha's Vineyard*, Volume I, Early Voyages of Discovery, 61–72. (1911; repr., The Dukes County Historical Society, 1966.)
2. Banks. *The History of Martha's Vineyard*, Volume II, Annals of Chilmark, 71–74. (1911; repr., The Dukes County Historical Society, 1966.) http://history.vineyard.net/dukes/bnk2c_71.htm (accessed 7 March 2008).
3. Ibid.

Page 15. “Buys No Man’s Land,” New York Times, 2 March 1914.

Page 15. “Seize Private Harbor,” New York Times, 29 August 1922.

Page 17. Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection. “Risk Reduction Activities and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Assessment.” <http://www.mass.gov/dep/cleanup/sites/nliuxo.htm> (accessed 7 March 2008).

IMAGES

Page 13. Satellite image of No Man’s Land. Google.com

Page 15. Image of Joshua Crane. New York Public Library, Mid-Manhattan Picture Collection. <http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?828191> (accessed 7 March 2008).

Page 16. Historic USGS Maps of New England & New York, Squibnocket, MA Quadrangle. Surveyed 1942 (revised 1951), southwest corner. <http://docs.unh.edu/nhtopos/Squibnocket7.5MA.htm> (accessed 5 March 2008).

Page 17. Painting by Alexander Crane (1904–1953), son of Joshua Crane and founder of the Connecticut Watercolor Society. <http://www.alexandercraneartist.com/alexander-crane-art-02.html> (accessed 7 March 2008).

Fig. 1. Aircraft debris. <http://www.mass.gov/dep/cleanup/sites/mcpbkgrd.htm> (accessed 5 March 2008).

Fig. 2 & 3. Signs by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Navy. See source for page 17 above.

Fig. 4. Jet airplane fuselage used as a target. See source for Fig. 1 above.

Fig. 5. Inert bombs that have been moved to the shoreline for off-island disposal. See source for page 17 above.

Fig. 6. Exposed bomb casing found on an upland pond shoreline. Ibid.

Fig. 7. Bomb debris on the shoreline. Ibid.

Fig. 8. Beach erosion can expose material that appears on the shoreline and can be mistaken for ordnance items. Ibid.

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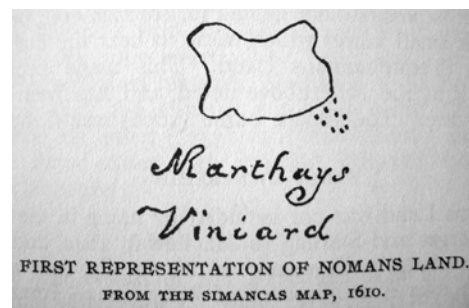
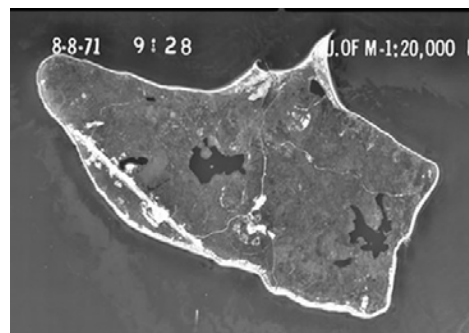


Illustration from *The History of Martha's Vineyard*, Volume II, Annals of Chilmark (Banks), 71.



Cliffs at No Man's Land



Aerial photograph showing landing strip



Memories of New York

1126 Broadway, New York, NY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Private Circulation is proud to announce its first public installation, *Memories of New York*, at 1126 Broadway, just north of 25th Street. The installation features a semi-empty storefront that contains the remnants of a typical New York souvenir shop. Against the backdrop of Broadway, near Roxy Paine's recently de-installed sculptures at Madison Square Park, *Memories of New York* examines the tenuous relationship between an artwork and its surroundings.

Using text, sculpture, and photography, the installation suggests a linkage between cultural bankruptcy and the malaise of the United States's collective memory, thereby highlighting the problematic relationship between cheap trinketry and the American Dream. Among the miscellaneous objects on view are shrink-wrapped reprints of vintage New York photographs, a person-sized Statue of Liberty, empty trinket vitrines, a handmade pink Big Sale sign hung from stained drop-in ceiling panels, and a freestanding pole draped by a large American flag.

In a contemporary environment where artworks commonly eschew a singular theme or form in favor of a multifarious spectacle, *Memories of New York* is devotedly thematic. Yet the installation soundly rejects stability, favoring a more radical interpretation of the thematic approach in which its various arrangements and relations are randomly threatened by the whims of the proprietor.

Memories of New York is the first in a series of public artworks designated by *Private Circulation*. The best times to view the installation are during the day and at dusk. Images reproduced in *Private Circulation* may not reflect the current state of the artwork. For general inquiries or, if you would like to bring *Memories of New York* to your city, please contact privatecirculation@gmail.com.