Windermere
of 1896
“A Paradise Indeed,
A Very Eden!”

The Prophetess
And New Bethlehem
by HARRY R. BUTMAN

Whaling: The Vineyard Connection

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Four Years in the Pacific Aboard Virginia
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The Baptists Take a Firm Stand:
“Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery”
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Printed at daRosa's in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts.

CORRECTION

On page 100 of the February 2001 issue, it was stated that Henry Manter's first command was the whaleship Pocahontas of Portsmouth, N. H., and that he was only 20 years old at the time. We also stated that he "took her to the South Atlantic for two years and returned with 250 barrels of sperm oil."

We have learned that this is wrong. In Kenneth R. Martin's book, "Heavy Weather and Hard Luck," a recently published history of whaling out of Portsmouth, he writes (p. 59) that the master of the Pocahontas on that voyage was "Benjamin Manter, thirty-nine, of Tisbury on Martha's Vineyard."** On the voyage, they took 1450 barrels of whale oil and 250 barrels of sperm and 10,000 pounds of whalebone, according to the Martin book, which draws on primary-source material held in the Thayer-Cumings Library in Portsmouth.

So our description of that voyage that used data from Starch's history of American whaling and Whaling Masters, was wrong. The Pocahontas master was Benjamin not the young Henry Manter. We regret our mistake. The ship did return to Portsmouth with only 250 barrels of sperm oil, as we reported, but Captain Manter had sold all the whale oil and bone in Brazil. He then took aboard a cargo of coffee to be carried back to Portsmouth and sold.

*Benjamin Manter, born in Tisbury in 1797, married Almira Arheam in 1825. In 1850, they lived in Chilmark. We find no close family relationship to Henry Manter.

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Vol. 43, No. 1 © 2001 M.V.H.S. August 2001

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The Dukes County Intelligencer is published quarterly by the Martha's Vineyard Historical Society (formerly the Dukes County Historical Society). Subscription is by membership in the Society. Copies of all issues are available at the Society's library, Cooke and School Streets, Edgartown, Massachusetts, or by mail at the address below.

Membership in the Society is solicited. Applications should be sent to P.O. Box 1310, Edgartown, MA, 02539. Telephone: 508 627 4441. Fax: 508 627 4436. Author's queries and manuscripts for this journal should be addressed there also, care of the Editor.

Articles in The Intelligencer do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society or its officers. Every effort is made to confirm dates, names and events in published articles, but we cannot guarantee total accuracy.

ISSN 0418 1379
The Prophetess
And New Bethlehem

by HARRY R. BUTMAN

I PREACHED MY FIRST SERMON in 1925 and in the 76 years of my ministry I have had a number of experiences that give the lie to the notion that the pastor's life is humdrum and placid. I have been in situations that were exciting, humorous, tragic and of life-changing significance.

But in the category of the outre and the bizarre, nothing ever came close to what befell me when I was the fledgling incumbent of the pulpit of the Edgartown Federated Church in the early 1930s. Then I had occasion to be smitten of the Lord by having in my congregation a woman named Madalyn Jasper. She was not to the manor born, being a fiery Spaniard, adopted in childhood by a devout and memorable woman of the church.

In those days, there was a sharp theological division in the newly-formed Federated Church, the Baptists being very conservative in their beliefs while the Congregationalists were much more liberal in doctrine. I was suspect, and with reason, of being in the camp of the ungodly, but my position was easily tenable until Madalyn became converted. No ordinary conversion this: the Lord himself appeared and announced that Madalyn was his Prophetess, to be heard and heeded by all — and especially by a young pastor of the free-thinking Congregational cast.

In a short time the powerful gravitation of her madness — for madness it literally was, as you shall read — gathered around her a group of women whose common sense was overshadowed by

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1 Not her real name. The author has chosen to use a pseudonym.

2 The Federated Church was formed in the late 1920s, combining the Baptist and Congregational congregations.

REV. HARRY R. BUTMAN lives in California and continues to be active in his 97th year. He was the 3rd pastor of Edgartown's Federated Church, serving from 1932 to 1937, during which time he experienced the events he describes in this article.
their piety. At once, the Prophetess began to utter oracles. God had told her in a dream that the three Edgartown churches were to disband forthwith and form one organization and the three pastors, including Father Smith of St. Elizabeth’s Roman Catholic Church, were to surrender the spiritual leadership of the town to the Prophetess.

This richly nutty announcement led me to express, overbluntly I realize now, my opinion of her sanity, to which the Prophetess frostily replied that atheists and false shepherds could not be expected to obey God’s commands.

But one taunt of mine hit home: How come the potential ecumenical pastor wasn’t a member of any church?

At this, she announced her desire to unite with the Baptist branch of the Federated Church, in which the candidates had to appear before a committee for examination as to their fitness to become members. So Madalyn, with her teenage son and her docile spouse, who was the church sexton, appeared before the committee consisting (unfortunately for me) of her adoptive mother plus two saints of the Lord, gentlewomen both.

When it came time for me to interrogate the applicant, I confessed that I was willing to accept her estimate of me as one not qualified to judge spiritual things and so I would ask her a simple question dealing with the administration of the church, for which I was responsible.

“Mrs. Jasper,” I began, “this church is a spiritual body. It is also a legal and an ecclesiastical body. If you become a member, will you abide by the rules of the church?”

She answered with lofty scorn: “I will do what the Lord tells me to do.”

“Well,” I responded, “in that case I guess I will have to vote not to accept you.”

This was the only time I have ever done such a thing. Of course, the committee overrode me and Madalyn and her family were baptized, not by my unshallowed hands but by the minister of the Vineyard Haven Baptist Church, the Rev. Willard Johnson, who had no record of persecuting saints.

Now I will leap ahead and describe an episode that took place some years after I had left the Federated pastorate. I owned a small summer place in Edgartown where I vacationed, but this was not during vacation time. It was a cold, stormy Christmas Eve. I wanted to spend a bit of time working on my boat, preparing it for spring, but more than that I wanted to see the church pageant that was always put at Christmas.

But when I got to the former Baptist Church\(^1\), where it was

\(^1\) The former Baptist Church is on School Street. For a few years after the Federated Church was formed, it remained church property, but then it was sold and soon was converted into a Masonic Hall. Today, it is a private residence, externally unchanged.
usually presented, the building was unlighted. I entered the dark auditorium — in that day of innocence, churches could be safely left unlocked at all times. The building, ordinarily heated by oak firewood in a hot-air basement furnace, was as cold as a tomb. Puzzled, I hid myself to the Methodist Church a few steps away, where lights were blazing. There, I discovered, sitting in warmth, my glowing former parishioners, watching the Methodist children playing on their sacred histrionics.

As soon as the pageant was over, the Federated parishioners gathered about me on the sidewalk. Indignantly, they told me the story of how they had been shamed before the Philistines (I mean, the Methodists).

God, they told me, had appeared to Madalyn in a vision by night and warned her not to go. The pageants were sinful play-acting and an abomination in His sight. So Madalyn, not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ordered her husband, the church sexton, not to have the church warm that night. He simply let the fire go out at noon. Through the long afternoon, the chill of a northeaster made the sanctuary turn icy and when at six, the pageant players arrived, the room was frigid beyond redemption.

To the consternation of my irate former parishioners, I began to laugh and, in a triumphant I-told-you-so tone, explained: "Do you remember the terms on which Madalyn brought herself and her clan into the synagogue? When I asked her point blank, she said she would not obey you, but God. And she has done just that."

I charitably did not add, "And it serves you right." This reticence should be counted to me for righteousness.

That happened after I had left the Edgartown pastorate. But Madalyn’s summit lunacy, the maddest item of my long and sometimes exotic experience, came while I was the minister of the Edgartown Federated Church.

Dr. Channing Nevin, with whom I regularly played Bach, said to me one night before we plunged into Bach’s “Double Violin Concerto in D Minor” (which he could play and I couldn’t), "What’s the matter with Madalyn Jasper?"

I tapped my forehead significantly.

"Right," he said. "She came to me saying that she was pregnant, but when I examined her, there was nothing to it. She insisted, so I gave her the rabbit test and still nothing doing. She then told me that she was with child by the Holy Ghost and was going to be the Messiah in His Second Coming. It was obvious, she suggested, that the holy event would not be discernible to a medical skeptic like me, but just to be on the safe side, would I attend her at the time of delivery?"

"Yes, I would, I told her," the urbane and grinning doctor said, "a man would be a fool to pass up that kind of obstetrical event."

Tucking his violin under his chin, he said: "Now how about trying the opening eight bars again?"

So we were off with Bach.

But it developed that the Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, after reading Dr. Nevin’s report, was reluctant to make arrangements for the highly blessed event. Madalyn then decided that place was not worthy of so signal an honor as being the locus of the Second Coming of Christ.

She and her friends, having been given the use of an old hencoop, scrubbed it, whitewashed it, hung curtains, laid down rugs and prepared it as the chapel in which Bethlehem would be re-enacted. They met once a week at the “chapel” to sew on a layette for the Messiah.

(Here, I feel, I must solemnly state to those who doubt me that I am telling nothing but the literal, historic truth.)

It must be noted that Madalyn displayed all the external physical evidences of pregnancy. Only the two scoffers, a pastor and a physician, realized that they were seeing that rare but possible medical phenomenon, pseudocyesis, a false pregnancy.

The months passed and when the ninth came, great was the expectancy among the godly women at the chapel. But the ninth month passed without incident, and so did the tenth, and even the possibility of initial calendar miscalculation could not prevent the awakening of a certain skepticism among the fringe supporters of the Prophetess.

Late in the eleventh month, I had a fine moment of revenge upon the Prophetess, who had all this time been
announcing how certain false pastors would be put to confusion by the Second Coming. I met her near the postoffice and greeted her.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Jasper. I am sorry to see that you have changed your faith."

"What do you mean?" she bristled. "I am the best Christian in town. What are you talking about?"

"Well," I said (I must admit, embarrassingly now, with a smirk), "my knowledge of Hindu mythology makes me aware of the fact that when our Lord Buddha was incarnated, he was born as a white elephant through his mother's side. Now, since the gestation term of an elephant is eleven months, and I consider the date, I am wondering if it is the Messiah or the Buddha who is about to make a second appearance?"

She looked at me with blazing malignancy and fled -- speechless and without vituperation for once. And I gleefully and wickedly can report that within a few days the dimensions of the Prophetess were once again those of a non-pregnant woman, the doctor and pastor grinned during their fiddle sessions, and the hencoop chapel was taken over by cobwebs.

But God did not leave his Prophetess naked to the scorn of the heathen. Once again, He appeared to her in a dream and told her that because of its infidelity and great sin, Edgartown was not worthy of being the new Bethlehem and the Second Coming had been indefinitely postponed.

WHEN CAPT. HENRY MANTER left his house on Manter Hill in Holmes Hole, on August 16th, 1847, to walk down to the wharf to take the packet to New Bedford, his wife, Mary, did not go with him. She stayed at home, watching him walk away. Mary was heavy with child. It would have been difficult, physically and emotionally. But she watched through her spyglass until he disappeared from view. She did not look when the packet sailed away, as she wrote in her letter to him:

"I did not wash [sic] you on board the boat with the glass when you left home Monday morning. I washed you down to your Mother's and the last I saw of you was when you went past Caroline's. I was almost sure that you would return in the boat; I was very much disappointed, for I was wishing and hoping, all day long, for your return home."

It would be four years before they would see each other again, the first four years in the life of their son, Henry Luce Manter, born three weeks after his father left home. We have a number of letters that Henry and Mary wrote to each other during those years. They reveal the loneliness of whaling families.

In her first letter, Mary seemed pleased with what she learned from Capt. Holmes Luce, aboard whose packet Henry had sailed to New Bedford. After getting back, the captain called to see me last evening and related to me all that transpired from the time that he left home until his return, that is respecting you, and said he was very much delighted with your fine ship, officers and crew.

A few months earlier, when Matthew Luce, Henry's cousin and a partner in the New Bedford firm that owned the whaleship Virginia, had offered Henry command of her on the next voyage,

1 Mary C. Manter, letter to Henry Manter, Aug. 26, 1847, MVHS. Henry did not receive the letter until two years later, delivered by another whaler.

2 Capt. Luce died two years later at sea of "inflammation of lungs." He was only 30.

ARTHUR R. RAILTON is Editor of this journal; EDWIN R. AMBROSE is Research Editor.
Henry did not immediately agree, perhaps because of Mary’s pregnancy. Matthew wrote back to tell him he must decide by February 10th and he detailed the financial arrangements:
Your pay shall be the same as Richards, 15th [a one-fifteenth lay – about average] and 10% on Sale of Slops or put them in yourself.

Luce may have been concerned about reaction along the waterfront if it became known he was hiring his cousin. He told Henry to keep his decision secret:
If you decide to go in her on her Return please not to name it to your most intimate Friends. I do not wish any one to know it.

Henry then agreed to take the command and was now aboard the ship, readying her for the voyage. Before leaving New Bedford on August 18th, 1847, he wrote to Mary. What he wrote pleased her very much as she told him in her reply:
I was much pleased to see by your letters that you have a Doctor with you, it has taken a very great care from all our minds... I am delighted to hear that you have a man on board that understands music, for it will pass away many lonely hours.

Sailing east towards the Azores to pick up more crew, Henry started training the “green hands” he had aboard. Most were still seasick. The boats were lowered, but only a half of the crew could go. The next day, another attempt was made, but the men were still sick. On the third try, the exercise was fully manned, but Henry was not happy with the performance. A week later, his concern seemed justified:
Saw a large sperm whale, lowerd but could not strike. The ship Olympia came up and struck the whale at 3 P.M. At dark the whale was not dead.

The next morning, he sent a boat out to chase the harpooned whale, but it was unable to get close. Henry noted:
Hard luck and no mistak. Bad beginning some times has a good End.

His optimism paid off. The following day they killed two blackfish and boiled three barrels of oil. Not a great haul, but good training for the green hands, all but one of whom was now well

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1 We don’t know who Richards is. Starbuck shows the master of the Virginia, then still at sea, as Joseph T. Chase. The remark about the slops indicates that some captains ran the ship’s store as a private enterprise.

2 Henry was a musician. He took his fiddle with him on the Virginia, which he mentions playing in one of his letters. There was no doctor aboard, as we shall learn later.

3 It isn’t clear why Henry sent a boat out. Didn’t the harpooned whale belong to the Olympia?

4 The letters and the journals were given to the Society by the Daniel Manter family.
Hole, Henry’s home town. Brush had gone ashore and was heading back to his ship when a squall came up. His boat tied up to the Virginia and the neighbors had a visit:

Capt. Brush fell to the Leeward of his ship and got on board of us at 9 P.M. in a rain squall and remained all night.

The event suggests the parochial nature of whaling. Two men from Holmes Hole, a small village on Martha’s Vineyard, were brought together by chance in the Azores and Henry doesn’t seem to think it unusual.

Leaving Fayal, Virginia headed south towards Cape Verde Islands. When the wind died, Henry took the opportunity to give the novices some more training. For two days, they “Lowered and Exercized the Green Hands.” When they reached the Cape Verde Islands, Henry sent a boat ashore at Mayo to see if we could get some Hogs, found that we could try by going round to the town. . . [The next day] the boat returned bringing 12 Hogs and a few Coconuts.

When they left, they saw a few blackfish, killing one, which produced three barrels of oil. A few days later, they spoke a ship from Greenport, N.Y. A touch of homesickness cropped up in Henry’s entry that day:

Went on board ship Mary Ann of Greenport [sic] crossed out Mary and corrected his entry to Lucy Ann. Saw a Lady and it looked like home.

November 11th, three months out, Henry’s daily latitude entry changed to South. They had crossed the Equator.

First Whales Killed

On the last day of November, another twinge of homesickness. Above his sketch of the brig Olinda of Hobartown, he wrote: “One Lady and child on board.” (See opposite page.) Then, with the new month, a bit of good luck:

December 2, At 5 P.M. saw Sperm Whales, lowered, caught three, at 11 P.M. got them alongside; at Daylight began Cutting. At 11 A.M. finished, took one on deck whole.

They were small whales yielding only 50 barrels, two 20-barrel sperm and one 10-barrel. But it was a start. By now they were south of Cape of Good Hope and heading easterly. The

“A sketch by Henry. Most often he uses the stamp common to logs, but sometimes he makes a sketch, usually of a vessel from home (not in this case).

“Roaring Forties” lived up to their reputation:

Blowing a hurricane, Expecting every moment to lose our Masts but everything stood.

Christmas Day, 1847, passed without a mention of either the holiday or of his wedding anniversary. In almost all his logs, on this date he would note their wedding day. This one was their fourth anniversary.

On the first day of the New Year (also without any mention), the Terrible Forties brought another gale:

At 3 p.m. a Sea struck and stove the Waist and Bow boats, they being turned bottom up and hoisted up to the David (davit) Heads.

The ship was heading due east and by January 7th, she was well in the Indian Ocean. Henry headed for Amsterdam Island, just north of St. Paul Island and anchored:

Sent two boats after fish. At 8 P.M. returned with 56 fish. Lost a boat anchor while the boats were gone. Picked up a Cask of Oil Marked E.O., which we call Elephant Oil. It had been in the water a long time to all appearances for it was covered with clams, crabs, etc.

The captain was discouraged and homesick. At the bottom of several pages, he wrote in flowing script, “Mary C. Manter.” To add to his discontent, on January 20th:

At 10 A.M. saw a large Sperm whale going at the rate of 10 Nots to windward. Lowered but never saw him anymore. At noon boats came on board. So ends.

A month later, in February 1848, they arrived at the New Zealand whaling grounds. Henry wrote at the top of the page:

Elephant oil is obtained from elephant seals.
“Cruising off New Zealand.” But the whales were hiding:
6 mo. out. 40 bbls! Rather discouraging.

With no whales in sight, Henry sent the men out in boats for exercise. They spoke the bark Pantheon of New Bedford, out 33 months with 700 barrels sperm and 800 whale. Two days later:
Spoke ship Martha, Fodaller, of N. Tucket, 29 mo. 1300 bbls Sp.

Then on March 10th, a welcome sound, but more bad luck:
At 3 A.M. heard whales spouting, wore ship and steered off. At daylight saw whales working to windward, wind very light, lowerd and gave chase. At 12, struck one large whale, took two lines and two drags and went off.

Fourth Whale
The next day, their luck changed:
Off chasing. At 3 P.M. struck again. Got a boat stove and lost another line. At 5 P.M. Got the whale to the Ship, began cutting.

The whale, the fourth killed, was a large male and for the next three days they were busy boiling the blubber. By Wednesday, they were finished with 80 barrels of sperm oil to stow in the hold. Stowing done, they spotted more whales, but without success. They were not the only ones with poor luck:
Chasing Gallied [frightened] whales 2 P.M. Gave up the Chase 7 P.M. Spoke the ship Martha. they lost their whale by cutting.

Henry decided he needed a lift – a musical lift. On March 21st, they spoke ship Ganges of Nantucket, and he,
At 4 P.M. went on board the Ganges and purchased an Organ. At 1 A.M. spoke ship Collambus, N. Bedford, 22 mo. 1600 W and 800 Sperm.

With the organ in his cabin, musician Henry would try to cheer himself up. He needed to. For the next two weeks, they cruised the New Zealand grounds without seeing a whale. The other ships on the grounds seemed to be doing well, at least Henry must have thought so. One of them, the C. W. Morgan, had been out 20 months and already had 2000 barrels of sperm.

They were now cruising off what Henry calls French Rock (L’Esperance Rock) one of the Kermadec Islands, a volcanic group belonging to New Zealand and about 500 miles north of Auckland. Henry made sketches of the three major islands. Three boats

9 Master of ship Martha of Nantucket was Henry Folger, not Fodaller as Henry wrote.
10 Not clear what is meant by that, perhaps they had to cut the line.
11 She is the famed ship now displayed at Mystic Seaport.

went ashore on Macaulay Island “after Goats and fish.”

The next week, their luck was no better and on April 7th, Captain Manter decided he had had enough of New Zealand:
Here I throw off a day and start for the off shore Grounds.11

Two days later, they saw their first whale in weeks, but their luck had not improved. They lost the whale:
At ½ past 8 saw a sperm whale at dark. struck. Got a boat stove and the iron drew. Spoke an English brig boiling. So ends.

That convinced him the decision to leave the New Zealand grounds and head for South America was the right one. “Dull prospects seems to attend,” he wrote, adding in the margin:
About this time I am some what put to my wits Ends to know what move to make to obtain Sperm OIl, but my mind has been lead [led] to lean on a strong arm that never forsakes his Children in times of trouble and temptation.

He knew the Lord was on his side as he headed down to the Roaring Forties, the belt of strong westerly winds along latitude 40 South that would speed their long voyage across the Pacific. Heading the pages now was: “Ship Virginia from French Rock to Off Shore Ground.” For more than a month, they sailed to the east, the steady, strong westerly moving them towards what Henry hoped would be a better hunting ground. He was leaning on his Lord’s “strong arm,” no doubt after serious prayer.

Whale Five
On May 15th, 1848, as the Virginia was nearing the Off Shore Grounds:
At 2 P.M. saw a sperm Whale, at 5 Struck. at 8 P.M. took him to the Ship in a dead calm. At daylight began cutting. At noon got the body in. So ends.

The next day, they were happily at work:
Got the head clear . . . employed boiling.
12 They had crossed the 180° meridian and had to lose a day. The Offshore Grounds are off South America, along the Equator – a long trip, but at least closer to home.
It was a big whale and added 80 barrels of sperm oil to their catch. On Friday May 19th, Henry wrote in the margin, with double underlining:

9 mo out 200 Even. So ends

He had made the right move, leaving New Zealand. His “strong arm” had not forsaken him. But the good luck did not hold. They were now close to the Equator and the winds had changed. “Strong trades from the East and no mistake, very Squally.”


His spirits were lifted. He was doing better than Captain Fisher. June passed without even seeing a whale. They were not alone, many ships were nearby, two from New Bedford, John Howland and Herald. Both brought mail, but none for Henry:

Mr. Luce had one Letter, Pratt another, Mayford one. None for me. Two Ships in one day.

Henry had more to worry about than letters:

We have no time keeper on board except the Chronom. We have three watches and they have all refused duty.

They spoke the ship Commodore Morris of Falmouth a few days later. She had been out 35 months and had only 200 barrels of oil, one half of it whale oil. The Virginia was doing much better than that. He solved the “time keeper” problem when he exchanged Watches With Capt. Jones for six dollars to boot, that is I gave him boot.

For the next two weeks they cruised the whaling grounds. Among the ships doing the same were two more from New Bedford, the Lafayette and Degade. And they brought more mail.

No letters for me but several for the boys.

If they couldn’t catch whales, they could get turtles. Henry sent some men ashore on Abington Island and they brought back eleven bull terrapins.

They continued in the company of other whalers. None was killing whales. Then on Saturday, June 14th, just as night was falling, whales were spotted:

At sunset or a little after saw Sperm Whales, lowered but could not get to them before dark.

11 We don’t know who Pratt and Mayford were. Officers?

Two Small Whales

The following afternoon, whales again were sighted:

At 5 saw sperm whales, lowerd, Caught 2, missed one and killed one other at 8 P.M. Got them alongside. At day [break] began cutting. At 9 1/2 finished.

They were small, the sixth and seventh whales killed, producing 20 barrels each, not enough to excite a whaling master, but during a drought any sprinkle is welcome. Wednesday, June 28th, they did better:

At 1 P.M. lowerd for the whales, two boats to windward and two to leeward. Struck and killed two at dark, took them to the Ship. At daylight began cutting. At noon got the large whale in and the Case ready to Bail.14

The larger of the two whales produced 80 barrels, the smaller 20. The trypots were boiling for three days. Manter decided it was time for a break and for the first time in months he sketched an anchor in the margin. The coordinates place the anchorage in a harbor near Esmaraldas in Ecuador, South America.

For two days, they cleaned the ship’s sides and hauled fresh water, as the watches alternated on shore leave. The inevitable happened. And Captain Henry knew what to do:

the Spaniard [went] looking for George Williams that deserted this morning.

To make sure that nobody else jumped ship, the Virginia moved off shore. Before doing so, she picked up a passenger, a man bound for Tombes, about 100 miles south.

The Spanish crewman brought back the deserter. He had Caught the runaway and [I] gave the Spaniard $10.15

14 The case is the upper half of the head, outside the skull, mostly valuable spermaceti.

15 It could not have been a comfortable circumstance for the Spaniard to be on board with the man he had brought back after deserting.
The next morning, another chance meeting: spoke Barque Malta of Tisbury, Capt. Cromwell, cutting a 30 bbl. Whale.

There, off the coast of Ecuador, Captain Manter from Tisbury met Captain Cromwell\(^{16}\) from Tisbury who sailed on a ship from their home town. For whalmen, it was a small world.

Whaling wasn't any better off Ecuador's coast. But there were plenty of blackfish. They killed 17, producing more than 20 barrels of whale oil. During this activity, a strange whaleboat under full sail, came up to them, heading for land:

Spoke a whale boat with 5 men in her saying they left the Brig Latina 5 days ago at 1 o'clock A.M. They had their baggage with them and plenty of Provisions.

They were not the sort of mariners a whaling master could be fond of. Henry drew a sketch (top) under which he wrote:

**Whale boat from the Latina with a set of scamps.**

Three days later was the first anniversary of their departure from New Bedford. It had not been a very successful year:

12 mo out with 350 bbls sperm & 35 Blackfish & dull prospects.

**August 31**, they were again in port. This time at Tombes, Peru, where they dropped off the paying passenger. Eleven whalers were anchored there. Henry listed each, with her catch to date. Of the six ships that had been out about as long as Virginia, only two had more oil than she had. Whales were scarce.

They spent the next ten days in port. No journal entries were made. On Sunday, September 11th, the record resumes:

Stood to sea with all hands on board except the Cook, he deserted. We painted the Ship white in port. Got 800 bbls of potatoes and a pretty Good recruit. Got 200 bbls water, 3 cords wood. Nothing more worthy of Record while in Port.

The Virginia sailed into the Offshore Grounds. Ten days later, at the Galapagos Islands, Henry went looking for a cook:

At 8 A.M. went on shore at Chas. Island to ship a Cook.

By the next afternoon, the search ended:

At 2 P.M. Boat returns with a Not [knot] Headed Darkly for a Cook.

They also found some fresh meat for him to cook:

At 5 P.M. boats returned with a shore boat with them, all loaded with Terrapin. Got 100 Terrapins by buying them at $100.\(^{17}\)

**Tenth Whale**

The whales were still scarce but on October 10th, success. It had been nearly four months since the previous kill:

At 4 lowerd and Caught one [whale] Got a boat badly stove, at dark got the whale alongside and stoven boat in, squally weather at daylight. Began cutting, put the spare boat on the Bow Crane and put the Stoven boat overhead. Saw whales at 9 A.M. Going quick. Lowerd but no Go. At noon finished Cutting.

That was their 10th whale and produced 50 barrels, bringing the total in the hold to 400 sperm. Whaleships were all around them. It was no wonder whales were scarce. Almost every day the captain wrote that he spoke a ship from New England.

At the end of October, Henry decided something had to be done to produce whales:

Ship Virginia, Offshore Ground with 400. This 30-day I put up a bounty for the man that raises the most whales in getting 500 bbls Sperm Oil.

His bounty was slow to produce oil. It was a month later

\(^{16}\) We don't know which Cromwell it was. There were four Cromwell mariners living in Tisbury at the time: Benjamin, Moses, Peter and Samuel.

\(^{17}\) It would seem that Henry meant $1.00 not $100. It must have been a chore to carry 100 turtles out to the ship in small boats. Once on the ship, the turtles were flipped on their backs, making them immobile, unable to turn themselves over.
before they had a kill. They were not alone in the chase:
Nov. 29, 1849. Saw Sperm Whales at noon. Boats off Chasing in company with
At 4 struck and killed one, at 5 took him to the ship. Struck one other whale,
irons came out and lost him.

The whale was large, producing 80 barrels and bringing the
total to more than 450 barrels. They were aiming for 1500,
minimum catch for a Pacific voyage. Perhaps there were better
ways to get rich, faster ways, Henry may have thought on this day:
Dec. 19, 1849. Saw the Barque Minerva, N. Bedford, bound to Cape Francisco
with 50 passengers, 2 horses, goods & chattles & apparatus for digging Gold.
Sold him two Barrels of Beef.

On New Year's Day, 1849, Henry doesn't exude happiness:
Jan. 1. Ship Virginia, I wish you a Successful New Year. We have done very
slim in 1848 but the Lord is able to prosper us if it is for the General Good, if not,
I must pray for patience and persevere unto the End and leave the Event
with God, for his kindness Endureth forever. 16th mo., nearly 450.

The year 1849 did start out better. On January 16th:
Saw Sperm whales, lowered and caught one at 11 A.M. took him to Ship.

It was a big whale. Ninety barrels of sperm oil were stowed
below. The total in the hold was now over 500. Two weeks later,
another kill. This one, 70 barrels. Maybe there was hope.

But then, another dry spell, three weeks without a whale.
It was March 1849 and they were far south of the whaling ground.
Time for shore leave at Coquimbo, Chile, and the usual result:
Got a raft of water, 125 bbls, took another raft ashore. [The next day] at 8 A.M.
took the second Raft of 125 bbls. At 8 A.M. one watch went to the city of Serra
on Liberty for 4 days. At the appointed time they all came on board, sober
and well satisfied for Liberty. Sunday morning the other watch went to the City
with Liberty till Wednesday. At 4 P.M. they all came except Charles Gilberts
and Lewis Hall. Lay in wait and pursuant of them till Friday. At 4 P.M. shipped 2
men and a boy and took the anchor and stood out to Sea.

The following day, Saturday, March 18th:
Got clear of Port Coquimbo leaving two Deserter and Discharging Steward and
John C. Chase, Boatswain. Mr. Luce very unwell.

Giving the men shore liberty was costly. And no wonder
with the endless days without a whale and the voyage home still
years away, plus the new temptation of finding gold in California.

18 This New Bedford bank would be among the earliest to deliver 49ers to the gold fields.
The first on record arrived in San Francisco on February 18, 1849, two months after this

19 Henry had written Mary before leaving New Bedford that there was a doctor on board the
Virginia. Obviously there wasn't he did say that just to reassure his worried wife.
20 This was the naval frigate on which the doctor was serving. Callao is farther up the
coast in Peru. "The other two men" were the men left there to take care of Mr. Luce.
Sailing north to Callao, the journal entries are in a different handwriting, smaller than Henry's. They kept spotting humpbacks, but killed none. At Callao, the captain went ashore:

April 17th. Found Lewis Hall on shore that deserted the Ship at Coquimbo. Took him before the Consul and took him on board again. At 7 A.M. the next day went on shore and discharged Mr. Luke, the first officer, and left him in care of the American Consul. 11

By the beginning of May 1849, the ship is again cruising the Offshore Ground and Henry is once more writing the journal entries. The whaling was no better, but there was mail:

May 16th. 1849. Two ships in sight. Received a letter from Mary by ship Amazon, the first letter from home (I am 20 months out) except what I got from Mr. Daggett.

This letter is in the Society collection. It was written August 15, 1848, exactly one year after he left the Vineyard August 16, 1847. The Amazon, from Fairhaven, had sailed August 19, 1848. Mary had learned that a townsman was going whaling in the Pacific on the Amazon so she wrote the letter quickly:

I have just heard that Thomas Chase Harden 22 is to leave in the boat this morning to go to sea again... our babe has been a very healthy child. He has now four very large teeth... Oh, he is a butiful child! Henry, how I do wish you could see him now, he is so very interesting to me. O, that you could be at home now so that we could enjoy each others joys and sorrows together... Father died the 17th of last Feb. Mother's health is not very good... Mother Manter's health is good but Matilda has been sick this summer with the slow fever, but is now getting well fast. I must now close. Your own Affectionate Wife, Mary C. Manter (Heaven protect you my love).

Henry must have felt a great surge of emotion when he received the letter, his first since leaving home, but there is no evidence of it in the journal. He kept the letter, as he did all he received, and took it home. On the outside, he wrote:

Rec'd per ship Amazon May 18th, 21 mo. out, first letter.

June was nearly over when they got a "free" whale:

June 28, 1849. At 3 P.M. pick up a small dead sperm whale. He had burst, but the black skin was not off. Took him to ship and cut him in in 1½ hours and

began boiling at 8 P.M. At 7 A.M. finished boiling.

The small whale yielded only 20 barrels, but that was the first oil taken in two months. The area was filled with whaleships. Only whales were missing. He wrote: "Plenty of ships, no whales." July 4th: Spoke Bg. Mary Frances, 6 mo. Clean. 23 Had a letter from Mary & Mathew.

Matthew, you will recall, is Henry's cousin and partner in Hathaway & Luke that hired him to command the Virginia. Henry doesn't tell us what he wrote or what Mary wrote. However, we have Mary's letter. She began writing it the day before Christmas 1847, and finished on Christmas Day. There's no mention of Christmas, but she did mention their fifth wedding anniversary:

My dearest Henry... our son Henry Luce Manter is now fifteen months old, he passes away many a lonely hour, we could not live without him for he is all [a] heart could wish for... if [only] you could see him now for he sits rocking himself and whiseling, for Uncle Henry has learnt him to whiselp, he begins to talk, very fast, for he can almost say Father, he calls me Mary and Mother, Ma... he has ten teeth now, four upper and four lower and two double teeth, he cut his teeth very hard but he is now well and hearty... I have not received a line from you since ye left Fayall... the last I heard from you was by a letter from Samuel N. Brush to his wife, he writes that he was on board of your ship and staid one day and all night...

[The following morning, Christmas day]. I must close this hastily written schrall [scrawl] for I heard that Capt. Thomas H. Smith 24 will leave home this

An example of how a ship looks when a hand stamp is used. Compare this impression with the crisp sketches that Manter draws.

21 Mr. Luke died there the next month (Starbuck). We don't know what his first name was or if he was related to part-owner Matthew Luke, Henry's cousin.

22 Mary has the spelling wrong. He was Thomas Chase Harding, later Captain Harding, whose life is a story in itself. He commanded a Russian vessel attempting to lay the first submarine cable between Asia and North America. His house in Holmes Hole was destroyed in the Great Fire 1883.

23 "Clean" means without any oil.

24 Captain Smith sailed on the Mary Francis Jan 6, soon after Mary wrote the letter. He lived in Holmes Hole only a few blocks from Henry and Mary.
The four-year voyage of Virginia took her around the world. Most of the time was spent in the Offshore Whaling Grounds, just off the coast of South America. She left the Grounds several times, as noted in the items "Ashore," but her courses while sailing to and from shore are not plotted on the map because of confusing overlapping.
morning to go away to sea, he sails from Waren [Warren, R.I.]. He could tell you more than I could write about home. My dear Henry, it is just five years since we were united in the solemn rite of marriage, how swiftly time flies on and we are passing away with it. . . a kiss from little Henry & his love to his Father, Your affectionate Wife, M. C. Manter

Soon another letter from Mary by way of the Edgartown bark Alfred Tyler and her first officer, Elisha, whose last name we believe was Lambert. Tyler left Edgartown November 27, 1848. When Henry received the letter from Elisha in July 1849, they surely must have talked about home, but he doesn’t write anything about it in his journal. Fortunately, we have this letter so we know what Mary wrote. Here is most of it:

To my beloved husband. . . Henry L. Manter, our son, is just fourteen months old this day, and a fine interesting child he is now, a sleeping beauty, or at any rate I think so and I know that you would think the same as I do, for he is all that heart could wish for. He has dark blue eyes, and dark hair, but it is very thin or I would send you a lock of it, he walks about and tries to talk. I now you would be delighted to see him for the first word when he awakes in the morning is to say kiss and puts his little arms around my neck and kisses me and then calls for Aunt Rosa’s kitty . . . My dear Father departed this life just nine months since. . . Oh how he loved this dear little babe, he called me to him the morning before he died and took the child by the hand and prayed for it and me and then kissed us . . . [he said] I have anticipated to much happiness with that dear little grandchild, but it is all right and then went like a child. . . I must close this hastily written scrawl [scrawl] for Elisha35 will leave home in the morning to go to Edgartown to go to sea in the Alfred Tyler Bark, Capt. [George] Luce, he is first officer.

P.S. Capt. George Coffin’s wife has received a letter from her husband of late, he writes of seeing you and that you was well and had three hundred and fifty bbls of Sp. in January.

They were now close to South America, just north of the Equator, heading for Pt. Galera, Ecuador, to buy some fruit. The ship Archer from New Bedford was there and not only did Manter pick up lots of fruit, but the Archer had a letter from May, although there is no mention of that in the journal, only:

July 21. Returned with 2500 oranges. 15 bunches of bananas and 100 Coconuts and a Canoe I purchased for 10 dollars.

Mary had written the letter in May, 1848, he received it in

July 1849, more than a year later. It was only one page long and she wrote mostly about their baby, then “ateething”:

On the 17 of last Sept. I became the mother of a fine, good, healthy Son and he now enjoys good health. God has seen fit . . . to severely afflict us in the death of our dear and much beloved Father . . . In a week later, she added I now had a few lines more for Capt. Lorenzo Smith is going away today and I wish to send these few lines by him. Henry L. Manter, our son, requires a very great deal of care just now for he is “ateething,” he has cut two or three new . . . he is one of the best of children. . . I sincerely hope and pray that the time may come when we may meet, never more to part . . . Your ever affectionate wife, Mary C. Manter.

The Archer had sailed from New Bedford with the letter in May 1848 only two days after Mary wrote it. Along with Mary's letter, the Archer brought one from Henry's cousins, Phoebe A. David and I. C. Daggett and a bit of Holmes Hole gossip:

. . . Dr. Hall is Married to Emily D. She met him in Boston and they went to Providence and “all said” were married. The Dr., I am sorry to say it, has ruined himself here and lost the confidence of his friends in this place. They tried hard to sustain him, but he would ruin himself. He is now here living with wife. I will tell you more in another letter. Affectionately, I. C. Daggett.

No doubt happy to get “news” from home (the “news” be-
ing more than a year old). Manter took the Virginia to sea, her
galley filled with fresh fruit. In the morning, back whaling:
Saw Sperm whales lowerd and got one. At 7 took him to the ship. At daylight
began cutting.

A small whale, it added only 28 barrels of oil to their total,
but after a long dry spell it was welcome. The next day:
Saw a large Lone Sperm Whale. Lowerd, could not Get any run of him. He
stayed down 35 Minutes each time.\textsuperscript{27}

Two days later:
Saw Sperm whales Going quick to Windward. Lowerd but of no use. [And the
next day] Saw Whales going to windward. Lowerd but of no use.

Henry was frustrated. He began keeping track of the whales
lost by numbering the tails he stamped in the margin to denote a
missed catch. They now had 18 misses. The next day was better:
Saw whales at 10 A.M. Went to windward of the whales and lowerd, struck and
killed one.

It was another small sperm, producing only 20 barrels. Two
days later, one even smaller:
Saw ships whaling, went down amongst them and Caught one whale or a Calf.
Took him to ship and cut him in.

This really was a baby, only 10 barrels. Henry tried to in-
ject a bit of humor, writing: “Employed in boiling the Great
Whale.” Not a very proud kill. The following week, they came
upon blackfish, scores of them. They killed 25, hardly what
they had come all this way for, but blackfish oil was better than no oil.

Again, Henry decided for shore leave, this time at the vol-
canic Galapagos Islands far off South America. Perhaps he
thought men would not jump ship in such a place. He was wrong:
Sunday Sept 2, 1849. All hands returned Except Bertola, a Spaniard. He de-
serted taking with him a bag of bread and two quarts of water. Charles Smith &
George Williams and Forest, these three Men Deserted from our Encampment
27 That is about the average time a sperm whale remains submerged.
28 These volcanic islands, famous for wildlife, provided Darwin with important scientific
findings in 1835. Galapagos (which means tortoises in Spanish) had thousands of the
huge animals that were virtually wiped out by whalers, who killed them wholesale.

search for the Missing Man... Sent 10 men on shore to look for the Spaniard.
There was no sign of the deserter and Henry concluded
that he had sailed away on another ship in the middle of the
night. When they sailed away, they had good luck:
Saw a large lone sperm whale. Lowerd and gave chase. [the next day] Struck
and killed him at 3 P.M. took him to ship, began Cutting at 6, lashed down for
the night. head nearly off. By daylight began again. at noon got the Case in.

It was indeed a large whale, yielding 100 barrels, their larg-
est catch to date, a big whale by any standard. While they were
cutting and boiling, more whales were spotted and off the boats
went, killing one. He was much smaller, only 15 barrels, but they
were filling the hold and that was what mattered.

Again, back to South America, anchoring at Tumbes, the
most northern port in Peru. Eleven other whalers were in the
harbor. There was a wreck on shore and Henry sent some men to see
what they could salvage. She had a load of calico and they brought
the wet cloth back. The next day was Sunday, supposed to be a
day off, but they were told to work. A problem:
Called on the Crew to take care of the goods. They refused to come on deck
saying they had not been used well by Mr. Rogers, 2nd Mate. Finding they will
refuse, we left them to Consider of it till Monday Morning. They still refusing I
got them. They said if I would see them well used and go up to Payta to
land & call and give them a chance to see the American Consul they would
work again. My mind being previously to go to Payta, I told them they would be
used well and I was bound to Payta.

For the next ten days, the men worked as agreed, rafting
fresh water and wood from shore. They also picked up a few barrels
of potatoes before hauling anchor to sail to Payta. On the 15th of
October, after five days sailing south, the Virginia came to anchor
in Payta and one watch went ashore on liberty. One crewman,
Lewis B. Hall was discharged as sick and a Henry Thompson was signed on to replace him.

While ashore, the cook deserted. Also W. A. B. Godard, crewman, did not return. On Sunday, October 21st, Henry discharged Charles Smith “by Mutual Agreement.” These shore days took their toll. No wonder captains avoided them. The next day: No news of the Deserters, shipped a green Spaniard as the only alternative, men being scarce.

Back awhaling, they had good and bad luck:

Saw two sperm whales, lowered, struck them both. Got one. Line parted from the other or the 2nd had cut it. At dark got him to the ship. at daylight began cutting.

It was another large whale, providing 80 more barrels of oil. Captain Manter has stopped giving a running total so we are not sure how many barrels he has. He had written earlier to the owners reporting on the voyage, not optimistically, it seems. Their reply was candid, revealing how owners felt about the crew:

We trust that you will not be discouraged in the least on a/c [account] of not being as successful as some of your neighbours… if you have to pay off your crew purchase their oil as low as possible and make the most of every thing… make them pay great prices for slops… The trouble you may encounter, in consequence of the California fever [Gold Rush] you will find in the end will turn to your advantage for this verry Trouble will add 1/2 to the value of your Cargo. Oil is now high and will be higher for the next 3 years…

November passed without a whale. Cruising along the Equator coast, they had plenty of company. Numerous ships were spoken, one being the ship Vineyard of Edgartown. Then the new month, December, brought a kill, a large sperm producing 80 barrels. It was their 20th whale. At the end of the year, Captain Manter summarized the catch so far:

28th mo. out, 900 sp, 100 w. Taken 450 [in] one whole year, 1849.

For the next three months, Virginia left the Offshore Grounds cruising to the south. Not a single whale was killed and only four or five blackfish were taken. At the end of March 1850, they sailed into the port of Concepcion, Chile, far down the Chile coastline. The crew was given liberty. One man, carpenter William Sanders, was discharged and two Spaniards were taken on. They were still without a cook. “While in port not a man deserted,” Manter wrote. But soon after they sailed off, the shore-leave dues came due:

3 men [sick] with the Ladies fever. [a few days later, Henry wrote,] I myself have been unwell 2 or 3 weeks with the Decentary but now recovering slowly.

As they neared the Offshore Grounds, whales were spotted, but none was killed. And the dues were still being collected:

All the way from 6 to 12 men off Duty on account of Sickness, 4 of this number with the Venereal.

On May 6th, he wrote: “Sick folks getting better. As for myself I am nearly well.” But later he still hadn’t recovered: “I have been sick six weeks.”

When the Virginia got back on the Offshore Grounds, there was a happy change in their fortune:

May 23rd. At 10 A.M. saw sperm whales, struck and killed two. The first oil taken for over 5 months.

They were not large whales, one 30 barrels, the other 40, but they were adding oil to the hold. The health problems from shore leave continued:

4 men off duty Sick and I am not well. [A few days later] Samuel Lynsa and String with the venereal… Hundreds of Dauphin around… Caught several.

They spoke the ship James Steward of St. John’s, New Brunswick, Canada, heading for the California gold fields. Maybe that was how to get rich, whaling didn’t seem to be. Just when their spirits were ebbing, good news:

June 8th, 1850. At daylight saw a large whale. at 10 A.M. struck and killed. Got one boat badly stove. [now] working to windward after the whale.

He was another very large one, 100 barrels of sperm oil were added to the catch. For four days they were busy boiling. On June 15th they spoke two ships: the Pacific out 19 months, 500 barrels of sperm; and the Desdamonia, out only 10 months, 600 barrels. At the end of June, they spoke ship Benjamin Rush of Warren, R. I., out 10 months with only 170 sperm. Henry took a man from her “by the name of Washburn as 4th officer.”

They had been out nearly three years and still below 1500 barrels, the minimum amount for a Pacific voyage. On July 4th, 1850, a few more barrels:
Saw sperm whales, low'd, struck two, save one. The other took two lines, end for end and went off.

It was the 32nd whale they had lost. The "saved" whale was the 25th killed. They were now at the western end of the Offshore Grounds, far out in the Pacific and a few miles north of the Equator. Whales were spotted, but not always with good results:

Saw Sp. whales, low'd, struck one, got two boats stove very bad, one while sailing to leeward a whale breached over the Boat and broke her in two pieces. Got one man by the Name of John Ward badly hurt.

Later that week, lots of action, but losses, too:

Saw whales at sunset, struck 5, saved one. 3 went off spouting blood. One the Iron drew, the other line got cut. At 8 P.M. took the whale to ship. At daylight cut him in. At 10 A.M. saw whales going quick to windward, lower but no Go.

Their bad luck continued:

Saw two large whales, low'd and struck one, he took two lines end for end together with two drugs. Ends in pensit of the whale I hit. [The next day] Boats returned on board. This continued our hard fortune.

The Virginia sailed into one of the Galapagos Islands:

Sent 3 boats after wood. [The next day] At 2 P.M. boats returned with 29 Green Turtles and some wood. At 4 went again to stay all night. At noon returned with 4 more large Turtles and loaded with wood.

Back at sea, Manter's entries become shorter, simply giving weather and their position. The months were dragging. Little was happening. The captain wasn't well:

I am sick but Cannot tell exactly My Disease.

They killed six blackfish, producing 18 barrels of whale oil. The hold wasn't filling. At the end of September, they were back on shore in Tumbe. Henry discharged one man and another deserted. Two days later, they found the deserter and took him back on board before leaving for Paita where two sick men who had been off duty were examined by a doctor, who reported, "nothing alarming about them." When they left port, Henry wrote: "Glad am I to Get clear once more."

"Man Overboard!"

Whaling masters were always wary of port calls. But at sea, there were greater worries, sometimes tragedies:

Seaman Edw. DeForest Lost Overboard and Drowned. At 8 A.M. Oct. 21st, 1850, the Cry of Man Overboard was distinctly heard, the ship running before the wind at the rate of 5 miles per hour and the weather being pleasant and the water smooth. Joshua Breukiron, hearing he could not swim, he immediately sprang into the Sea after the drowning Man, the Ship being bro't two [to] and a boat dispatched immediately but all of no purpose. He sank to rise no more till God calls the abundance of the sea to come forth. This is heart rending to us hear at sea, he being our shipmate over 3 years on this pleasant voyage. I do hope and pray that God has redeemed his spirit to dwell with Jesus in heaven and may God sustain his relatives when they may hear of this sad and distressing tale. I heard him call for a rope to be thrown. Was the last and only words he had time to utter. We find no writings [in] his Chest or Clothing worthy of remark for saving for his friends.

Oh, how often are we warned! Saying be ye also ready. Henry Manter.

In the margin Henry added later:

This young man belonged in Verona, Onieder County, State of New York.

The following day, Henry wrote:

Sober faces and long sighs being the chief Excrubate for this afternoon. 12

Two weeks later, after days without spotting a whale, they kill a small sperm yielding 20 barrels. The next day more whales were seen and boats lowered. "Chased till dark. Got nothing." Right in the middle of the Offshore Grounds, but whales were scarce. Three weeks of staring at the ocean finally paid off:

Saw a large lone whale. Boats off at 3 P.M. Struck and killed the whale. Got one boat badly stove. At night Got the whale to ship and stoven boat. took her in and put out another. At daylight began cutting. At noon finished, that is, Got the Case ready to bail.

The catch was a good one: 90 barrels added to the hold. Their good luck continued. More whales were spotted:

Boats off. After missing two, struck one. At 5 took him to the Ship and Got ready to cut. At daylight began cutting. At 10 A.M. finished. Saw whales twice Going quick to windward. Lowerd boat times, did not Get near them. We suppose the whales were started by the other ships.

Sixty more barrels of oil went into the hold. 13 As usual, there were plenty of ships around. A week later, more whales:

Lowerd our boats for whales, amongst 10 or 15 other boats. At 5 P.M. struck and killed one small whale. At 7 P.M. took him to Ship. At daylight began Cutting.

12 Henry makes no comment about the heroic Joshua, who jumped into the ocean in an attempt to rescue his shipmate. We assume he was picked up, but Henry doesn't tell us. How did the man fall overboard in calm weather? Was it suicide? Making good speed, the ship would be far from the drowning man before a boat could be lowered. Joshua's act was foolhardy, not something many seamen would do. Was there some special relationship between the two men? A puzzling story, that remains puzzling.

13 Readers should remember that "barrels" is a measurement, not an actual barrel. The oil is cooled and stored in various-sized casks, each of which holds a number of "barrels."
It was their 31st whale, a small one, yielding only 20 barrels. As the year 1850 ended, Captain Manter was becoming more optimistic. He could feel the end of the voyage nearing:

Now Ends the year 1850. 40 ½ mo. and we have 1300 sp. 100 wh. Bless God we have so much and enjoying Good Health. Oh, may God spare me one More year to return to My Island home. . .The year 1851 begins with fine weather, no whales nor ships to be seen.

They headed for Chatham Island and another shore break. 34 For eight days, the men frolicked on the beach, catching turtles, swimming. It must have been a pleasant break and a chance to get over the death of their shipmate. Wednesday, January 15th, all hands returned, bringing 180 terrapin, enough for many meals of fresh turtle meat.

Back at sea, they had barely gotten under way when:
At 10 A.M. saw Sperm whales. Lowered and Caught three. At sunset took three alongside. At daylight began Cutting. [the next day] Got all three whales in, took in stoven boat and made sail.

The trio was two small whales, one a calf, and one large male of 90 barrels. Altogether, 130 barrels went below. A good haul and Henry, no doubt, was happy. But not for long. It was two months later, March 19th, before they spotted another whale:
Saw whale, lowered, struck one [the next day] At 3 P.M. took the whale to ship at 4 began cutting. At dark unhooked. 35 At daylight began again. At noon finished.

That was number 35, yielding 75 barrels. They had passed the 1500 mark. Time to think about home. They were now far down the coast of Chile, south of Valparaiso. April 5th, the Virginia anchored at Talcahuano, the best harbor on the Chilean coast. They were in port ten days, it isn’t clear why:
Nothing of importance . . . except discharging 8 men and shipping 3 others.

At the bottom of the page on April 15, 1851, Captain Manter (happily, no doubt) made this remark for the record, even adding his signature to emphasize its importance:

34 Chatham is the most eastern of the Galapagos.

35 Unhooked means that they stopped “unpeeling” the long blanket of blubber and tied the whale securely so they could resume cutting with daylight.
Ship Virginia Homeward bound. All well with 1500 Sp. 100 wh Oil. 44 months out. Henry Manter.

By the middle of May, they were south of Cape Horn, heading east. Gale winds were frequent as were torn sails and broken spars. But it didn’t matter, they were “Homeward bound.”

On June 30th, after passing the bulge of eastern Brazil, they began a northwesterly course, nearing the Equator.

Spoke ship Oida of Boston. . . Got some news Papers. At daylight commenced Braking out and Coopering oil in the Main hatch. After taking out 80 bbls and found it in Good order we began stowing it back. 36

The mood must have been buoyant. “Fresh” newspapers to read, the oil safely stored below, and headed straight for home.

The men were kept busy painting, repairing spars, cleaning cabin and tools. The ship had to be returned in good condition. Henry was still awailing. They were now nearing Bermuda:

Steering N.W. Looking sharp for whales. . . Finished painting outside.

But no more whales were seen as they kept a course for New Bedford. On August 1st, as they were closing in on land, they began sounding the bottom to be certain where they were:

At Midnight sounded 55 fathoms. . . [at daylight] Employed heaving tryworks overboard. 37

Henry’s handwriting was larger now, the lines farther apart, there was no reason to save paper, these would be the final pages:

Saturday Aug. 2nd, 1851. Spoke a New York Pilot boat. Got some papers. The Islands of New York in sight and 10 or a dozen ships. [Two days later] at 3 P.M. Saw Montoak Light. . . Close to Block island, fired several guns and No pilot to be seen. 38

After four years at sea, the crew was eager to get into port, but they had to head off the wind, awaiting a pilot. Then two long impatient days spent staring at the shore. Finally, a pilot came, but more delay. The evening fog had moved in:

Wednesday Aug. 6th. . . Took a pilot at 8 P.M. of Sow & Pigs. At 9 P.M. came to anchor in the Bay on account of fog. At daylight Got under way. At 2 P.M. made her fast to Hathaway & Luce’s Wharf. Thus ends the Voyag. 47 months & 15 days. 1650 bbls Sperm oil, 150 blackfish & humpback. 1800 bbls all told. H. Manter

36 They were lucky. Oil prices were at an all-time high when the Virginia returned (Davis, Gallman & Gleiter, Pursuit of Leviathan, 1997, p. 367).

37 A new tryworks was built for each voyage. The intense heat was destructive.

38 Normal procedure called for the firing of shots to call a pilot.
A Manter Mystery in the Graveyard

IN THE OLD VILLAGE CEMETERY in Vineyard Haven a large stone marks the Manter graves. On its reverse side (left) are the names of Captain Henry, Mary and their son, Henry Luce Manter, who never married.

Nearby are stones for the graves of Henry’s parents, Thomas and Hannah, and Jesse Manter, 19, wife of Joseph D. Manter, Henry’s older brother, and their baby, aged two days. Jessie died soon after the birth.

There too is a stone for the infant’s father, Joseph D. Manter, who died on Tahiti in 1837 and was buried there. On the same stone (left) is a Thomas Manter, who, it states, “died at Olahaeti” (Tahiti). We can find no record of any Thomas Manter dying there nor is he mentioned by Henry Manter, who visited the Tahiti grave of brother Joseph in 1844.

Is this a stone carver’s error?

Will some member help us solve this mystery?

The Windermere of 1896:
“A Paradise Indeed – a Very Eden”

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM has it that today, in the third millennium, the Vineyard faces its greatest threat from over-building. But the biggest threats came in the late 1800s when developers tried to sell postage-stamp-size lots to middle-class folks for their summer homes. All failed, luckily, but some of the names survived: Oklahoma, Ocean Heights, Lagoon Heights and others.

We are fortunate that the grandiose dreams of the subdividers did not come true. Had they, the place we call Martha’s Vineyard would be much different. In those days there was no concern about wetlands, about waste disposal, about water supply, about zoning, about traffic, about anything except fitting as many houses as possible on every acre.

One of those failed subdivisions was “Windermere, A Paradise indeed – a very Eden!” So the sales brochure proclaimed. On the Oak Bluffs shore of the Lagoon, north of today’s Lobster Hatchery, it was promoted by the Windermere Land Company with its sales department in the offices of the Cottage City Street Railway Co. on Oak Bluffs Avenue. The trolley ran through the north end of the site, alongside the road that crossed the Lagoon bridge.

Windermere covered 75 acres that were divided into 350 lots, averaging 2500 square feet, 50 by 50 feet. The price was $150 per lot (10 percent off for cash). To encourage quick construction, the company promised “a prize of $150 for each of the first ten residences completed by August 1, 1896.”

The late Emma Mayhew Whitman gave us one of its sales brochures and we print it on the next pages in almost original size. The photographic images are very poor, with little detail, as they were in the original. Reproducing half tones at that time was in its infancy.
LOOKING OFF over Lagoon Lake and the adjacent Harbor to Vineyard Haven and out upon the broad sound, from Windermere's upland, or across to Cedar Point and up the beautiful expanse of lake, hemmed in by verdant slopes and wooded backgrounds, the most varied and charming panorama of which Martha's Vineyard can boast is unfolded to view. The lake vista vividly recalls the exquisite English prototype for which this property is named, while a turn of the head brings one face to face with the open sea, thus affording a combination of scenery found nowhere else upon this American "Isle of Wight."

Windermere contains over 75 acres, situated one mile west of Cottage City — 2 1/2 miles by road, a distance covered in 15 minutes by the street cars — and building is gradually working in this direction, being characterized by an increasingly substantial class of residences. The property comprises two topographically differing parts, which by way of distinction are designated "The Harbor Front" and "The Plateau." The former is on either side of Beach Road, the highway from Cottage City to Vineyard Haven and the line of the electric cars, giving some 50 beautiful shore lots on the harbor front and a like number on the opposite side.

The Plateau (see opposite views) is a superb table-land of level and rolling character, dotted with trees and of good turf and fertile soil. No finer site for residence could be imagined. A prominent feature here is the reserved space which is to be handsomely laid out as a public park, "The Overlook," skirted by the new boulevard, Lagoon Road, which will sweep in a curve from Beach Road up to and along the entire front of the higher land; this and other improvements of a substantial nature will soon be under way. With this development and its natural beauties Windermere must become one of the most deservedly popular localities on the Island. The plan on page 13 will show the boundaries and other points of information regarding the property.

In the matter of midsummer comfort Windermere easily stands pre-eminent. The prevailing winds are invariably cool, coming directly over the water and not overland as in many neighboring places which suffer from sultry winds and excessive heat.

A short walk brings one to the station of the New York Yacht Club, and the fleet when at anchor is in full view from any point on the property. White-winged gulls brighten the harbor at all times and the Sound beyond is the channel for all coastwise shipping, over 30,000 sail passing in sight of Windermere every year.
ATHING AND BOATING. — Facilities of more than ordinary excellence for bathing are afforded at Windermere, both along the half mile of shore on the harbor side and around the entire lake front of still greater extent and beauty, as shown in the opposite views.

The water here, in common with the rest of the north-west shore, shares the warming effects of the Gulf Stream’s proximity and is of a pleasurable temperature. There are no strong currents or dangerous eddies, and children and invalids may bathe here with perfect safety and comfort. Bath pavilions and boat landings will be constructed upon both beaches, for the use of residents and their friends.

Sailing on the placid surface of the Lagoon is also exceptionally safe — and the same may be said of the harbor — both bodies of water being free from the heavy winds of the open ocean and from the treacherous, unwhetted gusts of mountain-hedged fresh-water lakes.

Windermere seems to provide every requisite for the fullest enjoyment of these two crowning pleasures of summer sojournings. Excellent fishing may be had from boats and wharves.

THE ELECTRIC RAILWAY runs directly through the harbor-front portion of Windermere, passing Lagoon Road near the bridge; 12 minutes is the running time to this point from Cottage City.

There are 7 miles of track now in operation, the route being through Cottage City and about the Circle to Lagoon Heights, and to Windermere and Vineyard Haven, with side lines to Highland Wharf and the New York Wharf. Cars run every 30 minutes and complete the round trip in one hour. It is the intention of the company to extend its line to other prominent points as fast as expedient.

The advantage of the new road in increased valuation to property in this section, and eventually over the whole island, is incalculable. Here, as elsewhere, the introduction of the electric system may be trusted to materially influence the appreciation of real estate and the improvement of business generally. The experience of other communities — even distinctively summer resort communities, Newport being a recent notable example — amply demonstrates that the road’s new equipment and its further extension will prove a marked benefit to property interests. The future of Cottage City and the adjoining towns will acknowledge a debt of gratitude to the advent of the trolley.

UR STEAM YACHT, the Columbia — chartered by the season by the Pilgrim Steamboat Co., which purpose adding other boats to its line later on and making regular trips daily to the principal landings — is a fast, staunch boat, capable of carrying 30 passengers without overcrowding, fully equipped for comfort and complying with every condition of safety recommended by the inspectors; a covered cabin gives protection in case of sudden rain.

The Columbia makes frequent advertised trips to Gay Head, Buzzard’s Bay, Wood’s Hole, Makonikey, West Chop, Edgartown, &c., and may be secured by private pleasure parties for excursions to the fishing grounds or to the above named and other places of interest in the vicinity.

Vineyard Haven and Buzzard’s Bay are noted far and wide for their diversified and picturesque scenery, and the great variety of enjoyable water trips. The Columbia, by moderate charges and unrestricted service, brings these excursions within reach of all, at any hour and for any length of time.
ADVANTAGES OF SITUATION. — The peculiarly advantageous location of Windermere will be appreciated by a glance at the accompanying map. Lying midway between Cottage City and Vineyard Haven, the two chief towns of the island's most accessible and populous section, and within a few minutes street-car ride of each; traversed also by the electric railway which connects the two; enjoying an unsurpassed outlook of great variety over land and sea, near and far; yet protected by a practically land-locked harbor; blessed with invariably cool summer breezes and sheltered from wintry blasts; having exceptional opportunities for boating and bathing; — these and other valuable features give to Windermere an advantage which must appeal strongly to both summer and year-round residents.

The very material enhancement of valuation as a natural and inevitable consequence will, furthermore, be patent to the most casual observer. As an investment Windermere cannot fail to prove safe, sure and profitable, as a home or summer residence, unusually attractive and eminently satisfactory. Peerless in all desirable characteristics, it seems destined to become the heart of the Vineyard's future greatness.

150.00 is the uniform price per lot throughout the property, nearly all lots containing 2500 feet each, a few being larger. There are some 350 lots in all.

The terms are $25 at time of purchase and the balance in quarterly payments of $25. No interest or taxes.

As a protection against loss by death we insure the buyer to the full amount of his purchase, and agree to deliver deed and receipt in full to his heirs, in the event of his death while paying for the lots.

Ten per cent discount is allowed for each purchase.

As the lots are limited and are offered at a low price for the present, and as we desire their purchase by those who will buy for residence rather than for speculation, we reserve the right to sell only two lots to one customer. Residents will be protected by suitable building restrictions.

To stimulate immediate building we offer a prize of $50 for each of the first ten residences completed by Aug. 24th.

For further particulars and detailed plan of lots inquire of WINDERMERE LAND CO., office of Cottage City Street Railway Co., 4 Oak Bluffs Avenue, Cottage City.
The Baptists Take a Firm Stand: “Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery”

The Edgartown Baptist Church was formed in 1823 at a meeting in the home of Dr. Samuel Welden. Its founders, a small group of local Baptists who had been attending services in the West Tisbury Baptist Church, wanted a church closer to home. Doctor Welden, the leader of the group, is the first person listed on the membership list at that meeting on April 16, 1823. One year later he was censured and denied the fellowship of the church because of intoxication. He confessed to the congregation and was readmitted under one year’s probation.

Samuel Vincent was denied church fellowship in 1831 for his public intoxication. Like Welden, he was a founding member, and was readmitted a year later.

Peggy Francis and Sarah Coffin were excluded from communion for “unmoral and unchristian conduct” in 1842.

Such expulsions were infrequent and sinners were soon forgiven. But that was not true for Mrs. Serena Charles, who had joined the church in 1840 along with 18 others, all converted during revival meetings. In 1844, four years after joining, Serena Charles was expelled permanently. She was excommunicated.

When she joined the church, Serena was 20 years old, living with her husband, William, and their two small children in the Hall House on South Water Street, Edgartown, a few steps from Main Street (the house is now part of the Harborside Inn). Her husband, William, was a mariner. The large rooming house they lived in was owned by the pastor of the Baptist Church, Rev. William W. Hall, who baptized Serena. It was a crowded rooming house with 18 persons from several families living there.

In 1844, one of those living there was Capt. Isaiah Mills, 48 years old, a mariner like Serena’s husband. His wife had died of consumption in 1842. He had three daughters, all teen-agers.

Those were the characters in the drama that was recorded in the minutes of the Edgartown Baptist Church, which follow:

Jan. 2nd, 1844. At the close of the Covenant meeting, the Pastor called the brethren of the Ch. aside and said that public reports charge Sister Serena Charles with the Crime of Adultery. Whereupon the Committee of the Ch., to wit: Rev. Wm. Hall, Dea. Thomas Coffin & Brother Cornelius Ripley, stated that they had inquired into the charges and had found too much evidence of the truth of the charge. Therefore,

It was voted that the Committee be directed to visit Sister Charles and invite her to a meeting of the Ch. to be hereafter appointed to answer to the charge of adultery preferred against her; and also that they collect such other evidence as may have relation to this case.

Voted that the Ch. meet on the evening of the 8th at the house of the Pastor to try Sister Charles on the charge of adultery.

Mond. Evg. Jan. 8th. The Ch. met at the Pastor’s house in pursuance of the appointment. The Pastor stated the object of the meeting & called on Rev. Mr. Sever, agent of Am. & For. Bib. Soc., present, who prayed for divine guidance on the trial now before the Ch. The com. stated that they visited Sister Charles on Saturday & that she made the following statement: To wit:

1. That she had had illicit intercourse with Capt. Mills living

1 Reverend Hall, owner of the Hall House, had been pastor from 1836 to 1841 when he asked to be relieved of the post although continuing to be a member.
in the same house with her three or four times.

2. She denied the charge of adultery on the ground that she was forced, that she made all the resistance in her power & on the 1st effort called to two girls who were in the upper part of the house & he did not succeed. That on subsequent occasions she made resistance but made no outcry.

It appeared in evidence that two other families lived in the same house and that two other inhabited dwellings were within some five or six rods & others within easy call, and yet she made no call.

It appeared in her acknowledgement that these acts were repeated through a space of three or four months & yet that she had not exposed him till she supposed herself pregnant by him.

Voted that the question of her guilt or innocence be decided by ballot.

The Pastor then summed up the evidence in the case briefly, whereupon it was

Voted unanimously that the charge is sustained.

Voted unanimously that Mrs. Serena Charles be and she hereby is excommunicated from the fellowship of this Ch.

Abner Webb, Pastor.

In August of that year, Serena gave birth to a girl. At least, we assume the birth recorded in the Edgartown Vital Records is her child, although the mother's name is not listed. The "motherless" daughter's birth is recorded this way:

"MILLS, Pamela G., d. Isaiah, mariner, Aug. 15 [1844]."

We do not know what happened to baby Pamela. Six years later, the 1850 Census lists Serena, William and their two children still living in the Hall House. No Pamela is listed in the Census, either as a Mills or a Charles.

In 1849, Captain Mills married Eliza Norton, a widow, and they moved into a house on Summer Street and Davis Lane. The captain was a part owner. 1 Three families and twenty-one persons lived in the house, but no Pamela. Her fate is unknown.

2 August 15 was also the birthday of Serena's husband, William. Some birthday present!

3 The house is the one now occupied by the Vineyard Gazette. Five years later, in 1858, Isaiah Mills was living in Noank, Conn. We don't know about Pamela, now 14.

In Memoriam
Anthony K. Van Riper
1926—2001

Tony Van Riper was for many years an enthusiastic and spirited worker at this Society, holding several offices, including President. Although he did agree to serve in these positions, administration was not what he preferred. His preference was communication. He was passionate about spreading the word of this organization's role in preserving and publishing local history.

Local history was a favorite avocation of his. He and his friend, the late Sylvia White, were the driving force behind the formation of the Tisbury Museum more than 20 years ago. When it merged with us in 1987, Tony agreed to serve as Vice President here, enlarging the goals of this organization in many ways.

A large man physically, when he entered the room, he was noticed. His height and bulk made his presence something that no one could miss. Inside that huge frame was a kind heart and a giant intellect. As a former teacher of literature and writing, he was a wordsmith who could be counted on to say what he wanted to say in a manner that would enlighten and entertain.

He enjoyed that role. When he spoke, his voice was equal to the task. Coming from deep inside a broad chest, his voice had a resonance that made memorable the most routine sentence. Words flowed rhythmically and his phrasing was theatrical. Music was one of his many talents and he spoke with a cadence, a beat, as though playing the piano or reading his poetry. He loved to play and sing the popular songs of his day, enlivening many of our Past and Repast Luncheons with the same gusto and enthusiasm he had for almost everything he did.

His humor was well known. Rarely was there a topic on the agenda for which he couldn't find a lively anecdote. As all who served with him know, Tony could do a lot for a dull meeting.

For years to come, board members, trying to get through some tiresome agenda, will glance at the chair he occupied for so long and say, "Tony, we miss you."

The Society owes much to him. We extend our deepest sympathy to his loving family.
This cross-section of the bathalicknows of New Bedford shows the location of the lower hold where the cakes filled with all cereals required (except with the sugar and spices). The other holds would be used for ordinary fishing. The master's cabin is found on the starboard side (shown here), ready for mission boats. A fourth hold is carved on the starboard side (called the bulwark) near the stern and is not visible. The forecastle is at the bow (see ladders) where the ordinary crew members bed down. The deck above the forecastle is the forecastle deck, and the aftermost of the officers, ship's carpenter, coxswain, bosun, and other skilled crew members had their bunks. The deck below was always kept clean of slop.