



# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 41, NO 4

MAY 2000

*A Journal of a voyage round  
the World the ship Oscar  
in the year of  
our Lord on 1836 1837 1838*

Title given by Joseph Daggett to his log of Oscar's voyage. It is our second log of the voyage. In 1839 when she was condemned in Hawaii, he left her to join the Vineyard.

## The Death of a Whaleman On Oscar's Round-the-World "Voige" By EDWIN R. AMBROSE

## When Gay Headers First Got the Vote They Changed the Island Forever by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

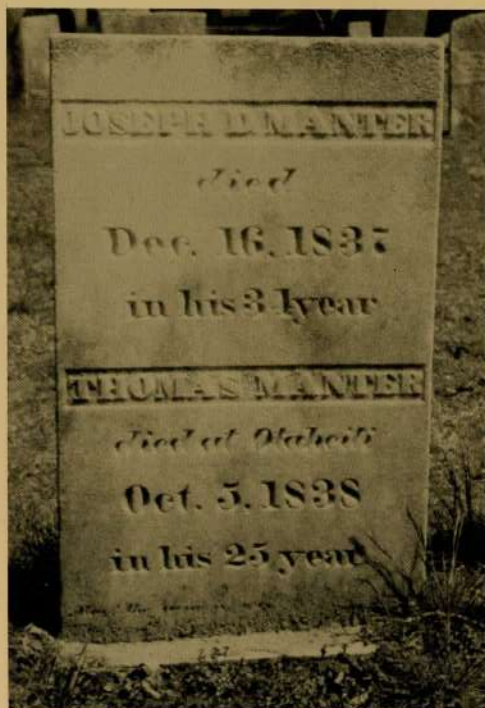
A Running Account  
Of Matters & Things

## Henry Describes the Southern Belle: Scarlett O'Hara She's Not by HENRY BAYLIES

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\$15 to cover the cost of this journal.*



Stone memorializing Joseph Manter in the old cemetery of Vineyard Haven. Date is incorrect. He is buried on Tahiti, where he died (p. 122)

# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

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May 2000

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By HENRY BAYLIES

Editor: Arthur R. Railton  
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## The Death of a Whaleman On Oscar's Round-the-World "Voige"

by EDWIN R. AMBROSE

WHALESHIP OSCAR, with Capt. William F. Daggett Master, departed from Fairhaven on August 8, 1836. Twenty-seven months later, on November 4, 1838, she arrived at the Sandwich Islands (now Hawaii) with 1401 barrels of sperm oil where she was condemned as unseaworthy.<sup>1</sup>

This voyage was unusual in that Oscar sailed from New England to the western Pacific whaling grounds by going around the tip of Africa, rather than around South America.

Two logs of this voyage are in the Society archives. We have chosen one of them for this article. As is often the case, there is no identification of the keeper, but we have concluded that he was Joseph D. Manter of Holmes Hole, who, we believe, was probably the second mate. There were several Manter families living on the Vineyard at the time. Log keeper Joseph was the son of Thomas and Hannah (Luce) Manter, and distantly related to the Manters on the Island today.

When Joseph sailed away on this whaling "voige" (as he spells "voyage"), he was a widower, 32 years old. His wife, the former Betsey Andrews, had died five years before at 19 years, soon after giving birth to their only child who lived only two days.

Joseph had become a devout Methodist, perhaps as a consequence of his grief. It was a time when that evangelical denomination was popular among Islanders. We know of his religious beliefs because in the log he states that, being at sea, he was saddened to be unable to attend the August 1836 camp meeting in Wesleyan Grove, the second to be held there.

We don't know if he had attended the first camp meeting, but sadly, he would never have a chance to attend another. He

EDWIN R. AMBROSE is the Research Editor of this journal. This is another article in a series devoted to making members aware of the content of the many whaling logs in our archives.

<sup>1</sup> Condemnation proceedings are initiated when one or more officers plus a majority of the crew make a formal complaint to the U. S. Consul.



died in the spring of 1838 on the island of Tahiti. Born on the island of Martha's Vineyard, he died and was buried on another island half way around the world, far from his family and friends.

After Joseph's death, the *Oscar* continued the whaling voyage until her condemnation. Repaired by a new owner, she returned to Sag Harbor, Long Island, in 1844, completing her round-the-world voyage. Strangely, the voyage is not listed in Starbuck's massive inventory of American whaling voyages.<sup>2</sup>

Some have suggested that the *Oscar* was a cursed ship. She certainly was a hard-luck ship. On this voyage, our log keeper died, another man was lost overboard and when she reached Hawaii, she was condemned. On later voyages, her bad luck continued. Misfortune accompanied her throughout her life.

### *Ship oscar of Fairhaven on a Whaling voige*

*William Dagget Master August 8, 1836<sup>3</sup>*

**O**n Monday, August 8, 1836,<sup>4</sup> the ship *Oscar* sailed out of Fairhaven, heading east across the Atlantic. For two weeks, the crew stowed gear and cleared the decks, preparing for her long voyage awhaling. When they were two weeks out, Joseph Manter wrote this revealing paragraph, one of few personal notes in the journal, framing it inside two wavy lines:

To day we have bin from New Bedford 14 days. camp meating begins to day which Makes me allmost home sick to think I cannot be there but every dog must Have his day So I must be contentated.<sup>5</sup>

The next day, they saw their first whales, but were unsuccessful in killing any:

23 - at 7AM rose Whails. put off[f] the boats but did not Succeed in getting any.

Joseph inked two whale tails alongside his entry, the customary method of noting whales chased but lost. There was an-

other whaler in the vicinity that was having better luck. She was "aboiling":

25 - Saw a number of Sails and one vessle aboiling bluber. At 8 A.M. Spoke a Spanish Brig.

By now they were in sight of the Azores. They met two Nantucket whaling schooners and "spoke" each. Both had been at sea four months, one had 70 barrels of oil, the other none. In the left margin is a one-inch silhouette of a full-rigged bark made with a wooden stamp which Joseph will use throughout the voyage each time they "spoke" another vessel. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, they moored off the Azores:

28 - Wore Ship and then run in for the Land at 7 A.M. Captain Daggett Went on Shore to buy Recruits.<sup>6</sup>

The following day, Captain Daggett (Joseph usually spelled it with only one "t") returned and they weighed anchor. To celebrate the new month, Joseph wrote the date in large letters and decorated it with small dots around every letter and number:

*September the 1<sup>th</sup> 1836*

As they headed south to the Cape Verde Islands, they, like sailors before and after them, discovered that shipyard work was not always what it should be:

All hands imployed in sending down the main topmast riging to overhall it, for the devlish riggers [riggers] cent it without overhalling it.

Arriving at Cape Verde, Captain Daggett again went ashore, this time with two boats, returning at 1 a.m., the next night with both boats filled with fruit. Once the captain was back, "the mait went on Shore and rowed back ½ past 3."<sup>7</sup>

Leaving Cape Verde, *Oscar* headed south east, making good progress in the strong southwesterly breeze. The crew enjoyed the good weather and on Sunday even had a bit of leisure

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Starbuck, *History of the American Whale Fishery*, Waltham, Mass., 1878.

<sup>3</sup> This is the heading Joseph Manter wrote on the top of the first page.

<sup>4</sup> Manter has written "Sunday, 8," in error. It is Monday.

<sup>5</sup> A note about our editing: spelling and capitalization remain as written by Manter. He is a poor speller. We inserted correct spelling [in brackets] only when we thought it was necessary to understanding. We have also added punctuation, periods and commas, for the same purpose.

<sup>6</sup> "Wore" is to gybe and come about with stern to windward to head downwind. "To buy Recruits" means to purchase provisions. "Spoke" is to exchange words at sea with another vessel.

<sup>7</sup> Now we know Manter is not the First Mate, but he doesn't tell us his rank. It is perhaps unfair to suggest that the captain and the mate were not attending to official duties while ashore during those early morning hours.

time. Unless whales were spotted or there was cutting or boiling of blubber to be done, the sailors had their Sundays off:

Sunday, 18 - All hands setting and laying about Deck reading books.

Monday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, their first catch: a pilot whale, not what they wanted, but good practice for the real thing:

19 - Saw Black fish [pilot whales]. loward [lowered the boats] and got two.

Two small drawings of blackfish spouting red ink were placed next to the entry. Three days later, they crossed the Equator under full sail. No mention of the crossing was made, except that the recorded latitude changed from "N" to "S." On September 26<sup>th</sup>, excitement and disappointment:

26 - Saw a large whale put off [the boats] And fastened and kild him and he Sunk. so heavy that it took two boats to hold him up. we run the line to the Ship twice and parted from once and tore out the hole once. then we run both line to the Ship the 3<sup>rd</sup> time and hald [hauled] him a long side of the Ship and put the chain fluck rope on and in haling the chain forward, parted the rope and the whale Sunk. So ends these 24 hours.

The other log keeper, Joseph Daggett, is more frank about their disappointment:

26 - Saw a larg whail, lored all four bots and persude him and Struck him to the bow boat and Cild [killed] him with mich Ease and he Sunk being heavy So that wee lost him [along] with Several irons and two flook ropes. So Ends the labour of this day to now purpose.<sup>8</sup>

The next day, they sighted Trinidad Island in the south Atlantic, east of Brazil. They also spotted a school of humpback whales, but did not lower any boats. Humpbacks are inshore whales that swim too fast for the whaleboats to catch. No sense wasting their time chasing them. Changing course to southeast, *Oscar* headed toward the southern tip of Africa. Occasionally, they spotted whales, but made no attempt to chase them as they were not sperm, the whale they were after. There was plenty of work, some of it unneeded as it turned out:

14 - the watch employed in Ship's duty. one thing I like to forgot -- at 1 P.M. got the tackles up to cend [send] the fore yard down to Sling it in the middle and after we got it on deck we found twas right or Sling [slung] in the middle.

By the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, nearly three months from home, they were south of the Cape of Good Hope, Africa, heading east

<sup>8</sup> The fluke chain (our log keepers spell it two different ways), with a line attached, is wrapped around the base of the tail just ahead of the flukes to hold the enormous body alongside.

in the southern Indian Ocean. They occasionally spotted right whales, but made no attempt to catch them, as Manter wrote:

22 - Saw a number of rightwhales but did not troble them.

For several days, they sailed in the company of a bark and on October 26<sup>th</sup>, they made a social call. Manter doesn't say who went, but it sounds as though he did:

26 - at one P.M. hove a back and went onbord of the barque that we had bin in sight of for a weak. she was from westmiller with about 200 convicts, all wimmen, bound to new holland.<sup>9</sup>

Later that day, they "spoke" the ship *Washington* from Sag Harbor. She had been out four months and had 80 barrels of sperm oil. The *Oscar* had none so far.

They were now in the stormy latitudes known to sailors as "The Terrible 40s." Seas swept over the deck in the violent storms, damaging some of their whale boats. They were well south of Australia, about 600 miles from the continent, where they spotted many right whales, humpbacks and finbacks. But they were not interested in them. They were in a hurry to get to the sperm-whale grounds. Sperm were what they were after.

Early in December they were off New Zealand, close to the sperm whaling grounds. Soon, they would be filling their casks with oil, something they had come so far to do. Manter noted that in a terse entry:

9 - Near the end of our Pasage.

Off the southern end of New Zealand, they turned north, sailing up its west coast. Now they had to pay attention. Sperm whales were around – or so they hoped:

11 - On whailing ground. . . laying to knights [nights] so not to run over the ground without having a good look.

The weather improved, but not their luck. Manter was becoming impatient as they sailed for Three Kings Island, off the northern tip of New Zealand:

[December] 19. . . employed in breaking out for water, getting it up handy. . . saw the land bearing E by N dist. 50 miles.

20 -- employed in filling salt water in the fore hold to trim ship.

<sup>9</sup> New Holland was the name given to today's Australia by the Dutch, who explored it in the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century. English explorer James Cook in 1770 claimed the east coast and named it New South Wales. In 1788 the first English settlement was a penal colony on that coast. About 70,000 convicts were taken there before the practice ended in 1840.

21 -- heaving to the southward bound for the 3 kings . . . see nothing but a few humpbacks and poppoises. in sight of the land — dist 20 miles . . .  
 22 -- shorten sails nights and gog along days towards the 3 kings.  
 23 -- at 9 A.M. made the 3 kings—dist 20 miles. plenty of finbacks and blackfish but no sperm Whales.

There was no reason, it seems, to celebrate Christmas:

25- which is chrismas, fine light winds and fine wether. see no fish worth catching.

Oscar is now cruising the grounds supposed to be productive and yet they haven't seen a sperm whale or another ship:

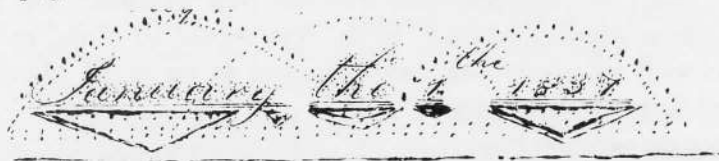
29 -at 10 A.M. reaft [reefed] the topsails. employed in mending sails and to work on the riging and a sharp Look out for whails.

30 -we have crosed [cruised] here 20 days and have not seen the Spout of a sperm Whale.

31 -At 10 A.M., a Sail reported from the masthead, the first one for about 2 months. Spoke her, the Guvner, bark of sidney, 19 days out. no oil.

In the left margin Manter placed the silhouette of a ship, using a wooden stamp. Beneath it, he wrote "BARK" in double outlined letters.

The new year, 1837, brought him a chance to decorate the page and also a bit (almost) of good luck:



January 2 - Saw a school of sperm whales going quick. we loward all 4 boats and chaist them 5 hours and did not get within a mile of them.

He drew two whale tails in the margin, indicating whales that had been chased, but not caught. Finally, on the third day of the new year, they began what they had travelled so far to do:

3 -at 6 A.M. rose a School of whails in sight of the land. loard and got 3. 150 days out.

After five months of sailing, they caught three sperm whales in one day. In the margin is a drawing of a dying sperm whale, spouting blood in red ink. Next to the body of the whale is the number 68, recording the fact that the three whales produced 68 barrels of oil. A fine day's work. For the next days they lay to as they labored, turning the blubber into oil:

4 -employed in cutting. in Latter part commenced boiling. cruseing [cruising]

clost [closed] in with the land.

6 -Still employed in boiling, finished at 6 A.M.

They went back to hunting whales. The stern whaleboat that had been badly damaged in the gales earlier was determined to be beyond repair and the wood, valuable material on a voyage, was put to good use:

10 - made Sail as usual got the Stern boat and Stove hur to pecis [pieces] for the cook to burn for She was badly Stove.

Apparently, Captain Daggett changed his mind. The scarcity of sperm whales may have convinced him that it was time to begin chasing smaller whales, but with no more luck:

14 - Lowered for blackfish [pilot whales] and fasted [fastened] with 2 boats and boath drowned and Lost them.

Manter didn't draw any tails in the margin this time. Perhaps blackfish were too small to dignify with a sketch. They were not what they had come for. They were in another "dry" spell with no sperm sightings. The weather had been stormy, frequent gales, but now it was calm. Good weather for sighting. Days passed without a kill, then a visitor, the first in weeks:

20 - Spoke the bark Ann of London. 20 months out with 900 [barrels] of sperm oil. Capt. Howe.

Manter's silhouette of a ship in the margin had the name "ANN" in neat capital letters beneath it. They approached the opening between the north and south islands of New Zealand:

21 - in Sight of the Land near Cooke Straits on the West Side.

23 - in the mouth of cook Straite --- Saw a large whale going verry Slow to the S. loward our boats. it was so Still we could not get on. he Started [and] we chaist him 4 hours but let him go.

He drew a whale's tail in the margin. They were entering Cook Strait and for the first time since leaving Massachusetts, they prepared to enter a harbor, but again bad luck:

24 - Light wind and fine wether . . . Employed in Stowung things away from the thevish natives.

25 - Close to the Land, bound in. Saw a bay we Supposed to be the harbour. At 1 P.M. Sent a boat in and returned at 3. it was not the place.

The next day they were in a situation that sailors dread:

26 - under short reafs at 6 A.M. made Sail but Soon tuck (took) it in again getting Cllost in on the lea Shore, but little searoom for a blow So we concluded it was best to run through cooks Straits. at half past 11 Squared the yards to get through.



With double reefs in the sails, they made it through the narrows with a following gale wind. They were now in the Pacific, east of New Zealand. Back to work and more bad luck:

29 - at 6 P.M. lowerd for blackfish got but one. hoisted him in and shortened Sail.

30 - at 10 A.M. saw a School of blackfish lowered and fastened with 3 boats and got none. we kild 2 but they Sunk.

31 - at 5 P.M. Saw two Sperm whales Going quick to the north. we lowerd but it was no use.

On the first of February 1837, they came upon another New England whaler. She had been out more than three years and was heading home. The men on *Oscar* took advantage of this chance to send letters back with the ship:

1 - Spoke the Ship Roger Williams, capt mayew, 40 months out, 1,200 bls. capt mayew came aboard and stopt 11 P.M.<sup>1</sup>

2 - All these 24 hours Light winds and pleasant wether. in company with the robert [roger] williams. all hands Employed in gaming [gamming: officers visiting another vessel] and writeing Letters to send home.

Three days later, they caught three blackfish and Manter drew three very small whales spouting blood in the margin. Then, for the first time since leaving New England, they went into port, anchoring in a New Zealand harbor. From the latitude he gives, it must be what is now called Hawke Bay, about half way up the east coast of North Island. Manter makes no special mention of the momentous event or even that it was the first time some of the men had gone ashore in more than a year:

6 - Laying of and on, traiding for hogs and potatoes.<sup>11</sup> Sent 2 boats a shore but did not do much. employed in boiling out blackfish bluber.

For the next two days they surely enjoyed trading with the native Maoris, a number of whom had to spend the night on board ship. The strong wind caused problems:

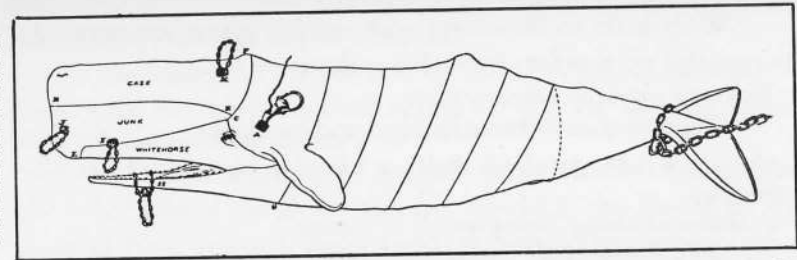
7 - Strong winds and fine wether. went on shore with to [two] boats and got back at 6 P.M. got 1 boat full of water in the Surf. Laying of and on with about a dozen natives aboard. stopt all night. blowing Strong. we could not land them.

8 - 6 A.M. the canoes began to come alongside with hogs and potatoes. one

<sup>10</sup> Starbuck, p. 302, states that *Roger Williams* from Bristol, R.I., was condemned in Pernambuco, Brazil, in 1837, with 1200 bbls sperm and 500 of whale oil. No first name was given for Capt. Mayhew. One would think log keeper Manter, a Vineyarder, would know how to spell "Mayhew." In the margin, he stamped a ship's silhouette and mislabelled it "Robert W."

<sup>11</sup> "Laying off and on" means rowing whale boats back and forth from ship to shore.

The American Whaleman



Location of case, junk and whitehorse in head of a sperm whale. Each is cut free and raised on deck with large shackles shown. Blubber blanket is cut in a spiral.

capsized and lost there potatoes and canoe. at 11 A.M. went with 3 boats Loaded with natives [going back ashore].

9 - boats got back at 3 P.M. the Ship clear of natives once more. we have about 80 baskets of potatoes and 16 or 18 hogs, and Stud [stood] off[f] to look for whales. . . employed in breaking out for water and bread.

Their luck improved now they were in the Pacific Ocean. Right away, a whale, and a large one:

12 - at 12 A.M. rose a Large whale.

13 - at 1 P.M. loard 2 boats and puld [pulled] to the windward to Spred our chances but the whale came up to the lward [leeward] of the ship. capt Dagget struck the whale. tuck him to the Ship. at 4 P.M. commenced cuting [cutting] and finisht cutting at 12 A.M.

Manter drew a whale spouting red ink in the margin and under it the number 80, meaning 80 barrels of oil. A good catch for Captain Daggett.

14 - fine wether. employed in cutting gunk [junk]<sup>12</sup> and boiling. at 4 P.M. saw a bark boiling [and] heading to the Eastward under short sail.

17 - at 7 P.M. Spoke the Ship Ganges of Bristol. 4 mon[ths] previous lost her capt. and his boats crew by a whale. She was 11 months out with 80 bls.

Starbuck tells us that "Captain Harris and boat's crew [were] lost fast to a whale." This would mean that the whale dove straight down, pulling the whaleboat under before the line to the harpoon iron could be cut. The *Ganges* continued without her captain, returning home in May the following year.

The 80-barrel whale *Oscar's* men were boiling down didn't seem to cheer our discouraged log keeper:

18 - Employed in stowing down [oil]. that is good business but we have had little of it to do yet.

<sup>12</sup> Junk is a wedge-shaped section of the sperm whale's immense forehead composed of meat and oily matter which produce excellent spermaceti oil when boiled (see drawing at top of page).

With little to do except wait until a whale was spotted, the men did what sailors have always done:

25 - Employed in washing and scrimshorting [sic].

The new month brought good and bad luck:

March 1 - at 6 A.M. saw a large whale. at 8 loard and fastend and tuck him to the Ship.

2 - Commenced cutting. Strong wind S. S. E. rainy.

3 - Strong wind from the S. Laying with a head Long a side. at 5 A.M. tried to hook on but it was to rugged and Let it go and commence boiling.<sup>13</sup>

4 - Employed in boiling. . . At 11 A.M. cleard the blubber. Rum.<sup>14</sup>

They were now in sperm waters. Daily, whales were spotted, but the bad luck continued to haunt them. A large whale was struck, but they were unable to kill it, even lost one boat:

7 - Saw a number of Large whales. loward and Struck and Stove the Larbord boat. their being but two boats we lost the whale. the Ship and the [other] 2 boats [were] 5 miles off after another whale.

8 - whales in sight all day, going all ways and verry Shy.

9 - saw several Large whales going quick to the Sothard. we loward two boats but of no use.

It was discouraging, but a few days later better luck:

13 - at 5 P.M. [the day before] Saw several large whales going S.W. loard 3 boats and gave chase but it was late and we could not wate (wait) the second rising. at 6 A.M. [today] Saw 5 or 6 Large whales. at 8 loard and Struck with the waist and bow boats tuck them to the Ship. they was to [two] noble whales.

In the margin, Manter inked in two whales, spouting red ink, indicating a bloody kill. Between the two images he wrote, 130, the two "noble" whales had produced 130 barrels of oil - a good day's catch.

Cutting, boiling the blubber and stowing the oil in casks below kept them busy for the next week. It was a "good business," Manter wrote. By March 20<sup>th</sup>, the good business was finished. A large whale was spotted going quickly to windward. Whales that go quickly to windward were impossible for the sailing ships to overtake. After a week of hard work on deck, the men, no doubt, welcomed the rest. But a disappointed Manter

<sup>13</sup> This was the bad luck, losing the head before its valuable spermaceti had been bailed out, a major loss. Manter doesn't show any regrets, writing only, "Let it go."

<sup>14</sup> No explanation, simply "Rum." Captains did issue liquor to all hands as a reward for good performance. Manter never mentions it again, but it is unlikely that this was the only issue. After all, he was a Methodist and no doubt despised the use of alcohol.

wrote: "So ends this day in idleness."

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, a welcome occasion. A ship from home:

26 -- Spoke the Ship Vineyard. 8 months out with 350 bls. capt Daggett went onboard and Stopt till nearly 12.

It is heartwarming to imagine these Islanders meeting on the other side of the globe, two tiny specks in the Pacific off the coast of New Zealand. Such meetings were totally unplanned as there was no way to communicate with each other to arrange a get-together. The two captains had much to talk about so the two ships sailed in company with each other for the next few days, heading northeast. Seeing the Edgartown ship, *Vineyard*, so close brought a spell of homesickness to our log keeper:

April 1 - fine wether with a fair wind from the South. in company with the Ship Vineyard and I wish I was as near the vineyard as I am to her. I would soon Shorten the Distance.

Manter doesn't record the arrangement in the log at this time (he does later), but the two masters, Captain Daggett of the *Oscar* and Captain Tilton of the *Vineyard*, entered into a "mat-ing" agreement on the last day of March which meant they agreed "to cruise together and divide the catch."<sup>15</sup> As we will see, the arrangement turns out to be more profitable for the *Oscar* than the *Vineyard*.

The two cooperating ships headed for an island to refill their water casks. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, the island came in sight:

6 - saw the Land bearing N.W. by W. Dist. 30 miles. in company with the Ship Vineyard. both bound in to Vavaoe.<sup>16</sup>

By dark the following day, they came to the island and in the morning anchored. To record the moment, Manter drew a blue anchor with a red line curled around it in the margin:

7 - Laying off[f] and on waitin for daylight and then there was 2 other Ships in Sight bound in, the Lancaster and a hudson Ship. at 11 A.M. [the next day] Set the anchor.

8 -- Employed in fitting raft for Casks for water. one watch on Liberty. the 2 Ships that was astern of us cuming in was the Lancaster of newbedford and the henry astel of hudson.

These must have been most enjoyable days. For the first

<sup>15</sup> Quoted from Elton W. Hall, *Sperm Whaling from New Bedford*, Old Dartmouth Historical Society, New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1982, p. 208.

<sup>16</sup> This was, no doubt, Vavau, the largest coral island in a group that is part of the Tonga Islands. He spells it various ways.



time since the voyage began, the men were given liberty to go ashore. The next day was Sunday, so all hands had the day off.<sup>17</sup>

9 - pleasant weather. all hands on liberty. so ends the day.

10 - Employed cutting wood. carried a raft a Shore and fild it. the Ship independance Left hear for Sidney for repairs.

11 - All these 24 hours pleasant wether. Employed in cutting wood. got one raft of water and a few yams. the Ship Briton of new bedford came in. 21 months out with 6 bls. Short of hands.<sup>18</sup>

12 - Employed in cutting wood and bying yams. towed a raft a Shore for water but could not fill our casks. the natives was filling for the inglish bark.

13 - Employed in blacking the Ships bends, cutting wood. one watch on liberty.

14 - painting and cutting wood. one watch on Liberty. So ends this day.

15 - Fine wether woding [wooding] and painting at 6 A.M. cent [sent] 2 boats to help tow the Ship independance further up to discharge her oil. it is Supposed She will be condemned. She was damaged by Draging ashore. 16 months out with 1,000 bls.

The next week of beautiful weather was spent cutting and storing wood, rafting casks of water, painting and more shore liberty. The captain had a some business:

22 - capt daggett attending the auction of the reck of the Ship independance which was condemned yesterday. She draged ashore 3 weeks previous. her bottom was badly damaged. Part of her crew will be carried to hity (Tahiti) by a inglish brig.

23 - all these 24 hours, thick rainy weather. Capt Daggett bought a mizentop-sail and sum riging from the ship independance. all hands on liberty [it was Sunday].

24 - At 12 midday waid [weighed] our anchor and maid sail from vavao with wind East in compny with the Ship vineyard, bound to the norwest coast.

Ship's work occupied the crew, after all that time ashore:

25 - employed in blacking chains and Stowing them away. cuper [cooper, the cask maker] making 2 large gunkcasks [junk casks].

26 - Employed in Lashing the anchor and rattleing<sup>19</sup> the larboured main rigging.

They were now sailing into an area dotted with many is-

<sup>17</sup> One can only imagine what happened when these rough young men who had not seen a woman in more than a year went ashore. The logs never discuss that, but what a scene it must have been. Native females wearing little or no clothes facing sex-starved sailors. If Manter would only tell us!

<sup>18</sup> Out 21 months and only 6 barrels of oil - a discouraging voyage. Short of hands may be the reason for the small catch.

<sup>19</sup> He is referring, no doubt, to work being done on the ratlines, the small lines between the shrouds that form the ladder for climbing aloft.

lands, known today as Samoa. They took on fresh provisions:

27 - Saw the iland tutuvillan [Tutuila, in today's Western Samoa].

29 - Capt Daggett and capt tilton<sup>20</sup> went on Shore and bot a Dozen baskets of tarror [taro?]. com aboard at 8 P.M.

30 - capt. Daggett went a shore to traid. got a raft ready to go a shore.

May 1 - towed a raft a shore and fild it.

2 - Went after our raft. Stove and lost Several of our casks. Spoilt half our water. So ends this day with a bad days work.

3 - brot off] 4000 Coconuts and about 15 hogs and we Saved 45 bls of water from our raft out of 90 bls. At 12, got all on board and made Sail.

For the rest of May 1837, the ships sailed together heading northwesterly. Occasionally, one captain would go aboard the other vessel for the day while the men were busy with "ship's duties." But there was an added task, an important one:

May 15 - Employed in fitting our cutting penants in company with the Ship Vineyard.

Manter doesn't tell us, but these pennants were necessary because the two captains had entered into an agreement to sail as "mates," dividing the catch equally. Special flags or pennants were essential for communication between "mated" ships.

Another coincidence: on June 7, 1837, out there in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, they met another Edgartown ship, the *George and Mary*. The three Vineyard whaling masters, Captains Daggett, Tilton and Coffin, got together to exchange news. Coffin, who had been out longer, was having better luck:

June 7 -- Spoak the Ship *George and mary* of Edgartown, 22 months out with 1700 [barrels] all Spurm. capt Daggett and capt coffin spent the eavoning onboard the Vineyard.<sup>21</sup>

Three days later, on a foggy 10<sup>th</sup> of June, so foggy they had not even bothered to send a lookout up the mast, an obliging sperm whale surfaced alongside them. Their luck continued bad:

10 - All this day calm and foggy. no lookout from masthead. at 4 P.M. their was a large Spurm whale come up along side. we loward and fastened with 2 boats. Set him Spouting thin blood. he went down and tuck 2 lines, the Starboard and Larbord boats. Saw a number of finbacks, poposis, cot [caught] a sunfish. we bent on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Line and parted.

<sup>20</sup> Captain Samuel Tilton is master of the *Vineyard*.

<sup>21</sup> The *George and Mary*, Capt. Edwin Coffin, was owned by Abraham Osborn of Edgartown. She returned home on May 10, 1839, two years later, with 3000 barrels of sperm oil, which is 94,500 gallons, then worth \$1.08 per gallon (*Pease Diary*), a value of \$102,060. In today's dollars, that would be about \$1,500,000. No wonder there are captains' houses on Water St.!

Since May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Oscar had sailed 2400 miles and had not killed a whale. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, their luck changed:

15 - At 7 A.M. rose several Large whales going to the S.W. we are in company with the Ship vineyard. we Loward and got each of us a large whale. So ends this day in good business.

So pleased was log keeper Manter that he surrounded the whale silhouette in the margin with red dots. The whale's spouting was also in red - blood, signifying a kill. Now there was profitable work ahead, cutting and boiling:

16 - All this day Light winds and fine wether. Employed in cutting in a 70 bls. whale. got his body in at 12, the end of sea day.

17 - First part got the head in. middle part Employed in cutting gunck [junk]. At 4 P.M. started the [try] works. So ends this day in boiling.

More whales were spotted, interrupting the trying out of the blubber, but more bad luck:

18 - at 2. P.M. rose a School of Large whales. we loward and the waist boat got fast and lost her line. Employed in boiling.

Boiling was completed the next day. Their partner, the ship *Vineyard*, spotted some whales, but also without a kill. Under strong westerly winds and reefed sails, they now turned northeast, heading toward North America. Another month had passed. As was his custom, Manter decorated the new month's entry, "July The 1<sup>st</sup>, 1837" with many tiny dots. That day brought a view of something to cheer about. Not whales, but the coast of North America, but no cheers from Manter:

July 1 - saw the land bearing N.E. distant 40 miles.

The Fourth of July came without any comment:

4 - we are working to the north and westward. And shorten sails nights. Saw plenty of kelp, poposses, drift wood, and finback humpbacks.

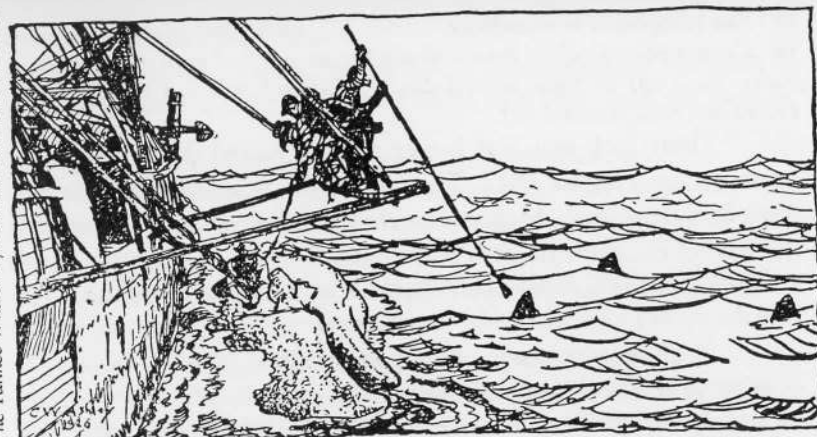
On July 5<sup>th</sup> Manter makes an interesting point known. The *Vineyard* was not on the same calendar as the *Oscar*:

5 -- gaming [gamming] with the Ship Vineyard, it being the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with them. capt tilton and his mate onboard the Oscar. i and mr. Daggett On-board the Vineyard.<sup>22</sup>

Suddenly, after sailing almost around the world seeking sperm whales, they came upon the most they had yet seen in

<sup>22</sup> The *Oscar* had crossed the 180<sup>th</sup> meridian from the west, having sailed around Africa into the Pacific, and because of that was a day ahead of the *Vineyard*, which had sailed into the Pacific from the east. Thus Manter's log on the *Oscar* was a day ahead of the *Vineyard*'s. Until 1884, there was no International Date Line, which would have corrected the difference.

The Yankee Whaler by Clifford W. Ashley, 1926.



Cutting in a sperm whale starts by severing the head, which is done by men perched precariously on a plank frame above the carcass, as hungry sharks are discouraged.

sight of North America:

7 - in sight of the Land at 1 P.M. Saw a school of Spurm whales. Loward. got one to the Starboard boat. got him to the Ship at 4 P.M. commenst cutting.

During that chase, they got one whale, but lost two more. In the margin Manter inked two whale's tails and one complete whale spouting red ink. Two days later, they spotted what they thought was another pod of sperm whales:

9 - Saw a School of whales which we coled [called] Spurm whales. Loward and they proved to be humpbacks.<sup>23</sup>

The next morning was calm and they took advantage of the light air to visit another becalmed ship:

10 - First part calm. Loward the Starboard boat and pould [pulled] for a Sail which proved to be a London trador [trader] from collumba [Columbia] river traiding chiefly in furs. in sight of the Land dist 30 miles.

Strong winds ended the calm, but they soon dropped off, bringing fog. The men worked at changing and repairing sails, while the captain spent his time aboard the *Vineyard*. By now one would think the two captains would have run out of conversation. Whales were spotted, but not the kind they were after:

15 - capt daggett went onboard the *Vineyard* Saw several humpbacks.

16 - Land in Sight dist 30. miles. . . Saw a great many humpbacks and finbacks

<sup>23</sup> Humpbacks are an inshore whale, easily mistaken for a sperm. They are almost impossible to catch with a whale boat as they swim so fast.

17 - Saw humpbacks in abundance.

18 - Croseing [cruising] for Spurm whails but we can find nothing but humpbacks. the Land in Sight at Mid day. we sounded and had 80 fath[oms], tacked and Stud of [stood off].

Their luck was not better as they sailed down the west coast. It was August 1837. They were almost as far south as today's Los Angeles.<sup>24</sup> Manter inserted another decorated date on the first of the month. Still no whales:

2 - Painted one of our spair boats which we shall take for a waist boat and keap the old one for a nock round boat in poart.

A chance at whales, but again no luck:

4 - at 10. A M. Saw several large whails in company with the Ship vineyard. we loward from both Ships. the vineyards Starboard boat got the chance furst and mist him. they all went off[f] out of reach.

Manter stencilled two whale tails in the margin – the symbol of disappointment. The next day, another chance. Success – thanks to the mating agreement with *Vineyard*. *Oscar* continued to have problems, but half of *Vineyard*'s catch was hers:

5 - School of whales to the windward. the vineyard being to the windward had the chance. we all loward. the vineyard got 4 whales. [Oscar's] capt daget got fast and lost a line and got nothing. the 4 whales we tuck to our Ships and commenst cutting.

Below the two whale silhouettes, spouting blood, that Manter placed in the margin, was the number 78, indicating 78 barrels of oil from them. The *Vineyard* men had killed all four and had given her partner, *Oscar*, two.

They have been out a year; Manter makes a summary:

7 - employed in boiling. . . This day the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1837 we are 12 months out with 550 bls. we are maited with the Ship vineyard and have been since the Last day of march.

He celebrated the anniversary by decorating the entry with a silhouette of a ship, labelled VINEYARD, and two sketches of trees and land. The trees look like fruit trees in blossom. He must have been wishing he was back on the *Vineyard* enjoying summer. Instead, they are heading away from home and are now far north of the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands.

Sailing along with the *Vineyard*, their partner ("pardner" as Manter spells it), the *Oscar*'s Captain Daggett keeps spending

<sup>24</sup> In 1837, California was still part of Mexico. There was no Los Angeles, of course. Not until the mid-1840s did Americans settle there.

time aboard the sister ship.

15 - Working to the South. at 10 A.M. Saw a School of killars.<sup>25</sup> employed in ships duty coiling lines for the secont line in each boat which will make us 320 fathoms each.

16 - the ship vineyard picked up a Spar 57 feet Long of Soft wood.

17 - All this day pleasant wether. gaming [gamming] with our pardner. at 4 P.M. got the waist boat in and a new one out. the old one we Shal take for a drouge [drogue] boat.<sup>26</sup>

They were not the only ship that was having difficulty filling her casks with sperm oil:

28 - Spoke the *Averick* of Newbedford. 19 months out 600 bls.

31- we are in company with the vineyard and maited and have bin for 6 months to the day but whales are Scarce.

It is September 1<sup>st</sup> and only two whales had been killed in August. Log keeper Manter drew two rather fanciful designs to designate the new month. Or perhaps to cheer him up. He is not pleased with the whaling:

3 - Light South wind and calm. our cous is S. E. by E. saw gramposses,<sup>27</sup> that was the nearest to a spurm whale we could come. So ends this day.

4 - all hands went in a Swimming. Employed in ships duty latter half.

This was the first time any immersion has been mentioned. Perhaps it was their first bath since leaving New England a year before. The next day they caught some "olivecore," which may be albacore, "to trade to the islands."<sup>28</sup> Their bad luck continues:

12 - Employed in blacking iron work and filling salt water to trim Ship. whales are so surce we cannot get oil to do it. so we take salt water. we have not seen a whale this 5 weeks.

As supplies and water are consumed and the ship is lightened, her trim changes. To bring it to normal they must fill casks with ocean water, casks they had hoped to be filling with oil. Instead, they wait, in ideal weather, but they can't even catch small whales:

<sup>25</sup> Killer whales are part of the dolphin family, so named because they attack right whales.

<sup>26</sup> A drogue boat is at the end of the line attached to the harpoon thrust into the whale. The boat creates a drag that exhausts the wounded animal. A large block of wood usually serves the purpose, but a worn-out boat is suitable as well.

<sup>27</sup> Grampus, like the killer whales, are related to the dolphin family, best known for their audible grunting.

<sup>28</sup> Whaling masters brought cheap trinkets, knives, clothing, to use in bartering with the natives to whom currency had no value. Now we learn that fish are also used in trade.



17 - Saw popposes And grampuses. better wether their never was for whaling but they are not har [here].

20 - Load for blackfish but could not get on it. was so Still.

The *Oscar* and her mate, the *Vineyard*, are now heading south, making about 600 miles a week despite the light air. Another month passed without a kill.<sup>29</sup> Then, their luck changes:

October 2 - at 4 P.M. rose whales. loward and got 1 to the Starboard boat and the vineyard got 3. we tuck 2, two each Ship, at 6 A.M. commenst cutting. at 10 finished.<sup>30</sup>

3 - this day more moderate and pleasant wether. Employed in boiling out our two whales at 9 A.M. capt tilton came on board of us. we are maited with him. at 11 A.M. finnished boiling.

5 - Setting up pipe for water and stowing our thirty barrel fair in the bubber-room and Stowit in the lowar hole next fair, their is so the little of it.<sup>31</sup>

Nearing the Sandwich Islands, October 7<sup>th</sup>, at 1 p.m.:

7 - saw Ohihe [Hawaii] and at 3 P.M. Saw mohe [Maui] bairing W.S.W. Stearing W. by S. till 9 P.M. then double reaft [reefed] the topsails and Lay with the head yards aback till daylight then maid Sail and run for the passage. at 10 A.M. bent the chains. So ends this day.

8 - All this day Light winds and calm with baffling wind. bound in to mow-heel at 4 P.M. got the boats a head to tow hur in at 6 P.M. Let the anchor go at 6 A.M. got our old boat out. capt daggett went on Shore and got potatoes, unions, goats and fruit. at 10 A.M. tuck a raft a Shore to fill. So ends this day.

9 - from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Lying in mowhee getting water, and other recruits. nothing els worthy of note except 8 deserters and 1 discharged. two of them were caught and we Shiped 7 connackers to make our number good.<sup>32</sup>

20 - All this day fine wether. at 1. P.M. got all hands onboard then got under way. employed in Stowing anchors and chains in company with the Vineyard but not maited.

The "mating" with the *Vineyard* has ended. Perhaps Captain Tilton decided the relationship had been mostly to the benefit of *Oscar* or perhaps they were not planning to go to the same whaling grounds. Despite the change, for the next three weeks the two ships remained together, heading north and then west. No sperm whales seen:

<sup>29</sup> Manter wrote August instead of October for the new month. He is heading backwards in time.

<sup>30</sup> The ship *Vineyard* seems to be getting a poor deal under the mating arrangement. Manter drew a spouting whale with the number 30, indicating 30 barrels of oil.

<sup>31</sup> This seems to make no sense, but it is the best we can do with his writing and spelling. We do not know what is meant by "fair."

<sup>32</sup> He is very casual about eight deserters. What are connackers?

10 - Saw a finback but Spurm Whales are Scurse. we have not seen one this 2 months.

14 - Saw plenty of finbacks and porposes. Struck a porpose and Lost him.

In the margin Manter has drawn one tree on a small island, recording the fact that once again, land is in sight:

15 - Saw the island of godalupe [Guadalupe, about 200 miles off the coast of Baja California, Mexico] baring ESE. So ends this day, runing for the Land.

16 - at 2 P.M. the Starboard boat and waist boat went on Shore to Look for wood and could not find any except 2 Spars that had drifted a Shore. 1 that mashurd [measured] 8 feet round the largest part and the other half as large and mashured 74 feet in Length. The 2 Spars we Left and picked up a few armfuls of small wood. when we first Landed we Saw about a douzen of Sea Eliphants and kild 8 of them and did not Save them, it being near night. at 7 P.M. the boats returned.<sup>33</sup>

Twice boats went ashore the next day, but again disappointment. No wood was found:

18 - Stod of from the Land . . . we [had] come to godalupe for wood and found none. it is nothing but a barron island and verry bad Landing.

Still seeking wood, they headed for another island:

20 - Standing in for the Land at 7 P.M. headed in but the island we tuck for Serus island proved to be a Small island to the north of Serus island not down on our chart. we Steared SE and made Serus island right a head.

Seeing no bay into which they could sail, Captain Daggett went ashore to look for one, but found none. The following day, he decided on a likely anchorage and started in, directing the helmsman from the crow's nest. More trouble:

22 - Stood in for a place we cold [called] the bay. capt Daggett was not acquainted with the bay [so] he went aloft to look out as we run in. we had a man in the chains<sup>34</sup> Slinging the Led. capt Daggett misunderstud the man in the chains and the man made a mistake in the marks. toch [took] 3 for 4 and capt Daggett was a Loft and understood him [to say] 8 fathoms all the time till She Struck in muddy bottom. it was then 2 P.M. and high water. we got out a chage and hove tool<sup>35</sup> and then the tide fell and hild hur. the next high water She come off[f] verry easy. that was at 4. A.M. we towed off[f] in 4 fath. with 2 boats and let the anchor go and commenst breacking out our oil to coper [cooper].<sup>36</sup>

They stayed a week in the place, working at coopering

<sup>33</sup> Apparently Manter went ashore with the men: "when we first landed." This would suggest his whaleboat was either the Starboard or Waist boat. Why would they kill the animals?

<sup>34</sup> The anchor chains hang down at the bow, providing a place to stand while sounding the lead.

<sup>35</sup> What can that be?

<sup>36</sup> To fill the casks with oil and seal them shut once the oil has cooled after the boiling.

and taking time off for "fishing and Shelling." Captain Daggett caught some "poggies and thog." Three barrels were filled with beach sand and brought aboard. On November 29<sup>th</sup> they set sail for Cape St. Lucas at the southern tip of Baja California, arriving on December 3<sup>rd</sup>:

3 - clost in by cape St. Lucas at 5 A.M. rose whales. loward but did not get any. they was a School of 50 bls. whales and popposes and humpbacks.<sup>37</sup>

The following days were productive, but not of whales:

4 - Laying off[f] and on the cape looking for Spurm whales at 4 P.M. loard for blackfish but they were going too quick for us.

5 - at 2 P.M. capt. daggett went onshore at realdor [?] bay at 6. P.M. returned with a quater of a bullock and one cheas [cheese].

6 - Spoke the Orion of nantucket 3 months out, 500 bls. capt daggett went onbord and returned in the evening at 7 P.M. Loard for blackfish got 3. Saw a number of humpbacks. painted the Starboard boat in Side. So ends this day in by cape St. Lucas.

7 - Employed in boiling out our blackfish. they made 4-1/2 bls. Saw plenty of humpbacks.

9 - at 2 P.M. capt coffin from the Ship Columbus of nantucket came onboard at 8 A.M. they [the two captains] went on Shore.

10 - capt daggett and capt coffin returned at 1 P.M. with a bullock to be divided betwixt them.<sup>38</sup>

11 - Saw a french frigguit [frigate]. by appearance was Surveying the coast at Sunset. Spok the George of Newbedford 16-1/2 months out with 675 bls, Abigail of Newbedford 24 months with 1,900 bls, Sparton of Nantucket 24-1/2 months with 1,000 bls, Magnet of Warren 23 months with 1300 bls. Saw plenty of humpbacks at 10 A.M. Spok the George again. got her blacksmith to come onboard and do some iron work.<sup>39</sup>

12 - Setting up rigging. . . at 5 p.m. put the hellum [helm] up to Leave the Cape in company with the Ship George of Newbedford. Steared S.E.

The two ships sailed along the coast of Mexico, about 100 miles offshore, for a week, heading for Chinkatang (as Manter spells it).<sup>40</sup> They arrived off Chinkatang late on December 19<sup>th</sup>, and waited offshore for daylight so they could locate the harbor:

20 - Looking for the harbour. at 4 P.M. capt daggett went in to a bay with a

<sup>37</sup> These were larger than average. He did not explain why they didn't get any. In the margin, he drew two curved headless whales.

<sup>38</sup> The two captains had been ashore overnight. Doing nothing but buying a "bullock"?

<sup>39</sup> A stencil of a ship in the margin has the four ships' names beneath it.

<sup>40</sup> We can't find Chinkatang on the map, the latitude and longitude place it about 125 miles north of today's Acapulco, Mexico, near or at the Balsas River estuary.

boat. it proved not the harbour and returned at 8 P.M. Layed back during the night. at 8 A.M. went in with 2 boats. concluded to wood. Laying off[f] and on at 11 A.M. one boat returned with a boat Load of wood. Saw two Ships to the windward.

21 - Employed in Laying off[f] and on boating of wood off[f] Chinkatang harbour. we was uncainted [unacquainted] with the harbour and thot it was not the place. the Ship george went in and we followed and come to at 8.P.M. Latter part Employed in cutting wood and got a raft on Shore for water. So ends this day.

22 - Employed in wooding. got off[f] one 1 raft of water. at 2 P.M. the Ship magnet and Sparton came in and anchored.

23 - Employed in wooding and Stowing water. Last night 2 men run away. took a boat from the Sturn and Left her on the beach.

It was Sunday, but the men spent the morning stowing the wood. Then, despite the two desertions, Captain Daggett gave all hands liberty ashore. He and the officers stayed on board. They had a little socializing of their own. It was day before Christmas, but Manter makes no mention of the holiday:

24 - this day all hands on Liberty. . . capt daggett had some Spanish Lades onboard to pay him a visit.<sup>41</sup>

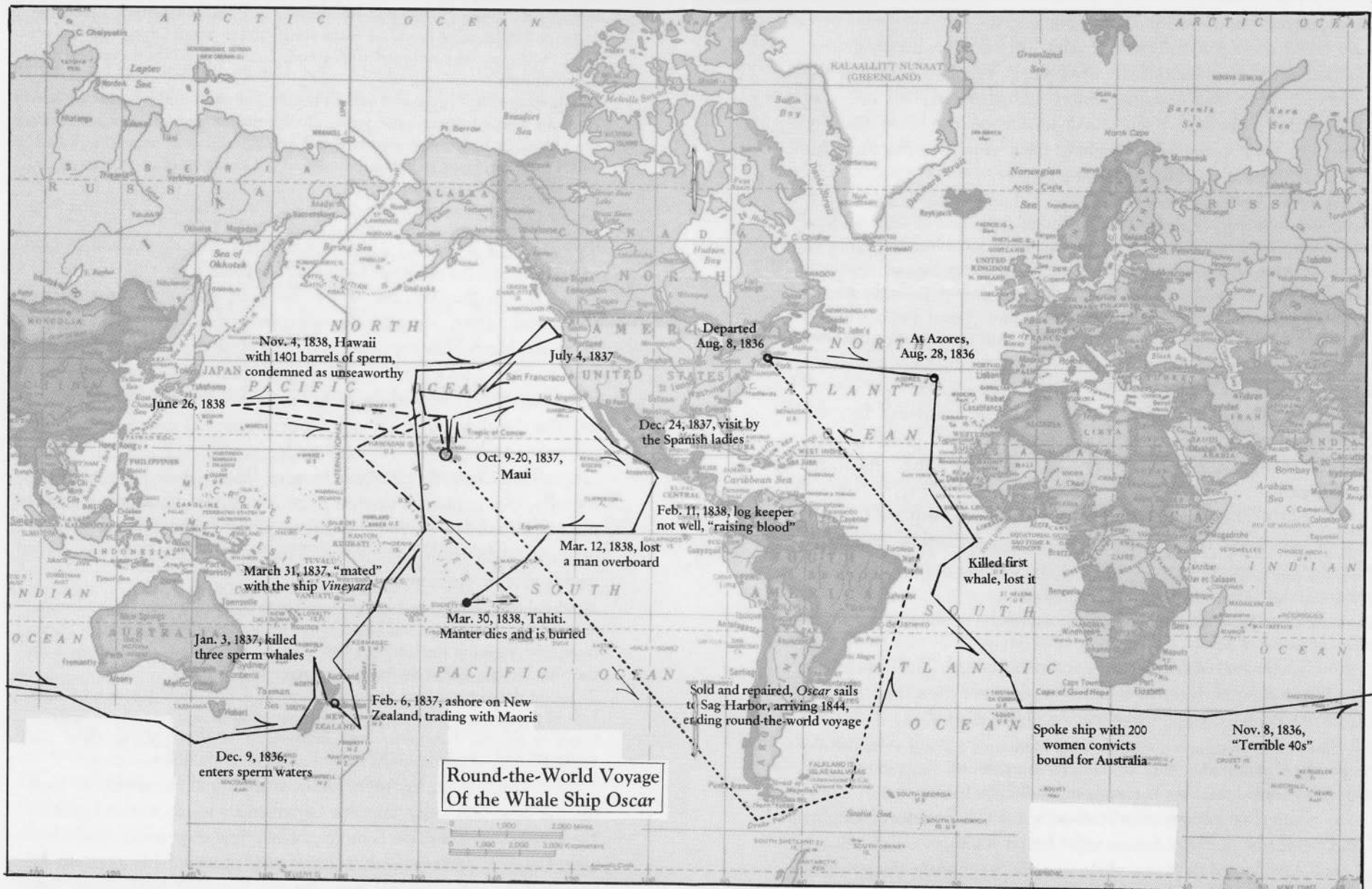
The captain's decision to give liberty may have paid off socially, but it proved unwise from a business standpoint. More men deserted. He moved the *Oscar* out of the harbor, anchoring offshore, away from temptation. The captain liked spending the nights ashore, it seemed:

26 - finished wooding. we had 3 men to Leave us since we Lay at chinkatang. at 8 A.M. got underway and Lay off[f] . . . whilst capt daggett went on Shore. commenst Stowing the anchors and blacking the chains. in company with the Ship George. Left in harbour the magnet and Sparton.

27 - capt daggett returned from the Shore at 6.P.M. with 2 barrels of corn. Lay off the harbour all night at 7.A.M. capt daggett went on Shore again in hopes to get his 3 runaways and returned at 10 AM without them and Steared S.E.S. for agriculco [Acapulco] in hopes to find his men their.

There is no log mention of stopping at Acapulco to look for the deserters, only that the *Oscar* sailed south to the Equator. New Year's Eve was on Sunday, only a few days away, and Captain Daggett perhaps didn't want any more of his men to be tempted, having just lost five. So the first day of the new year came and went with no celebration, nor even a mention. Surprisingly, Manter didn't even give the date, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1838, his

<sup>41</sup> No comment. The other log keeper makes no mention of the Spanish ladies.



Oscar's circumnavigation of the globe was interrupted when she was condemned in Hawaii. She was sold, repaired and in 1844 sailed to her new home at Sag Harbor, N.Y. Solid line is her route while log keeper Joseph

Manter was alive (the voyage detailed in this issue); the broken line is the rest of the voyage, from the log kept by Joseph Daggett, ending in Hawaii; dotted line speculates on her route home, we have no log of that voyage.



usual decoration of dots outlining the entry.

At the equator, *Oscar* changed her course, heading west. She straddled that line all the next week. The first weeks of the new year were discouraging. After sailing nearly all the way around the globe and even going ashore on the west coast of America, they now were heading back into the Pacific. But suddenly, a bonanza! Not without a price:

22 - at 3 P.M. Saw whales. Loward the boats and cot [caught] 4, 2 to the Larboard boat, one with Starboard [boat], and bow boat. one of Larboard boat whales was a large whale. got one of our boatstearas [boatsteerers] Legs badly hurt by Shifting the line over.<sup>42</sup> . . at half past 5 commenst cutting.

23 - Employed in cutting in. So ends this day. . . saw whales, the sun 15 moments high, Loard two boats but it was to Late.

The next days were busy, cutting and boiling the blubber of the four whales. Manter was pleased:

25 - Employed in boiling blubber. That is good business a nuff.

Finishing the "good business" on the following day, the *Oscar*, still straddling the Equator, turned around heading east. Manter entitled the page, "Ship Oscar On the Line," meaning the Equator.

For a number of days, the log entries are very brief - only one or two lines: the weather, longitude and latitude and little else. Manter seems bored, but perhaps he had something more serious, much more serious, on his mind:

11 - Saw a humpbacks and porposes. I the writeer am unwell with the Complaint of raising of blood.

There are, of course, no doctors on board. The "raising of blood" is not something to be ignored, but out there in the middle of the Pacific Ocean there was no alternative:

13 - Saw whales in company with the Ship Merrenner off [f] our wether beam, nearly a head of the other Ship. they nevver saw them till they run in among the[m] and Started them. we Loward from boath Ships but of no use.<sup>43</sup>

The ship is now almost exactly on the Equator, being at Lat. 00 - 05 N. A rainy day brought better luck:

14 - at 6 A.M. loward for Spurm whales. got one Small whale. the rest made

<sup>42</sup> "Shifting the line over" may be the job of hauling on the line from the iron embedded in the whale to cause the boat to come alongside the harpooned whale prior to lancing or killing it. A critical procedure requiring strength and precision. It is the responsibility of the bow oarsman.

<sup>43</sup> We find no ship *Merriner*. She is no doubt the *Mariner* of Nantucket who was in the Pacific at the time.

no stop but went to the north. cut him in and went to look for more.

As usual after a kill, Manter placed a spouting whale in the margin with a number under it, indicating the barrels of oil. This had been a small whale - only 15 barrels. The average sperm produced more than 30. For the first time, he did not use red ink to indicate the whale was spouting his blood, the sign of a kill. Perhaps it was a coincidence, perhaps he had used up all the red ink. But it may have had more significance. Like the dying whales in his sketches, he was spitting up blood, something he preferred not to acknowledge. Never again did he use red ink to designate a kill. And they were killing whales:

15 - at ½ past 4 Loward for a School of small whales. fastened with 3 boats. the waist and bow boats Ironed their irons.<sup>44</sup> the Larbord boat got a 20 barrel cow. took him [sic] to the Ship and Lay by him that Night. the next morning cut him in. at 9.A.M. commenced boiling.

16 - finished boiling at 11 A.M. Loward for blackfish. got fast with the Larbord boat and Ironed. So ends this day.

For a week *Oscar* cruised in a mix of sunny and rainy days, but no whales. The weather soon improved and, except for our log keeper, so did the whaling:

24 - All this day fine wether with a moderate breas [breeze]. rose spurm whales with our four [fore] topsail unbent. got it to the yard and left it for the Shipkeepers to bend.<sup>45</sup> Loward 3 boats for that is all we man, for I am Sick with the complaint of Spitting blood.<sup>46</sup> our boats soon returned. the whales purceived them. at 2 P.M. loward again. the Starbord and Larboard boat got each of them 1, toch [took] them to Ship. Saw more whales. Loward again. the Starboard boat got 1, the rest maid no Stop.

For three days the men were kept busy cutting, boiling and stowing the oil below in the cooling tank. The three whales were small, producing only 55 barrels in total. Once the oil was cooling, they returned to hunting.

It is now the first of March. They have sailed almost around the world from Massachusetts. Now they are heading away from America, back across the Pacific. They have been out 18 months. To mark the first of the month, Manter, resumed his

<sup>44</sup> The idiom "ironed their irons" seems to mean they missed the whales, as the stamp in the margin shows only the 20-barrel cow killed by the larboard boat.

<sup>45</sup> Shipkeepers are the sailors left on board to man the ship while the others take to the whaleboats to chase the whales.

<sup>46</sup> It seems clear now that Manter is the mate in charge of either the bow or the waist boat.

custom of outlining the date with dots.

They sailed west along the Equator, "bound to the marguas [Marquesas] islands to get yams and hogs." On the way, they met up with another New England ship:

9 -- Spoke the Ship timolan of newbedford 28 months out with 1000 bls. it being night time he did not come onboard.

The next day, two kills:

10 - Saw whales. Loward. got 2 40 bl whales with the Starboard and bow boat.<sup>47</sup>

11 -- Employed in cutting. Latter part boilling.

A sudden tragedy, a careless accident:

12 - At ½ past 9. A.M. we lost a man overboard, catching water washing the deck. we loward a boat but of no use. he could not swim. he Shipped by the name of edward Jones [but] we found a letter which gives us reson to think his name was Foley insted of Jones.

The matter-of-fact manner in which Manter describes the death of one of the crew provides a hint of how emotionally distant the officers, such as Manter, were from the men in the foc'sle. And of how anonymous men could be aboard ship. As in the French Foreign Legion, nobody inquired about a man's past. It was nobody's business, whaling protocol had it. The lost sailor had signed on, like thousands of other whalers, with an assumed name for reasons known only to himself. He took his real identify to a watery grave. His relatives, whoever they were, would never know what had happened to "Ed." Even his shipmates, crowded though they were in the cramped foc'sle, did not know his identify. Or if they did, protocol required that they not divulge it to the officers.

Manter doesn't state where Ed joined the ship nor does he show any sadness over his loss.<sup>48</sup> There was no memorial service, no sympathetic remarks by the captain about the tragedy. No prayers for his soul. It was just another bit of bad luck on the *Oscar*. The work continued without a pause:

13-16 - Fine weather, light winds, finished boiling and stowing.

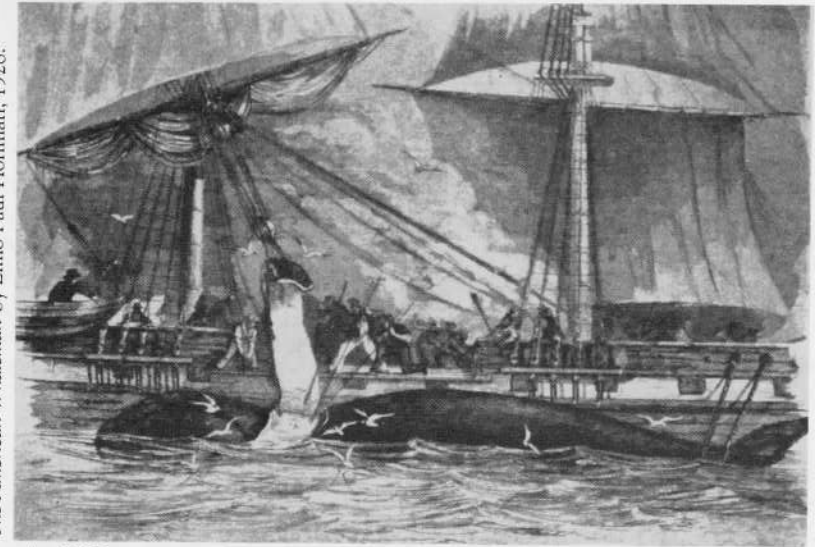
17 - Saw the island of Domanneek,<sup>49</sup> on [one] of the Marquesas islands baring

<sup>47</sup> Manter stamps only one whale in the margin, barrel total of 70 for two average-size whales.

<sup>48</sup> Daggett, the other journal keeper on the *Oscar*, wrote, after recording the loss of the man: "So Ends this 24 hours with Solom [solemn] times." He, at least, showed some respect.

<sup>49</sup> Probably Dominique Island, although we can't find it among the Marquesas.

The American Whaler by Elmo Paul Hohman, 1928.



An 1850 engraving shows the blanket of blubber being peeled off the carcass with the head in place. It may not be a sperm whale, which could explain the sequence.

off S.W. at 9 P.M. hove a back. lay till 4 A.M. then run in for the Land.

18 - Laying off and on getting hogs and potatoes. the natives appear verry friendly. we went ashore to do the traiding.<sup>50</sup>

They didn't stay long in the Marquesas:

19 - Laying off [and] on getting recruits. at 6 P.M. got all onboard and left the island. . . Squally with thunder and Lightning. at 5. A.M. Saw whales. Loward and got one with bow boat, one with Starbord boat. the Larbord boat Sunk one with an wafe drug [waif drag].<sup>51</sup>

The whale silhouette, again only one for two whales, that Manter placed in the margin records 35 barrels of oil, meaning the two were young and small. During the week that followed, the crew finished cutting in, boiling and stowing the oil. Then the *Oscar* headed southwest. At the top of next page, Manter wrote in his graceful penmanship: "Bound to the Society islands. March 20, 1838." But their trip was interrupted by an abundance of prey – five whales killed. Manter, perhaps because like the previous catch, they were young whales, did not sound excited:

27 - All this day Light winds and baffeling. at 8. A.M. Saw Whales. Loward,

<sup>50</sup> He must be feeling better as this hints that he went ashore.

<sup>51</sup> A waif is a flag on a sharpened staff that is thrust into a dead whale to mark it as belonging to that ship. Apparently the dead whale sank before it could be towed to the *Oscar* and was lost. We don't know what "drug" means except perhaps "drogue" or "drag."

got 5. So ends this day in getting the whales to the Ship.

The five young whales produced 60 barrels, only 12 barrels per whale. (The average adult sperm whale produces about 35 barrels.<sup>52</sup>) While the crew was cutting and boiling, Captain Daggett was gamming aboard a Nantucket boat:

29 - in sight of Otahtia [Tahiti] bairing SW by S, dist 40 miles. at 8. A.M. the mate of the enterprise came onboard and capt Daggett went onboard the enterprise, 16 months out with 400 bls. So ends this day in boiling.

That entry written March 29, 1838, was the last one Manter made in our log. He died there on Tahiti soon after. He may have written more during his final illness, but if he did it is not in the log. The three sheets that follow his March 29<sup>th</sup> entry have been precisely cut from the book with a sharp knife. On the stubs that remain there is evidence of handwriting, perhaps part of Joseph's description of his final days, perhaps a letter from a dying son to his mother. Those pages may have been removed for her to keep, a treasured memory of Joseph, her first-born son. One of her six children, his death and burial on an unknown island on the opposite side of the world surely broke her heart.

Our excised log tells us nothing about his final illness. On the page that follows the three removed sheets, there is an unsigned paragraph, perhaps written by Captain Daggett:

March 30, 1838, Ship Oscar Capt. Daggett Arived at Otahtia [Tahiti]. Whaleman<sup>51</sup> Manters Grave may be found by inquiring the burying place of the white Inhabitance which you approach from the [word illegible] Road. The Grave is on the other side of the fence up the first family yard next the Road. The man that buried him goes by the name of Abrams.

Although we have nothing to support this, it is our belief that Captain Daggett presented the log to Joseph's mother, Hannah (Luce) Manter, when he returned to the Vineyard, faced with the difficult duty of telling her that her son was dead.

Hannah's only other son, Henry, was a whaling master. Some years later, he took the log, with its instructions for finding the grave, with him on a whaling voyage to the Pacific. He planned to go to Tahiti and pay his respects to his brother. Be-

fore taking the log, we believe he carefully removed those three pages and gave them to his mother to treasure. They were her son's last words.

Nearly seven years after his brother's death, Captain Manter, master of the whaleship *Pocahontas* of Holmes Hole, arrived at Tahiti. His visit adds a final paragraph to our story:<sup>54</sup>

May 2, 1845. Henry Manter Arived at Tahita but found the grave of his dear Brother had been Covered with trash and the yard had not the appearance I Expected to see, nor had it to traders who had been their several years [before] and after leaving their, I saw the Man that buried him and attended him in his last sickness. The house he died in had been torn down and the French have got a long block of buildings on the same land. all I can say it is a fine, pleasant place to live in if one could have his friends and relatives by his side.

This is all we know about Joseph's death. He had mentioned his illness only twice, both times noting that he was coughing up blood.<sup>55</sup> Soon after they anchored at Tahiti on March 30, 1838, Joseph must have gone ashore. He obviously failed quickly as the paragraph attributed to Captain Daggett suggests that he died between that day and April 17, when *Oscar* sailed away. This would mean that his final illness lasted at the most only two weeks.<sup>56</sup> There was no doctor to treat him. His brother wrote that the man in whose home he died had "buried him and attended him in his last sickness."

In reading and rereading the *Oscar* log, the present writer became very fond of Joseph Manter, a man whose life had been scarred by the death of his 19-year-old wife, Betsey Andrews, and of their first-born child. Joseph tells us very little about himself in the log. But the entry, written two weeks after they sailed from New Bedford provides a hint of his character. It is the entry of August 22, 1836:

To day we have bin from New Bedford 14 days. camp meating begins to day which Makes me allmost home sick to think I cannot be there but every dog must Have his day So I must be contentated.

That was only the second camp meeting held at Wes-

<sup>54</sup> The ship *Pocahontas* was owned by Thomas Bradley of Holmes Hole. She had sailed from the Vineyard May 15, 1844, Henry Manter master, returning July 20, 1846.

<sup>55</sup> Manter used the expressions "raising blood" and "spitting blood."

<sup>56</sup> *Tisbury Vital Records* lists a confused entry for Joseph, even misspelling his name: "Mantor, Joseph, Dec. 16, 1838 [sic. 1837], a. 35. [Joseph D. Manter [h. Betsey], died Dec., 1837, in 34<sup>th</sup> y., from G.R.4."

<sup>52</sup> There are no "barrels" on board a whaler. "Barrel" is a unit of measure - 31 1/2 gallons. Casks, each holding as many as 14 barrels, are used to store the oil. Filled, they weigh about two tons.

<sup>53</sup> The word we have interpreted as "Whaleman" may not be that. What was written is a contraction of a complete word and is difficult to decipher, but "Whaleman" seems likely.



leyan Grove in today's Oak Bluffs. Joseph's strong feelings indicate that he, like many young Vineyarders, had been swept up in the Methodist revival brought on by the preacher, "Reformation John" Adams and others in the 1830s.

Strangely, the other log of this voyage, kept by Joseph Daggett of Holmes Hole, makes no mention his fellow officer Manter's death. Daggett does list eleven other whaleships that were anchored in Tahiti at the time the *Oscar* arrived: five from Nantucket, four from New Bedford and Fairhaven, the other two from Salem and New London. With so many New England ships in the harbor, it would seem likely that Joseph Manter's funeral was attended by a delegation of whalemens.

Let us hope that among them were a few Methodists. That would have pleased Joseph.

### Epilogue

Although our story of the whaling voyage ends with the death of Joseph Manter, the voyage continued. We have, as has been mentioned, a second log of the same voyage kept by Joseph Daggett, who, we believe, was the *Oscar*'s first mate. After leaving Tahiti, for the next eight months the *Oscar* sailed north and west towards Japan. She had much better luck in those waters. By the time *Oscar* arrived in Hawaii in November, the oil of 12 more whales was in her hold – giving her a total of 1401 barrels of sperm oil that would be worth nearly \$50,000 in New Bedford. But she didn't get to take the oil to New England. She was condemned as unseaworthy and her oil-filled casks were loaded aboard other ships for the journey to market.

Our second log keeper, Daggett, after the condemnation, signed on the *Vineyard* for the trip back to Edgartown, arriving there July 8, 1840, with 2200 barrels of sperm oil.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps Captain Daggett of the *Oscar* was also on board, facing the sorrowful task of informing Hannah Manter of her son's death. We have no way of knowing if he was.

After being condemned as unseaworthy by authorities in Honolulu, *Oscar* was repaired and sold to new owners from Long Island. Shortly after that she was sailed to her new home in Sag

Harbor on Long Island, her new home port. Only then had she completed her round-the-world "voige."

In later years, she made two South Atlantic whaling voyages, one of which was cut short by a mutiny. Then in 1849 she was hired by a group of Argonauts to take them from New York to the California gold fields. The Society has a log that was kept on that voyage and we hope to publish it in a future issue.

From California, she went back awhaling where her bad luck continued. Her captain was killed by a whale on a voyage to the North Pacific. In her final whaling voyage, she was considerably damaged by fire while in Honolulu.

It does seem that *Oscar* was a hard-luck vessel.



*May 2<sup>d</sup> 1845 Henry Manter arrived at Tahiti.  
He found the grave of his dear Brother had  
been covered with weeds and the yard had  
not the appearance I expected to see nor  
had it to Manter who had been there several  
years and after living there I saw the stone  
that buried him and attended him in his  
last sickness the house he died in had  
been torn down and the French have got  
a long block of building on the same  
land all I can say it is a fine pleasant  
place to live in if one could have his  
friends and relatives by his side*

Capt. Henry Manter, our log keeper's younger brother, wrote this conclusion to the log after visiting the Tahiti grave in 1845, seven years after his brother died there.

<sup>57</sup> From Jeremiah Pease Dairy, MVHS archives.

## The Two Logs Themselves

We have, as mentioned earlier, two logbooks of the same Oscar voyage. One was kept by Joseph Manter (the one used in our article); the other was kept by Joseph Daggett. Donor of the Manter log was Mrs. Daniel (Lillian) Manter in 1975; Mr. and Mrs. Everett Whiting gave us the Daggett log in 1965.

In appearance, they are almost identical. The one kept by Daggett has more pages than Manter's. Both are about 8 inches wide and 12¾ inches high. The spines of both are leather-covered, as are the corners of the covers. The paper is a high-quality, heavy stock and after 165 years, many under poor conditions, is still in excellent condition. The ink, too, has survived well.

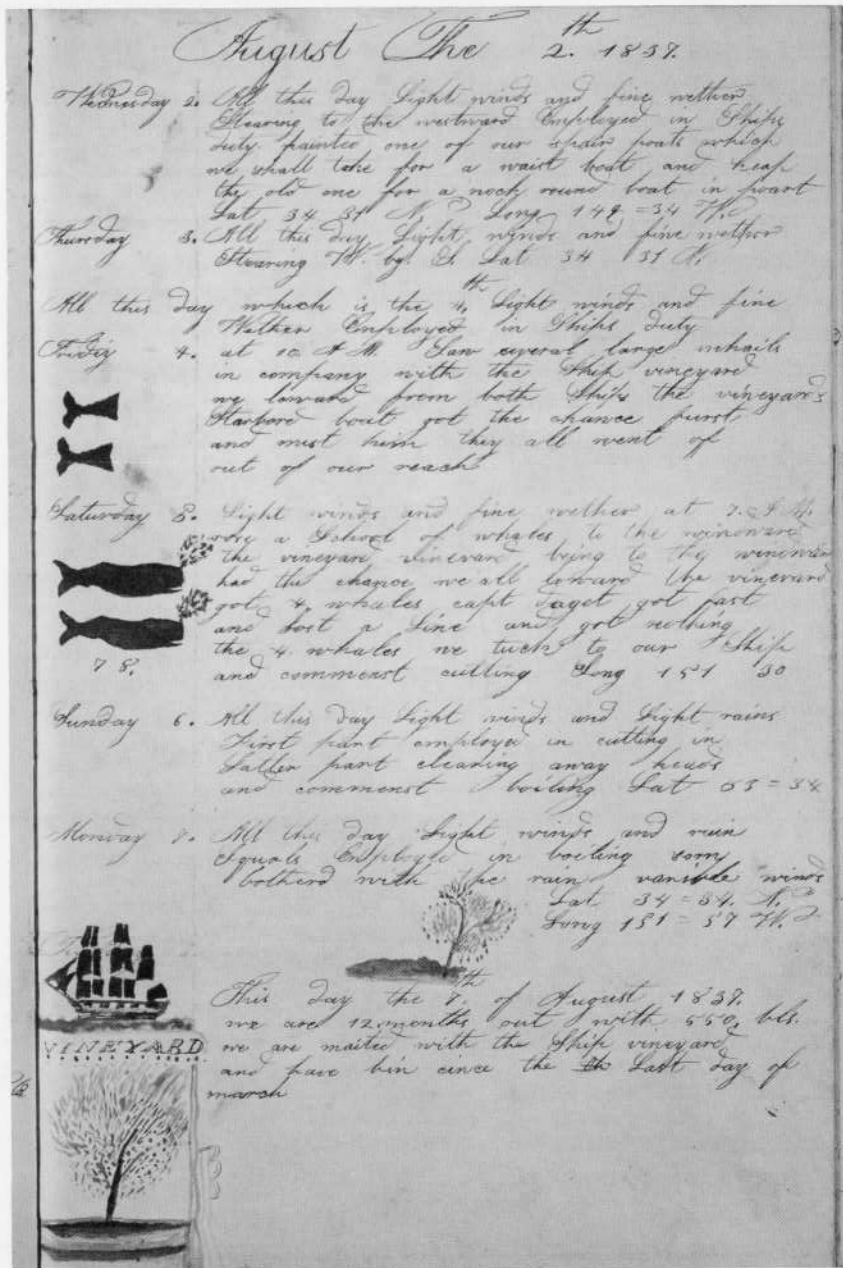
The icons used to indicate whales killed or lost and ships "spoke" seem to have been made by the same wooden stamps. The individual images vary slightly, but the differences probably are due to the inking and pressure used by the log keeper.

Daggett's entries are formal, providing little that is not "official business." While Manter is not glib, he does write more freely. We have assumed that Daggett was the first mate and, if so, his log entries probably had to be approved by the captain. One hint of that is when the Spanish ladies came on board one Sunday afternoon with only the captain and the officers present, Manter mentions the visit, Daggett does not.

Handwriting in both is reasonably legible; Manter's is somewhat better. His spelling, however, is far worse. Daggett inserted no freehand drawings in his log except for a watercolor map of the harbor at Chinkutang, Mexico, on the first page. It is not clear why he did that, unless something memorable occurred there. His entries provide no clues.

Manter several times decorated pages with sketches of trees (see opposite page). Each time they anchored he drew in the margin an anchor with its line attached (usually in color).

Both kept in the back of their logs a running record of whales killed by each of the four boats: starboard, larboard, waist and bow. The number of barrels of oil obtained from each whale is also recorded. This is the usual logbook practice.



An artistic page in Manter's log. Trees are watercolors: red, yellow, green, brown and black. Whale spouts are red; the ship Vineyard sails on blue-green water.

Romantics will prefer the Manter log book because of the poems that Joseph's brother, Capt. Henry Manter, added to it. He wrote them while on the *Pocahontas* during the voyage on which he visited Joseph's grave. The poems show the human side of a whaling master, contrary to the character usually described in fiction. Henry appears as a sensitive, thoughtful person with deep and heartfelt emotions. The titles of the poems:

*The Sailor's Thoughts of Home while at Sea.*

"At sea Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> 1845, on board ship *Pocahontas*."

*The Beggar Boy's Basket.*

No date of writing given.

Untitled.

"Written on board Ship *Pocahontas*, April 19<sup>th</sup> 1845, on her Passage from French Rock Toward Tahiti."

*A Sailor's Farewell to his Mother.*

"At sea on board ship *Pocahontas*, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> 1845."

*My Native Land.*

No date given.

*The Welcome Back.*

"Written at sea Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> 1845, on board Ship *Pocahontas*."

*An Evening Thought.*

No date given.

*Weep Not for the Dead.*

"Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> 1845."

*Lines addressed by a sister to her Brother about leaving Home for a 3 years*

*Whaling Voyage.*

"Taken from a Paper Printed at the Sandwich Islands, copied by H. Manter, April 7<sup>th</sup> 1846."

A large number of pages, presumably blank, were ripped out of the Manter log in addition to the three sheets, precisely removed, that are discussed in the article. Daggett's book has few blank pages. After Oscar was condemned in Hawaii, he shipped on the *Vineyard* to return to Edgartown and kept a log of her voyage in the Oscar logbook. On arrival, he added a religious poem, "Speak Ye, the Lord."

One year later, he went awhaling on the bark *Chase* and used most of the remaining pages in the book to record that voyage, ending June 30, 1842. Thus, in the one book there are logs of three voyages: *Oscar's*, *Vineyard's* and *Chase's*.



## When Gay Headers First Got the Vote They Changed the Island Forever

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

IT WAS a day to be remembered. But it has been forgotten. On November 4, 1879, for the first time, the men of Gay Head were allowed to vote. Their ancestors had been on the Island for centuries, but as Indians on a "plantation" they had been denied the vote until the plantation was made a town.

When the 24 men voting in Gay Head marked their first ballots, they voted unanimously and their votes elected one man and made certain a narrow win for another, bringing a stunning victory to a rebellion against Edgartown's control of the county – control that had gone on for years. At issue was the petition of Cottage City (Oak Bluffs) to secede from "Old Town."

The election was close. It brought out the largest percentage of voter participation in history and precipitated an acrimonious struggle that had to be resolved in the State House, where the election was ruled legal. Within weeks, a bill was passed making Cottage City a separate town. Residents of the northern section of Edgartown had finally won independence – thanks, in large part, to those 24 first-time voters on Gay Head.

The story is complicated. Before 1880, there were only three towns on the Island: Edgartown, at the east; Tisbury, in the center; and Chilmark, at the west. In addition, on the Indian Lands at Gay Head there were non-voting "persons of color," wards of the state.

Edgartown, the largest town, was the county seat, enjoying the patronage and political power of such. But one section of Edgartown didn't share in that power. It was Eastville, the northern part, separated from "Old Town" by several miles of mostly uninhabited land. In that settlement on the eastern shore of Holmes Hole harbor in 1850 were 30 families whose interests were with Holmes Hole, only a mile or two away by water. To get there by land meant a six-mile trip around the La-



goon. For years, the residents had asked for a bridge across the narrow opening of the Lagoon so the long ride would be unnecessary, but Old Town voters refused, as they regularly refused most requests from Eastville.

Each year, Eastville residents became more rebellious. To placate them, Edgartown voters agreed to build the bridge, bringing them closer to Holmes Hole and even less interested in Old Town. The bridge also brought an increase in population as families moved from Holmes Hole. In one year, 1879 to 1880, Eastville grew from 115 to 162 families with a population of 570.

Even greater growth was taking place just to the east, around the Methodist campground. Off-Islanders were buying land in the developments there, creating a building boom unlike any in history, before or since. Houses, hotels, stores and livery stables were going up like weeds. By 1879, there were 1106 tax-paying buildings in the area, including 18 hotels and nearly 50 stores. That total did not include the cottages on the tax-exempt campground. The taxable value of the new buildings was more than \$1,200,000, two-thirds of the total valuation of all Edgartown. Although they paid most of the taxes, Eastville residents argued, they got little in return.

Their dissatisfaction became even greater when Old Town voted to put \$15,000 into a railway designed to carry summer visitors from the steamboat wharf in Oak Bluffs<sup>1</sup> to a development at South Beach in Katama. It was, everybody knew, an attempt to divert business to Old Town, where the decline of whaling had brought hard times. Eastville folks asked: Why should we pay to send our customers to Edgartown?

There were other complaints. One was about fire protection. Eastville regularly asked the town for a fire engine. They had only a small chemical engine, useless against a major fire. Again, Edgartown voters denied the request, but agreed to send them an old hand-pumper engine they no longer needed, having just bought a new, state-of-the-art Button fire engine. The old

<sup>1</sup> The northern section of Edgartown had various names. The old settlement along Holmes Hole harbor (where the hospital is today) was Eastville. The new developments, mostly summer houses, to the east were called Oak Bluffs. The campground area was known as Vineyard Grove, the name of the post-office. The entire section, encompassing all these, was known as Cottage City.

pumper was so large and unwieldy that Cottage City folks called it "The Elephant."

The latest complaint was that Old Town was using tax money to send lawyers and officials to Boston to lobby against Eastville's petition to secede. Angry residents asked: Why should we have to pay to defeat our own petition?

These actions so antagonized Cottage City property owners (most of them non-voting summer residents) that, despite Old Town's efforts, they introduced legislation to make Cottage City independent into the General Court of Massachusetts. In two close votes, the bills failed to pass, principally because the Island's own representative opposed them. That representative was Benjamin Clough of Tisbury who, Eastville folks said, was "in the pocket" of Samuel Osborn Jr., of Edgartown.

Osborn was the Island's political leader as well as its major businessman. Although not an elected official, he controlled most of what took place in the town and county through economic power and his oratory. He opposed division. An independent Cottage City was impossible with him running things.

Then, a star appeared. Not in the heavens, but on the streets of Eastville. It was the *Cottage City Star*, a weekly newspaper created "to accomplish the incorporation of Cottage City."<sup>2</sup> Financed by businessmen and summer residents, its first issue came out on May 22, 1879, with Rev. E. H. Hatfield, a Methodist minister, as editor. We know little about him. He may have been one of the ministers who lived on the Campground. He became an excellent newspaperman. In the first issue, shortly after the attempt to secede failed, he editorialized:

It may be admitted that the failure to secure the division of the town of Edgartown has been a serious drawback to all our interests . . . but we accept our fate with the best grace we can command and will wait for the better days that are coming and while we wait we will not forget that "eternal vigilance is the only price at which liberty can be secured."

Samuel Osborn became his prime target. Hardly a week went by without a paragraph about "dictator" Osborn. The Republican Convention's choice of Beriah T. Hillman for Representative and Benjamin Clough for County Commissioner was

<sup>2</sup> That was not given as its purpose at the start of publication. Only on its sixth anniversary did Editor Howes Norris acknowledge that as its real purpose.

one of "Samuel Osborn's edicts," Hatfield wrote, adding, "voters of Dukes County, will you longer submit to the dictation of Samuel Osborn and his followers?"

During the summer, meetings were held in Oak Bluffs to organize the effort to defeat "Osborn's edicts." Another petition for division, signed by more than one hundred residents, was sent to the State House. The first signature was that of Samuel Butler<sup>3</sup>, who had led the battle from the start:

... the chief petitioner for division, now about 87 years of age, [signed it] with a firm hand, without the use of glasses. Mr. Butler hopes to live in the town of Cottage City yet. May his wish be gratified.

Then, only a month before the election, Reverend Hatfield retired as editor. The newspaper gave no explanation:

Rev. E. H. Hatfield retires as Editor and Mr. Howes Norris assumes the entire responsibility of its Management.

The association of gentlemen who originated the paper having accomplished their purpose to establish a newspaper in Cottage City, and having transferred their interest to Mr. Norris, the "Vineyard Publishing Association" passes out of existence.

The new editor was former Dukes County Sheriff Howes Norris, who had lived in Eastville most of his life.<sup>4</sup> An active Republican in state and county, he had long been a force in the move to separate Cottage City from Edgartown.

When he took over, the *Star* was a splendid weekly newspaper, far better than the moribund *Vineyard Gazette*, which always referred to it as "the so-called *Cottage City Star*." In turn, the *Star* called the *Gazette's* editor the servant of Sam Osborn. Its circulation was growing because it covered the entire Island (although Edgartown received little attention, except politically), even running news columns from Gay Head and, in summer, from the fishing settlement on Nomans Land.

Norris took over with the election close at hand. At stake was the office of Representative to the General Court in Boston, the man essential to passage of any division legislation. Norris and the divisionists focused on that race. Beriah T. Hillman, the Republican nominee, was opposed to division. The

second office Cottage City supporters wanted to win was County Commissioner. The Republicans were running Benjamin Clough of Tisbury, a former County Representative. Both men, the *Star* editorialized, were beholden to Samuel Osborn:

Mr. Beriah T. Hillman of Chilmark . . . was nominated for Representative. . . he is the candidate of Samuel Osborn and a vote for him means a continuation of oppression for the residents, as well as the non-residents, of Cottage City.

Another act of the Convention was the nomination of Benj. Clough, Esq., . . . for County Commissioner. This is in payment for past services to Mr. Osborn and entirely contrary to the wish and judgment of the people of Capt. Clough's own town.

Voters of Dukes County will you longer submit to the dictation of Samuel Osborn and his followers?

A "Mass Meeting" of voters at the Agricultural Hall in West Tisbury was, the *Star* reported, attended by 250 voters from all parts of the Island – excepting Old Town – determined to "defeat the candidates of this clique of designing politicians." The resolution it passed cited these complaints: the continuing control of county offices by the "clique"; the failure to provide justice to taxpayers of the "northern section of Edgartown"; and the leasing of the Great Ponds to private interests "to monopolize the fisheries of the said Ponds" that would "take employment from many needy people."

The gathering nominated Stephen Flanders of Chilmark for Representative, Lorenzo Smith of Tisbury for County Commissioner and Edwin A. Luce of Tisbury for County Treasurer.

Ten men from each village were named to a Rallying Committee to get out the vote. Chosen were men with well-known names, even today: Cottle, Bodfish, Mayhew, Luce, Rotch, among the Tisbury men; Dias, Norton, Luce and Vincent from Cottage City; Flanders, Mayhew, Tilton and West in Chilmark; and Cooper, Vanderhoop, Jeffers, Rose and Smalley of Gay Head. The Convention adjourned with "three rousing cheers for its nominees."

Reacting to the uprising, Samuel Osborn called a Citizens' Meeting in Old Town. The *Star* was not invited, but reported that about 75 men attended. Speakers, in addition to Samuel Osborn, were Joseph Thaxter Pease, Rev. Hebron Vincent and C. G. M. Dunham, all leading Edgartown citizens.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Butler was the son of William, who had leased the famous oak grove to the Methodists for the first camp meeting in 1835.

<sup>4</sup> The Norris family was very active in Eastville business, owning the wharf at the end of New York Avenue where the steamers from New York unloaded their passengers.

A resolution was passed criticizing Eastville residents for not seeking an "amicable settlement" to the division question. Instead, they had established a newspaper in which "there has been an almost continual fulmination of abuse against the town and its citizens."

In his last fulmination before the election, Editor Norris urged all to vote for "The People's Ticket." Interspersed in the news columns were these exhortations:

*Vote the People's Ticket and strike a blow at the one man power.*

*Let the people work, in season and out of season,  
from now until Tuesday night in behalf of  
the People's Candidates.*

*Don't let campaign lies deter you  
from voting the People's Ticket.  
Spurn them.*

*Vote the People's Ticket early in the day  
and get your neighbor to do it too.*

The voting was heavy, 858 ballots, the largest turnout in history. The Rallying Committees on both sides had done their jobs well. In Old Town, they had even enlisted the help of women – a major breakthrough:

The first time the citizens of Edgartown ever witnessed the sight of ladies (?) publicly electioneering and distributing votes was on Tuesday. It showed how desperate the leaders had become.

The People's Party, as Norris named it, had a great victory, electing two of its three candidates: Stephen Flanders won for Representative over Beriah T. Hillman by 40 votes; Lorenzo Smith defeated Benjamin Clough for County Commissioner by 4 votes; while its third candidate, Capt. Edwin A. Luce, lost his race for County Treasurer by only 20 votes, 15 of them coming from the Elizabeth Islands.<sup>5</sup>

The losing Republicans demanded that the Gay Head votes be thrown out. The notice of election, they claimed, had been improperly worded and posted. Editor Howes was scornful:

We hear that Capt. Clough proposes to endeavor to have the Gay Head vote thrown out for an informality in the warrant for the election. However this is, the election is an honest one. Capt. Clough is not the choice of the voters and

<sup>5</sup> The editor stated that the anti-division vote from across Vineyard Sound was due to the fact that *Star* was not being read on "Forbes's island."

any but a desperate man would overlook a trifling informality, if there is one, on the part of this young town, officered by our well-meaning colored friends.

Clough's petition went to the State House where the Committee on Elections ruled the vote valid. Clough had lost. His second complaint claimed that 12 Tisbury votes were illegal because of late payment of poll taxes. It was also thrown out.

The *Star* had won! It headlined its election story in large bold type: "SOUND THE HOGAG! The People Victorious! Glorious News." But not a word of gratitude for the Gay Head votes. Lots of words about the "clique":

The people will not submit to the unreasonable and domineering rule of Mr. Samuel Osborn and his clique of syncophantic followers. They are tired and worn out with enduring the political outrages imposed on them by this man and his willing victims.

Two weeks later, the winners held what the *Star* headlined as "A Rejoicing." A large gathering from all over the Island celebrated at the Vineyard Grove House, where only a few weeks earlier Edgartown's Health Department had declared its water contaminated. The *Star* had called the ruling political. The owner of the hotel, Joseph Dias, was an active divisionist. New samples of the water were sent to Boston in sealed bottles and it was declared safe to drink.

A torchlight parade and fireworks preceded dinner. As the parade passed the office of the *Star*, the marchers "gave three rousing cheers." Nobody cheered for the 24 Gay Head voters who had contributed so much to the success. No mention of them appears in the news account. They probably were not even present at the party. Those were the days of strict segregation.

Norris had bigger things on his mind than thanking Gay Head for its votes. He ended his story this way:

We wait impatiently a few short months the larger and more enjoyable occasion in store for us – the celebration of the incorporation of the town of Cottage City.<sup>6</sup>

Old Town politicians searched for the cause of their downfall and, unlike the *Star*, they focused on those 24 voters in Gay Head. Driving home the point was a parody of a popular

<sup>6</sup> After the debate over the election results had been settled, the legislature immediately passed a bill making Cottage City a separate town. The Governor signed it and it became law on February 17, 1880. The Osborn forces in Old Town were so demoralized by the secessionist victory, they did not even attend the hearings on the bill.



minstrel-show song<sup>7</sup> that was being circulated in Old Town. Howes Norris got a copy and rushed it into print:

#### STOLEN THUNDER

*The ditty which we publish below is an Edgartown production of the Hillman-Mayhew-Clough clique . . . the original [is] in the Nursery Rhymes, from which it is an attempt at parody at the expense of our worthy colored friends . . . We hope our Gay Head friends will read this "poem."*

#### GAY HEAD GLEANINGS.

One little nigger feeling rather blue,  
Sent for another nig to vote for Flanders too.  
Three little niggers thought they needed more  
Sent for another nig and that made four.  
Four little niggers feared their number small,  
Beckoned to another nig just within call.  
Six little niggers standing in the hall,  
Shouted for the seventh nig as loud as they could bawl.  
Seven little niggers knew their cause was great,  
Called for another nig, and that made eight.  
Eight little niggers standing in a line,  
Called for another nig, and that made nine.  
Nine little niggers – neither voting men,  
Called for another nig and that made ten.  
Up stepped Ichabod now to applaud,  
And praise the little nigs who helped in the fraud.  
We supposed that the black cloud had now passed o'er  
When in stepped Norris with half a thousand more.  
Now that the voting time has all passed by,  
The secess no more for the nig will sigh.  
Some have gone to their homes near the Sunset Heights,  
While others sit down by the STAR'S pale light.<sup>8</sup>

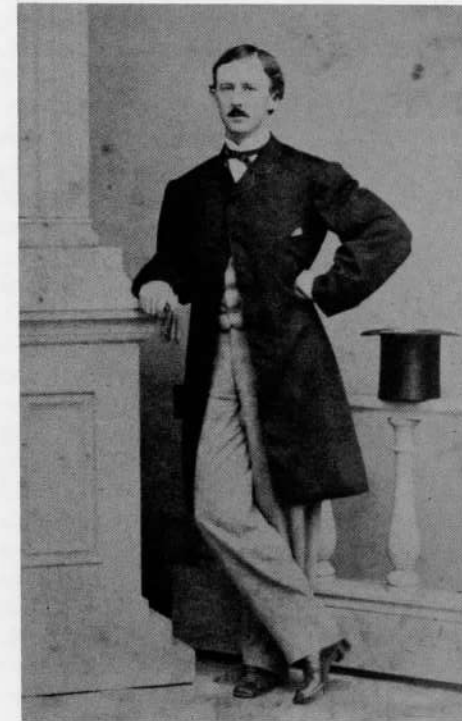
Those "nigs," in the ugly word of the rhyme, had for years been described as incapable of running a town on their own. They now had proved that they could. Today, Gay Head is called Aquinnah, its citizens preferring the Indian name to that

<sup>7</sup> The original song, "Ten Little Nigger Boys," later became a nursery rhyme and "Injun boys" replaced the insulting "Nigger boys." The last line, "And then there were none," more recently became the title of an Agatha Christie mystery.

<sup>8</sup> Ichabod was Ichabod Norton Luce of Eastville, a leader of the rebellion and a strong critic of Samuel Osborn. The Norris was Howes Norris. The word "secess" refers to those, like Luce and Norris, who had fought so hard for secession. The rhymer correctly forecast their brief interest in Gay Head residents. They soon forgot about them.

given it by the English. In their first election after becoming a town, those voters of Gay Head had voted en masse to help create another new town, Cottage City (now Oak Bluffs). Not long after that, a third new town was created when West Tisbury was separated from Tisbury (Vineyard Haven). The Island's geographical transformation was complete.

The long domination by Old Town's power group ended with the creation of those three new towns. There have been many elections since the 24 men of Gay Head voted for the first time, but never would that town's votes be as significant as those cast on November 4, 1879.



Howes Norris in his 20s. He was 38 when he led the rebellion that made Cottage City a separate town. He never saw his father, a whaling master, who was murdered by mutineers in the Pacific soon after he was born. Uncle Shaw Norris of Eastville took him in after his mother was killed by lightning in 1851.

## Documents

A Running Account  
Of  
Matters & Things

by HENRY BAYLIES

HENRY BAYLIES and his ailing wife Hattie, are in Mississippi, preparing to return to Martha's Vineyard. They came south to cure her disease, which has been variously and vaguely diagnosed. The Vineyard doctors thought that the southern climate would help. It has not.

To add to their problems, Henry has been unable to find employment. An ordained Methodist minister, he has given up the ministry because of a throat problem. He cannot make the long and vigorous sermons expected from Methodist preachers. He became an educator and was principal of the Dukes County Academy in Tisbury (West Tisbury) and later headmaster of Edgartown's first high school.

He briefly ran a private school in Mississippi, but abandoned it because of a shortage of pupils. He blames his lack of success on his northern roots. Even some of his southern friends confirm this.

Having failed in both efforts, he and Hattie will go home, returning by way of river boats, canal boats, railway and finally the coastal voyage from New York to the Vineyard, an impossible trip, it would seem for someone as sick as Harriett.

We plan in our next issue to publish his account of that journey, a long, arduous expedition that took exactly one month.

In his final days in the south, he wrote at length his thoughts about some personal habits of southern women. They are not exactly what one might have expected.

•

Monday, March 31, 1851 (*continued*). I preached last night to a very respectable evening congregation. Not having had sufficient opportunity for preparation & not feeling very bright, etc., I felt when I had concluded that my effort was nearly if not quite a failure. Still the entire congregation was very attentive throughout the sermon of 55 minutes. I prayed earnestly it might do them good. . .

I have learned, or rather had fully corroborated, a few statements about "Whitening" & "Dipping." Sister Neely - Julia - says that all the ladies in the South use whiting, flour or starch or something of the kind, upon their faces. One beautiful young lady I was advising the other day literally covers her face with a coating which might be peeled off. I have not infrequently observed ladies who called on us with the whiting thick on their faces, in their eyebrows & hair. One lady (Mrs. M. J.) had a pure white spot on her cheek which I supposed was a pit or scar filled up with starch, whiting or what not. Even in church they have their "starch bags" with them & when they kneel down at prayers take them out & apply freely to their beautiful faces!

When Sister N. [Neely] was a girl she says she has herself applied the Bag to the faces of other girls kneeling beside her! All this is undeniable fact. One of our Northern young ladies, Miss Sally Chapin, is not in the habit of using the bag & of consequence her face shines rather more than whiting would allow.

Rev. Bro. N., [Neely] D.D., one day said to his wife, "Why does Sally grease her face? She would be a very handsome girl if she did not grease her face." His wife informed him she did not grease her face whereupon he affirmed, "She must

grease her face & do you tell her not to do it."

Such is the unvarying custom of using the "starch bag." The consequence is the despoiling the skin of its beautiful charms.

A worse habit than this among the Southern ladies & far more injurious to their beauty & health is the extremely filthy practice of "Dipping." Dipping is eating snuff. The lady procures a twig of some tree or bush - wild cherry, I believe is preferred - chews one end of it into a kind of brush, plunges it into her snuff box or bottle & then rubs it backward and forward on her teeth. Thus the process is continued, dipping, chewing or rubbing till the desired intoxication is produced. Young ladies often get together in company of four, five or more & have a social "Dip." One in the center holds the bag of snuff & all dip out of it. These gatherings over the snuff are said to be very fruitful of slander. Sometimes, as a physician told me, they dip till they are actually stupid or drunk. This habit, in Columbus at least, is confined principally to the aristocracy I am told or to the upper 10,000. The probability is all engage in it. Sister Neely informs me that ladies of the first rank visit her who keep in their mouths during their calls these brushes - short-ones, fully impregnated with snuff - thus to keep up the stimulus! If one with the habit of dipping leaves it off a few days she is often sick with fainting, etc.

In Columbia, Tenn., a lady of great beauty, wealth & of the first rank in society, one day called on her (Sister N.'s) mother & fell immediately on entering the door. She was taken up & placed in bed. As soon as she began to recover she asked for snuff, which furnished, immediately restored her. She

explained that she had been making several calls but thought she could make the additional one before returning home to dip. She was away from her snuff longer than she was in the habit of being, hence the fainting.

While Sister N., resided in Greensboro, Green Co., Ala., she was one day in company with others reckoning how many ladies in the place did not dip. They were able to reckon only one that did not dip! This young lady called on Sist. N., a day or two after when she said to her, "Well, Mary, you are the only lady in G., that does not dip."

Poor Mary blushed & let the secret out. She too dipped! Greensboro is quite a respectably sized village in Ala., with very intelligent, wealthy inhabitants.

The effect of the "dipping" it is said is quite disastrous to health. To the skin at first it imparts a delicate white complexion, but after protracted use, a decided yellow. Several instances have been related to me where persons have resorted to this practice to drown their sorrows, the same as the drunkard resorts to his cups.

All this is the truth. I have it from so many reputable & Christian persons that no room is left me for doubt. I think it is a general custom in the South yet prevailing more in some areas than others.

Bro. (Col.) Geo. Harris called on us this morning. I had a long conversation with him upon Slavery as it exists & its probable issue, etc. I elicited no new information of especial interest. Bro. H. has proved himself a firm friend to me since I came to Columbus & I shall ever remember him with Judge Clayton & Rev. Bro. Neely as among my truest friends in C. [Columbus] & in the South.

April 1", Tuesday. . . On going to the river there appeared little prospect of any



conveyance to Mobile. The river was low & the boats due last evening had not arrived.

I had just returned from the river again in the P.M. when the *Cuba* arrived. The Capt. thought he should be ready to leave for Mobile about dark, but at dark he had not left Columbus for Plymouth, a "landing" 3 or 4 miles upriver.

By extra exertion we got on board with our baggage just as she left Columbus for Plymouth & well for us that we did for she did not return to Columbus till after midnight – rather an unpleasant hour to be getting on board a steamer especially at such low stage of the River.

Bro. Neely very kindly procured a carriage for our conveyance – Sister Mrs. L. Harris's -- thus saving us from \$1.50 to \$2.50. Dearest Hattie walked from the house to the carriage & from the carriage to the Boat. This is certainly a great improvement from carrying her in my arms or conveyance in a chair by strength of a couple [of] waiters. We have great reason for thanksgiving & praise.

This morning Dr. C. Wesley Malone came up to Bro. Neely's & vaccinated the whole family, ourselves included. I prefer such trivial precautions either in danger or out of danger. This is the fourth time I have been vaccinated.

During the forenoon Bro. Lewis Green, a Carpenter, called to see me & offered me his fine brick house with furniture & servant as an inducement to remain in Columbus. I could occupy it four or five months, perhaps longer, gratuitously. He had been conversing with Bros. Geo. Harris & Banks who expressed great anxiety I should remain & he proposed this as an inducement & certainly a very fine one. Yet as Sister Julia said, we can not live on a house & servants. We prayed over the subject, asking direction of God.

During the day, Bro. Green advised with gentlemen relative to my remaining – among others with Col. Topp, a lawyer. I likewise did the same. They are of the opinion that the violent prejudice excited in the community through the influence of Maj. Blewett on account of my being so lately from the North, can not be done away & it would be quite impracticable for me to attempt further. Following this advice & my own accordsant convictions, I concluded to follow out my plan & leave.

This was most assuredly a most noble offer on the part of Bro. Green, a man with whom I had never spoken till this morning. Bro. G. buried his wife last summer, hence the vacancy of his residence.

I have left many firm friends in Columbus, Miss., whose memory shall never perish. Rev. Neely, has been a Brother indeed & Alice [Julia?] Neely, a Sister.

Bro. N. would have accompanied us to the Boat but could not as he had a weekly prayer meeting with the colored people. He is very deeply devoted to the interests of the Slaves. We parted with many heart throbs of sorrow. We meet in Heaven.

Bro. N. assures me he shall visit the North, probably next Summer, i.e., a year hence. Bro. N. is a slave holder but if there is a Christian on earth he is one. Should he visit me & I should be in charge of a Church I have pledged to him he shall preach in my pulpit & I will hear him if not another person will. Amen.

The foregoing record is written amid the jarrings of the steamer & to me even is hardly legible.

*Henry and Harriet are now starting their month-long journey back to the Vineyard.*

Publication of the Henry Baylies journal has been made possible by the generosity of Joanne Coffin Clark.

## In Memoriam Barbara Rowe and Richard Hagen

The Society has lost two valuable friends during recent months. Both were dedicated volunteers, devoted to the goals of this organization. Both have left memorials that will be constant reminders of them.

Barbara B. Rowe served on the Board of Directors of the Society, but didn't limit her role to attending meetings and making decisions. She wanted to do things – things that would preserve Island tradition. And she did.

The work no doubt she would most want to be remembered for is the Colonial Herb Garden just outside the kitchen door of the Cooke House. She and Mrs. Lizanne Chapin created this garden to show us how colonial housewives managed to bring tasty dishes to the table in the days before packaged condiments. For years, she and Mrs. Chapin devoted themselves to making their garden grow – and grow it does, and grow it will.

We will never walk past that garden with its profusion of herbs without remembering Barbara Rowe.

Richard Hagen, known to us as Dick, left a lasting memorial of a different kind. For many years, he and his wife, Norma, worked in the Huntington Library, putting many of our genealogical files into an organized format. With the help of genealogist Catherine Mayhew and her husband, Donald, files of the largest Island families were put into a computer so they can be sorted and printed out for library use. These indexes are a blessing. As Kay Mayhew has noted, it's a rare day when she or some researcher doesn't refer to Dick's work. In the indexes are thousands of names of such Vineyard families as Mayhew, Luce, Norton and Pease, sorted by first names. Anyone who has ever tried to find a Luce or a Mayhew or any member of the other large Island families, knowing only the first name, will understand how much time such an index saves. Dick's work lives on.

We extend our sympathies to the families of Barbara and Richard. We have lost two dedicated members, but what they left us means they will not be forgotten.



*Whales Taken Onboard the  
Ship Onward of Fairhaven Capt. Dagg  
Master*

*Starboard Boat*



*Starboard Boat*



*Waist Boat*



*Bow Boat*



On the last page of his log, Joseph Manter (as was the custom) kept a running account of whales as they were killed. After he began spitting up blood in February 1838, he stopped adding red blood spouts to the whale icons (see page 119).