THE
DUKES COUNTY
INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 43, NO. 4
MAY 2002

ON THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF GOSNOLD NAMING THE ISLAND

The Story of Martha's Vineyard:
How We Got To Where We Are
(Chapter One)
by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

Whaling: The Vineyard Connection

Vineyarders Sail Our Best-Known Whaler,
Charles W. Morgan, On Her Maiden Voyage
by EDWIN R. AMBROSE

In Memoriam:
Peg Knowles (1910-2002)
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Printed at daRosa's in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts.

Gosnold 400

The Gosnold 400 logo, designed by New Bedford artist, Arthur Moniz, is to remind us that May 21st this year is the 400th anniversary of the visit to this Island by the English explorer, Capt. Bartholomew Gosnold. He was so taken by the beauty of the place that he named it Martha's Vineyard to honor his daughter.

During the summer, we will have an exhibition that gives a snapshot of this Island as it might have been 400 years ago. In August, we will present three lectures: the first on the Wampanoag Indians; the second on their early interaction with the English; and the third a comparison of the 1602 ecology of the area with today's. A fourth event will be a musical program of our maritime history.

Dates and times will be announced in our newsletter, The Messenger, and on our web site. We invite you to attend this collaborative effort of the Society, the Wampanoag tribe and the Nature Conservancy.

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

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

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ISSN 0418 1379
The Story of Martha’s Vineyard: How We Got To Where We Are
(Chapter One)
by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

T HIS IS the first chapter in a narrative history of Martha’s Vineyard. Others will follow as they are written. When it is completed, we hope to publish all the installments in a single volume. It is an ambitious goal and the author hopes to reach it. As it is a work in progress, he asks readers to bring errors to his attention so corrections can be made before publication of the completed volume. ARR

From the Beginning to the Dutch Rebellion

SUMMER PEOPLE ARE NOT NEW on Martha’s Vineyard. They roamed over its hills and valleys more than 10,000 years ago. But they hadn’t come to vacation at the beach. There was no beach. The ocean was 75 miles south and almost as far east. They were hunters, not bathers, chasing wild animals for food.

The Vineyard was not an island. So much of the earth’s water had been frozen in a mile-thick ice cap that the ocean level had dropped so low as to uncover 100,000 square miles of continental shelf. The Vineyard’s higher land, deposited by glaciers thousands of years earlier, was a tiny “bump” rising above that vast plain. Large mammals like the mastodon, caribou and moose (perhaps even the wooly mammoth) roamed across the tundra, chased by those summer people on the hunt.

Summers were not warm. The southern edge of the melting ice cap was still only a few hundred miles to the north. Winds blowing across thousands of miles of ice drove cold air south, chilling the Vineyard, even in summer. Great quantities of water, running from the melt, flowed to the sea, creating river beds and valleys. On the Vineyard, the southern terminus of the glacial flow thousands of years earlier, the melt had left undulating moraines, huge boulders and thick beds of gravel.

Cold though it was, the climate was warming, very slowly. As ARTHUR R. RAILTON, Editor of this journal, thanks Prof. James B. Richardson and Jill Bouck for their assistance in the preparation of this chapter.
the climate changed, so did the population. The caribou and moose moved north, the mastodons and mammoths became extinct. Deer, elk and smaller mammals took their places. Temperate-zone plants and trees began to flourish, fish of many varieties swam up from southern waters. Those summer hunters found their lives less harsh as food became more abundant. About 8000 years ago, they began staying all year.

As the ice melted, the ocean level rose. The low land that tied the Vineyard to the continent became soggy, delta-like. Then about 6000 years ago, the rising ocean had become high enough to surge across those coastal wet lands, turning the high ground into islands. One of those islands is now Martha's Vineyard.

Through thousands of years, ocean tides, at first gently, then with increasing velocity, scoured the sea bottom, creating channels and "holes," such as treacherous Woods Hole with its bewildering currents that swirl around the Labrador boulders left there by the glacier to bedevil mariners.

By 5000 years ago, the ocean had stopped rising and the coast line stabilized. Barrier beaches, formed by wind and tide, created shallow salt-water ponds along the shores of which those Vineyarders, now year-rounders, built their wigwams. The ponds provided ample food, there was shellfish in abundance. Life became easier. They had more time for living and, as many have discovered since, they had found a good place to live.

We know this story in part because of shell middens, trash heaps left behind by those early settlers, dating back nearly 5000 years. These shell archives are still being uncovered by the surf and by excavators digging foundations for today's settlers.

An unknown hunter, about 1500 years ago, invented the bow and arrow and made killing wild animals easier. Nature was generous. She provided food and she filled their spirits. Her beauty brought them joy and contentment. The Island, with its gentle hills and sandy beaches, surely was a heaven on earth.

From the thick beds of clay, they dug raw material to make utensils and pots for cooking and storing their food. They began to develop agricultural skills and from gardens on the fertile plains harvested squash, beans and maize.

In their dugout canoes, they speared blackfish, occasionally even whales. Often, those large ocean mammals, trapped in the shallow waters, washed up on the beach, providing vast quantities of food and oil for all to share. Fire became a tool to burn off the dense undergrowth that covered the land. The tangled jungle of trees and vines was opened, providing more land to farm and to hunt. With more plentiful food, their numbers grew. By 1000 years ago, there were 3000 Wampanoags on the Island, members of the tribe that inhabited southeastern New England.

Protected by the narrow moat of salt water, their Island was a most peaceful place. And for the next 600 years, it was theirs — theirs alone.

Then, on May 21, 1602, a huge vessel with tall masts and billowing sails dropped anchor off Cape Poge, the northeastern tip of the Island. It was not the first such vessel they had seen, but the others had sailed past, far out on the ocean. This was the first to stop, the first they could see close up. It was gigantic, frighteningly
so. Filled with wonder and concern, they anxiously watched from behind bushes and trees. The next morning, when a few men left the ship and came ashore, they saw nobody. It was, as a journal keeper wrote, “a dishabited Iland.”

But it was not “dishingabted.” There were 3000 Wampanoag there, watching and wondering from their hiding places. Who were these light-skinned men? What were their plans?

The vessel was the Concord from England, her master was Capt. Bartholomew Gosnold, explorer and entrepreneur. He had crossed the ocean seeking a place, a certain place, to set up a trading post where they would make money by trading with the natives, swapping trinkets for furs.

On board were 32 men, more than the usual crew. Most were not mariners. They were “adventurers,” eager to get rich in the New World. The ship had two captains: Gosnold, who was in command and would stay through the summer to run the trading post; and Capt. Bartholomew Gilbert, who would sail the Concord back to England, returning in the fall with supplies for the winter.

The certain place Gosnold was seeking had been described so glowingly by Capt. John Smith on an earlier voyage that he knew if he found it, success was certain.

It was a grand plan. And Captain Gosnold on that lovely May morning was tempted to make Cape Poge the “place.” A “place most pleasant,” the journal keeper wrote, so pleasant and verdant that Gosnold named it “Martha’s Vineyard,” honoring his infant daughter, Martha. Journal keeper Gabriel Archer recorded the events of those two memorable days, May 21 – 22, 1602:

...coasting along we saw a dishabited Iland which so afterwards appeared unto us: we bore with it, and named it Marthaes Vineyard... the place most pleasant; for the two and twentieth, we went ashore, and found it full of Wood, Vines, Gooseberry bushes, Herbiers, Raspies, Eglience, etc. Heere we had Cranes, Hearmes, Shouler Geese, and divers other Birds which there at that time upon the Cliffs being sandie with some Rocike stones, did breed and had young. In this place we saw Deere, heere we road in eight fathome neere the shoare, where wee tooke great store of Cod, as before at Cape Cod, but much better.

It was exactly 400 years ago this month, that journal-keeper Archer wrote those words. He was the first, but certainly not the last, to describe the Island as a “place most pleasant.”

Explorer Gosnold liked to name places. A few days earlier, while the Concord was anchored inside a sandy hook of land to the north, Gosnold had gone ashore. The men who stayed on board did some fishing, catching many large, tasty codfish. So large and so tasty were they that when Gosnold returned, he named that hook of land, “Cape Cod.”

Now, a few days later, off Cape Poge, they again “tooke great store of Cod, as before at Cape Cod, but much better.” Had Gosnold not already used the name, he might have named the place “Cod Island,” instead of the more mellifluous “Martha’s Vineyard.”

In the morning, Gosnold decided it wasn’t the “place” and the Concord sailed west, anchoring off today’s Lake Tashmoo. On the beach, they saw thirteen “fast-running Savages, armed with Bowes and Arrows without any feare.” Again, a small party rowed ashore, this time, no doubt, more cautiously. But there was no need for concern. The welcoming Indians, who probably knew of the earlier visit to Cape Poge, “brought Tobacco, Deere skins and some sodden fish... in great familiaritie.” The journal keeper wrote: “This Iland is sound, and hath no danger about it.”

Captain Gosnold still was not satisfied. He had not found the place. They continued to sail west. Passing some colorful cliffs, he named them, “Dover Cliffs,” after those in England, but that name, unlike the others, did not survive. (Nobody knows who first called them “Gay Head Cliffs,” an inspired choice.)

When Concord rounded a chain of islands that ran to the northeast, they found themselves in what Archer called “one of the statelyest Sounds that ever I was in.” Gosnold, too, was impressed. He named the westernmost island, “Elizabeth’s Isle,” honoring his sister, a name since transferred to the entire chain.

Going ashore on that island, Gosnold found a small freshwater pond behind the barrier beach. In the middle of the pond was a small island, a secure site for their trading post.

“We stood awhile,” the journal keeper wrote, “like men ravished at the beauty and delicacy of this sweet soil.” Captivated by its beauty, Gosnold declared that this was the “place.”

While the men unloaded the Concord, they were visited by Indians, Wampanoags, men much taller than they, with olive-colored skin. From the mainland, these Wampanoag had seen the
tall masts and paddled over to investigate. Like those on Martha's Vineyard, they were peaceful, friendly.

Gosnold took the smaller pinnace and sailed along the shores of the "stateliest sound," today's Buzzards Bay, and saw more Indians, many more. He was pleased. There would be plenty of hunters to trade with, plenty of furs to take back to England in the fall.

For six weeks, the men worked, building a house and fort that would be their trading post. More Wampanoags came to trade furs for cloth and trinkets. This, indeed, was the "place."

Soon, it was time for the Concord to return to England. But some of the "adventurers" who had agreed to remain with Gosnold and operate the trading post were having second thoughts.

There had been a frightening encounter one week earlier. Four of the English, away from the settlement catching crabs and other shellfish, were assaulted by four Indians. One man, hit by an arrow, was seriously wounded. A few days before, the English had found a Wampanoag canoe and put it aboard the Concord to take back to England. The surprise attack may have been in retaliation.

The second thoughts multiplied. More men joined the doubters, claiming that the meager supplies would not last until the Concord's return. Only a handful agreed to stay with Gosnold. The grand plan had to be abandoned. All the men sailed away, leaving a house and a "fort," in the middle of the pond. And, no doubt, some very confused natives.

Why, they surely wondered, did these pale-skinned strangers, with sharp tools and shiny weapons, work for weeks to build these structures with smooth boards and iron nails, unlike anything they had ever seen, and then leave, taking only some furs, sassafras roots and cypress logs? Strange people!

Had the men stayed, Cuttyhunk would now be a national shrine: the first English settlement in America. Jamestown and Plymouth would be denied their glory. Cuttyhunk would be the nation's birthplace. Instead of praising pious Pilgrim fathers, we would be honoring Gosnold and his "adventurers," men who came seeking freedom of enterprise, not freedom of religion. There would be no paintings of sober-faced believers walking through the snow to church. No Thanksgiving turkey.

What would we use for our icons? Account books instead of prayer books? Trading posts instead of churches? They would be more accurate symbols of what this land has become. Or am I wrong?

During the next forty years, other ships stopped at the Vineyard. Capt. Edward Harlow in 1611 kidnapped two Vineyard Indians, Epenow and Coneconam, and took them to Europe along with three others from the mainland to be sold as slaves in Spain. Epenow was "a goodly man, of a brave aspect, stout and sober in his demeanor." But there were no buyers for Indians in Spain where they had the reputation of being poor slaves. With an abundance of well-tested Africans on the block, buyers weren't interested in the Americans.

So Epenow and the others ended up in a London sideshow, billed as "Savages from the New World." Sir Ferdinand Gorges, one of the backers of Gosnold's voyage, owned the sideshow. He wrote that Epenow had learned enough English words "to bid those that wondered at him, 'Welcome! Welcome!'"

Sir Ferdinand was a leading promoter of the New World. And with good reason. He owned settlement rights to Maine and the islands south of Cape Cod, including Martha's Vineyard.

Epenow had learned more English than Gorges realized. A clever man, he quickly spotted the English appetite for riches and convinced Sir Ferdinand that on his native island, Martha's Vine-
yard, there was gold, lots of gold. Gorges persuaded the Earl of Southampton, also a backer of the Gosnold voyage, to outfit another ship to go to America. This time, not to set up a trading post, but to find Epenow’s gold mine. Capt. Nicholas Hobson, who had been with Harlow when Epenow was kidnapped, was picked to head the adventure partly because he was so convinced by Epenow’s story that he invested 100 English pounds of his own money in the venture. In 1614, with Epenow and two other Indians on board, the ship sailed off to Eldorado.

Soon after the ship arrived at the Vineyard, Epenow managed to escape during a bloody confrontation in which a number of Vineyard Indians were killed. Captain Hobson returned home empty-handed, without gold and without Epenow. When Gorges was informed of this, he wrote: “Such are the fruits to be looked for by employing men more zealous of gain than fraught with experience how to make it.”

Capt. John Smith, who had his own plan for the Vineyard, described the futile adventure this way: “They spent their victuals and returned with nothing.”

Warner Foote Gookin, one-time historian of this Society, wrote of Smith’s plan. In 1615, Smith (later of Pocahontas fame) visited the island and was so enamored of the place that he promised himself he would create a plantation there. He was the leader of the Virginia settlement and died there before he could make his Vineyard dream come true.

Capt. Thomas Dermer, who had been with Smith on that 1615 visit, returned to the Island in 1619. He met Epenow, who “gave me very good satisfaction in everything almost I could demand.” There was no attempt to punish Epenow for his trickery. He had outsmarted the English fair and square, it seemed.

The following year, Dermer went back to the Vineyard to trade with the Indians. With him was Squanto, later the friend of the Pilgrims. Serious violence broke out. Governor Bradford of Plymouth described the Dermer visit in Of Plymouth Plantation:

[Dermer] came to the Isle of Capawack [Martha’s Vineyard] (which lies south of this place on the way to Virginia) ... Squanto with him, where he, going ashore amongst the Indians to trade, as he used to do, was betrayed and assaulted by them, and all his men slain, but one that kept the boat; but himself got aboard sore wounded, and they [would have] cut off his head... had not the man rescued him with a sword. And so they got away, and made shift to get into Virginia, where he died; whether of his wounds or the diseases of the country, or both together, is uncertain.

Bradford explained the unexpected Indian violence by stating that they thought Dermer had come to revenge the killing of two Europeans by Indians on the Cape a year earlier. Certainly, the violent attack was not typical of previous (or later) meetings between the English and the Wampanoags.

Perhaps that violence discouraged further visits to the Island by the English. In the next twenty years, none was recorded. Then, in 1641 or 1642, a Welchman came with a different purpose. He hadn’t come to find riches. He was Rev. Roger Williams, who had sailed to the Island from Providence Plantations, the settlement he founded on Narragansett Bay. He had been expelled from Massachusetts for his anti-establishment views, which were strong. He opposed making church attendance compulsory and church membership a requirement for voting. He opposed levying taxes to pay ministers, although he was a minister himself. To him, church and state should be separate.

Williams became the Indians’ best friend. He was critical of English monarchs who gave grants of land to the settlers, land that belonged to the Indians. It wasn’t kings’ to give, Williams said. He admonished the settlers: “Boast not proud English, of thy birth and blood. Thy brother Indian is by birth as good.”

No wonder he was kicked out of Massachusetts.

After much wandering, living with the Indians some of the time, he settled on Narragansett Bay and named the place Providence Plantations. From there, he often sailed to nearby islands, spreading his religious message among the Indians. On one such mission in 1641, he stopped at the Vineyard, probably at Gay Head. He mentioned the visit in a book that was published in 1643 in London:

The Indians of Martins [Martha’s] Vineyard, at my late being amongst them, report generally, and confidently of some Islands, which lie off from them to Sea, from whence every morning early, certaine Powles come and light amongst them, and returne at Night ... .

His book was about the Indian language and life style. Williams was fluent in Algonquin. That quotation is from a chapter
on Indian names for birds. But Reverend Williams hadn't sailed to
the Vineyard to watch the birds. He had come to spread the word
of God, his Anabaptist God. As a result, perhaps, Gay Head had
the Island’s first Baptist church. That was in 1693, many years
later, but the seed he planted had flourished. Despite generations
of Mayhew Congregational missionaries, Baptists were (and re-
main) the Indians’ chosen denomination. Williams’ visit (he may
have made more later) was a year before the Mayhews came to the
Island in 1643, making him the Island’s first missionary.

When he came, there already was a settlement of English at
the eastern end of the Island, far from Gay Head. Or so some be-
lieve. About 1636, according to believers, a ship, heading for Vir-
ginia from England, anchored off today’s Edgartown and sent a
party ashore for fresh water and berries. The Atlantic crossing had
been long and stormy, bringing sickness and death to those on
board. Some of the men who went ashore, on solid land at last,
decided to stay. The settlement has never been documented and
to many it is a fiction known as “The Pease Tradition,” after its
supposed leader, John Pease.

According to that tradition the Englishmen, coming ashore at
today’s Pease’s Point, walked south along the western shore of Ed-
gartown harbor looking for a sheltered spot in which to settle.
They soon came upon some sandy bluffs that formed a bowl pro-
tected from the wind, warmed by the sun. There, they settled. The
place is now called “Green Hollow.” The men lived in caves they
dug in the bluffs. Soon they became friends with the natives, who
helped them survive.

There is another version. It says that John Pease and his
brother, Robert, stopped at the Vineyard on a voyage from Salem,
their first home in the colony, to Enfield, Connecticut, where they
planned to resettle. They liked the Island and John with a few
others decided to stay while Robert continued on to Connecticut.

Whether the Pease settlement occurred or not has been in
dispute for a century or more. In the early 1900s, Dr. Charles E.
Banks, the eminent historian, declared it untrue. In doing so, he
disputed a statement by Rev. Joseph Thaxter, the Island’s religious
leader for many years after the American Revolution. In 1814,
Rev. James Freeman of Boston, writing a history of New England,
asked Thaxter about the Island’s first settlers. Thaxter replied:
It is beyond a Doubt true that several years before the Mayhews had a
grant of the Island there were a Number of Families settled on the Island
. . . I am confirmed in this by the Division of the Town — the Mayhews
and their associates had 25 shares and others were called half-share men.
These made the Number of Shares 42 — those it is presumed were set-
tled here when the Mayhews obtained the grant.

Thaxter gave Thomas Mayhew’s great-grandson, Rev. Experi-
ence Mayhew, who had written of the settlement, as his authority:
Experience Mayhew must have had evidence of the Fact, otherwise it is pre-
sumed he would not have said it.

The first Mayhew to settle on the Vineyard was Thomas
Mayhew Jr., who arrived in 1643 with a few others from the
Watertown area. He was 21 years old. His father had sent him to
form the first “authorized” settlement. As far as is known, neither
he nor his father had been there before. It was a bold move,
frught with uncertainties.
Mayhew, the elder, had come to Massachusetts from England in 1630, probably on the historic Winthrop fleet. He had been hired to manage a farm and trading post owned by Matthew Cradock of London on the Mystic River just outside Boston. Furs and deerskin were the principal exports of the farm. Cradock also owned fishing stations on the coast. It was a profitable enterprise. When the previous manager was arrested for making blasphemous remarks about the king and the church, Cradock fired him and sent Mayhew to take his place. A major investor in New England, Cradock had been the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, but remained in England. While governor, he defined the colony’s purpose: “the mayne end of our plantation [is] to bring the Indians to the knowledge of the gospel.”

That lofty purpose was written before Cradock sent Mayhew to the colony to manage his business. It seems unlikely that he gave his new employee that as his goal. But the principle was adopted by Mayhews in the years that followed. Five generations of the family were involved in bringing “Indians to the knowledge of the gospel,” the last being Zacchariah, who died in Chilmark in 1806.

When Cradock hired Mayhew, England was in chaos; the Parliament had been dissolved. The Puritans, in control of the Massachusetts Bay Company, sent John Winthrop to the colony as its resident governor. He and about 700 colonists sailed from England in the spring of 1630 in five ships, arriving at Salem two months later. Thomas Mayhew Sr., heading for his new job, is believed to have been on one of the ships.

He settled in Medford in a house owned by Cradock close to the farm he was to manage. It is not certain whether Mrs. Mayhew and their son, Thomas Junior, came with him. She died at about this time, but there is no record of where or when.

A year or so later, Cradock and a man named Edward How financed a grist mill on the Charles River at Watertown, one of the first such mills in the colony. Mayhew represented Cradock in the undertaking. In late 1634, Mayhew went to London, probably to report to Cradock, but while there he did more than talk business. He wooed and married his second wife, Mrs. Jane Paine, widow of a wealthy London merchant.

Widow Paine must have been a courageous woman. It is unfortunate that we don’t know more about her (or about the first Mrs. Mayhew, for that matter). This well-to-do widow gave up her comfortable life in London to move to the primitive colony in Massachusetts. London was lively with theater and society. It was the era of the Globe Theatre and Shakespearean drama. She and her two young children left all that for a great unknown. It was a brave move that not only says something about her, but also tells us that Thomas Mayhew must have been a man of great charm.

The new Mrs. Mayhew soon had reason to doubt her decision. Shortly after they arrived in Massachusetts, Cradock fired her husband. The reason could not have been trivial. It so angered employer Cradock that he wrote his friend, Gov. John Winthrop of Massachusetts, on January 13, 1637, to complain. In vitriolic language, he told Winthrop of Mayhew’s “most vile bad dealings.” He listed no details, but it is clear that there had been a serious breach of trust:

The greiff [grief] I have been putt to by the most vile bad dealings of Thomas Mayhew hath & doeth so much disquiet [to] my mynd, as I think God never aney thing did in the like manner. . . . good sir, lett me intreate your self & those in authority there to make some course that Thomas Mayhew may be answerable for that estate of myne which. . . . hath come to his hands. . . . when it shall appeare hoe [how] he hath dealt by me, you & all men that shall see it, if I ame perswaded, will hardley think it could be possible that a man pretending sincerity in his actions could deal so vilely as he hath & doeth deal by me. . . . Lett me crave your favour & the courts so flarr as you shall see my cause honest & just. . . .

There is no record that Governor Winthrop made Mayhew “answerable for that estate of myne.” Mayhew, like Cradock, was the Governor’s friend. He was also a partner with John Winthrop Jr., in an importing business (it may have been part of the problem). The governor could not have been eager to punish his friend in Massachusetts to please another friend in faraway London.

That was not the only complaint the governor received about Mayhew. A few months earlier, in a letter criticizing Mayhew’s behavior, Cradock had written:

. . . if Mr. Mayhewe doe realley approwe his integrity I shall desire to Continuue him in my employment . . . I ame persuaded when ever wee passe he will not fynd one so willing to doe him good as I have beene and ame.
He sent his "servant Jno. Jollifte" to the colony to investigate, believing that he was not making enough profit on his large investment. Forgotten, it seems, was the lofty principle of bringing "Indians to the knowledge of the Gospel."

There is other evidence of Mayhew's failure to run Cradock's operation in a businesslike manner. Rev. Roger Williams of Salem, not yet expelled from Massachusetts, wrote to the governor to complain about a law suit he was facing. He had owed Cradock 50 pounds for "commodities receave from Mr. Mayhew," with the understanding that payment would be made when he sold his house in Salem. As soon as the house was sold, Williams said, he paid Mayhew. Now, he was being sued for that amount plus damages. He asked the governor to help him.

We don't know the exact date, but it seems that Cradock fired Mayhew early in 1635. With his pregnant wife, Mayhew moved out of Cradock's house to the new village of Watertown, where their first child was born in June 1635.

Mrs. Mayhew must have had further doubts about her decision. Watertown was just a tiny cluster of houses around the grist mill. Mayhew soon became a leading citizen. When the village named its first officials in 1636, Mayhew was one. For as long as they lived there, he held public office, sometimes several, and received six large grants of land from the town.

He built a small cottage for the family, which now numbered six. To support his growing family, Mayhew bought Edward How's half of the grist mill. Cradock owned the other half. It is hard to believe that Cradock, who had written so angrily to the governor about Mayhew, would agree to accept him as a partner. But he may not have known about it. Communication was slow.

Two years later, perhaps when he did find out who his new partner was, Cradock sold his half to Mayhew for 240 pounds, holding a mortgage for the full amount. In 1640, Mayhew sold the mill, with Cradock's mortgage still on it, to the deputy governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Dudley, a political enemy of the governor. Cradock was still having profit problems. He wrote Governor Winthrop to thank him for cutting his taxes, adding: "I greyue [grieve] for my owne Losses ... they have been very heavey and greate. ..."

In the next few years, the tiny Mayhew cottage became more crowded when two more daughters were born. The family now totaled eight. It isn't clear where the income was coming from to support such a flock, perhaps from Mrs. Mayhew's inheritance. Mayhew wrote to Governor Winthrop in March 1640, explaining his problems. Apparently, the colony ("Countryst") owed him money that he needed to pay taxes. He asks for immediate advice:

I am to pay my owne Rate & tax and some 5 li [pounds] for other men that I owe unto and although that I have had bills due from the Countryst [colonists] one yeare and 7 months since for 70 and 6d pounds I must now have my household goods sold except I pay out this money which seeing I have mony to receive I think it very hard measure. I cannot see equite in it ... I desire your worship's advice per his bearer which is the Constable... Mony is very hard to get upon any terms. I know not the man that can Furnish me with it ... I delight not to compleyne [complain].

Whether related to his financial problems or not we don't know, but the following June, the town of Watertown "agreed that Mr. Mayhew shall enjoy the 150 acres of land on the south side of Charles River by Watertown Wear [weir]." The land was across the river from Mayhew's ten-acre homestead and included a freshwater pond with a herring run.

With land on both sides of the river, Mayhew built a pedestrian bridge, the first across the Charles River, charging tolls to those using it. There were objections by the villagers and the dispute was turned over to the governor. After two years, the governor's council ruled that a toll bridge could not be privately owned. It must belong to the town. In exchange for the bridge, the council ordered the town to grant Mayhew another 300 acres of land.

Mayhew's neighbor was John Oldham, founder of Watertown, and a clever man with land grants. He had gone to England and received the rights to the area between the Charles and the Mystic Rivers, including Watertown. Like Mayhew, he was involved with John Winthrop Jr., now governor of Connecticut.

Perhaps Oldham's land dealings inspired Mayhew to seek his own. We don't know that, but in 1641 Mayhew began to negotiate for the rights to settle the islands south of Cape Cod. In October, for 40 pounds, he bought settlement rights from the Earl of Stirling, who claimed ownership of Long Island and all islands to the east, including the Vineyard. This claim was challenged by the
Dutch, then in New York. Settlers from Lynn had gone to Long Island with a Stirling grant some time earlier and had been forced to leave. It seems strange, if aware of the Lynn experience, that Mayhew would have believed Stirling’s agent enough to pay him 40 pounds. He did and one witness to the agreement was Nicholas Davison, Cradock’s agent in the position once held by Mayhew, hinting that Cradock might have been involved.

A few days later, Mayhew bought from Richard Vines, colonial agent for Sir Fernando Gorges, a second charter to settle the islands. Gorges, you will recall, was the man Epinow had tricked into sending a ship to find gold on the Vineyard. The second grant was needed because Gorges owned rights to Maine and all islands (unnamed) off New England.

Mayhew was playing it safe, making sure he had authority from both claimants. It was a remarkable accomplishment for a man who claimed he was broke (he may have been using his wife’s money) and whose honesty had been challenged.

Mayhew was now authorized to buy land from the Indians and to settle on land that he bought. Mayhew wasted no time in becoming the Vineyard’s first real-estate developer. Even before he had visited the place, it seems, he began to sell lots, or at least options to buy lots. Among the early buyers was the same Nicholas Davison, Cradock’s agent, who had witnessed Mayhew’s signature. We don’t know when Davison bought his land (or perhaps was given it by Mayhew), but it must have been one of the early transactions. In 1654 he owned two large tracts on the Vineyard, one was a working farm with livestock. In that year, he swapped “his sheep, cattle, and land in Martha’s Vineyard...” to buy the old Mayhew homestead in Watertown from Mayhew.

Even after that swap Davison still was a major land owner on the Vineyard, holding “...the land (1000 acres) which he received of Mayhew for the Oldham Farm” in Watertown. Considerable mystery surrounds these dealings. Watertown records show that after Oldham’s death, which was before this, his farm was bought by Cradock. Why Mayhew wanted it enough to give Davison 1000 acres for it, is only part of the mystery.

There is no list of who came with Thomas Junior on that first trip to the Vineyard in 1643. Nor is there any record that Mayhew had already bought the land they settled on from the Indians. There was a general belief at the time that because the Indians were not “using” the land (by English standards), the colonists had a God-given right to use it themselves. Only when the natives protested did the English feel obligated to negotiate its purchase.

Whether the land had been bought from the Indians or not, the first lots were laid out in today’s Edgartown along the waterfront from Starbuck’s Neck on the north to Tower Hill on the south. Indians on the Island, then totaling 3000, did not put up any resistance. Nor, it seems, did they show much interest.

They did not object, believers in the Pease Tradition claim, because that earlier English settlement, under John Pease, had shown them that pale-faced men, arriving from far away in large ships, would do them no harm. Perhaps this does reinforce the idea that Mayhew seemed to acknowledge when he gave a number of men who had not bought land from him, the half shares that Reverend Thaxter mentioned. Half-share holders were assigned less desirable lots.

Map of early settlers’ lots in Edgartown. Unsigned and undated, it may be by historian Banks. It is the only such map we know of (some typed names added for legibility).
but they did get land as a gift from Mayhew.

That would have been a way for him to prevent any conflict with the earlier settlers and even with the Indians. It made sense to have the Pease group (assuming they existed) on his side rather than in opposition. With so much land, he had nothing to lose.

No record confirms this. It is speculation. Many years later, a few accounts were published about those early years, but they were mostly written by Mayhews to describe their missionary work. They were written with a religious focus. Those accounts describe conversions of Indians, not the practical problems that the English may have had. They tell nothing about harsh winters, near-starvation, English sickness or death. And so, those first years remain a mystery. No wonder the Pease Tradition survives.

The senior Mayhew moved from Watertown to the Vineyard in 1646 with his new wife and five children. In that year, Thomas Junior married Jane Paine, his step-sister. The bride’s mother, the former Mrs. Paine of London, now Mrs. Mayhew of Martha’s Vineyard, had no grand English cathedral in which to see her daughter marry. The tiny settlement had no church, no school, no social life. There was no Globe Theatre, no Shakespeare dramas. She had given up London for this!

Nor was there any government until seven years later when a committee of Mayhews was chosen by Mayhew to run the village. A couple of years later, the senior Mayhew dissolved the committee and took total authority upon himself, appointing the village officials – family members all. With no more than twenty English families in the settlement, little government was needed. The Mayhews would handle everything: church, courts and taxes.

The grant from Gorges had stated that Mayhew would form a government in his settlement similar to that of Massachusetts, where there was a touch of democracy. But that was not done. Nobody complained. Not at first. Some years later, when the Mayhew “aristocracy” had become so deeply entrenched as to be arrogant, a non-violent rebellion did occur, demanding equal treatment of all.

Demands for equality for all, of course, referred only to the English, nobody even thought about equality for the Indians. But there is no record of tribal complaints. Perhaps the Pease group had created so much trust that equality was not an issue. More likely, the Indians, totally unfamiliar with the concept of private ownership of land, could not imagine what lay ahead. When they found out, it was too late.

Mayhew knew that he had no choice but to get along with the natives, at least in the beginning. With thousands of Indians and a handful of English, any other course would have been foolhardy.

Pease Traditionists claim there had been a record of their settlement and of their dealings with the Indians kept in a “black book” that mysteriously disappeared when John Pease died, hinting at a Mayhew conspiracy. With nothing in writing, we are left with only speculation.

The first published record of the Mayhew settlement (although Mayhew was not mentioned) was in October 1643 in the journal of Governor Winthrop, who, as we have seen, was Mayhew’s friend. He wrote:

Some of Watertown began a plantation at Martin’s [Martha’s] Vineyard beyond Cape Cod, and divers families going thither, they procured a young man, one Mr. Green, a scholar, to be their minister, in hopes soon to gather a church there. He went not.

Winthrop’s description of “one Mr. Green” as a young scholar is confusing. Rev. Henry Green was a minister in Watertown. Could he have been Winthrop’s scholar? It matters not as the Reverend Green decided to take the church in Reading rather than chance it on the Vineyard.

With no minister “to gather a church,” Thomas Mayhew Jr., took on the task. Though not educated as a minister, he must have been well suited. Within a few months, an Indian, Hiacoomes, began attending his services, standing shyly in the back of the room. Mayhew, pleased to have an Indian in the congregation, invited him to his house after each service. Hiacoomes soon became a Christian, prompting his family and other Indians to label him “the English man” who had abandoned his heritage. He was cast out of the family.

His conversion was important to history. It inspired young Mayhew to focus his energies on bringing the “savages” to Christ. Some years later, Thomas Prince wrote of that inspiration:

But his English Flock being then but small, the Sphere was not large enough for so bright a Star to move in. With great Compassion he beheld the wretched
Native perishing in utter ignorance of the true GOD, and eternal Life, labouring under strange Delusions, Inchantments and panic, Fears of Devils, whom they most passionately worshipped . . . GOD, who had ordained him an Evangelist for the Conversion of these Indian Gentiles, stirred him up with an holy Zeal . . .

He had found his calling. That first convert, Hiacoomes, taught him to speak Algonquin and soon he was preaching to the natives in their language, becoming the first of five generations of Mayhew missionaries.

Acceptance of his message was helped by a serious plague that devastated the Indian population. Those who had been attending Mayhew’s preaching “did not taste so deeply of it” and Hiacoomes and his family were untouched:

. . . at last the Lord sent an universal sickness, and it was observed by the Indians, that they that did but give the hearing of good counsel, did not taste so deeply of it, but Hiacoomes and his family in a manner not at all.

When Governor Winthrop learned of Mayhew’s missionary work, he urged him to move to Connecticut, where his son John Winthrop Jr., had formed a settlement. The governor suggested that Mayhew take the Vineyard’s praying Indians with him to Connecticut. There were many more Indians there than on the Vineyard. He would be able to accomplish much more of God’s work. Mayhew went to Boston to discuss it, but turned it down.

Rev. John Eliot of Roxbury, also a missionary, urged young Mayhew to inform a missionary group in London of his work. In his letter, Mayhew described his prayer-healing and how it had brought Indians to Christ. He told of one Indian who, after being cured by prayer, had gone back to his native religion. When Mayhew was told this, he said, “God will kill him . . . and so it shortly came to passe,” he wrote. His letter was published in London in 1649 along with one from Eliot.

The letters from Mayhew, Eliot and others aroused so much interest that Parliament set up a corporation to raise funds to convert the “savages.” To promote fund raising, Rev. Henry Whitfield, then a pastor in Gilford, Connecticut, was called to London. On his way to Boston to board a ship for England, head winds forced his vessel to stop at the Vineyard. He met young Mayhew and attended a prayer meeting for the Indians.

So impressed was he that when he arrived in England, he per-suaded his new employers, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, to put the young missionary on its payroll, along with Eliot. They became the first paid missionaries in New England.

In 1650, Thomas received his first pay: 20 pounds a year. Along with it (at Eliot’s suggestion), he was given a library (the Vineyard’s first). Soon, his salary was doubled and Hiacoomes and other Indians were added to the payroll as preachers and teachers, becoming no doubt the most prosperous members of the tribe. In 1654, the Society built an Indian school, the Island’s first schoolhouse. Missions had become a major activity.

The work was seen not only as a way to save the souls of the Indians, but also (perhaps more importantly) as a way to make them more willing to accept the English way of life, to give up their land peacefully, to abandon their “savage” traditions, their “nakedness” and their worship of 36 gods, even their belief that witch doctors, not prayers, could rid them of sickness.

To fund the work, Parliament authorized collections in all English parishes as well as in the army. Ministers even went from house to house with collection baskets each Sabbath to solicit those who had not attended services. The money was invested in farms and the rental income sent to the colony for mission work. This was not the first time for such solicitations. Earlier, the Crown had ordered collections in all parishes to build an Indian College in Virginia. One thousand acres were set aside for its campus, but the college was never built and the money disappeared into unknown pockets, according to the late historian Francis Jennings, once of Chilmark.

As its funds increased, the Society decided to revive the Virginia dream. It would send Indians to Harvard College to become ministers. They would return to their tribes and bring their brothers and sisters to Christ. Harvard, a young college, had no room for them (or so it said). So the Society built a building, the Indian College, the first brick building on the campus.

Six Indians, selected by Mayhew and Eliot, made up the first class. Two were Vineyarders: Joel Hiacoomes, son of Mayhew’s first convert; and Caleb, son of Sachem Chesshamuck, from whom the senior Mayhew, two years later, while Caleb was still in school, “bought” much of the northern part of the Island.
In 1656, the six enrolled in a Cambridge preparatory school to begin their education. They were taught to read and write Greek, Latin and English, as well as their own language, now being created phonetically by missionaries. It was an ambitious dream, too ambitious. Of the six, only two made it to the senior year. They were the two Vineyard Indians, Joel and Caleb.

An amazing accomplishment: two Martha’s Vineyard Indians in Harvard’s senior class, along with sons of the leaders of the colony of Massachusetts. They were not treated as equals, of course, but they were there, in college. A miracle, the contributors in England must have believed.

But the miracle was short-lived. Near the end of his senior year, Joel Hiacomes went to the Vineyard to visit his family. Sailing back to Boston, a storm drove the vessel aground off Nantucket. All on board were lost.

Only one Indian student was left. He was Caleb, the other Vineyander, who became the first and only graduate of the Indian College. It was discontinued after that first class. Earlier, as the class dwindled, the first floor had been turned into a print shop where in 1663 the first Indian-language Bible was published. (The building was later torn down and its bricks reused.)

Caleb’s name was listed among the graduates in Harvard’s Class of 1663 as “Caleb Cheschemuck, Indus.” The others, all from the colony’s leading families, are arranged alphabetically. Caleb’s name is at the end of the list, out of order. He graduated with them, but he, the Indus, was not one of them.

Thomas Mayhew Jr., had hoped his son Matthew would be one of the graduates (Reverend Eliot’s son was), but after attending Corlett’s preparatory school in Cambridge at the expense of the missionary society, Matthew dropped out. He had no desire to be a minister. His talent lay elsewhere, as we shall see.

Tragically, soon after Caleb graduated, even before leaving Cambridge, he died of consumption, a disease common among Indians who took up the English life style. His death, along with Joel’s, denied the Vineyard the services of two Harvard-educated Indian leaders. History would be different had they survived.

Wealthy to settle a dispute over his wife’s family fortune. Her father, Mr. Paine, had left a large estate in England that was being threatened by legal actions. Thomas Junior and his wife’s brother, also named Thomas, left for England to protect their inheritance. Traveling with them was a young Indian who lived with the Mayhews, no doubt an indentured servant. Their ship left Boston for England in November 1657 with 50 on board. It never reached port.

Mrs. Mayhew Senior had now lost her son and her son-in-law, Thomas. Her six grandchildren were fatherless. She must have been wondering more and more about her move to the colony. The Mayhew home was overwhelmed with grief. As were Island wigwams, where with grief came questions. The third converted Indian had died; first, Harvard students Joel and Caleb, and now the missionary’s young servant. What kind of a God would do this to three young Indians who had put their faith in Him?

Great Harbour, as the village was called, again had no minister; the Indians no missionary. At the society’s urging, the aging governor agreed to take over. He had no religious training, nor did he speak the Indian language. He explained how he handled that in a letter to his friend, Governor Winthrop: “I can clearly make known to them by an interpreter, what I know myself.”

The man making Mayhew’s thoughts “clearly” known to the Indians was Peter Folger, the Island’s first teacher. His father, John Folger, was one of the settlers from Watertown. Both father and son had worked in Mayhew’s grist mill there. Peter was hired to teach the Indians to read English, or at least to read the English Bible, and was fluent in their language, a skill that became useful to the governor. When Mayhew bought Naushon Island from the sachem Quaquauquinigat for two woolen coats, it was Folger who did the bargaining.

Paid by the society as a teacher of the Indians, Folger became Mayhew’s real-estate agent. In 1659, when some off-Island men wanted to buy Nantucket, Mayhew sent Folger to negotiate. He sold all Nantucket (Mayhew kept one lot) to Tristram Coffin and his partners for 30 pounds, plus two beaver hats. For another 5 pounds, they got adjacent Tuckernuck island. The buyers liked Folger so much they gave him a half-share in their venture and he moved to Nantucket to be the interpreter and to run a grist mill.
While this was going on, there were happenings in England of great importance to Mayhew, although he wasn’t yet aware of them. In 1660, the Puritan Commonwealth was ended and King Charles II, an Anglican, was restored to the throne. He promptly disbanded the Puritan missionary society. But soon, Charles was persuaded that the missionaries were good for England. A new society, more to his liking, was formed and the work went on, its message changed only slightly, on the Vineyard not at all.

Folger’s work as Mayhew’s agent had long-term consequences. One of the men who bought Nantucket (and the wife of another) was a Baptist, the “cult” of dissidents. It appealed to Folger, who had long criticized the established church for its intrusion in government. He became a Baptist. In Nantucket, where he was town clerk, this led to a falling out. He refused to turn the records over to anti-Baptist Coffin, who wanted to use them to check voter qualifications. Arrested, he was held in jail for a year and a half. When released, he moved to Rhode Island where the anti-establishment Roger Williams did things more to his liking.

The Royal Commissioners in Hartford, agents for the new society, sent Rev. John Cotton Jr., to the Vineyard as minister of the English church and missionary to the Indians. Cotton learned the Indian language and was soon preaching to the natives as well as to the English. His stay was brief. In 1667, after a falling out with Mayhew, he left and moved to the parish in Plymouth.

It wasn’t difficult to have a falling out with Mayhew. He ruled the Island as his fiefdom. He accepted no outside control, no higher authority. His only off-Island connection was the missionary money he received from faraway London. The Vineyard, his island, was ignored by the colonial governors and he liked that.

In 1664, when the English took New Amsterdam from the Dutch, Charles II gave New York, New Jersey and the islands to the east, including the Vineyard, to his brother, the Duke of York. Mayhew was pleased. When Indians boarded a wrecked ship near Tarpaulin Cove in the Elizabeth Islands in November 1667, stealing its cargo, he decided this was a chance to establish a friendly connection with New York, which he preferred over one with Massachusetts. He reported the theft to the acting governor, Richard Nicolls, the military man who had led the takeover from the Dutch. Colonel Nicolls ordered Mayhew to “compell by force of arms or otherwise [the Indians] to make restitution.”

No doubt, Mayhew wished that he hadn’t informed New York. He had no desire and no means to compel, “by force of arms or otherwise,” the Indians on Naushon Island to make restitution.

When a similar event occurred two years later, he made no report. A ship had been wrecked on the shores of the Vineyard and 40 hogheads of rum, plus other items, were taken from it by Indians. New York’s new governor, Francis Lovelace, somehow learned of the incident and demanded an explanation. What was Mayhew going to do about it? Rum was not something Indians should have, especially not 40 hogheads of it.

Mayhew was slow to respond. Six months later, on May 14, 1670, he sent his grandson Matthew, then 22 years old, to New York with an explanation. In his message, Mayhew asked Governor Lovelace which colony his Island now was under, New York or Massachusetts? Lovelace replied that the Vineyard’s “Inhabitants are from henceforth to have directions of their Government from this place.” To be sure there was no misunderstanding, he ordered Mayhew to come to New York to discuss the matter.

This time, Mayhew decided he had better go himself, taking grandson Matthew along. For a week, they stayed at Fort James, headquarters of the governor, discussing the matter of governance. The two men became friends. Or so it seems, as when Mayhew made several requests, all were granted. One was that he, Thomas Mayhew, be made “Governor for Life” of Martha’s Vineyard. He also asked that a large tract of land he had “purchased” from the Indians on the western end of the Island be designated a manor in the English tradition. Lovelace approved both requests. The Manor of Tisbury was created, named for the English village where Mayhew was born. (Manors were in vogue, several having been created along the Hudson River under the Dutch.)

Governor Lovelace then designated Mayhew and grandson Matthew as “Lords of the Manor of Tisbury,” with authority to collect rents from all who lived within its bounds. Included in those bounds were most of today’s Chilmark, a part of the present West Tisbury, plus the Elizabeth Islands and a few small islands in Monument Bay off the mainland. Not included was today’s West Tisbury village, where two years earlier, with Mayhew’s approval, four off-islanders had “purchased” considerable land from the In-
Vineyarders Sail Our Best-Known Whaler, Charles W. Morgan, On Her Maiden Voyage

by EDWIN R. AMBROSE

PROVING THE HIGH regard that Vineyard whalemen were held in by the industry, whalship Charles W. Morgan sailed from New Bedford on her maiden voyage, September 6, 1841, and more than half the men aboard were from Martha’s Vineyard.

She was built in New Bedford, had a New Bedford registry and bore the name of a New Bedford man, her principal owner, Charles Waln Morgan. Yet when she left port for the first time, only four New Bedford men were aboard.

This pride of New Bedford, whaling capital of the world, had been turned over to Vineyarders. Of the 32 men sailing her, 19 were from Martha’s Vineyard, including three of her four officers: her master, Capt. Thomas Adams Norton; her 2nd Mate, James Coffin Osborn (both of Edgartown); and her 3rd Mate, William Adams Look of Tisbury. Average age of the three officers was 24 years. Her 1st Mate, Charles S. Chadwick of Nantucket, was the oldest man on board at 36.

Of her four boatsteers (the non-commissioned officers of a whaleship), three were Vineyarders, one of them an Indian. The fourth was from New Bedford. Average age of these men: 22 years.

Completing the complement were 23 mariners, 14 of them “greenhands” on their first voyage. Twelve of those 14 were from Martha’s Vineyard. Their average age was 16. One of them, Holmes Jernegan of Edgartown, became ill on the voyage and was taken ashore at Paita, Peru, where he died and was buried.

The average age of the entire complement, officers and crew, was 20 years. Those 32 young men were entrusted, on her maiden voyage, with the New Bedford ship that has become the best-known whaleship in history. She is still afloat at Mystic Seaport, the Connecticut maritime museum, more than 160 years later.

That first voyage in 1841 is a tribute to the Vineyard’s...
connection with the history of whaling.\(^1\)

Principal owner Morgan chose young Captain Norton (who bought one-eighth ownership in the ship) as her master on that first voyage. His choice was a good one. On that voyage which ended January 2, 1845, Captain Norton returned with 1600 barrels of sperm oil, 800 barrels of whale oil, and 10,000 pounds of whalebone, with a total value of $56,000 (more than $1,000,000 in today’s money). The Morgan made 36 more voyages before being retired in 1921, sailing more miles than any other whaler in history and returning more than $1.4 million dollars to her owners, on an initial investment of $52,000, her construction cost.

Evidence of the wisdom of Owner Morgan’s choice of master is in an article published in The Sailor’s Magazine in February 1845, a month after the voyage ended:

Capt. Norton proved himself truly the sailor’s friend, and 19 or 20 of the seamen, who, when they shipped, knew nothing of navigation, came home well-instructed in the theory and practice of the art and able to navigate and sail a vessel to any part of the world. Twenty-three [sic] of the crew and officers belonging to the Martha’s Vineyard and, of course, were true-blue-seamen and native Americans. This speaks well for the good people of that island.

Two logs of the voyage have survived, both written by her 2nd Mate, James Coffin Osborn of Edgartown. The Society owns one of them, Mystic Seaport owns the other. Our log stops on May 25, 1843, nearly two years before the voyage ended. The log at Mystic includes the entire voyage. Log keeper Coffin was 26 years old, unmarried, a sensitive, intelligent man, as excerpts from his log make clear. He took with him on the voyage (and said that he read) 91 books (see inside back cover for a list of the titles).

Osborn was the son of Capt. John Osborn and his wife, Desire Allen Coffin. A few months after returning from the Morgan’s first voyage, James married Achsah Ann Norton. He was 31, she was 17.

He had first gone to sea as a teenager on the Emerald under Capt. Clement Norton of Edgartown, making yearly Atlantic voyages after right whales. He worked his way up with Captain Norton and was chief mate on the captain’s final voyage in 1835. On that voyage they caught an enormous right whale off Brazil that yielded 200 barrels of oil, one of the largest on record. Osborn then sailed under Capt. Thomas Adams Norton, Captain Clement’s nephew, on the Alexander Barclay in the late 1830s. Captain Norton and he were together again on the first voyage of the Charles W. Morgan, the subject of this article.

Osborn wrote this preface in the log of the Morgan voyage:

Journal of a Voyage to Pacific Ocean in the Ship Charles W. Morgan, Thomas A. Norton, Master. Sept. 6th, 1841. May kind Neptune protect us with pleasant Gales, and may we be successful in catching Sperm Whales.

The Morgan arrived in Fajal, Azores, September 27th. After two days there, recruiting a few crewmen and putting up with squally weather, she left heading south to round Cape Horn. Sailing around the Horn against gales and head winds took her one week. The cold, unpleasant weather brought this log entry:

Dismal. Cold and rainy. Land in Sight, hope her two under storm sails. A plenty of Snow and Hail. Employed in Sawing Wood to keep from Freezing — cold as you wish to have it!

After rounding Cape Horn on December 9th, the Morgan headed northwest to warmer weather. She anchored in the harbor of Callao, Peru, along with three other whalers and one sloop-of-war. During their stay, the men went on liberty when not hauling water and potatoes. February 6th was a feast day in Peru and some of them spent it “playing with the Spaniards.”

She then headed for the Offshore whaling grounds around the Galapagos Islands. Captain Norton sent some men ashore on Albermarle Island to capture some “Turpin,” huge tortoises for which the islands were famous. These animals were kept alive aboard ship until eaten, providing fresh meat. Turpin, they could catch, but they had come for whales. Osborn is not happy:

April 13: Caught about 70 Yellow Tails & a shark.
April 17: Begins with Glorious weather. Last part a fine Moon to Promenade the Causeway. So ends. Home sick.
April 23: Saw something in shape of a fish. Called him Devil Fish.

And a touch of sarcasm:

May 2: Whales a plenty, as they are in our Corn Fields at home.
May 3: Saw a Haglet, he looked very hungry.\(^2\)
May 6: Cruising on the Off Shore Ground, wearing out our Copper and Sails.
May 7: Saw a plenty of Squid & large Flying fish.

\(^1\) Another connection: the Morgan was built by shipwrights Jethro and Zachariah Hillman of New Bedford, whose father, Zachariah, was born and raised in Chilmark.

\(^2\) We believe a haglet is a shearwater, an oceanic bird that skims the water as it flies.
Another despairing entry:

May 15: I am thinking that we shall see some Bean Days before this Ship is full of Oils. Oh Molly! 1

May 17: Saw a Breach, kept off for it, saw nothing. Middle, saw Finbacks. Last part raised a Sulphur Bottom [great Blue Whale]. So ends another long day.

The drought is over, some action, maybe too much:

May 27: Raised a Breach about 1/2 past 8 o'clock. Lowered 4 Boats, two Pods of Whales in sight 4 miles off. Struck a Bull Whale, to the Starboard [boat]. But the Larboard Boat struck the same Whale, and got stove. Took the Whale to the Ship about one o'clock. Cut him in, a running off before the Wind, in hopes of getting another Whale, saw nothing.

The whale stamp that Osborn placed beside the entry credited the Starboard boat with the catch, the ship's first, producing 26 barrels of oil. The next day, the Waist boat got a larger one, yielding 38 barrels. Apparently, the log keeper, Osborn, had harpooned it. He wrote, "The first for me."

On the first of June, a happy event for future meals:

The old sow broke out between Decks and Landed 9 Pigs on Deck.

Their good luck continued. A large whale was spotted two days later. All four boats struck it. One iron pulled out and another had its line cut, but the Bow boat's held:

... about 10 o'clock took the Bow boat's Whale to the ship, almost buffed out. This Whale's teeth weighed 85 lbs.

It was a large sperm, yielding 100 barrels, keeping them busy for three days, cutting and boiling, then another two days to stow the oil below deck and clean up the ship. A welcome change from the hard work: many whales spotted and chased:

June 20: Lowered Boats and struck to the Bow Boat & the W[aid] Boat. Larboard Boat & the Starboard B. Lowered and struck. Each Boat killed their Fish. Took 3 to the Ship. The Waist Boat waisted their Whale about sunset 6 miles from the ship. Came onboard.

Waiting means to indicate ownership by planting a flag stick in the dead whale so it can be left and returned to later. The three whales each yielded 25 barrels of oil.

The weather turned bad and no whales were spotted, giving them time to finish boiling and stowing, plus cleaning up the mess that such work creates. Then, time for some socializing:

July 2:... spoke the Ship Splendid of Edgartown, 30 months out, 2100 bbls. Last

1 "Bean Days" no doubt means days without meat, short-ration days. "Oil+" is a mystery.

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<tr>
<th>OFFICERS AND CREW OF THE CHARLES W. MORGAN</th>
<th>WHEN SHE LEFT NEW BEDFORD, SEPT. 6, 1841</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Residence</td>
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<td>-----</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas A. Norton</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>Charles S. Chadwick</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>(Discharged at Paia, Maui, sick.)</td>
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<td>James Coffin Osborn</td>
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<td>William Adams Look</td>
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<td>Nathan M. Jernegan</td>
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<td>Miles Adams Johnson</td>
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<td>Samuel J. Hudson</td>
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<td>Philander Smith</td>
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<td>Manuel Tavares</td>
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<td>Manuel Lopez</td>
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<td>Orlando Blake (Discharged at Paia, Maui, sick.)</td>
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<td>Abraham Weaver</td>
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<td>Samuel Robinson</td>
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<td>Charles Scriber</td>
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<td>Zenas M. Gould</td>
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<td>Allen M. Atcham</td>
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<td>William Henry Coffin</td>
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<td>James Connelly</td>
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<td>Stillman T. Manter</td>
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<td>William Dunham</td>
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<td>Samuel O. Fisher</td>
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<td>Holmes Jernegan</td>
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<td>(Discharged at Paia, sick. Died and was buried there.)</td>
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<td>John A. Luce</td>
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<td>William Rawson Norton</td>
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<td>William Osborn</td>
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<td>Samuel Osborn</td>
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<td>George Porter</td>
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<td>(Discharged at Paia, sick.)</td>
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<td>Isaac C. Smith</td>
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<td>(Deserted at Paia.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacob Thompson (No mention in log, but did not return from voyage.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timothy Mayhew</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Morgan</td>
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* A lay is the share of the profits each mariner receives. It is his total pay.
part, one of the Splendid's boats capsized alongside, in Wareing [wearing—

It was the Fourth of July and some of the officers, including
Osborn, went on the Splendid for a gam. Next day, more visiting:
Spoke the Mount Vernon of New Bedford, 23 months out, 2100 bbls. & the
Barque Alto of Fairhaven, 23 months out, 300 bbls. Last part Gamming with
above ships.

There follows a note:
NB: Mind and remember these Banyan Days.

Whales are scarce and time for talk, a bit of sarcasm:

July 16:... First part this Evening spent in telling long yarns. Latter, thinking
about Home & the Glory of Being away from there.

But there was work to be done, they came upon a pod of
whales, a family, apparently:

July 25:... about 8 o'clock raised Whales. Lowered 4 Boats, struck to S. Boat &
Bow & Waist Boat Drawed. The Starboard Boat got 2 Whales, the Bow Boat
one. Took them in tow astern of the ship and kept the Ship agogo after the
School about one o'clock saw the Whales. Lowered and struck to the W Boat.
Took him to the Ship. So Ends this Day with 4 whales alongside.

July 26:... at Daylight commenced Cutting. Finished about 11 o'clock & set
the Try Works a blazing — Caught a Cow Fish & a Porpoise. So Ends, Boiling.

The four stamps Osborn placed alongside the entry show
that three of the small whales produced 15 barrels each, the
fourth, 25 barrels. They were now north of the Galapagos Islands
and sailed to Narborough Island where the captain sent a boat
ashore to fish. It came back with 70 fish and two seals. It is now
August. Our log keeper took a party ashore for turtles:

August 9: Come'd with fine weather. At 4 o'clock in the Morning left the Ship,
with 2 boats, on a cruse after Turpin [tortoises], the Ship at anchor in the Bay.
Went up to the Head of the Bay, Dist. 20 miles. Landed where no Human Being
ever did before I believe. Their have been a Volcano their, and everything was
turned up in heaps and it was a dismal place, I assure you. Arrived at the Ship
about 12 o'clock. Painted Ship outside and got the ship underway about 3 o'clock
PM. So Ends this Day. Buffed out.

Could they have done all that before noon, sailing 40
miles, going ashore, looking for "Turpin"? Seems impossible, but
apparently they did. No wonder they were "buffed out." They then
sailed to Ecuador on the Equator near Point Malpelo, where they
bought 1500 oranges, plantain and coconuts. The next day, back

---

"Banyan Days" are like Bean Days, short-rationed (our thanks to Joan Druett).
them along side. At 3 o’clock the Starboard Boat struck a Large Whale, got stove Bad. The Bow Boat struck the same Whale and got stove. About 8 o’clock the old man came on board, left the Bow Boat with the Whale, sent the Waist Boat to the Whale, he being wide awake for Boat Board [ ]. Layed by the Bow Boat until the old man came back, then hauled in the Line. . . . boate the Irons Brook and the Whale gone off.

Much work, but little result. The two whales they killed were babies, producing together only 20 barrels. The large whale that damaged two boats was probably the mother. She got away.

At Chatham Island, the next day, they got 38 tortoises, not an easy task. Osborn wrote: “So Ends this hard Days Work.” The next day: “All hands preparing their Belts for to back Turpin.” Belts were used as slings to enable the men to carry the heavy, live tortoises on their backs to the boats. It was hard labor on rough terrain. The next day, ashore again. This time overnight:

Sept. 26: . . . Lowered 4 Boats in pursuit of Turpin. We brought Down 70 and lashed them to a rop until morning. Hauled up our Boats to sleep under. So Ends, killing Seal, etc.

Sept. 27: . . . showed our Boats off the Beach and began to load with Turpin. All 4 Boats arrived and took a load of Turpin. All 4 Boats arrived at the ship having captured 120 Turpin. Got the ship under weigh, bound to Charles Island. So Ends this Day all most Buffed out.

For the next few weeks, they cruised among the Galapagos in company with the ship Hector, but had not much luck. The Hector did not get one whale, but the Morgan got none. She was not the only whaler with poor luck:

Oct. 19: . . . saw the ship Mary of Edgartown, 22 months out, 300 bbls. So Ends this Day. Home sick and sick of Whaleing.

“Do not ask me to come round Cape Horn.

If You Do, look out for your Peepers.” 6 John Savage

When whales were spotted the next day, the Morgan gave chase and identified them as sperm. Two whales, both cows, were killed and brought alongside. Together, another 55 barrels of sperm oil was boiled out and stowed below. A messy job it is and Osborn wrote, “Work up to our Eyes in Grease” followed by:

Washed the Ship with Leie [lye] fore & aft and a sharp lookout for Sperm Whales.

It was now getting towards the end of November 1842. They had been out a little more than a year. The next few weeks were very productive. Good whaling and promise of good eating:

Nov. 16: . . . about 7 o’clock raised Whales abreaching. At 9 lowered our Boats, struck to the Larboard Boat, took the Whale to the Ship about 10 o’clock. Kept the Ship agoin [going] after the School. Saw no more of them. Got Dinner. Hook unto the Whale about one o’clock, finished about 3 o’clock.

The old Sow delivered 10 pigs all in good trim. So Ends this Glorious Days Work, boiling.

Nov. 17: . . . at 6 o’clock saw Whales. Lowered. Struck to all 4 Boats. Saved 2 Whales to the S Boat & 2 to the L Boat (lost a line), 1 to the W Boat & 1 to the Bow Boat (lost a line). Lay by the Whales until morning.

Three of the whales were cows, each yielding 25 barrels, the fourth was a young bull, 20 barrels. The two they lost were both small. Both, Osborn estimated, would have produced only 17 barrels, in total. The good luck vanished for a few days:

Nov. 27: . . . saw Porpoises and a Poverty Bird — thinking about gowing to the Poor House.

Two days later, a surprising entry: “the Cooks Gally was Robbed.” Nothing more about the theft appears in the log. One would think that would be a serious crime aboard ship.

On December 10, a pod of whales was chased. Each of the four boats got one. The Waist Boat did iron two, but lost one. Three of the whales were cows, yielding 20 barrels each; the fourth was a baby, only 10 barrels. With the four carcasses securely tied alongside, the weary crew went to their bunks. In the morning:

Dec. 11: . . . cleared away the Heads and made a Smoak under the Tryworks, so Ends, Boiling, Up to our Eyes in Grease and I want to see more of it, as the Dutch man says.

That was not to be, no matter what the Dutchman said. But in the closing days of 1842 lots of other things happened:

Dec. 16: . . . saw one Finback [whale] and he was crying for something to eat. Last Part, the bedbugs were picking out tender places on our Ribs. So Ends.

Dec. 17: . . . Killed 3 Turpin & a Pig.

Dec. 18: . . . a fine Pig in the Oven aBaking and plenty of good Turpin. Middle, a Sail in sight. Last Part, a little Goaty [ ].


Dec. 23: . . . Two ships in sight with their Main tacks down. That is a good sign that Whales are scarce.

Dec. 25: . . . got a good nap behind the Roundhouse. Dreamed that I was in Kidders Shop, but when I waked and found that our Lat. was 04 degrees 29 minutes S and Long. 122-03 N, I concluded that it must have been a Dream. Last Part, Glorious weather.

No mention of Christmas — it was ignored by Protestants.

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6 John Savage was an English author. Expression means: “I’ll punch you in the eye.”
The Morgan sailed south and east to San Felix Islands, off the coast of Chile. On January 30, Captain Norton sent a boat out fishing. “Caught about 200 fish. Arrived on board at Sunset.” They were eating well: roast pig, turtle and fish.

The following day, January 31, four cow whales were killed, yielding from 30 to 40 barrels each. Osborn wrote: “I Remember this Long Night as long as Grass grows & Water runs.”

For five days, they cut and boiled blubber, filled casks with cooled oil, stowed them below and washed down the ship. On February 7th, Osborn wrote, “saw a Sperm Whale but he had lost his jacket.” Such a carcass was worthless except to sharks. Its blubber (jacket) had been peeled off and its head removed.

Thoughts of home crept into Osborn’s writing as did words gathered in his wide reading:

Feb. 9: a thinking about Home and very low in spirits but there is something that keeps the sinking spirits up and says separation shall not always be. Shakspear [Shakespeare?]

Suddenly, the situation improved:

Feb. 12: ... saw Sperm Whales, Lowered our Boat in pursuit, Struck to the L Boat & S Boat. Took the Whales along side about 1 ocklock. Eat a hearty Dinner off a Roast Pig ... at Dark the last Head came over the Plainsheer, about midnight commenced [commenced] Boiling.

Another 40 barrels stowed. A week later, the Morgan anchored in Santa Harbour, Peru. More rest and recreation:

Feb. 19: the Larboard Watch on Liberty, about 12 of us got Horses and started for the Town of Santa. And it was put in to see who had the best Horse. And the Ground smoked, I know.

Feb. 21: [after a morning stowing fresh water] about 2 ocklock started off Agunning on Horseback. Killed a number of Ducks.

In the morning, they sailed out of Santa Harbour, heading north to Paita, where they were more R & R and dancing:

Feb. 28: ... it was Carnaval Days with the Spanyards and the Eggs & Paint were flying in all directions. about 8 ocklock in the Evening I went on Shore to see the Spanish Lady’s Walse [waltz] And they were so much like Home that I Screamed.

For four days, they stayed at Paita, replenishing food, filling water tanks and entertaining a mysterious visitor, plus two ladies:

March 3: ... So Ends this Day with Monungo on Board, the Smugler.

March 7: [at anchor in Tornes River] Employed getting off water ... Last part nothing remarkable only Two Females Visited me, they were bound for

Whaleships would win no beauty prizes. They were built for stability and work, not speed. The plan shows (dotted lines) how the stage is rigged for cutting-in the blubber.

Guyakill [Guayaquil]. The Wind was ahead. [No more mention of the women.]

March 8: ... Took out Anchor about Sunset, bound to the Galapagos.

March 21: ... Glorious weather and I wish that I was where I yest [used] to was.

Cruising off the Galapagos, whales were spotted. They lowered and chased them. The Bow boat struck one and took it to the ship. The next morning was Sunday, but it was a working day:

March 26: ... Called all Hands at Daylight and Hooked on to the Whale, finish cutting at 8 ocklock and made a Smock ...

March 27: ... Finished Boiling about 8 ocklock ...

Forty more barrels of oil were stowed. A week later, three more whales, adding another 60 barrels. The ship was filling.

April 1: Gone as the wandering Female which I read about ... A pain in the Breast.

Those final words in the entry sound ominous, but he doesn’t mention chest pains again. The next day, another whale was killed and secured to the ship overnight:

April 3: ... Commenced Cutting at Daylight, finished about 10 ocklock, got the Decks clear about ½ past 11 ocklock and made a Smooch [started the fire under the tryworks]. Middle employed Boiling and frying Doughnuts.

A barren period followed. No whales. Osborn’s entries included: “All Hands Employed a killing Cock Roaches,” and on

7 The women, no doubt, came aboard, seeking passage to their destination.
8 Osborn was referring to the book, Female Wanderer, one of the many books he had brought on board.
9 The cook made doughnuts and the men were deep-frying them in the boiling whale oil during the trying-out of the blubber. Fresh, hot doughnuts in the mid-Pacific!
another day, "making Spunyarn."10
May 2: Dreary and Gloomy. Sorrowful and Home Sick, Sea Sick, and Sick of the Sea: Amen, and it is 26 Days since we have seen a Whale.
May 9: . . . Talk of the Western Country. I say go away Cape Horn - All Hands about discouraged. A building the Old Man a Wheelbarrow.11
May 20: . . . The old Sow Pige'd. A thinking of the Comforts of Home and should my Life be spared to return, May I be contented to spend my Days there.

On May 22nd whales. The Bow boat got one, adding 24 more barrels to the hold. Spottings continued to be rare:
May 27: . . . Lonesome times these, and 40 months for us.
May 31: . . . Tack'd Ship to the South in hopes to see Whales on the 1st of June. And may the Lord prosper us & preserve us from all Danger.

Although no whales, there was excitement, a near tragedy, but Osborn makes it sound like just another day:
June 16: A Man fell overboard, the Ship was lue'd to the Wind and a Boat lowered in about two Shakes, one of the Boatstexers fastened to him solid, and we starn'd [all] out of the Suds, he was about one 1/4 of a mile from the Ship when we got him. His name is Norton.12

They were now cruising near the Galapagos Islands and the Fourth of July was coming up. The captain dropped anchor off Black Beach on Charles Island. Fun and games. A real holiday:
July 3: Come'd. with fine weather. The Larboard Watch on liberty. The Starboard Watch employed a Fishing & Scrimshawing. So ends this day. A Dancing.13
July 4: Come'd. with fine weather. The Starboard Watch on Liberty. Took a Fiddle on Shore and had a regular Breakdown. So ends the 4th of July 1843.

Back to work hunting whales:
July 22: . . . About 9 o'clock saw Whales off our Ica Beam. 2 miles off, lowered our Boats, Struck to the L Boats, took the Whale alongside at 12 o'clock . . . . at 3 o'clock PM Come'd. Cutting, finished at 4 & Cleared the deck. So Ends.
Sunday, July 23: . . . At Daylight began to boil the Whale . . . finished boiling about 4 o'clock PM.

Another 23 barrels of oil were stowed in the hold.14 The

10 Spunyarn is a soft rope made by braiding smaller lines. Used for seizing.
11 "Suds" are foam in the water caused by the abrupt change in direction. "Starred" may be "sterned." Very lucky to be saved was William Rawson Norton, 16, of Edgartown, no relation to Captain Norton. The log keeper doesn't seem to know his first name.
12 Sailors don't need women for dancing; a swinging all-male "breakdown" to the fiddle.
13 We remind readers that barrels, like gallons, is a measurement of quantity. Many barrels of oil are contained in a cask, which is what they stow in the hold.

captain headed the Morgan to the port of Tombes:
July 27: . . . Saw a Brig at anchor off Tombes River. The old man went onto Her to inquire about the Feaver that we herd was a raging up & down the Coast. The Capt. of the Brig told him that about one half of the population was Dead. Middle, aworking towards Payta. . . . strong breezes from SW by S and could enough to freeze Cats. O glory!

Sailing along the coast of Peru, the Morgan arrived at Paita harbor July 31st. The watches alternated going ashore, the watch staying aboard being kept busy painting and cleaning ship. For some reason that the log doesn't explain, Osborn wrote after his entry of August 4th: "Remember this Day." Whatever he meant on that day, the next few days were memorable. The ship lost her first mate, Charles Chadwick of Nantucket:
August 6: . . . Two of our crew deserted. Middle, avisting the Ladies on board the Ship George of Fire Haven. A good Spree and no Mistake.
August 7: . . . The David Paddock Arrived off the mouth of the Harbour. Discharged her first mate on account of Sickness. Mr. Chadwick [the Morgan's 1st mate] left our Ship on the same account & got his things on Shore.

Two days later, the anchor was weighed and the ship headed for Charles Island, looking for recruits to replace the deserters:
August 14: . . . steerling for Black Beach. At 7 o'clock the Capt. went on Shore after recruits, came on board about 10 o'clock having arrange his business.

Osborn doesn't say anything more about the new recruits or what, if anything, was done to replace the first mate. Being second mate, he would be in line to move up, but he makes no mention of such. During the next two days, the men were sent ashore to cut wood. Pumpkins and potatoes were brought aboard. The ship then sailed to Chatham Island to get turtles. By August 23rd, they were at sea, with more than 350 giant tortoises aboard.

By September 6, only two weeks later, the Morgan had killed six more whales, producing 320 barrels of oil, a very good two weeks. The crew was hard at work, rearranging the holds and making room for more than 300 live turtles:
Sept. 11: . . . Employed stowing Oil in the After Hole . . .
Sept. 13: . . . Employed stowing off the Fore Hold with Shocks [turtles that are used to make casks] Wood & Turpin . . .

On September 18th, a bit of hard luck:
Sept. 18: . . . Saw Whales at 10 o'clock. Lowered, Struck a Whale to the L. Boat
but the Line off, Lancing him...

And another lost chance two months later:

Nov. 15:... saw a large Sperm Whale, Lowered our Boats did not Strike Him, shortened Sail and kept the Ship a going in Pursuit of Him... This Whale was a Buster.

But Buster got away. They didn't get a whale for more than a month. There were other things to do:

Dec. 11: Calm weather. All Hands Employed Killing Roaches, Cocks, in the Fore Castle. Middle Part much the same. Calm, all Hands over Board having a swim... Thus Ends.

On the bottom of another page, December 24th:

O rain Come and wet me, Sun Come and Dry me, go away Cape Horn, do not Come too near me.

Christmas Day came and went without a mention. And another month without a whale. By the end of January 1844 they were back in Paita:

Jan. 28:... About 7 o'clock PM Dropped Anchor in Payta Harbour. The L Watch on Shore to Grass. Thus ends.
Jan. 29:... the S Watch on Shore to Grass. Discharged to [two] Natives...
Jan. 30:... the L Watch on Shore... Two Ships off the mouth of the Harbour, the Capt's. on Shore...

While at Paita, more bad news. Two men were sick enough to be discharged (and an earth quake was felt on the ship):

Feb. 5:... Discharged the Carpenter and Holmes Jernegan on account of Sickness. Shipped 3 men from the Shore... felt the Shock of an Earthquake on board the Ship. Latter Part all ready for sea. Thus Ends.

Finally, at sea with better luck. February 16th, a whale was killed, the first since September. For two days they were busy cutting and boiling. Then, February 18th, Osborn wrote: "Cooled down the Try Works." The Morgan sailed for Charles Island in the Galapagos. The captain was busy making big plans. A surprise:

March 24:... all Sail set, steering W by North. Watch Employed fitting Right Whale Gear...  

Captain Norton had decided to head north after right whales. Maybe they would do better chasing them. They were easier to find and to kill, but their oil was worth only half as much. There would be a stopover on the way:

15 To "grass" means to relax, to take time off from work.

16 The carpenter was Orlando Blake, home town unknown. Holmes Jernegan, an Edgartown greenhand, 18 years old, died a month later in Peru and was buried there.

April 2:... steering W by N. At Sunset took in the Studing Sails for fear of running the Land down... 6 o'clock A.M. [April 3] saw the Island of Owyhee [Hawaii], dist. 40 miles. At ½ past 8 o'clock A.M. saw the Island of Mowee... They were at Hawaii, then called the Sandwich Islands.

April 5:... laying at Anchor in the Port of Lahaina [Maui], one Watch on Shore to Grass, the other Watch Employed Blacking the Bends...  
April 6:... the St. Watch on Shore to Grass. The other Watch Employed getting off Potatoes & Pumpkins...  
April 8:... about 8 o'clock A.M. took our Anchor, also 8 Passengers, 6 of them were Females. All Bound to Woahoo [Oahu].  
April 9:... at Anchor in Woahoo Harbour. About 7 o'clock the Old man went on Shore with Mr. Brewer and Lady. The others Dear little Yellow Girls went on Shore in a Boat from another Ship...  
April 10:... About one o'clock the Capt. came on board... at sunset the West End of Oahu bore at NE, Dist 15 Miles from which I take a departure from.

Again they were at sea, this time heading northward for the Kodiak whaling grounds in the Gulf of Alaska to chase right whales. The handwriting in the log changes slightly, but Osborn seems to be still keeping it. Perhaps he has a new pen nib. Early in May, he had an accident (he described it in the back of the log):

May the 5th, 1844. Off Duty on account of being hurt by the ship's Counter, when Lowering away the Boats. Thus Ends. Snowing hard and hard luck.

Sailing north, the weather was much different. Gale winds,
snow and hail slowed their progress. Seas were crashing over the
deck, “the W Boat got stove Bad by a Sea... Blowing a gale.”

No more equatorial breezes. They were now in the Gulf of
Alaska spotting lots of right whales. But for three weeks, high
winds and rough seas kept them from lowering a boat. Only three
times were they able to chase the whales they saw every day. And
each time, after striking the whale, they lost it. The line snapped,
the iron pulled out, or the seas were so high they had to cut the
line to save their lives. It was cold and snowy. They must have
looked back at the sperm-whaling days as heaven. Then, a kill:

May 24: ... Saw Whales. Lowered & Chased Untill 5 o'clock P.M. Could not
strike ... Latter part much the same. Saw Whales, Lowered, struck to the L
Boat and Killed the Whale. Got one Boat Stove. Thus ends.

It was a good-sized whale, yielding 150 barrels of whale oil
(right whales, with thicker blubber, yield more oil than sperm
whales). One week later, after chasing whales every day and
catching none, they killed another 150-barrel whale:

May 29: ... Latter part all Hands Employed stowing Down Oil in the after Hole.
Saw Whales, Lowered. Struck to the L Boat. Thus ends.

May 30: ... got the Whale along Side about 1 o'clock P.M. and come'd cutting.
Finished at 9 o'clock P.M. ... began to stow Down Oil in the after Hold. Saw
Whales. Too much work to attend to them. Thus Ends. Boiling.

The following week they spotted whales every day, lowered
and chased, but could not strike. Then, 150 more barrels:

June 5: ... The Boats off in Pursuit of Whales. The L boat Struck, got the whale
alongside about 5 o'clock. Began to cut at 10 o'clock P.M. Got Supper and
set the watch ... Latter part employed Boiling and Setting up Pipe Shooks.19

Another long period of chasing and not striking followed.
Then some good and bad news:

June 17: ... About 6 o'clock P.M. Lowered one Boat to lance a Whale, Struck
him, got him along side at 8 o'clock ... finished cutting at 10 o'clock A.M.
Lowered for more Whales. Struck a large Whale to the B Boat and dropped [?] the Iron.

They killed a whale on each of the next two days, one of
125 barrels, the other, 150. Then, two weeks of very high seas.
Whales were all around them, but they were unable to lower their
boats. It was tantalizing:

June 30 ... thick Fog. Saw Whales close to the Ship, we wanted their Jackets

very much but thought it rather risky as we had all our line in the Boats. Thus Ends. Foggy.

July 3: ... Saw Whales. Lowered could not Strike ... Latter part Saw Whales
about 8 o'clock A.M. Lowered struck to the W Boat. Got the Whale alongside
about 11 o'clock A.M. Began to cut him.

July 3: ... Employed cutting the above mentioned Whale. At 9 o'clock P.M.
finished. Got Supper and set the Try Works a Smoking ... Boiling in a thick fog. Thus Ends. Boiling.

It was the biggest catch yet: 240 barrels of whale oil. The
mammal was so huge that the log keeper wrote: “You want from 5
to 6 foot Lances” to kill him. These were busy days on the Morgan:

“All Hands employed Cooperating oil, Boiling, Chasing Whales.”

Then, a lucky find:

July 8: ... about 4 o'clock P.M. Saw a Dead Whale ... took the Whale along
side about 7 o'clock ... Cutting finished at 8 o'clock A.M., began to Boil ... Stinking Dead Whale.

Dead right whales will float for a long while, kept buoyant
by their thick blubber. That “stinking dead whale” yielded 60
barrels. The hold was filling. Work continued around the clock:

another Whale to the S. Boat and got him along side at 5 o'clock P.M. Began to
Cut him, took in his head Gear [?] and let him lay. In the Middle part employed
clearing away the Head. ... About 3 o'clock A.M. began to cut in his body.
Finished at 8 o'clock A.M. and made a great Smoke under the Try Pot ... Saw
Whales, too much work to attend to them. Thus Ends.

“Clearing away the Head,” was a messy task with right
whales. The long strips of baleen attached to the roof of the mouth
had to be cut loose. An even messier job came later, scraping
the skin from the bone, covering the deck with the slimy black gurry.

The ship was sailing southward, heading for Monterey,
California. Then, as the water warmed, some sperm whales:

August 5: ... all sail set, steering ESE. About 4 o'clock P.M. Saw Sperm Whales,
Lowered, Struck to the Waist, Bow & Larboard Boats. Got the last Whale to
the Ship at 9 o'clock P.M. ...

August 6:... Com'd Cutting at Daylight, finished about 11 A.M. ... began to boil
at Sun Set ... [still] Boiling at Daylight. Saw the land to the Westward of
Monterey. Thus Ends.

August 8: About 1 o'clock P.M. Cooled down the Tryworks ... at Daylight [on
the 9th] began to break out the After Hole to stow down Oil. Put about 35 bbls
down and Jumped on the Hatch. Thus Ends.

They had killed three small sperm whales, each yielding 30
barrels. A total of 90 barrels of valuable sperm oil. The after hold
was full. "Jumped on the Hatches" in celebration. Then, more reason for joy: they would "grass" in lovely Monterey, California:

August 10: . . . Dropped our Anchor in Monterey Harbour. Found the Sloop of War Levant and 3 Other Ships at Anchor. . . . the L Watch ashore to Grass. Thus Ends A Long Day.

The following day, the starboard watch took its turn "to Grass." Then more good fortune:

August 11: . . . About 9 o'clock, Lowered the L Boat to Lance a Humpback. Killed him and took him along side and Cut him in. Thus Ends a Long Day.

An easy kill. While at anchor, another whale! More oil in the forward hold. Crew changes were being made:

August 13: . . . Discharged 4 Men: Jim Kanaca, Barney Meegee, Bill Kanaca, Henry Dalley, also a Native.

August 14: . . . Shipped William Harris, Seaman.

The captain was getting ready for the long sail around the Horn. He didn't want to take the islanders to New Bedford and he signed on Able Seaman Harris to fill out the crew.

August 20: N. B. Birth Day.

It was our log keeper's birthday. James C. Osborn, now 30, was born in August 1814, in Edgartown. But the day was notable for more that - it was the day they weighed anchor and started for home. Ten days later, August 30th, Osborn predicted:

August 30th, 1844: I think that the Good Ship, Chas. W. Morgan, will Arrive at New Bedford, on the 5th of January, 1845. J. C. Osborn.

As we shall see, he was almost exactly right. In rough weather, halfway around Cape Horn:

Saturday, October 27th, 1844: Off Cape Horn, the Land in Sight. . . . Took in all sail but a Double Reef Main Top Sail & Fore Sail. . . . strong Gales & Heavy Snow Squalls. at Day light made Sail . . .

As usual, rounding the Horn meant a wet, rough passage, but by November 10th, they began drying out:

Nov. 10: . . . Watch employed making Spun Yarn. Thus Ends a Long Day. N.B. Our Deck has not been Dry since the 5th of October before to Day.

The Morgan was making good time on her sail north. The heading at the top of the log page is now in bold letters: "Towards New Bedford."

A rather unusual remark by Osborn, written in the back of the log, not among the daily entries:

December 13th, 1844: Com'd with Painting and Standing alooking at the Drip Stone to see it Break and it did break and who cared? Had a severe Repremend from the Boy about making Gury in the Cabin out of Bone Scrapings. Thus Ends for the present, looking very Black. 21

Ten days later, an event deserving a sketch by Osborn:


They were now north of the Equator, off the Caribbean. There would be no more need for the try works, no more cutting, no more boiling. Next stop, home!

Christmas 1844, they were passing Cape Hatteras. Again, it was just another day. No mention of a holiday:

Dec. 25: . . . Wind veered to the West, took in the Fore and Mizen Topsails and reefed the Fore Sail . . . strong Gales.

But Wednesday, Jan. 2nd, 1845, was far from being just another day:


His final sentences were written in a rough scrawl, larger and less graceful than the rest of the log. Obviously, Osborn was emotionally involved in the excitement of getting home. He drew a large anchor at the end of the day's entry and added:

I feel thankfull to the over ruling Power for so prosperous a Passage, 130 days from Monterey, run 41 Days on one tack. The good ship Chas. W. Morgan sailed Sept. 6th, 1841. Arrived in New Bedford Jan. 2nd, 1845 . . .

Captain Norton, the young man from Edgartown, turned the ship over to her owner and namesake, Charles W. Morgan, heavily laden with 1600 barrels of sperm oil, 800 barrels of whale oil and 10,000 pounds of whalebone.

Mr. Morgan must have been smiling.

21 Gury, as mentioned earlier, is the slimy residue that results from scraping whalebone. The log keeper had apparently been messing up the officers' cabin, much to the disgust of the Cabin Boy. Does any reader know the significance of the Drip Stone breaking?

22 Whalers coming home after years at sea were filled with worry about what might be awaiting them. Had family members died? Their sweethearts married? It was a tense moment, the thought of that first meeting after so many years without communications.
In Memoriam  
Peg Knowles  
1910 – 2002

At the Society, Friday was Peg's Day. We knew that every Friday morning at 9 o’clock, Peg Knowles would be at the door eager to go to work. In warm weather, her bicycle would be leaning against the wall. She was the kind of volunteer curators dream about: enthusiastic, capable and dependable.

It began when Mrs. Margaret Ogden Knowles (always called “Peg”) told the Curator she would like to be a regular volunteer: “I don’t have anything special to do on Friday mornings and I would love to work in the Library.”

So she started. For years after, when you entered the Library on Friday mornings you would find her sitting at the large table, wearing curator’s white cotton gloves, papers spread out around her. After reading each one, she would enter a summary on her inventory sheet. Sitting there, prim and precise in white gloves, she looked like a Boston matron, expecting friends in for tea. That was the genteel, refined way that she did everything.

History wasn’t her only enthusiasm. She was a talented artist. Each Friday noon, she would rush off to have a quick lunch before going to her watercolor class in West Tisbury.

Her daughter Alison said that her mother was never happier than in her final years. “She really blossomed, loving every minute of life.”

A graduate of Smith College, she was looking forward to her 70th class reunion this month. At 92, she would be one of the most active of the alumnae. Certainly one of the few still riding bicycles.

Regretfully, she won’t be there. She died April 12th, 2002. It was a Friday. A memorial service will be held for her on May 17th, a Friday.

Friday was Peg’s Day. And for many Friday mornings to come, the Library will be an empty place without her.

“A List of Books that I have read on the Voyage”

1 vol. Goods Book of Nature  
1 vol. Self Knowledge  
1 vol. Morrels Voyages  
2 vol. Madame DeLacy  
2 vol. Quadroon  
2 vol. Pathfinder  
1 vol. Pilot  
1 vol. Retienza, or The Last of the Trybunes  
1 vol. Numia of Pompei  
1 vol. Book of Beauty  
1 vol. Tracks on Disapation  
1 vol. Husbands Duty to his Wife  
1 vol. Ladies Medical Guide  
1 vol. Madame Tussades History of the French Revolution  
1 vol. Pamela  
2 vol. Meriam Coffin  
1 vol. Ten Thousands a Year  
1 vol. Humphrey Clinker  
2 vol. Bracebridge Hall  
1 vol. Travels in Egypt & Arabia Felix  
2 vol. Elizabeth De Bruce  
2 vol. Bravo

2 vol. Repeaters  
2 vol. Steam Voyage Down The Danube Dr. Edward Young  
1 vol. Memoirs of  
1 vol. Health Adviser  
1 vol. Female Wanderer  
1 vol. Female Horse Thief  
1 vol. Holdens Narrative  
1 vol. Rosamond, Narrative of the Roman Catholic Priests, etc.

2 vol. Mercedes of Castile  
22 vol. of Marryatts Works  
1 vol. The American Longer  
1 vol. Benjamin Keen  
2 vol. Pelham Bulwer  
3 vol. Rolands History  
1 vol. Neapolitans Anecdotes  
12 vol. Bulwers Novels  
2 vol. The Prince & Pedler  
1 vol. Jack Adams  
1 vol. May You Like It  
2 vol. Kings Highway  
1 vol. The Young Mans Guide

Log keeper of the Charles W. Morgan, 2nd Mate James Coffin Osborn of Edgartown, took a personal library with him: a total of 44 titles and 91 volumes. This list is from the log, his spelling not changed. He wrote (quoted at top) that he read them all on the voyage. A prodigious task, it would seem.
Signals used on board the ship

When the flag is at the main, the whale is on the weather

Beam.

When the flag is at the main and the main yard aback, the

whales are on the Lee Beams.

When the flag is at the fore, the whales are three points off the

weather Bow.

When the flag is at the fore, and the ship kept off, the whales are

three points off the Lee Bow.

When the flag is at the Mizzen, the whales are four points off the

Wind on Quarter.

When the flag is at the Mizzen, and the ship kept off, the whales

are four points off the Lee Quarter.

When the spanker is hauled up, the whales are astern.

When the white flag is set at the Mizzen-peak, it is a signal for

one boat to come on board.

When two flags (the white and blue) are set at the Mizzen-peak it

is for all the boats to come on board.

When the white flag is at the fore top-gallant head, the boats

are to go further.

When the white flag is at the main top-gallant head, the whales are

near the ship.

When a flag is set at the fore and main, it is a signal that

a boat is stove.

I.B. Two whale will be set in a steamer boat when their situa-

tions will admit of it.

There had to be a means of communicating with the small whaleboats when they were away from the ship chasing and killing whales. These are the signals used, as written on one of the back pages of the log of the Charles W. Morgan.