

Orange and Union Streets Neighborhood Study  
Nathan Beebe House  
11 Union Street  
Nantucket  
Nantucket County  
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-1057

HABS  
MASS  
10-NANT  
76B-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

ORANGE AND UNION STREETS NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY  
NATHAN BEEBE HOUSEHABS  
MASS  
10-NANT  
76B-

Location: 11 Union Street (on west side), Nantucket,  
Massachusetts

Present Owner: Carrie Miller

Present Occupant: Leasee

Present Use: Dwelling

Brief Statement  
of Significance: One of a row of typical Nantucket four-bay houses;  
part of the Orange and Union Streets Neighborhood  
Study (MASS-1014).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1802 -- Nathan Beebe, baker, bought 22½ rods of land from Josiah Barker and Jethro Hussey, housewrights, for \$562.50.
- 1824 -- A. Aaron Mitchell bought from Nathan Beebe land with dwelling house, bake house, wood house and outhouses.
- 1831 -- Daniel V. Westgate bought from A. Aaron Mitchell for \$2200.
- 1869 -- Mary P. Alexander from Deborah B. Westgate (widow of Daniel and now of East Boston) and children John H., Matthew B. and Sara H. Wing.
- 1893 -- Emily J. Olderich by will of Mary P. Alexander.
- 1895 -- John R. Hendricks from Emily J. Olderich.
- 1923 -- Emma Cook from John R. Hendricks.
- 1923 -- Johanna and John R. Hendricks from Emma Cook.
- 1938 -- Johanna Hendricks and Robert P. Hendricks, her son, inherited at death of John R. Hendricks.
- 1940 -- Johanna Hendricks inherited on death of her son Robert.
- 1946 -- Carrie C. Miller and Emily T. Miller bought from Johanna Hendricks.
- 1968 to date -- Carrie C. Miller.  
(Abstract: Records Registry Deeds, Nantucket, Massachusetts.)

## 2. Date of erection: Soon after 1802 (Abstract, Book 28, Page 30, Registry Deeds, Nantucket, Mass.)

3. Architect: Unknown. Probably housewrights.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: By the end of the eighteenth century houses were being constructed with two stories front and rear and with high, full basements well lighted by windows. High front steps and stoop were customary. This house is a good example of this type of construction.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Possibly the least changed of any of the similar houses built in the same section at about the same time. An ell was added and the bake house, outbuildings, etc. removed to make room for the garage.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

The house at 11 Union Street was built by Nathan Beebe, a baker who came to Nantucket from Newport, Rhode Island. He built a bake house at one side of his dwelling, presumably where a garage now stands, and carried on his business there. He and his wife Elizabeth had many children, one of whom, Sophia Beebe, "an idiot" was among the ten inmates of the Quaise Asylum who were burned to death when the Poor Farm was totally destroyed by fire in 1844. At that time there were fifty-nine occupants of the Asylum. (Abstract: History of Nantucket, Starbuck, 1924.)

Daniel Westgate bought the property in 1831. He also was a baker. After his death his widow Deborah (Coffin) Westgate lived in the house until she moved to East Boston. Her sons John H. and Matthew B. together with their uncle James Westgate, carried on the bakery business. They made ship-bread (or crackers similar to hardtack), a pure water cracker for use on the long voyages of whaleships, which was "sent to sea" in new casks or large hogs-heads, designed ultimately as receptacles for bringing back oil taken on the whaling voyages. An interesting account of the Westgate bake house may be found on page 130 of Brief Historical Data by Joseph Ellis Coffee Farnham, 1915.

In the 1730's Quaaty Bank, which extended much further to the eastward across what is now Union Street, was dug away, the material taken out being used to fill the flats and low lands along the waterfront, making several acres of new land in that area now Union and Washington Streets. Union Street was paved with cobblestones until 1899 when these were covered with bituminous concrete.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: An early view of Union Street from the east in Brief Historical Data by Joseph Ellis Coffee Farnham, 1915; 1891 photograph of east side of Union Street, showing the cobblestones in Rambling Through the Streets and Lanes of Nantucket by Edouard A. Stackpole, 1969; old photograph of

Union Street in 106 Views of Nantucket by J. H. Robinson, 1911; drawing showing rear of these Union Street houses in Nantucket, Far-Away Island by William O. Stevens, 1936.

Prepared by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin  
Nantucket, Massachusetts  
August 1970

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of the Orange and Union Streets Neighborhood Study (MASS-1014) made in the summer of 1970 by the Historic American Buildings Survey on Nantucket, Massachusetts. This is the fifth summer project of a continuing HABS comprehensive survey of the early architecture and urban design of Nantucket financed by a grant from the Nantucket Historical Trust.

The project was under the general supervision of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Director was Professor F. Blair Reeves, A.I.A., of the University of Florida. Historical information was provided by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Photographs are by Jack E. Boucher of Linwood, New Jersey. The material was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Mrs. Constance Werner Ramirez, August 1971.