The Asa Johnson Family Saga, Told in a Packet of Papers
by Arthur R. Railton

The Asa Johnson house in West Tisbury as it looked about 100 years ago.

Whaling: The Vineyard Connection
Charley Brown, Steward, Reminisces About Whaling
by Joan Druett

The Grand Tour in 1860: A Vineyder in Venice
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THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER
Vol. 43, No. 3 © 2002 M.V.H.S. February 2002

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Before going to Venice, Henry stayed at Hotel Belle Vue on the lake in Zurich, Switzerland. He paid 4 Swiss francs a night for his room.
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YOU WON'T FIND THEIR NAMES IN HISTORY BOOKS. They are the Asa Johnson family, an ordinary West Tisbury family in the 1800s that lived an extraordinary life, but they have been forgotten.

While researching another subject, the author came upon a packet of papers that at first glance seemed to fit only the "miscellaneous papers" category—an envelope stuffed with disorganized, seemingly unrelated, old papers. Study revealed otherwise. Dating back to the 1830s, they were the "treasures" of Emily A. Johnson (later McCollum). Faded, difficult to read, even more difficult to make sense of, the documents told the story in bare outline. Research has fleshed it out.

They were given to the Society by Everett Whiting, along with other materials his mother, Emma Mayhew Whiting, had preserved. Mrs. Whiting (1876-1947), a historian and author, was described by Henry Beetle Hough, editor of the Vineyard Gazette, as "the most distinguished woman the Vineyard has produced."

The Asa Johnson Family
Asa Johnson (1788-1867), a farmer, innkeeper.
Prudence Adams Johnson (1793-1885), his wife.
Emily A. Johnson (1815-1898), their daughter.
[Abraham McCollum (1815-?), Emily's husband.]
John L. McCollum (1845-1878), Emily's son.
Miles A. Johnson (1817-1890), Asa's son, a mariner.
Matilda S. Johnson (1819-1866), Asa's daughter.
[Shubael Davis (1812-1878), Matilda's husband, a cooper.]
Anna Frances Johnson (1830-1912), Asa's daughter.
[Henry L. Whiting (1821-1898), Anna's husband.]
James A. Johnson (1831-1904), Asa's son, a mariner.

SHE WAS THE FIRST of five children in the family of Asa and Prudence (Adams) Johnson. Born in 1815, Emily A. Johnson, an attractive, intelligent girl, lived a long, unhappy life.1 We know of her unhappiness because of a packet of papers she

1 The middle initial is for "Adams", her mother's maiden name. Three of the five Johnson children had the same middle name. Prudence was proud to be an Adams. It was a time when two Adamses had been presidents, one of whom is now receiving broad public acclaim as the result of a biography by David McCullough, written in a house only a few hundred yards from where the Asa Johnsons lived in West Tisbury.
kept that have survived for almost 200 years. It isn’t clear why she saved them. Certainly, she did not consider them of historical importance. Many were scraps of paper, the kind of papers that most would have discarded. But Emily saved them.

We know little about Asa’s early life. He was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1788 and came to the Vineyard with his brother John early in the 1800s. We don’t know his occupation. In 1814, Asa married Prudence, daughter of James Adams, mariner, of Chilmark. The following year, Emily was born in Chilmark.

One document in Emily’s collection may provide a clue that Asa worked for David Look, a local merchant and entrepreneur who apparently bought up-Island clay for a company in Boston. The letter, dated August 8, 1823, does not mention Asa. It is a complaint from the Boston company to whom Mr. Look sold the clay about the poor quality of his latest shipment:

Sir, We have great complaint from Alger against the Clay which we sold him. It appears to be full of sulfur or some Kind of ore and is not worth more than half price if you have not settled for it we would advise your not doing so without an allowance of $1.25 per ton. We shall have to make an allowance to Alger but how much he will require is more than we have ascertained. It certainly was the poorest lot or Cargo of clay that we ever had. We should like to hear from you upon the subject. Most Respectfully, Curtis & Leavens.

This letter does not prove that Asa was working in the clay business, but it suggests the possibility. Otherwise, why would it have been among Emily’s papers?

Two years after Emily was born, Asa and Prudence had a son, Miles A. (also for Adams). Two years later, they had a second daughter, Matilda S. (middle name unknown). During the next ten years, no children were born, suggesting some change in lifestyle during that period. The only clue we have to those years is in an account book for David Look’s store in (West) Tisbury. From 1821 to 1826, it shows 32 purchases charged to Asa. Eight were for rum, gin or wine and 3 were for tobacco. Other items included nails, boards and planks. Charging some of the purchases to Asa’s account was a man named George Smith. There were none of the household items one would expect to find in a general store account. Asa paid in cash, but mostly with quantities of “Machine Cloth.” These years remain a mystery.

2 He may have been running a tavern and buying liquor for it. But was his wife with him?

Then in 1829, Asa Johnson made a big move. He leased the farm, tavern and store at Tarpaulin Cove on Naushon Island. With the arrangement came a commission as Customs Officer. The family moved there late in 1829. Early in 1830, a third daughter, Ann (later Anna) Frances, was born. Two years later, they had their fifth and last child, James A. (for Adams).

Living at Tarpaulin Cove must have been hard on Emily. She was then 15, an age when young men were becoming interested and interesting. On Naushon, there were few eligible men. Many transient sailors came into the tavern and were probably served by Emily, but they were not suitable for a serious relationship.

The Robisons ran a farm a few miles away (Robinson’s Hole, between Naushon and Pasque islands, was named for them). Emily saved a poem written by W. A. Robinson of Naushon Island entitled “To Miss Emily A. Johnson.” She apparently re-read it often, as it is tattered (an excerpt follows, with misspellings):

Now in the spring of life,
Let every florid bloom,
The budding virtue in thy heart
Shall yield the rich perfume.
And this Emily Dear be every charm
Which youth is possessed to share...
Asa did well at Tarpaulin Cove, according to the historian of Naushon, who wrote: "From 1830 to 1837, Asa Johnson was customs officer and store keeper at the Cove... his beautifully kept ledger has been read and from it the following extracts have been taken." The first shows that on June 30, 1830, Asa delivered 25 lambs to a Mr. Whiting. Price: $37.50. The accounts record sales of meat and vegetables, cloth and an occasional piece of hardware to sailors, including this most unlikely item: "I wigg, 33 cents." Asa was caterer when William W. Swain, who managed the island for owner James Bowdoin, brought friends from New Bedford to hunt. Here are a few extracts:

1835 William W. Swain Dr.
To the expense of the hunt Oct. 1835
14 meals @ 50 $7.00
1836 Wednesday Oct. 19th. Hunt 13 meals 6.50
Friday, Oct. 21st East Drive meals 9 meals $4.50
2 bottles cider pt. Brandy .75
Brig Wm. & Joseph
Nov. 23. 18 1½ lb. beef .48
2 qts. oil .62
½ bu. potatoes .25
1 doz. matches .33

John and Mary Nye had been tenants of the Tarpaulin Cove farm and tavern some years before. They left the Cove about 1810, but remained attached to the place. In December 1833, Augusta, a daughter of the Nyes, who were then living in Boston, wrote to Emily. She had recently visited Tarpaulin, as had her brother:

... My health is much better than it was when I was at Naushan. We arrived safe home the next week on Saturday after we left you, very much fatigued by our journey... I am very much obliged for the present which I received [sic] from you, handed by brother. My respects to your Mother and Family. I should be very much gratified in receiving a letter from you soon. Accept this from your friend, Augusta A. Nye.

Augusta's brother, Henry, during Tarpaulin visits, became an "affectionate friend" of Emily. Among Emily's papers there are few such personal letters as the ones Henry wrote. Their tone (plus a certain air of intrigue) suggests that he had serious intentions. Three of his letters were written within a few days late in 1834 after he had visited Emily and she had given him a "token":

1 Amelia Forbes Emerson, Early History of Naushon Island, 1935, pp. 47ff.
2 The month is illegible, but we know it was either September or December 1834.

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Dear Emily... I am sensible that my pen is too feeble in expressing that friendship which you have claim on me for... it is two years or nearly since our acquaintance was formed. We have shared in many a pleasant hour likewise we have had our trials... the token of your friendship is now before me and when I am far away may it remind me of your presence. I shall keep it close and remember the hand that gave it. I shall see you again before I leave for N. York... I should be ever happy to receive a line from you... [if not] I see the disadvantage which you labour under therefore I shall not consider it your fault... we separate and may this separation of ours be like the autumn leaves of the shady bowers and when Spring returns in its brightness may we meet in gladness. I must bid adieu for a time, I hope a short space... do not let this be seen. Your affectionate friend, Henry

When he wrote that, as he explained later, Henry had expected to leave for New Bedford shortly, but as was often the case in those days of wind dependency, the voyage was delayed. The following morning, he wrote again, apparently from the boat:

Dear Emily... the wind not proving favourable is the cause of the delay... the reason why I did not call on you in my delay you undoubtedly know. If you do not comprehend my meaning I will make an explanation the next time that I have the pleasure of seeing you... it would afford me much pleasure to open a correspondence with you but the inconvenience on your part would... be so great that I would understand if I am denied of the pleasure. Notwithstanding, if you wish to answer this you can deposit your letter with Mrs. Winslow' with perfect safety and she will forward them to me at N.B. I shall place this in her hands for you to receive without the knowledge of the fourth person... Since I saw you last my loneliness increases... Your affectionate, H.

When he did get to New Bedford, Henry wrote again to inform Emily of his safe arrival, ending with: "I shall hold myself responsible for the kindness you displayed. Your affectionate friend, Henry Nye." There is mystery in the postscript he added: "You must not tell that Matilda has been here." Emily's sister, Matilda, was four years younger than her, then only 15. Why was she in New Bedford and not want anyone to know? Two years later, she married Shubael Davis, a cooper. Perhaps she had gone there to say goodbye to him before he went whaling.

There is another letter from Henry, written a year later, in the collection. It is not to Emily but to Asa, her father. From it we get a suggestion that Henry had been going to the Cove for business reasons. The letter was unpleasant. It is dated February 2, 1835:

5 Mrs. Winslow may be the wife of Capt. Leander Winslow, pilot, who used Tarpaulin Cove as a base, and perhaps was on the boat with him. Between piloting runs, he may have made trips to the mainland. The "fourth person" Henry refers to is another mystery.
Mr. Johnson, Sir, without doubt you received a line from me by the hand of Capt. Allen respecting the settlement for the Goods which you refused to deliver to me in July last as I considered them mine at that time. My letter being unanswered, I shall trouble you with this, hoping that it will be duly honoured. I am not disposed to have any altercation upon the Subject but you must be well aware that I am not wholly ignorant of the responsibility which you assumed and took upon yourself in returning my property in the manner which Evidence will testify. Yours Respectfully, Henry Nye.

There is nothing in Emily's collection to explain the disagreement, but her "affectionate friend" Henry, whose three letters are the closest to love letters of any she kept, was most unhappy with her father. Their relationship seems to have ended soon as there are no more letters from Henry Nye.

The Johnsons were at Tarpaulin Cove from 1829 until 1837, Asa paying $300 a year rent to owner James Bowdoin. With the farm and tavern, he also ran a store where meat, cheese and other foods produced on the several farms that Bowdoin leased out were sold. This made the lease profitable for Asa, who also had income from the fees earned as Customs Collector. Tarpaulin Cove was a busy harbor of refuge for coastal vessels and occasional foreign vessels. Every vessel was examined by the Collector and if it was the first U.S. port for a vessel from abroad, duty was paid.

Emily saved a poetic description of the Cove written on a scrap piece of paper. It is likely that Emily was the author. We can date it because records show that the Revenue Cutter McLane, mentioned by the writer, was stationed in New Bedford in 1835:

It was one of those beautiful mornings when the atmosphere & every thing has the appearance of having become Celestial. The cutter McLane was lying in Tarpaulin Cove. I could compare her to nothing but a Beautiful Vessel in miniature, the handsomest thing I ever saw, every movement seemed so perfect. Lieutenant Sturgis in company with Mr. Taylor were on Shoar, took a look at the light House & took a pitcher of Milk [and went back] on Board after leaving some daily papers.

Emily was a sensitive woman and this, if hers, is evidence of her poetic instincts. Now 20 years old, her teen years, years so important to young persons, are over. Wasted at Tarpaulin Cove, she must have thought. At a time in life when many young women were thinking of courtship and marriage, Emily seemed to have no prospects.

6 We have customs records from Tarpaulin for later years and some days 30 or 40 vessels were examined by the collector.
much. This I want you to do [sic] for a certainty. ... Jane W. Robinson

Back on the Vineyard, the Johnsons settled in West Tisbury, where Asa purchased a house and some farmland in the center of the village from Thomas Cathcart. The basement of the house had a door at ground level so one could walk in from the road. It was large enough to be a tavern and a store. The Cathcart family had run an inn and the basement may have been its tavern. Asa planned to open one himself.

The house is the large building just east of today's Alley's Store, overlooking Parsonage Pond in West Tisbury center. It has been owned in recent years by Jane Newhall, great-great granddaughter of Asa Johnson. Family tradition states that Asa planned to operate a store in the house, but it didn't work out. Miss Newhall tells the story:

Asa ... hoped to have a store here, thus the door onto the street. The basement was to be a store. But that was not successful because what was the precursor of Alley's Store was there and [was] used more than Asa Johnson's store, so this house became what they called an "ordinary." The stage that went to Gay Head used to stop here for lunches ... and so Daniel Webster was supposed to have been one of the people that are here at our dining-room table.1

The 1840 Census lists eight persons living in the house, including Matilda, whose husband, Shubael, a cooper, was presumably off whaling. Miles, Emily's brother, now 23, was also a whaler. The next year, 1841, he sailed out of New Bedford on the first voyage of the Charles W. Morgan as a boatsteerer, a rank that indicates he must have gone whaling a few times before. One doesn't get to be a boatsteerer on his first voyage.

Although a newcomer in the village, Asa was elected Town Clerk in 1842 and was Moderator at District School meetings.

It was a time of intense religious fervor. The Methodists and the Baptists, who had no meeting houses at the time, held evening meetings in private homes, disrupting the village with loud singing and exhorting. Methodists met at the Johnson's, Emily wrote:

Jan. 16, 1843: Attended Watch meeting at Brother Look's. ... O that my unconverted friends may as the New Year commences seek the Lord. Oh that this year may be a happier year than we have ever seen, a commencement of happier years and that we might serve the Lord anew.

Jan. 17, 1843: A very interesting meeting at this house. ... Praise God for what

1 From oral history interview with Lindsey Lee, Sept. 23, 1995, MVHS.

We have no photograph of Emily. This is her sister, Anna Frances, at 18. No doubt, Emily looked a lot like her. Anna married Henry L. Whiting when she was 21. my eyes have seen and ears heard and for what my heart has felt ...

These evenings must have been happy occasions for Emily, after the lonely years on Naushon. Many young women were attracted to the evangelical preachers who brought excitement to their quiet lives. But more than religion was exciting Emily. She had a beau. On February 3, 1844, she announced her intentions to marry Abraham McCollum of Chilmark. Abraham lived with his widowed mother and several siblings just over the West Tisbury line, less than a mile from the Johnsons. They were soon married and on January 17, 1845, their son, John L. McCollum, was born.

Abram, as Emily's husband was called, may have been at sea when their son was born. A letter Emily wrote on August 27, 1847, makes it clear that he has been away for some time:

I returned home from your Br. Henry's and found a letter in the [Post] Office from you with ten dollars enclosed, which was gratefully received. I have not received the letter you wrote to me in New Orleans. I understood by Frank Williams that you were in the Hospital with a broken leg. I am very glad to hear of your recovery. Your friends are all well. Little Johnny and me are quite well. We have been off to Henry's on a visit of six weeks. Henry has had much practice he can attend to. ... He has bought him a new house, gave 1000$, a very

8 Henry, Abram's older brother, is a doctor, practicing in Martha's Mills on Cape Cod, which is where Emily and Johnny had been visiting.
pleasant situation. It is a general time of helth in this place. Shubael's helth is som better. He and Matilda are here. The summer is passing and the cold winter is aproaching. I am sorry for you, for I am so mischeivous. I refer you to the 2 Epistle of John 12 verse 3. Except [sic] my best wishes and regards. I send my love to you. Adieu. [Salutation and signature have been torn from this sheet.]

Among Emily's papers there is not one letter from Abram. She mentions having received letters from him, but she did not keep any. Most copies of the letters she sent to him have had the salutations and closing words torn off. That would seem to indicate that he had alienated her, that she didn't want to hold on to any memories of him.

Abram was not a faithful correspondent. But that was typical of mariners. A letter Emily wrote to one of his brothers in 1848 indicates that he was not keeping her informed:

Dear Brother: I have not heard of any news of Abram's voyage from New York for California and had left some money in Capt. Johnathan Hillman's hands for me. Please call on him and see that the money is forwarded to me by Capt. E. G. Pease of Edgartown. I have not received any money since last Jan. and I am in want of some to pay my rent. If he sailed in Hillman's employ please to ask him if he will advance me Twenty dollars. Your sister Mary and Husband will visit N. York this Summer and Cincinnatti likewise.

In November of that year, Asa decided to go into politics in a big way. He had been Town Clerk for only one year. Now he wanted to be Tisbury's Representative to the General Court in Boston. There were three candidates: William A. Mayhew, Alfred Norton and Asa. Mayhew won with 76 votes, Norton received 43 votes, and Asa only 20.

As she wrote to Abram's brother, Emily believed that her husband had gone to California. That seems unlikely because whaling records show him sailing as Third Mate on the whaling ship Falcon, leaving New Bedford October 2, 1849, for the Indian Ocean. When the Falcon returned in 1852, she was filled with oil. Abram's lay of 1/50 would have brought him a substantial amount of money, money that Emily needed. However, as far as her papers show, he did not go to the Vineyard after the voyage. In fact, there is no evidence that he ever came back to the Island. He may have died at sea. Or he may have decided, after collecting his share of the profits, to head for the gold fields and get rich. Emily's most sentimental (and final) letter to him had been written seven months after he left on the Falcon:

My dearest, It is the Sabbath. How lovely everything appears. The lawn begins to look green. The birds have returned to the old willow tree to cheer me with their songs, welcome visitors as the dove returned with the olive leaf to the ark. I suppose it is quite sunny where you are. I should like to take a little stroll with you on some meandering path. I hope to meet you again. Nearly 7 months have past since I parted with you. I am sure my heart and thoughts are always near you. Makes me think that saying false [the] one out of sight out of mind. I received your letter of the 15 March. This is the second I have written back to you. I do much rejoice for the continuance of your health and preservation and that I am preserved in health to salute you.

There is no date on Emily's copy of the letter so we cannot be certain when she wrote it. The context ("it has been nearly 7 months") suggests that it was written in the spring of 1849, but the absence of any mention of their son is strange. Whenever she wrote it, it is the last letter to Abram in Emily's packet and the last mention of him, directly or indirectly. Never in her many letters to their son, does she mention his father.

By now, gold had captured the imagination of the nation. In the year 1849, 80,000 gold seekers headed to California from the east coast. Abram may have been among them. And he may never have returned, thousands didn't. As far as Emily's papers show, she never heard from him, or about him, again. Her life, which had just begun to brighten, was darkening.

In the summer of 1850, Census Marshal Richard L. Pease of Edgartown went to every house on Martha's Vineyard, recording the names of all persons living there (plus family members who were at sea). On August 27th, he stopped at the Asa Johnson home in (West) Tisbury. He wrote ten names: Asa; Prudence, his wife; Miles A., his son, a mariner; Ann Frances, daughter; James A., son, a laborer; Emily A. McCallum, married daughter;

9 Shubael had come home from a whaling voyage in poor health.
10 John's Second Epistle, verse 12: "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full."
11 Mary is Mary Ellis, who married Capt. Allen Tilton of Chilmark. This letter was probably written to Abram's brother, John, who was living in the New York area.
12 This was too early for him to have gone to the Gold Rush, which began a year later.
13 As we shall soon see, John was then living with his grandmother McCallum. That may explain her failure to mention him.
Abraham McCollum, her husband, a mariner; Matilda S. Davis, married daughter; Shubael Davis, her husband, a cooper; and Adeline A. Davis, Matilda’s daughter, 5 years old. Emily’s son, John, was not among those living there.

One week later, Pease went across the bridge over the Tiasquam River to begin tabulating the residents of Chilmark, starting at the (West) Tisbury line. One of the first houses he went into was that of the widow Martha McCollum, mother of Abram. Living in the house, Pease wrote, was her grandson, John L. McCollum, Emily’s five-year-old son.

Why was John living with his grandmother? It wasn’t a lack of space in the Johnson house. It is a large house and a five-year-old boy wouldn’t have overloaded it. Matilda’s five-year-old daughter was in the house. Why wasn’t John?

It must have been devastating for Emily, a loving mother, now 35, to be living apart from both her husband and her son.

At this time another event occurred that would soon bring changes. An up-and-coming cartographer working for the newly formed U. S. Coastal Survey was sent to the Vineyard to chart its harbors. He was Henry L. Whiting, then in his 20s. Somehow, he entered the lives of the Johnsons. Jane Newhall explains:

In the late 1840s, Henry Lawrence Whiting, my great grandfather, was sent to the Island to do a topographical map of the Island... he lodged here [in West Tisbury] and fell in love with the Island and with one of the daughters of Asa Johnson, Anna Frances. And so they were married and acquired the farm next door, the old parsonage farm.  

Anna Frances and Henry were married November 3, 1851, in (West) Tisbury. Soon, Henry bought the old Congregational parsonage abutting Asa Johnson’s property. The Whittings used it as a summer home for years and later it became their year-round home.

Emily, living with her parents without either her husband or son, must have envied Anna Frances’s happiness and prosperity. For her, life was increasingly cruel.

The next year, her pain may have deepened when Abram’s unmarried sister, Hannah McCollum, 34, petitioned the Probate Court, stating "that there is reason for a Guardian to be appointed for John L. McCollum ... a minor son and heir of Abraham McCollum." What prompted this is not recorded. Probate Judge Theodore G. Mayhew approved the petition and Hannah, after posting a $1000 bond, became John’s guardian, although he continued living with his grandmother.

Miles, Emily’s brother, returned for a visit to the Island from California the next year. He was involved in a whaling enterprise on the west coast. While Miles was visiting, Asa sold him the family home in which Emily and her parents were living for $1200. Anna Frances, now Mrs. Henry L. Whiting, may have helped finance the purchase.

In 1854, Henry, moving up the ranks of the U. S. Coastal Survey, began to enlarge and improve his Tisbury house, which had deteriorated during its years as a parsonage. He was converting the property into a working farm. In August, Emily wrote her sister Anna Frances Whiting, whose house it was:

Mr. Howland’s three men started working on Mr. Whiting’s house the day after you left. They board to Mrs. Smith’s. James works with them... Father [Asa] has been getting a load of peat. Mother has been berrying a number of times. She is making a green corn pudding for dinner. I am going to make berry cake for tea. We have not tired of the sweet corn. It is as delicious now as ever although we have it on the table three times a day... I have called on Mrs. H. Look she has just returned from Eastham Camp Meeting. One hundred ministers and ten thousand people present... she saw the justly esteemed lady Miss Parmer  of N. York whose writings and exhortations are doing much to awaken in the church a sense of the importance of a deeper work of grace...

There is a gap of a several years in Emily’s papers, during

14 MVHS Oral History. It seems strange that he would stay in West Tisbury, far from the Island’s harbors, which were what he was surveying for the U. S. Coastal Survey.

15 Brother James was working as a laborer, but would soon go whaling.

16 She was Mrs. Phoebe Palmer (not Parmer), famous Methodist evangelist and author.
which, we have learned from court records, John was given a new guardian. In 1859, Dr. Henry McCollum, Abram's brother whom Emily had visited in Marston's Mills years before, was named guardian. His sister Hannah, former guardian, had just married and moved away. John never lived with either of them. They simply were “responsible” for him in the absence of his father. A teenager now, John was not living with Grandmother McCollum any more, but was with Emily in the Asa Johnson house. Neither guardían seemed to help Emily financially. She was always struggling for money. She wrote brother Miles in California that she was selling fruit from the property, which he now owned:

This is a beautiful island in the season of grass and flowers, birds and berries, groves and ponds. In the winter it is not so attractive. The berries on the burnt district have not been as plenty as last summer. Black berries have been very plenty I could pick four quarts in an hour on our place. It was evident that Haliott Coffin intended to keep our place gleaned but as soon as she saw me she would beat a hasty retreat leaving me the berries and the field. We had three bushels of pears, sold some for 3 cents apice, had peck of currants, some grapes.

The 1860 Census creates a bit of confusion. Emily, 45, was living in (West) Tisbury with son John, now 15, but it is unclear in which house. The Johnson family is listed by the census taker as being in three different houses: Emily and John, in one; sister Matilda, Shubael and Adeline Davis, in another; and parents, Asa and Prudence, in a third. Henry L. Whiting, with his wife, Anna Frances, and three daughters, plus two farm laborers, were in the Parsonage. The houses were close to each other, but except for the Parsonage and the Asa Johnson house, we can't identify them.

The census entry brings a huge shock: Asa is listed as “Insane. Hereditary.” Perhaps the developing mental illness was why he had sold the family home to Miles. It also may be why Emily and John are not living in the same house with them.

Despite her father's mental illness, Emily must have been overjoyed to have John with her. And even happier because, as the census entry shows, he is attending school, perhaps at the nearby Dukes County Academy. Emily always urged him to continue his education. In one letter, written shortly after he left home, she gave him some advice, plus a bit of philosophy:

My Dear John... I love you and call down the best of Heaven's Blessings upon you. Do not get discouraged, you have youth, health & character yet. Try to improve your time, as you will wish [you] had in after days. Do not neglect your study for you will soon be too old to go to school... here are moments in our life when but a thought, a word, a look, has proved to dash the cup of happiness aside and stamp us wretched. Oh, may this never be your lot.

She seems to be recalling something that had dashed her own cup of happiness. This undated letter is difficult to place in time. In 1860, John was 15 years old and living with her. When she wrote this letter he was still of school age so it must have been soon after. But he had left home; where he is we don't know. It was a discouraging time for him and the nation. Southern states were seceding. The Civil War was near. Early in 1861, it began. President Lincoln, newly elected, called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the “insurrection.” He did not call it a war. But as the fighting escalated, it obviously was a war — a bloody war. Casualties were increasing and Lincoln called for more soldiers.

Unable to meet their quotas for volunteers, Tisbury and other Island towns began offering $500 to every man who signed up. In September 1862, John came back to Tisbury and along with 15 other young men enlisted in the army. He signed up for nine months and was assigned to the 45th Regiment of Massachusetts Infantry as a musician (drummer). He was 18 years old and listed himself as a “Stage driver” on the enlistment form.

The volunteers, along with others from the Vineyard, were shipped to a camp in North Carolina. On December 20, 1862, he wrote his mother, his first letter since leaving the Island:

I am in a good state of health... We had a very pleasant passage out. I did not experience any sea sickness [sic] whatever. I well remember when we passed the Island [sailing south from Boston]. It was a beautiful Autumn day. The sun was just rising... I saw the whole of the Vineyard plainly... I could plainly see the shepp gently grazing. I could recognize many of the houses as I stood leaning over the railing and watched the fast receding hills, the tall brick light house, those bold grand old cliffs... Dear Mother you may imagine how the pleasant scenes of my early days fleeted back to my memory. I turned away and went below and sought [to] throw it off but in vain. I felt sad all day.

I have been in two battles... one in Kingston, the other in Whitehall. The air was thick with death round me but fortunately I came out unscathed. But I fear I shall worry you so I will close... your Son, John L. McCollum.

When his nine months' service were up, he returned to the Vineyard and decided to join the Navy. He left the Island and wrote to Emily from Boston on September 10, 1863:

17 That was a considerable sum. Nearly twice what a male teacher was paid per year.
My Dearest ... I will [write] a few lines to let you know as to my whereabouts. When we arrived at New Bedford I went up to the depot and took the cars [train] for Boston. I went to a shipping office and shipped for one year in the Navy. I am receiving $11.50 per month to be going [on a] gunboat carrying 8 guns, 100 men destined to Willminton [sic], N.C. I went on board of the receiving ship Ohio in Boston Harbour. We are expecting to sail in a few days. . . My drum is in Boston at Armory Hall. I would not lose it for a great deal as it has been in 4 battles and I always intend to keep it as memento of war.

John had said that when his Navy enlistment was up, he would settle in New Orleans. She advised him against that, urging him to go to California:

My brothers have prospered in business there. Perhaps there is the same chance for you there. If you try to do the best you can, the blessing will follow your lawful endeavours.

A few months later, in January 1864, John wrote again, telling about his Navy life. He likes it. Emily was overjoyed:

Tears of joy have I shed to learn that you are alive and well and have not forgotten me. Why [why] have your letters been like Angels visits? Let us know the secret. I am glad you like the Navy better than the Army. I think it is less dangerous not so much fatigue and bad water & exposure. . . . I have a bad cold and tooth achi and I advise you to have your teeth filled with gold before the air gets to the nerv. Do not go to a bad Dentist. The weather has been intensely cold until within ten days we have had a genuine January thaw.

When the war ended in mid-1865, John entered the merchant marine. Emily wrote him on December 29, 1865. Her letter is filled with local news and her usual motherly advice:

Elmore Rotch keeps the post office & store. Lyman Luce is studying medicine. Sanderson Mayhew is in the revenue service. He is a very steady young man. He has got promoted, lives aft, had his wages raised and will continue in the service, does all the Capt's writing. There is publick & private school also singing school. The scholars have fine scatting [skating]. I am glad to learn that you are studying navigation. It will be great advantage to you if you intend to go to sea. If you live and have your health you will visit all quarters of the globe you have been to Africka's sunny founting & India's coral strand, you will have a chance to collect some curiosity. Bring some thing to remember every place. You will get some coconuts & bananas, you must not make yourself sick with eating tropical fruit. I hope you will try to do as well as you can. Do not be enticed away from paths of virtue and honor. Let not all your youthful hopes be blasted by one vice.

18 This is a copy made by Emily. She may have sent the original to the government to prove John's service in the Navy. We don't know what happened to John's drum.

19 "Lives aft" means that he is not an ordinary seaman living in the forecastle.

20 It seems she is describing schools then being held in the Dukes County Academy.

In September 1866, Emily's sister, Mrs. Matilda Davis, died of dysentery at 47. She and Shubael had one child, Adeline, who was the same age as Emily's John. Within a year, their father, Asa Johnson, 79, died in the Taunton Insane Asylum, where he had been for several years. The family was dwindling.

There was good news. John was doing well in the merchant marine. That must have cheered his mother. In May 1869, she wrote her brothers in California. Spring delighted her:

Dear Brother James, I read your letter to Addie written about a month ago . . . I hope that the earth quacks [quakes] and small pox will not reach you . . . It is the Sabbath, every thing seems thankful for the return of spring. The birds are singing sweetly the flowers are blooming, all nature is putting on her gay attire. The grass is looking green, the air is perfumed. I should like to take a little stroll, a walk, with you. The weather is delightful.

Mother is as well as usual . . . There is going to be a Sabbath school concert this evening. The Vineyard Band have had a concert in Agricultural Hall. They performed well if not quite equal to the Boston Brigade or New Bedford Brass Band. They have had a singing school in the Academy all winter . . .

In her letter to Miles, Emily describes some improvements that had been made in the house, which he now owns:

Dear Brother Miles . . . we have had the warmest winter that I have ever experienced. We found the house is very much warmer since it has been repaired [sic]. I like the new stove very much. the Hancock's have all been in to see it. I have had a call from Cynthia. She very [angry] with you because you did
not send her your picture. She is going to write you a letter [using] some of the strongest words she can [think] of. Says she has always been a friend to you and you know it. Frances Ellen has been over to Ann's making new dresses for the children and some for Ann. 21

John wrote from Boston in the fall of 1869. His penmanship is the bold, shaded style being taught in the writing schools, then very popular. He will sail for New Orleans shortly and when he gets back he plans to head for California and will visit his uncles, Miles and James. He has news of another Vineyarder:

... While in Philadelphia a short time ago saw Mayhew Luce of Chilmark and learned considerable news as regards the people of the Vineyard... Am much obliged to Grandmother and yourself for your kind and cordial invitation.

James had written Emily from San Diego, having just returned from a sealing voyage. San Diego is as yet only a village it seems, as he tells her to address her reply simply: "James A. Johnson, San Diego, California." He's thinking of coming back to the Vineyard and moving in with his sister and mother:

Dear sister Emily -- Do you think if I should come home I could get a living off of the Old Place? It seems most a pity for it to lay with no one to improve it. I may come home next spring if we should be fortunate this winter in Whaling and as the House is large, I could perhaps marry some Old Made [sic] and perhaps make a living if I had some income from some business out here. I am getting quite old and this life of adventure has lost its Charm somewhat with me. We have lots of Grapes at this time of year. I wished you could have some as there is some of the best ones I ever saw. How were the Berries this summer? Them with the Green Corn is about the best thing the Vineyard produces. Miles tells of lots of Berries on the burnt ground last summer. I think he enjoyed them quite well, in fact he seemed pleased with his visit home and says he is going again. 22 We have a very nice comfortable vessel and a plenty of everything to eat and all that but still I don't feel contented. It is not home after all... Miles sends his respects to the Family. I will close by wishing you goodbye from your affectionate brother, James.

The 1870 Census shows Emily and her mother, Prudence Johnson, now living together in the family house. 23 Son John had visited them in the spring and cousin Addie had written to him

\[\text{Footnotes:}\]
21 We believe this is Ann (Cathcart) Johnson, wife of her cousin, Henry C. Johnson.
22 Miles must have visited the Vineyard, but there is no record of it in Emily's papers. Henry Hough, in the Vineyard Gazette, Aug. 15, 1944, wrote that Miles managed a whaling station at Point Loma, Cal., in the 1850s. Business may have brought him east.
23 There is a mystery in the 1870 Census. Francis A. McCollam, 17, born in Connecticut, is living with the family of John C. Johnson, Asa's brother, in (West) Tisbury. Who could she be? Emily never mentions her.

... while he was there. Emily saved the letter. Since her mother died, Addie was living in Cambridge with Aunt Anna Frances Whiting. They want Grandma Johnson to come for a visit:

Tell Grandma that Aunt Fran says that she had better come on with Uncle Henry or when Adeline Swan (?) comes on for it is a pleasant time now. The hens continue to lay and the one lone chicken still lives. I do not know whether the sick hen recovered or not. When you are in Boston you must come see us... I should have like to have been on the Island to have attended the Academy Exhibition. I presume you went. How did you like?... Tell Grammy that I have not heard from Cal. for a long time but when I write I will make particular inquiries about that chest of tea. Remember me to Aunt Emily and Grandma. Your affectionate cousin, Addie

Cousin Addie didn't know it, but John never received the letter. He was aboard the ship Charlotte bound for England. Emily wrote to him in September 1870, care of his ship in Liverpool:

... my health has not been very good this summer, the dysentery has prevailed here. Mrs. Carolin Athern died with it... I took a ride down to Camp meeting, stayed three nights, the change did me good. Your Uncle Whiting and family have been out to their house and stoped six weeks. They are expected on to spend the faire. I received a letter from your Uncle James. They have done well. Uncle Miles has gone to San Francisco to sell the vessel and cargo and buy a larger one. They will not be at home untill Spring. The Academy is being rebuilt... there has been a great deal of company at the See Breeze House this Summer. The whole Island is becoming a watering place. 24 Nathan Mayhew

24 After the Civil War, the thousands drawn to the Island by camp meetings began to realize that there were reasons other than religion to come here. The Sea Breeze House, we believe, is the present Howes House, across the road from today's Alley's store.
I think GranMother has half a mind to visit Boston if the weather continues pleasant. She says that you must not go out evenings in Boston. Do you have the pain in your head as much as ever? James West came home sick. It does not agree with him to work in the lead factory. The weather is mild and pleasant. The season is fast approaching when nature puts on her beautiful attire. The winter is past, the snow is gone, the grass begins to look green around the old willow tree, already the warblers begin to hop from spray to spray and cheer us with their songs. Glad to learn that your health was good as usual. Grandmother is well, has gone to church today. The weather has been very blustery. When is Ann Fran [Whiting] coming on the Vineyard? I suppose Addie is engaged in making up new dresses. Are you going to sea again? Perhaps the wind will spring up for you after all. I hope for the best and that you may return in good health. Write me the name of vesel, master and port. I miss you. As many good wishes as the waves will bear up. I fear this letter will not be interesting enough to compensate for the trouble of reading it. Full place for news. the school in the New Academy will close in one week. The farmers have commenced their spring work, the grass begins to look green, the birds have had a concert on the trees across the street, robins and blue birds. Be assured that the more you increase in goodness and delight in doing good, the more you will increase in happiness and will be in favor with God and man and die in the hope of rising from the grave to a life of endless happiness. Choose a life of goodness, you will. Inherit the promise of glorious immortality. Affectionately yours, Emily A. McCollum.

Then on December 8, 1871, Emily received a letter from John that must have shocked both her and her grandmother:

If the wind is fair we shall sail tomorrow. I wrote you several days ago and have been expecting an answer for the last three days but have been disappointed. I have concluded to leave my trunk and clothing with my wife. I wrote you in the last letter that I was married last Sunday night but perhaps the letter has gone the same road that many others have that I have wrote and you never got it. I want you should write me at Alga Bay in about 6 weeks after I sail. I shall be anxious to hear from you. From Your Affectionate Son, John Direct to: J. L. McCollum, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, bark Charles F. Perry, Capt. Hallett, Care of Taylor Kemp and Co.

My wife says that she will be happy to answer any letters that you may address her at No. 6, Phillip St., Boston, Mrs. Mary A. McCollum.

John married! What must have been Emily's reaction? And Grandmother's? A wife – someone they had never heard of!

Emily never did meet her son's wife, although others in the family did. In March 1872, Grandma went to Cambridge with Henry and Anna when they returned from an Island visit. Henry describes her trip in a letter to Emily:

... Grandma got down quite well to the Harbor and seemed to keep warm. She was also quite comfortable on the boat. In New Bedford we went to the hotel.
where Grandma got some dinner in her room and then laid down until the cars [train] started - that gave her a rest from 11 1/2 to 3 1/2 o’k. She got along quite well in the cars and slept some. In Boston I took a carriage and drove [them] out to our house in Cambridge. We are all well otherwise except Georgie who has some cold.39

I hope you are getting along well. You must write often and tell us how you come on and all about it. Very truly yours, H. L. Whiting

This is the only letter in the collection from Henry and it was saved in its original envelope.39 Emily responded by writing to her mother: “I received a letter from Mr. Whiting” and am happy to learn that you arrived safe...”

Grandma’s visit to Cambridge was lengthy. After three months, Georgiana wrote to her Aunt Emily, telling her that Grandma has met John’s wife, Mary. The letter, written by a 17-year-old niece, also gives us a hint of Emily’s mental condition and of how the family treats her. It suggests that they think of her as an incompetent. Georgie relays orders from Grandma as though instructing a child, not someone her aunt’s age:

...Clear up the cellar some. Put the basket that has got the bottles in it under the cellar stairs. Grandma wants to know what you have done with the potatoes and onions...cover the onions up from the air. Look at the hams to see if the flies have not got to them, keep the pork covered with pickle and put in a double handful of salt occasionally.

Take all the black tins and pans and put them away in the closet in the sick room. The oil in the bottle down cellar in the closet over the fireplace is to paint houses outside not inside...clean the green tin slop pail perfectly clean inside & put it in John’s room for a slop pail. Try to keep things in their place for you are liable to have company any time.

Grandma said she was in hopes you would clean the floors upstairs with lime and paint them, like the kitchen floor, not to get it too dark. Buy a new mop handle & make a new mop if you want one...plenty of rags down cellar.

Grandma took a ride the other day and she called on John’s wife. Grandma did not get out of the carriage but she came out to the carriage. She is quite pretty, very pleasant, light blue eyes, looks something like John. Appeared very well, quite large, said she was expecting John home every day.

Grandma says she has not heard anything from the cat. How is she, does she have anything to eat? I guess you will think this a letter of rules & regulation. I must end now, Georgie.

39 Georgie is their oldest child, daughter Georgiana, then 17.
40 Henry spelled her name McCollum instead of McCollum on the envelope.
41 Emily never referred to Henry by his first name, always Mr. or Uncle Whiting.
42 Georgie married Everett Allen Davis, lawyer and later judge, six years later.

Emily wrote (or saved, that is) only one letter that mentions her daughter-in-law and then only in its salutation: “My Dear Son, Dauter.” Dated Sept. 16, 1878 (no precise year is given), it seems to be the original, not a copy. Perhaps she never mailed it. In it is this mysterious reference:31

I was not at home when Mary called at the post Office. I went to Camp meeting...I looked round but did not see you there.

That reads as though daughter-in-law Mary had gone to the Vineyard, stopped at the post office to ask directions to Emily’s house and discovered she was not at home. Surely, Mary would have made a greater effort to find her before returning to Boston, a long trip. Also, why would Emily have expected to see them at the camp meeting? She must be referring to some other Mary, a friend. But why would she be writing about her in this letter to John?

Among the papers is a hand-made booklet of nine small sheets (3” x 5”) sewed together in the center with black thread and folded. It, too, contains a mystery. The first pages contain a number of strange items, one a carefully drawn chart headed “Orculum” and another headed “Unlucky Days.”

It could be an astrology forecast, although there is no reference to stars or planets. There is a complex code by which unlucky days are forecast. The chart shows thirty unlucky days scattered through the year and indicates the types of concern for each day with questions such as “Shall I have to travel?” “Will the patient recover from his illness?” It seems not to be something Emily would have done. The signature of Miles appears in several places and perhaps it is his work.

Other pages record purchases by Mrs. Prudence Johnson at the store of Sanderson M. Mayhew in 1872. She bought $2.31 worth, including food, liniment, nails, candles and pins and settled her account with cash on September 24, 1872. Listed also is Emily’s account at the store of William J. Rotch from 1875 until 1883. She bought cloth, boots and slippers, paying with eggs, cranberries, grapes and pears. She did not pay with cash. The final page was written in 1883. Emily, 68 years old, was exuberant:

Finished 20 pairs of Socks. Settled with Rotch. Also Union Store. Also Dr. Luce & Sander Mayhew. Square with the World! (the last in bold letters).

31 The word “Dauter” obviously was added after she had finished writing the letter.
for you to come up. So if you should come you must write me and let me know and Mary will meet you at the depot... My leg troubles me somewhat now but I am in hopes that it will improve as the weather grows warmer. Mary sends love, From your affectionate Son. Direct your letter, No. 20 Blackstone St., Boston.

That summer, Miles moved back to (West) Tisbury from the West Coast. There is nothing in Emily's papers that explains why, but, as we shall see, he was soon having mental problems and that could have been involved. The Johnsons had a tendency toward mental illness. Father Asa had died in the Taunton Insane Asylum five years earlier and Miles may have been developing symptoms. When he came back he sold the family house, where Emily and their mother lived, to his sister, Anna Frances Whiting. The property abutted the Whiting land. She paid him only $100, suggesting that when Miles bought the house in 1854 from his father for $1200, the Whitings had lent him the money. If so, in the next twenty years he apparently paid off only $100 of the mortgage, suggesting that his California enterprise was not as prosperous as Emily thought. That, of course, is a guess, but the difference between $1200 purchase price and $100 selling price seems to support the guess.

His mental problems worsened and sometime between 1875 and 1877, Miles was admitted to the Worcester Insane Asylum, where he was confined until he died in 1890. He and his father were the only Johnsons with mental illness that we know of.

Brother James, the youngest in the family, returned from California at about the time Miles went into the asylum. James lived at the Whiting's, apparently working as a farm hand. The farm had been greatly expanded, needing more men to tend the animals and work the fields. Henry was away most of the time with the Coastal Survey and was what later came to be called a "gentleman farmer."

Emily's son John sailed as a crewman to San Francisco in October 1877 and was in pain during most of the voyage. When his ship arrived at San Francisco in March, he was taken to the Marine Hospital. He told the doctor that he had earlier thought his problem was rheumatism, but he was now convinced it was something more serious. When he said that, "the doctor laughed at me," John wrote mother. She responded:

... Grandmother [still] thinks that you have got the rheumatism. Her remedy is mustard plaster and "No Question Linement", taken internally previous to
applying externally, a bit of sheeps wool [with] french cologne [I] rubed on, ware flannel keep dry. Can you get up any! ... your uncle James did not go to Florida. [He] is at your uncle Whitings.

I hope that you will get well, pray for strength to bare your trials to guard against temptation of a wicked world that you may be prepared for the land where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest ... write soon.

John certainly did have something more serious than rheumatism. On April 21, 1878, less than two months after entering the hospital, he died. When Emily received the tragic news from a visiting minister at the hospital, she was devastated. She had a friend write to the minister, asking if John had accepted the Lord before he died. The minister, who visited the hospital on Sundays, had known John and he reassured her:

I visit all the patients so I can spend very little time with each one. I did not therefore see very much of John, not so much as I should have done had I known he was to die. ... I saw him several times. Each time tried to lead him to the Saviour. He received my persuasions kindly. I think I can say truthfully he seemed really desirous to make his peace with God. ... It was on the 7th of April that he first expressed a hope in Christ, two weeks before he died. That day he seemed to have no doubt of all the soundness of his hope. He asked me to write to his Mother and tell her he could not write himself because his hand was slightly paralyzed, disabled, but that he hoped to write for himself soon, adding perhaps he never would write to her again.

Not knowing what to think I called on the resident physician. I asked his opinion of John's prospect of recovery. He replied that there was very little the matter with him. He was full of fancies, has a new disease every day.

Being assured by the doctor's confidence and thinking he would soon be better, I delayed writing ... hoping he would soon able to write for himself.

The next Sabbath Apr. 14, I was kept at home by rain. ... On the 21st I was surprised to see him propped up, with two nurses trying to feed him with some liquid through a flexible tube. His body was paralyzed from his neck downward. It was evident that death might be expected at any moment. He asked me to come to him when the nurses should get through, so after making the rounds of the building I returned to his bedside. His mind and tongue were unaffected as yet so he was quite calm, knowing that death was near ... asking me to assure his Mother that he died with a firm hope in Christ, of life in heaven hereafter.

Seemed to have no doubt on this point. At his request, I prayed with him and having got my promise to write and send the ring, he gave me her connections again to make it sure. He seemed to dismiss all care ... I could not stay long, feeling that his soul was saved. That evening he died ...

Emily had worried about John's faith, concerned lest they not meet in heaven. The minister's words must have relieved her.

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February 2002

During her heartbreak, brother James was there to support her, as were her mother and sister. But Emily, a self-contained person, seemed to be acting alone. Perhaps she refused to accept emotional or financial assistance from her family. She kept writing letters, seeking what she felt she was entitled to as the mother of a Civil War veteran, who had been both a soldier and a sailor.

One of her first letters went to San Francisco, asking for the money John had when he died. She was concerned that it would be sent to Mary, his wife. Emily questioned their marriage:

I have letters from the Marine Hospital in Cal. that my Son John Larue who shipped on board of the Ship Enos troubled [sic] the 27 Oct 1877 and remained on board until [sic] arrive first week in March 1878. [words unclear here, probably "he died"] the 22 of Apr. he left $22.55 in your possession. The reason he did not send the money to me [was] he thought that the money would go to pay his funeral expenses. His clothes he willed to the nurse and he has got them.

I have no proof that he was married. I live with a woman in Boston. She was not a good [woman] [sic] I have not heard from her, going 5 years since I heard from her. I do not know whether she is on this state or on the state of New York or what state. I have no proof that she was married to my Son. ... I never called that woman his wife. He went to Cal. to clear himself from her. I do not think he had intended to give her the money.

The minister who had visited John became involved on her behalf. When she learned from him that she would get the money, she gave instructions to the person handling the case:

You will convey a favour on me by sending the money by male [sic] please take enough from the amount and register the letter. I have received a letter from Rev. Joseph Rowel Paster of the Mariners church in your city stating that the money [is] ready.

Her effort to receive financial help continued. There are a number of copies of letters such as this one, applying for a pension as a dependent of a Civil War veteran, whose death, she claimed, was caused by his army service:

Dear Sir: John L. McCollum of West Tisbury my only child enlisted into the service of the United St. on the 12th of Sept 1862 to serve nine months as drummer of Capt. Nathaniel W. Bumstead Company D 45th Regiment of Massachusetts Infantry Volunteers. 18 years of age when enrolled, occupation Stage driver. Said John L. McCollum was discharged from the service of the United States on seventh day of July 1863 at Readville, Mass., by reason of the expiration of his term of service. My son was trained for artillery at Fort Donelson. He was in battle of Whitehall, also Kingston, Goldsborough. He contracted rheumatism, was carried to the Hospital on a litter at Newbern, NC.
He suffered very much. Got better, left the Hospital, went on a long March waded through a river and camped out in rainy nights. Slept on the bare ground. He had a relapse and was carried back to the Hospital again. When the regiment started for Boston he said he could not live five days longer but sea air revived him. Fearing that he was dead I hurried to Boston, found him alive but sick and feeble. He went to a Doctor and got better. September 1863 he shipped for one year in the [Navy]. ... [rest of letter not found].

She wrote to the Navy, asking for a pension and enlisted the help of a friend, Mary A. Luce, to write to Boston to find out if John and Mary had been legally married, something she doubted:

Dear Sir: Please inform me if John L. McCollum and Mary Ann Frances Burke were married on the last of Nov., or first Dec. 1871 or if the aforesaid Mary was again married to a foreigner on the last of Dec. 1877 or Jan 1878 or since that time. Mary A. Luce, West Tisbury.

Writing so often of her poverty, Emily must have suffered a loss of self esteem and become depressed. With reason. Her life, despite her sincere efforts, had not turned out well. Compared to her younger sister, comfortably off and living nearby with a loving family, Emily had been a failure. No doubt she believed that. And perhaps the community felt the same way. So it would seem when we read what the Marshall recorded in the 1880 Federal Census. When he visited the home of Mrs. Prudence Johnson and her daughter, Emily, he made this entry:

Prudence Johnson, 80, retired.
Emily Collum, 60, servant/keeping house.

He did not even get Emily’s name right. But much more disturbing was that he considered her a servant, someone keeping house for Mrs. Johnson. We hope that Emily never saw the entry.

In December 1881, still seeking help, she responded to an advertisement in the Boston Herald in which a company claimed it could help veterans’ families get pensions:

I am a poor widow dependent for my daily bread. ... I send you 2 stamps for information.

She enclosed a summary of John’s military record, a record she had written so many times she must have been able to recite it from memory. Finally, in 1885 she began to receive State Aid, $32 for the year. It was increased the following year to $48 and continued at that level as long as she lived. In 1894, for the first time, the payment was tied in with John’s military record as though it was a pension, not state aid, as the heading indicates:

State Aid: Emily A. McCollum, mother of John L. McCollum, Navy and Company D, 45th Mass. $48.00.

Statements about who received public assistance were published in the Tisbury Town Report and must have been an embarrassment to Emily’s sister, Anna Frances, wife of Henry L. Whiting, living in prosperous circumstances in the village. Anna’s life style became even more affluent when in 1882 her daughter, Virginia, married the widower, Edwin W. Newhall of California, a wealthy land owner and rancher.

Whether Emily refused Anna’s help or whether Anna did not offer any, we cannot say. It seems likely that Emily’s pride and stubbornness had taken over. Anna certainly helped brothers Miles and James when they returned from California. She and Henry were generous with the Johnsons in their burials. The entire family, including Asa and Prudence, is buried in the Whiting plot in West Tisbury cemetery. The Whiting must have paid for the burials and the stones. They thoughtfully had the name of Emily’s son, John, who was buried in California, carved on his mother’s stone. Absent is the name of Abraham McCollum, Emily’s husband, who was dropped by the family completely.

Emily’s pension payments as the widowed mother of a
Charley Brown, Steward, Reminisces About Whaling

by JOAN DRUETT

ON THE 15TH DAY OF May 1844, a young man with the grand name of Charles LaFayette Brown sailed from Holmes Hole (now Vineyard Haven) in the whaleship Pocahontas for a whaling cruise around the world.

Throughout his life Charles kept journals and some of them are now in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand. On June 10, 1879, his whaling days long past, he wrote an amusing account of them for the entertainment of his friend, T. S. Terrill of Carlsbad, California. Fortunately for us, this summary has survived.

When Charley made that first voyage on the Pocahontas under whaling master, Capt. Henry Manter of (West) Tisbury, the industry was nearing its peak. Hundreds of ships were chasing the leviathan. Dreams of adventure attracted many young men, eager to add to their life experiences with a whaling voyage or two.

What prompted Charles, a landlubber from Vermont, to go is only hinted at, but bluntly clear is that he, like so many who went awailing, was not ready for the challenge.

"Our ship was fitted out for 40 months," he wrote to his friend, "a long time, it seemed to me." Charley, we learn, was the greenest of green hands — so green a reader must wonder why he bothered to sign up. He hints that it was for his health, "for I thought I would not live long, my health being very poor."

Certainly, it improved his health. He lived long enough to

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"Our ship was fitted out for 40 months," he wrote to his friend, "a long time, it seemed to me." Charley, we learn, was the greenest of green hands — so green a reader must wonder why he bothered to sign up. He hints that it was for his health, "for I thought I would not live long, my health being very poor."

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Certainly, it improved his health. He lived long enough to
go on a number of whaling voyages and to enjoy a long and apparently prosperous life. Writing years after his last voyage, he reminisces pleasantly about his green-hand beginnings:

It is amusing to me to recall to mind my initiation into the mysteries of sea-life, the awkward, green Yankee running from one rope to another, thinking one and all answered the same purpose.

That first night at sea aboard the Pocahontas remained vivid in his memory:

Well, we got under way and stood out to sea. We had made but a few miles headway when the wind, commenced blowing dead ahead, saying thus far shall thou go and no further. So we came to anchor about midnight the same day we left our moorings, and such a night—the rain descending in torrents, the wind howling through the ship's rigging—with sharp lightning and heavy thunder, was enough to make us all think of our homes and dear friends left behind.

Charley and his mates may have had time to think of home, but not for long. There were things to be done to make sure Pocahontas made it through the stormy night.

We anchored our ship. "We," I say. At any rate someone done it, but "we" furl the sails. The Chief Mate sang out in a very musical voice for all hands to lay aloft and furl the sails, and to bear a hand about it, for we were going to have a regular northeaster.

At that moment, Charles came face to face with what he had signed up for and he wasn't sure he liked it:

Now, I came to the conclusion when he said "All hands" he meant me as well as the rest, and that was the first time I realized the sublime beauties of sea life.

One after another of the sailors go aloft, your humble servant following on after them, but while they take the overland route, [meaning over the top along the futtock shrouds]. I went the cut-off, through what is called the lubber-hole.

What cared I what route I took long as I got there, and if I had not, it would not of set me back much. I concluded it must be a tender hearted tar that could not bear a laugh from his brother sailors.

The lubber-hole, for those who are not experts on rigging, is a cutout in the futtock plate that is at the top of the lower mast, to enable "lubbers" like Charley to stay closer to the mast as they go aloft. Expert sailors scramble quickly up the rigging over the outside of the futtock plate. Charles, who is a sensible and much frightened beginner, took the safer route:

After getting through the lubber hole, I took a seat in the top, perfectly satisfied without going any farther. I sat there trembling and thinking my moments were short—that is if I attempted to go out on the yard arm to help furl the sails.

And there he sat and would still have been there next morning, if a kindly boatsteerer, Frank Williams, "a noble fellow," had not taken pity on him and taken his place on the yard. "I thanked him from the bottom of my trembling heart and frame," Charles recalled.

Next day, he wrote, "the wind shifted in our favor, so we got under way and stood out for sea." One of the other green hands, a lubber from Maine, was so sick he tried to bribe the captain to turn back and put him on shore, with the promise of "a good yoke of oxen and he knew his dad would give him lots of sheep." As for Charley, he appeared to be so unpromising a sailor that Captain Manit gave him the steward's job, for which he was profoundly thankful. The position brought a perk: "I was overjoyed to get out of the dirty forecastle and into the after cabin."

Could this noble fellow be the same Frank Williams Emily wrote about? (see p. 107).
Charley soon got his first view of whaling. The Pocahontas was just off the Azores when whales were spotted. He watched from the security of the deck as two were taken:

... four boats [were] lowered in pursuit of the monsters... and a fine sight it was... the way the white water flew was astonishing... my boy, to say that my eyes did not stick out of little more prominent than usual would not be telling the truth. I gazed with wonder at those twin monsters, who two hours before were spouting in their native element.

At Fayal in the Azores he visited the garden of Mr. Dabney, the U.S. Consul. Charley couldn’t resist gossiping:

By the way, this same Consul’s son [later] married Miss Webster, daughter of the late Professor Webster who was hung in Boston for the murder of Dr. Parkman. She and her dear old mother have found a kind and pleasant home on that beautiful island and may the sins of the father never be visited on those who once shared his home.

Back at sea, aboard Pocahontas troubles were beginning. The third mate, Mr. Luce, was only 19 years old. Two of the boatsteamers, older and much more experienced than he, refused to take his orders. This led to a general brawl. The dispute was settled by Captain Manter, who flogged the offenders. Charles could not bear to watch the punishment and after the flailing he “applied liniment” to the backs of the culprits. “I believe God never intended for one man to tie up another and flog him,” he wrote angrily. It was not the actual lashing he objected to so much as the humiliation of the punishment.

Discipline restored, Pocahontas sailed on, stopping at Cape de Verde Islands, which, Charles wrote, “have all the features of a land cursed by God and forgotten by nature.” Rounding the Cape of Good Hope, they headed toward Australia, whaling on the offshore grounds and taking 500 barrels of oil. When they sailed into Hobart, Tasmania, for provisions, Charles was impressed:

The town is quite pretty; and to look around, [one] would not think that the place is inhabited by so many convicts. The climate is excellent, which makes it quite a desirable place to live in.

Back awhaling, they took 500 more barrels of oil in the

5 Charles refers to a murder at Harvard College during a dispute two professors were having over a personal loan in 1849, several years after this voyage ended. The consul, Charles W. Dabney, adopted Fayal as his home, living there until he died in 1871.

Tasmania, part of Australia, at this time and until 1853 was a British penal colony.

... grounds off New Zealand and when they stopped in the Bay of Islands for provisions, Charley was greatly entertained:

I will now try and describe a war-dance witnessed at the Bay of Islands [sic]. There were several thousand natives collected together on a beautiful plain near the sea shore. Many of them had no doubt had feasted on the flesh of the pale face. Just imagine thousands of half-civilized beings in one solid mass, with tattooed and painted faces, performing gestures [sic] which made the earth tremble, and in such perfect harmony, you then have some idea of a war-dance.

Charles was equally impressed by the very large and gaily decorated Maori canoes:

Some of them are from 80 to 120 feet in length, dug out from the tall pines that flourish so beautful in that land. I have seen some 80 natives in one canoe sending forth an infernal yell of the most dismal sound; but to the canoes, which are finely finished, stained red from some kind of a bark; there is a narrow ribbon of wood near the top; and that is covered with rare specimens of beautiful sea shells; which they are constantly collecting. The figureheads of their canoes are of carved wood, finely executed, in imitation of some dragon or sea-monster.

They sailed south to Auckland and again Charley was happy with what he saw. He wrote: "The town is fine, situated on the hillsides, overlooking the bay, and contains a population of some 5000 inhabitants. After a long hike into the hills that overlooked the bay, he added, "the view is grand and beautiful, in fact, the eye never tires in gazing on the beautiful scenery of the adjacent country, dotted with hills and green islets."

Her hold nearly filled, the Pocahontas began heading for home. She stopped at Tahiti so that Captain Manter could seek out the grave of his younger brother, Joseph, who had died aboard the Oscar seven years earlier. He found the grave much neglected and arranged to have it cared for.

Captain Manter's family suffered another loss when First Mate Sylvas Manter, the captain's cousin, died as Pocahontas was sailing home. Charley had nursed him devotedly during his fatal illness and prepared the body for burial at sea. When they arrived at Holmes Hole in July 1846 on what Charles called "one of the loveliest days I ever saw," the dead mate's widow asked to meet him. "She was highly accomplished, with a pretty and

intellectual countenance," he wrote. She threw her arms round Charley's neck in gratitude for the loving care he had given her husband.6

Charles had enjoyed his first whaling adventure (particularly once he did not have to climb aloft) and after spending some time in Vermont he decided to go again. In 1846 he signed on the ship Tobacco Plant, Captain Albert Allen, out of New Bedford. She headed around Cape Horn for the Pacific. The weather at the Cape was especially cruel and for 42 days they struggled before making it into the South Pacific. They whaled along the coast of South America and sailed into San Francisco in the summer of 1847, where Charley went ashore:

Little did I think as I strolled about the place that in a few years [it] would become the largest city on the western shore of North and South America, and that this same California would so soon astonish the whole world.7

The voyage was not pleasant for Charley and more than a year later when they stopped at Lahaina to recruit, he asked Captain Allen for his discharge. He was tired of the ship. The captain refused, so Charley, along with two equally unhappy friends, Elijah Aikins and Lewis P. Barton, jumped ship and he shipped out on the Mechanic from Newport.8

When I shipped, the Capt. told me that he intended to make a short cruise for sperm whales, then make sail for home. That suited me, for I was anxious to go home, for I had not heard one word from there since I sailed in the Tobacco Plant.

They left Lahaina in November 1848. After some months of whaling, they went into the Kingsmills, part of the Gilbert Islands on the Equator, for provisions. While ashore, Captain Potter was offered a girl by the tribal chief. Charley explained:

[he] told the chief by signs and wonders [?] that he had a wife at home, which seemed to please his Highness, the Chief, but not his fair-haired daughter, who expected to get a few plugs of tobacco from old Potter.

Potter, despite his devotion to his wife, was a tough old character at sea with little sympathy for his men. On Pleasant Island soon after, he marooned one Portuguese seaman for trying get friendly with a native woman. So much for the stories of whalers consorting merrily with the hours of tropical paradises! The sailor, according to what Charles heard later, came to a nasty end. Left on board, he was attacked by a band of violent natives:

I was informed he fought bravely before he died, killed one of the devils and mortally wounded another, and would have escaped if some of the other canoes had not come to their assistance.

The natives of Pleasant Island, despite its name, had a reputation for ferocity, unlike the other islands in the Kingsmills, whose inhabitants were known for their friendliness and docility. Charles, by now convinced the master of their ship was a tyrant, bluntly accused him of having become what conventional wisdom tells us whaling captains are very likely to be:

Capt. Potter was the direct murderer of that man, for he knew he was sending him among savages. But he had been Captain so long that he considered himself more than a man – almost a God.

They continued whaling, stopping to recruit at such places as the Fijis and again at the Bay of Islands, a favorite stopover for American whalers. Charley went ashore and, despite the reputation of some of its tribal chiefs (he met one of the worst of them, Hone Heke), he came back alive and unscathed. The crew joked about his good fortune. Having been steward so long, Charley was now fat enough to have made a good meal, they suggested.

After provisioning at Samoa, where they traded calico for fresh food, they returned to whaling for a while before sailing into Stewart's Islands. Captain Potter had heard that the natives there were dangerously violent, so he armed the crew before sending them ashore. Charley described the preparations. The men were armed with "two or three old muskets, a few harpoons and lances, and if I remember correctly, an old rusty sword."

The natives turned out to be friendly, speaking good English and finding the weapons carried by the crew most amusing:

I never saw a man feel more ashamed of his rusty firearms than did Commodore Potter.

Charley, by this time, had had quite enough of Potter and was most happy when they arrived at Sydney where the whole
crew was discharged:
I for one heartily rejoiced when I bid Potter and his old ship farewell, no
tears dimmed my eye, no throbbing heart shook my frame.

He then shipped aboard the *James Loper* because, he wrote,
he liked Captain Whippy. After a brief voyage in the Japan
Grounds, they sailed east to Lahaina, where Charley took his
discharge. He had had enough whaling for a while. Boarding the
Big *Juno* for San Francisco, he was bitten by the gold bug and for a
few years worked in the gold fields with undisclosed success.

Only once more did he go whaling. He signed on the
*Parachute* out of New Bedford after he had returned briefly to
Vermont from the gold fields. No longer a green hand with eyes
that bulged at the sight of the leviathan, he was now able to pass
judgment on a life at sea:

The life of a sailor is a peculiar one, estranged from all polished and
refined society, rowing the mighty deep from clime to clime, and
almost from pole to pole. Through them, the arts and sciences have been
spread over the world; and the wealth of other lands and climes brought
to our doors.

He had seen the seven seas, viewing them, not from high
in the yardarms, but from the security of the deck. Always a
steward, he would never sign on until he was assured that he
would not be required to go aloft — a promise he had made to
himself years before while sitting on the futtock plate hugging the
mast of the *Pocahontas*, Capt. Henry Manter of Tisbury.

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The Grand Tour in 1860:
A Vineyarder in Venice

by HENRY BAYLIES

IN THE SPRING of 1860, Henry Baylies, whose third wife, Julia,
had died in the previous December, sailed from Boston to begin a
Grand Tour of Europe and the Middle East. Julia must have left
him some money as he seemed untroubled by the expense. For the story
of Henry's life, see Intelligencer, November 2001.

As was his habit, he kept a journal, filling four notebooks. The first
two seem to have been lost, but we have Volumes 3 and 4, which begin
in Germany on July 27, 1860.

We will publish excerpts that provide interesting details of European
cruise in the mid-1800s. Henry, a Vineyard native, no longer lives on
the Island. His most recent home and the place where Julia died was the
parsonage of the Allen Street Methodist Church in New Bedford. His
two very young daughters are being cared for by friends, the Taylors.
We don't know where they live, perhaps in North Bridgewater.

When this excerpt begins, Henry is on the train to Venice with his

Friday, September 21, 1860. From Milan to Venice. At 6:30 this
morning left by Rail for Venice where we arrived at 6 in the
evening. As we approached Venice, the sun set or, as the Italians
say, "went beyond the mountains." The scene was enchanting:
before we lay the Adriatic, quiet as a sleeping infant, a long stone
bridge stretched across the water connecting Venice, with its rich
towers & dome, with the Continent.

Is there a Venice? I have dreamed there is; I am in it and I
still dream there is a Venice!

I looked out upon the Venus of the Adriatic, the city
seemingly born from the foam of the Sea, so beautiful & so
fanciful is it & felt the soft breezes of an enchanted world
breathing upon me. Not a cloud swept across the deep blue Italian
sky & only in the West a few golden clouds festooned around the

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1 He shipped the first two volumes to the States from Europe. Where they are we don't
know. The two we have he brought home himself. They are in our archives thanks to
the generosity of Joanne Coffin Clark, whose family somehow became their custodians.
crimson couch of the retiring sun.

I have watched many a setting sun but this was unlike them all, so soft, so lovely, so enchanting.

At 6 o'clock, we landed from the [railway] Cars & stepped into a Gondola & were quickly rowed to the Hotel Vittoria. Standing up in the Gondola, which stopped at the steps of the hotel, I asked the Landlord for a room & stepped out upon the steps of the house. I felt I was stepping upon the deck of some splendid steamer.

I went to my "stateroom," which was large & airy, washed & entered the dining room. Soon felt refreshed. While at the table I distinctly felt the motion of the Great Vessel (I fancied I did). Supper over, with Newman, I walked out the hotel, passed through narrow lanes between high houses, whose walls I could reach, till at once I was let into St. Marc's or Piazza San Marco. Before me was St. Marc with its gorgeous ornamentation, its bronze horses & its numerous domes quite visible in the gaslight & the silver rays of the half moon, which was just falling below the balconies of the Royal Palace on my right.

The whole square was brilliantly lighted with the gass lights of the Shops and arrayed Cafes beneath the arcades surrounding three sides of the area. This area, perhaps 700 feet long by 350 wide, was filled with people of all classes, young & old, walking, chatting, sipping coffee or wine & listening to the music of volunteer bands. Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Americans, French, German, English, Austrian soldiers & officers in uniform & indeed people of all lands & languages here mingled with the gay & beautiful Venetians in the evening festivities. It was a fairy scene, such as I had read of in my boyhood days, but never expected to enjoy.

Beautiful prostitutes threaded the narrow ways & openly professed their business, without bonnets or veils & with full chests & low necks. They were very enchanting, but woe to the man who yields to their enticements. 2

Returned to room & retired about 9, fatigued with the all-day journey.

2 For a minister, he seems to have been little shocked. Perhaps his visits to other European cities have accustomed him to such soliciting.

Saturday, Sept. 22. At Venice. Dreamed last night of seeing many drowning people in Venice & of assisting in their escape from a watery grave.

At 9 o'clock started out in company with Newman & two gay Englishmen. I had attached to our party to see the sights. I took the precaution last night to engage a Commissionaire who speaks English.

We visited the Basilica of St. Mark first. The whole interior is covered in Mosaic & marble. A gilded [indecipherable] is decorated with figures representing various persons & scenes. The floor is likewise Mosaic. The walls, the monuments, the vaulted roofs, are of the costliest materials. All that is not gold, bronze or Mosaic, is eastern marble. Five hundred colors of serpentine & marble of every country may be counted in St. Marks. The canopy of the Altar is supported by richly carved pillars from Constantinople & behind the Altar are 4 Alabaster pillars said to have come from the Temple of Jerusalem.

St. Mark's is one of the few churches of the world that may be ranked with St. Paul's, St. Peter's, Cologne Cathedral & Milan Cathedral, not for sublimity of architecture, but for uniqueness & magnificence.

We visited the Ducal Palace or Palace of Dukes or Doges. This Palace presents an admixture of Arabic, Greek & European styles of architectures. We passed through its richly ornamented halls, rich in gold & marble & paintings. The great Canal Hall has a ceiling of heavy carved, gilded wood frames to large pictures & the walls are entirely covered with paintings. The largest painting, on Canvass 80 by 34, is on one end of the room.

We passed into the cells where state prisoners were kept - dark dungeons into which light was let only through a small round or oval hole in the wall. The dim passage of light struggling feebly through this aperture must have rendered the darkness more terrible.

We were shown the spot where state criminals were strangled. After condemnation, they were never brought up from their cells. This strangling summarily of state criminals was resorted to because the Republic had no army & was fierce in the

1 Gay, of course, is used its original meaning, not the recently appropriated one.
processes to secure its permanency. None of the cells are below the water level. We also passed onto the Bridge of Sighs. This is a high bridge connecting the prison with the hall of justice on the second floor. Persons accused of other than state crimes were confined in the prison over the bridge. They were brought from the prison to trial over the bridge on one side & if found guilty were returned over the other side of the bridge & thence were led to execution. The bridge is a covered bridge of Stone or Marble & divided through the center into two passages so the prisoners passing on one side could not see those passing on the other side. The common criminals were executed between the two pillars near the Palace.

At the entrance to the Palace of the Doges are two boxes in the wall with openings into them like letter boxes, called the Boxes of Denunciation, where any citizen unbeknownst could lodge accusations against any citizen.

At the corner of the palace is a sort of marble pedestal called the Stone of Shame because bankrupts were required to stand upon it & undergo some mortifying ceremonials. All this was in the days of the Republic.

We ascended the Bell Tower of St. Mark's which stands perhaps 30 feet from the church. It is 284 Venetian feet high, commenced in year 902 & finished 1510. It is square with a pyramidal termination. The ascent is not by stairs but by a gently inclined plane. The view from the bell tower is charming & dreamlike. The Alps in the North, the Adriatic East & South. The 72 Islands on which Venice is built are indistinguishable, seen as two or three larger islands all built over. At a little remove from the city & quite surrounding it are small islands surrounded with bristling fortresses. Both the islands upon which the city & the fortresses are built were scarcely more than shoals & the foundations are laid on piles driven through the sand. From our lofty lookout we saw large vessels & one Ship on the Adriatic under full sail, while light Gondolas were gently & easily gliding over the waters of the lagoon.

The lagoon within which Venice is built is protected from the waves of the Sea by a natural breakwater extending nearly 80 miles from the mouth of the Piave & Brondolo, kindly embracing the city & sheltering it from the billows of the Adriatic. . .

Took a Gondola for 2½ hours, were towed through the crooked & narrow canals & through the Grand Canal & into the open water of the Lagoon. There are 146 small canals of various widths in addition to the Grand Canal whose width is 300 feet. These canals are spanned by 306 bridges, mostly of white marble. The Grand Canal intersects the city in the form of an S & divides the city into two unequal parts. The bridges are all arched to allow the passage of Gondolas & other boats & lighters. The ride was very agreeable & afforded the only means of viewing the splendid marble palaces on the Grand Canal.

[Here he inserted a long poem by Rogers, beginning, "There is a glorious city in the sea. . ."]

Part of the time was employed in calling for our passports at Police Offices where since yesterday the authorities require all strangers to appear in person. Garibaldi is near, they think. Also called in Gondola at Post Office & to the Greek Consul.

In all Venice I have seen neither horse, ox or cow & only one pair of wheels on which a man was peddling in the Place St. Mark cold water & cognac. Not a wheelbarrow, not a hand barrow, not another wheel. The stillness of the place is almost afflicting & wearisome. The streets are from 2 to 12 feet wide from house to house & the majority do not exceed 6 or 8 feet. I said I did not see a horse, I misstate. There are 4 horses kept in Venice which made the journey from Constantinople to Venice & then to Paris & back from Paris to Venice & now some 1300 years old are in good condition – the bronze horses standing over the entrance to St. Mark.

It is remarkable with what facility the Gondolas are navigated, turning short corners, passing one another, performing sundry feats of skill with remarkable ease. The men always stand and shove the oar.

Dined at table d'hôte at 5½ & spent the evening in walking through St. Mark's Square, and the streets, purchasing Stereoscopic views, a cravat & at 10½ retired to rest.

Sunday, Sept. 23rd. At Venice. Spent the day mostly in writing.

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4 Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882), soldier and Italian hero whose military actions were important to the unification of Italy under Victor Emmanuel. Apparently, he was still at it. His story is too complex and his accomplishments too great to be recounted here.
Been to P. Office twice, hoping to receive letters from America, but in vain. My letters are now on their way to Jerusalem & I shall receive no more till I stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

The last letters received was from Bro. G. Packard & wife dated Aug. 16, & one from Sister B. dated Aug 9. This long silence, the past & future, saddens me.

At 2 P.M., stood in St. Mark’s place to see the pigeons fed. It is said some dove-like lady left money to be spent in feeding the pigeons. [Other] clocks around had struck 2, but the pigeons remained along the cornices (friezes) & balconies of the palaces & a very few were scattered over the square. The very instant the bell clock of St. Mark’s struck 2, down they flocked & in they flew from all directions to the estimated number of 600 or 700. They gathered in one corner of the square & not finding their accustomed food, flew to the opposite corner & so back & forth till they were fed, not however by any funded charity today, but by private persons, a gentleman & lady who furnished their little girl & boy with grain to throw them.

The surprising fact is that the pigeons should mark so accurately the hour of 2 & should not move till the bell of St. Mark’s struck the hour. I have been to St. Mark’s at other hours when the clock has struck but no pigeons congregated.

Bells began to ring at 5 this morning & almost increasingly rang in large numbers till 11 o’clock & indeed there has been only a cessation of perhaps 1 or 2 hours during the whole day & even at Midnight of Sunday the bells awoke me by their ding dang.

Dined at 5 & about 6 took a walk along the quay to the gardens & quite to the point of the Island looking towards the Adriatic. This is a much more extensive promenade than I supposed existed in Venice. The whole quay was literally full of people & it was with frequent difficulty we could make our way among them. The garden or park is pleasant & children were playing “Beans, peas & barley, Oh!” just as children in America play it. I saw the same game played in a filthy part of Paris.

A walk extends around the shore sides of the garden, very pleasant in the bright moonlight. From the point, being fatigued

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His late wife, Julia, was a Packard. Perhaps this was her brother. “Sister B,” we cannot identify. “Sister” and “Brother” were religious “relatives,” not necessarily family.

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Engraving Henry bought in Venice and brought home to paste in his scrapbook. Postcards and cameras were not available yet, but engravings took their place for tourists. & wishing change, we took a returning gondola & were rowed to St. Mark’s. This was an enchanted spot: the beauty, the loveliness, the quiet, the music of the moonbeams upon the waters, the deep blue Italian sky, the city lights, the tall towers, domes & minarets, all constituted one of the most pleasant hours of my life. I could but feel devotional & pious during the quiet Sabbath evening hour in the light gondola on the Adriatic.

Rev. James P. Newman of N. Y. Conference, who accompanied me from Geneva to Venice with the understanding, as I supposed, he would accompany me to the East – although he said he would go as far as Venice & probably would go East with me, today has given up his trip East for the present & goes to Florence. His wife writes from Paris she will be in Florence this week & wishes to see him once more before she goes to America & so he goes to see her. Tomorrow noon we were to start together for Trieste, expecting on Tuesday to leave for Athens. Trusting in God I shall move on according to my plan & doubt not He will furnish me with all necessary company & protection. This is doubtless all for the best.

On our return from our walk through the city, a large Austrian band of 50 pieces was discoursing excellent music in the
square of St. Mark. The streets from St. Mark's to our Hotel (Vittoria) were full of prostitutes, beautiful & bewitching, yet having no charm for me.

The Sabbath has been, so far as business is concerned, well observed. The stores have been all closed except the King's Tobacco shops & Coffee & bread stores & perhaps a few others.

While at dinner tonight was brought for the second time into conversation with two American gentlemen from Alexandria, Va. Learning their place, I ascertained they were well acquainted with Sam F. Beech, of whom they give a good report. I sent Sam my card with a line or two on the back.# Very pleasant indeed.

**Monday, Sept. 2, 1860.** Venice to Trieste & Adelsberg. Was called at 4 this morning & at 5 was embarked on a Gondola for the Steamer in the harbor bound to Trieste. At the same moment the gentlemen from Alexandria took a gondola for the R. R. to Milan. Bro. Newman accompanied me to the Boat. With a farewell, we parted for different routes.

Not a cloud rested upon the bosom of the sky, "the waters slept," the city was yet in slumbers & only the music of the bells awakening morning worshippers mingled with the sound of the splashing oar of the gondolas plying to & from our steamer.

The sun rose over the marble palaces, clear & bright, gilding the lofty towers, mosque-like domes & minarets of lovely, enchanting Venice.

At a little after 6 o'clock we were under way for the new commercial city of the Adriatic, Trieste, which under the favor of the Austrian government & a better location, enjoys the chief business of the upper Adriatic. We wound out of the bay of Venice amid fortresses & gunboats & reached the broad sea beyond the natural breakwater which protects the harbor. For six hours we steamed across the deep blue sea, barely ruffled by a kindly breeze.

On our left, lay the Tyrolese Alps, like fleecy clouds along the horizon. On our right, the beautiful Adriatic spread its quiet waters as far as the eye could reach. A few sails were lazy, floating along the trackless way.

Venice looks still lovely even in the distance & here & there a Venetian village sprang up from out of the waters to remind us of her from whom we had just parted.

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# Our guess is that Sam Beech is a Methodist minister in Alexandria.
One of the most impressive in the cemetery is the Whiting family site which is dominated by a huge wall marble cross.

The Whiting-Johnson Grave Site in the West Tisbury Cemetery