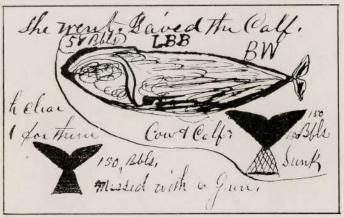


# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

Vol. 47, No. 1

AUGUST 2005



Allie's sketches are sometimes bold, as here, other times, very tentative. This one is near end of voyage.

Documents

"Allie" Smith, Teenage Journal Writer, Gives Us a Fresh Look at Whaling

by Arthur R. Railton

Chilmark's Paint Mill, An Ancient Manufactory

by John O. Flender

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Editor: Arthur R. Railton Founding Editor: Gale Huntington (1959-1977)

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# Chilmark's Paint Mill, An Ancient Manufactory

by JOHN O. FLENDER

LL YOU WILL FIND on maps to record the existence of the Chilmark Paint Mill is a narrow blue line labeled "Paint Mill Brook," just east of Cape Higgon on the North Shore. Paint Mill Brook flows north into Vineyard Sound. Its water was important to a major Chilmark manufactory, a paint mill that exported its product to the mainland in the late 1800s.

It was not the Island's first paint mill. In 1764, when a missionary named Whitwell was preparing to go to Gay Head to preach to the Indians, his son, W. Whitwell, wrote to him, asking a favor:

[I] have just time eno [enough] to inform you of my desire to have a barrel of yellow & red paint from Gay-head, & will pay whatever Charges may accrue from the same. Please to let the barrel be filled ¼ with Red & ¾ with Yellow; if it can't be procured, fill it up with such Colours as you can get.

Yr. dutif. Son, W. Whitwell.

The idea that a barrel could be filled with paint of two different colors, red and yellow, without mixing was baffling. Research cleared up the mystery. Paint at that time was not the type of paint known today. You could not dip a brush into it and spread it on a board to dry. Instead, paint was a very fine powder, ground from dried clay in a paint mill. The resulting dry product was called "paint." Buyers mixed it with an oil to turn it into a liquid similar to the paint used today.

That 1764 letter is the only known evidence of the pre-Revolutionary War paint mill at Gay Head. The material wanted by Whitwell may have been finely screened, but oth-

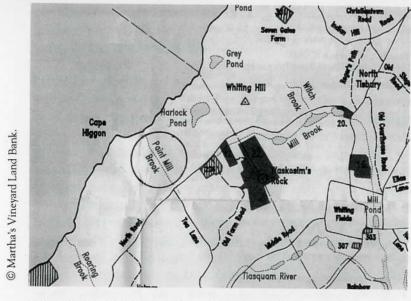
JOHN O. FLENDER of Chilmark is a member of the Society. His interest in the Paint Mill's history developed from a life-long career in consulting with and advising small-business owners. This is his first article in the journal.

erwise unprocessed clay, or may have been clay that had been ground at a windmill. In any event, it is clear that 100 years before the Chilmark Paint Mill began operating, "paint" was being produced up-Island in what must have been a very small facility.

In about 1847 or 1848 what was probably the first documented paint mill in Chilmark was established as "The Mt. Prospect Paint Mill" by Francis and Hiram Nye at Roaring Brook on leased land almost one-half mile upstream from the North Shore. It was located at the site of an earlier grist mill and was run by William C. Manter, whose occupation was listed in the 1850 Census as "Paint Grinder." The brothers Nye had come from Falmouth and were running a paint store in Holmes Hole. Although the two men held equal shares in the store, Francis owned two-thirds of the mill.

Tragically, on July 29, 1851, lightning struck the store and Francis was killed. Manter continued to operate the mill and to grind clay after Francis died, but gradually he shifted to the milling of corn and grain. In 1860 he bought the mill from Nye and in the Federal Census that year, he is listed as a "Miller." In the 1867 edition of the Massachusetts Register and Business Directory and subsequent editions, he is described as the owner of a grist mill. He and his wife also ran a store near the mill to satisfy the needs of the men who worked nearby at the brick works located downstream on Roaring Brook close to the shore. The "Manter Mill" survived into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is said to have been the last operating grist mill on the Vineyard.

The idea of starting another Vineyard paint factory was the inspiration of Franklin King, a second-generation Boston entrepreneur who ran E. & F. King Co., importing and distributing paints, oils, dye stuffs and chemicals. King thought it would be profitable to make the raw material, the "paint," that the company then was buying from others. Not knowing the business of grinding clay, he hired Lindley Moore Wing of Falmouth as manager, probably late in 1863. Wing had been a partner in an oilcloth carpet factory in West Falmouth and also may have been involved in a nearby paint mill where clay



Paint Mill Brook (circle) is about 1½ miles northeast of the better-known Roaring Brook with its old Brick Yard on the north shore of Chilmark.

was ground into the "paint" used as the filler in the manufacture of oilcloth carpet, then very popular. Most of the paint produced in Chilmark was sold for the same use.

Wing went to the Vineyard, looking for a suitable location for the mill. The site had to have access to the ocean for transportation of the finished product; it needed water power to run the mill as well as to be near clay deposits. He found only two possible sites, both on the north shore of Chilmark. One was at the mouth of Roaring Brook; the other was on a slightly smaller stream known locally as Howland Brook.

The first site had already been developed as a brickyard by Smith and Barrows and others, so Wing, with King's concurrence, chose the second. In September 1864, he negotiated on King's behalf a fifty-year lease with John Tilton of Chilmark to excavate yellow and red clay from his farm at Keephigon (near today's Cape Higgon). The lease also allowed the removal of all other substances from which paint could be made, except white, blue and black clay or iron. Five days after this agreement was signed, Wing purchased for King from

Jeremiah Stuart, a Chilmark farmer, two acres of land on which to build the mill and another one-half acre for a wharf, as well as the right to use Howland Brook and the existing dam and mill pond on it.

It seems strange that John Tilton specifically prohibited the removal of white, blue and black clay, but allowed yellow and red clay to be dug. (King later bought mineral rights from other farmers to dig the colors had Tilton denied him.)

It is not clear whether Stuart was reluctant to sell his family's land or whether King was conserving his capital, but he bought only two small, unconnected parcels, plus the right to pass between them, water rights and limited mineral rights.

To ensure an adequate supply of clay, an interest in additional land at Peaked Hill was bought in April 1865. At the same time, King and Wing decided to raise the level of the mill pond and to purchase land next to the dam from Elijah Howland, probably to use as a "borrow pit" from which to remove gravel to heighten the dam. At Wing's suggestion, King also bought the right to divert a near-by stream into the mill pond to increase the flow into Howland Brook. The two men had already come to the conclusion that the brook would not produce enough power to satisfy the mill's requirements, particularly during periods of drought, and had decided to install a steam engine to supplement the water power.

Work on the mill and associated facilities was under way in the spring of 1865 and continued into the summer. In addition to the new buildings and the heightened dam, a raceway was constructed and roads were built. Much of the equipment for the mill came from Holmes & Blanchard in Boston, dealers in mill stones, bolting cloth and "all machinery used in the manufacture of paints and colors."

By the fall of 1865, the mill was in operation and shipments of paint were being made, but sales were running well below expectations. King wrote from Boston that his salesmen were reluctant to solicit orders for fear the factory could not guarantee prompt shipment. In his letters to Lindley Wing, the plant manager, now living in Chilmark, King showed himself to be an involved owner, expressing numerous suggestions and concerns. Would soot from the boiler contaminate the light-colored pigments? Could plant capacity be increased if he shipped an additional packaging machine from Boston? And most importantly, King warned that if production was not increased, the venture would not achieve its goal of returning 10% on his investment.

After only a few months, the paint mill met with disaster when on January 5, 1866, it was destroyed by fire. The two men were discouraged, but not defeated and immediately began rebuilding despite the fact that insurance only covered three-quarters of the reported loss of \$17,000. According to the *Vineyard Gazette*, the "Carpet Paint Factory," as it seemed to be known locally, was going to be rebuilt on an even larger scale than the original and the mill pond was to be enlarged. (The rebuilt factory was capitalized at \$25,000 in 1870.)

Franklin King, who owned the mill personally, demonstrated his commitment by acquiring in the early months of 1866 another small parcel of land abutting his property along with additional mineral rights. However, his confidence seems to have been weakened somewhat, as in late spring he convinced Joseph W. Colburn, his partner at E. & F. King & Co., to make the Paint Mill part of their firm. On June 6, 1866, he transferred his entire interest to the E. & F. King & Co. Plant manager Wing continued to run the operation from a small barn at the site.

The operating history of the factory has not been fully documented. By combining the incomplete business records of the company held at the Martha's Vineyard Historical Society, Federal Census data and the occasional references in the Vineyard Gazette with an informative interview with Francis Reed printed in 1924 in The Vineyard Magazine, the nature and scope of the operation can be determined.

The man interviewed, Francis H. Reed of Chilmark, had gone to work with his father, digging clay for the paint mill when he was 16. In *The Vineyard Magazine*, he gives many details:

There were three kinds of yellow: the pale yellow, the "M" yellow and the Oxford ochre. They dried it and ground it at

SITE OF CHILMARK PAINT MILL IN THE 1880S

the paint mill run by King & Wing. . . From April to December, father and I walked ten miles a day and worked ten hours each day, sometimes twelve. We received on an average from 50 cents a ton to \$1.00. It sold in France at 14 cents a pound.

They got red and white paint dust, also, on the Island. We would dig 36 to 40 feet deep, in pits in which the yellow would be nine or ten feet from the surface, the white under that, anywhere from 8 to 15 feet of white, then red, very thick, and ending at the bottom in a sandy grit, which was useless.

At first, the two men, father and son, carted the heavy, wet clay in push carts to large drying sheds equipped with covers to keep the clay dry during a rain. These covers were similar to those on tanks used for evaporating seawater to produce salt. It took four or five days to dry the clay and considerable hard labor was needed as Francis Reed described it:

We had about forty or fifty drying sheds and would put a ton in a shed at a time to dry. Then we would pound it up with wooden pounders or mallets. Then we would stir it with hoes every day for four or five days, until perfectly dry. The clay by this time was in small hunks of a size smaller than a baseball.

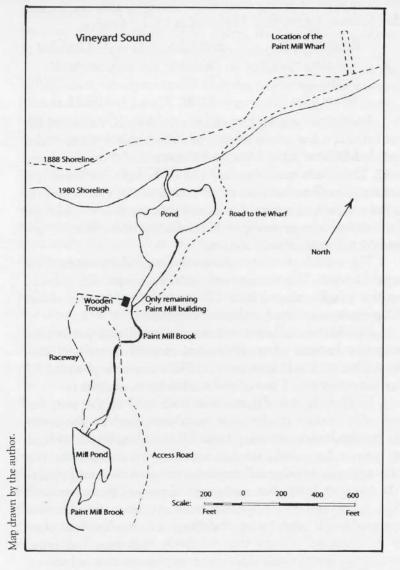
It was labor-intensive in those days before the internal-combustion engine. They soon had a horse to help. The pay was good:

My father would dig and I would lift it out. There were days I was so tired I could hardly straighten myself out after a day's work.

After our first year. . . we had a horse and derrick, and we drove the horse to and from the pits, which made the work easier. In the summer season we would live in huts we built. Sometimes we would be hoisting paint at 2 in the morning. At noon it would be very hot down in the pits, so we would knock off and rest in the huts.

The best day's work we ever did was [when] the price was \$1.00 a ton. We found a place and dug, and we got 50 tons in one day of "M" and pale yellow, and made \$50 for the day.

By way of comparison, it took a school teacher more than a month to make that much money. It was no wonder the father and son worked so long and so hard. Dried clay, of course,



Paint Mill site in mid-1800s. Water flowed from Mill Pond along the raceway and through an elevated wooden trough into the mill (see photo, page 14). Shore (dashed line) and wharf were then about 200 feet farther into the Sound. Remaining building is shown on page 15.

weighed less than the clay as dug and to compensate them for the extra work of drying there were two pay scales, one for wet clay, another for dry clay. The rates in 1873-74 were:

Rates per ton	Wet Clay	Dry Clay
Red clay	\$0.90	\$2.00
Yellow clay	\$1.00	\$2.00
White Clay	\$1.30	(not known)

Besides the regular clay-diggers, Rodney R. Reed and his son Francis, a few others worked at various times: Vinal Hammet, L. Mayhew, John Allen and George O. Tilton. For thirty years, Eben Norton of Vineyard Haven brought his horse and cart to the mill to haul the filled barrels to the vessels tied up at the company wharf for shipment to Maine, Boston and New York. Some was even exported to Europe from Boston, according to Francis Reed's account.

The records show that there was no standard weight for a barrel of paint. The average was probably around 300 pounds, but the weights ranged from 270 to 330. Half barrels, about 135 pounds, were listed as shipped occasionally.

In addition to being arduous, the work was potentially dangerous because of an occasional cave-in or pit-wall collapse. One such accident was in 1888 when a large chunk of clay fell on John L. Tilton, breaking his leg in two places.

Unlike the clay diggers, who were paid by the ton, the men who worked in the paint mill were paid by the hour. During the busiest periods, three full-time employees worked ten hours a day, usually six days a week, with as many as three part-time men working full days when needed. Normal pay was 17½ cents an hour, but during the depressed period around 1873, it dropped to 15 cents an hour. At times, the rate was increased to 30 cents for an undefined activity described simply as "burning." Given that relatively high pay, this must have been a particularly difficult or unpleasant task, whatever it was. It may have been related to producing burnt umber pigment.

In addition to Plant Manager Lindley Wing (in the 1870 Census he is listed as "Manufacturer"), those who worked full time in the mill from 1869 through 1875, included John O.

Weeks, James H. Mayhew, George T. Wicks, Albert O. Look and Nahum T. Norton. Among the part-timers were Matthew Stewart, Vinal Hammet, John Allen, Richard Norton, Moses T. Norton, Elihue Mosher and Eben Norton, the carter.

According to the "Products of Industry" schedule in the 1870 Census, the operation ran for the twelve months between June 1, 1869 and June 1, 1870, employing six men full-time, who were paid a total of \$3500 and produced 750 tons of "ochre," valued at \$13,500 (\$18 per ton).

In addition, the company reported it made 5000 wooden barrels, valued at \$2250, in which to ship the paint. The schedule listed the machinery used to make these products as a ten-horsepower steam engine, one press, one packer, two bolts and two mills. Each of the mills had two granite millstones, approximately four feet in diameter, ten inches thick and weighing about 1700 pounds each.

The principal colors of the ground clay were red and yellow. Smaller quantities of white clay, umber, burnt umber and iron oxide were also made. All the products were shipped from the company wharf a few hundred yards north of the mill. Although the surviving records of shipments may not be complete, they do show that from 1871 through 1875 about half of the paint went to independent customers while half went to the parent company in Boston. Most that was shipped to the parent company went on the schooner *Frolic*.

Not all the end uses of the pigments are known, but as mentioned above, the major market was in the manufacture of oilcloth floor covering. Such "carpets" were produced after the Revolutionary War by a cottage industry in New England. By the late 1800s, machines were developed to make production simpler and faster and companies began to make the floor coverings on a large scale.

Course fabrics such as flax or jute were stretched over a large vertical frame, treated with hot sizing or starch and when dry, both sides were rubbed with a flat pumice stone. When the surfaces were smooth, a coat of very thick paint made from ground clay (ochre) and oil was applied with a trowel and after drying was again rubbed smooth. Several such coats were ap-

plied until the desired thickness was achieved. Then a final coat was added, followed by decorations, if desired.

Some of the floor-covering manufacturers to which the Vineyard paint mill made direct shipments were: A. Sampson & Sons in Hallowell, Maine, who received more than 6300 barrels (about 850 tons) of red ochre from 1871 through 1873; A. Folsom & Sons in Boston; Page & Wilder (later Amos Wilder & Co.) in Augusta, Maine; and probably Marrett, Bailey & Co., in Portland, Maine.

Although the wharf ran far out into the Sound, there were many shoals in the area and mariners had to know the water. A news item in the *Vineyard Gazette* in October 1872 makes that obvious. A large shipment of red ochre bound for Maine aboard the schooner *New Globe* ran into trouble:

A vessel at the Paint Factory wharf, Chilmark, took on a cargo of 1000 barrels of paint last week. She grounded and remained in that condition through one full tide, but finally succeeded in getting afloat without sustaining much damage.

The story of the Chilmark Paint Mill becomes clouded after 1875, but it seems that the level of business declined significantly. By that time, the Vineyard was in the grip of the depression of the mid-1870s. Lindley Wing had moved back to Falmouth and although he may have retained some relationship with the mill, Nahum T. Norton had taken over from him, probably as a working foreman rather than as the plant manager.

There is no evidence of any great activity at the mill during the years 1876 and 1877. No hours worked were recorded between February 1875 and October 1878, and Norton alone is shown as having been paid, but only for a total of 243 hours between October 1878 and March 1879. In the last seven months of 1880, four men worked a total of only 471 hours. Nevertheless, there was still some activity as the *Gazette* happily reported in July 1878:

We are glad to learn that there is still some enterprise in manufacturing in Chilmark. They are employing several hands and manufacturing paint at the Company's Paint Mill Works, notwithstanding the depression of the times.

The accounting records at the time do not reflect a robust business. In 1876 and 1877 three shipments were shown, totaling 647 barrels (roughly 90 tons). Clay handled was 128 tons in 1875 and 165 tons in 1876 as compared with over 1000 tons in 1873. The *Vineyard Gazette* in June 1879 was pleased to report: "Several hundred barrels of paint have recently been shipped from the paint manufactory." Compared with the thousands of barrels shipped annually in earlier years, 1879 must have been a disappointment to the owners.

Unfavorable business conditions were not the only problems. In 1880, the "engine and water wheel" had been condemned. A new wooden trough that carried water from the raceway to the mill building had to be constructed and a new "wheel" was scheduled to replace the old one. The original "wheel" may have been a turbine rather than a traditional water wheel. In any event, the replacement was undoubtedly the turbine that remains as one of the few surviving pieces of rusting equipment still at the site.

Business, though not good, still must have justified making those repairs, judging from a few references to the mill published in the *Gazette*, including this report in May 1884:

Messrs. R. R. and F. H. Reed have contracted with the proprietors of the paint factory to dig and prepare for grinding, material for 300 bbl. paint (about 40 tons).

In November of that year the newspaper reported that the above work had been done, but it amounted to only a fraction of what the mill had been producing in its earlier years. The news item seems to indicate that more than half of the 150 tons of clay ("paint material") the two men dug was exported raw, not as ground paint:

Messrs. R. R. and F. H. Reed had dug and delivered to the paint factory during the season just closed about 150 tons of paint material, nearly half of which had been ground by Mr. N. T. Norton for the proprietors, Messrs. E. & F. King & Co.

In the 1880s, Nahum T. Norton operated the mill sporadically as orders for pigments were received by the parent company. Over the years he had acquired some land and was listed in the 1880 Census as a "Farmer" rather than as an em-

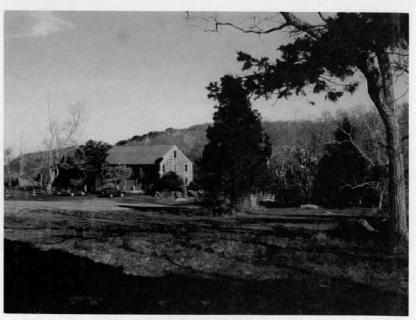


Entire paint mill about 1885 (see pages 18–19 for enlarged view). To-day, hill behind it is covered with trees and bushes, hiding the glacial rocks.

ployee in the Paint Mill. The final data in the business records record the delivery by Rodney R. Reed of about 68 tons of clay to the mill in August and September of 1887.

Other indications of the business decline were the taxes paid to the town of Chilmark and the assessment calculated from the published tax rate. In 1871, the company paid taxes of \$180.19 on a calculated assessment of about \$10,000. In 1891, the figures had dropped to \$24.73 and about \$2,500 respectively. In 1871, the Paint Mill had represented 3.4% of the total assessed valuation in town; by 1891, the figure had decreased to 1.2%.

Nason's Gazetteer of the State of Massachusetts, published in 1890 states, ". . . the principal business [in Chilmark] besides farming is whaling, fish-trapping and brick making." There is no reference to the Paint Mill, suggesting that the scale of the operation was not significant enough to mention. However, some work continued into 1890. In June of that year it was reported that a number of men were carting red clay from the pit



The Paint Mill is now a barn. The roof was raised years ago and one end of the building was removed, but otherwise the exterior has changed little.

near Ainsworth Tilton's to the Paint Mill for Nahum T. Norton. A small number of shipments of paint to Mr. King in Boston continued through 1893. One of the last no doubt was the one reported by the *Gazette* in April of that year:

Mr. Nahum T. Norton shipped a cargo of paint by Scr. [Schooner] Walker, Capt. Horton to Woods Holl last Friday

Although the Paint Mill was probably not operated after 1893, clay continued to be dug and exported. In all likelihood the wharf was still used for off-Island shipments by independent operators such as the Tilton brothers.

A few Vineyard clay companies were still operating in the 1890s, but when the Boston Globe in 1897 failed to mention paint or clay (except for making bricks) in an article about the future of Martha's Vineyard as a manufacturing center, it was obvious that paint was no longer important to the Chilmark economy.

As with so much of the story of the Chilmark Paint Mill, the reason for the decline of the business is a not clear. Cer-



Fannie (Silva) Jenkinson poses on the north shore of Chilmark with the remnants of Paint Mill wharf in the background. Photo taken about 1920.

tainly the depression in the 1870s was a significant factor. Perhaps, as had been the case with other Vineyard products, the cost of shipping off-Island was a reason The availability of wood to fuel the steam boiler, plus the cost of transporting it to the mill may also have contributed. Finally, the introduction of linoleum in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its quick acceptance by the public sounded the death knell for oilcloth floor coverings, the major end use of the Chilmark Paint Mill's product.

On November 23, 1897, Franklin King, the sole surviving partner of E. & F. King & Co., and executor of the estate of his former partner, sold the entire mill property, including land, buildings, machinery, and other assets to Everett Allen Davis, who later became the well-known Probate Judge Davis, for \$300. The sale, at what must have been considered a very low price given the investment made in the property over the years, may well have been brought about by King's ill health. He died in Boston nine months later.

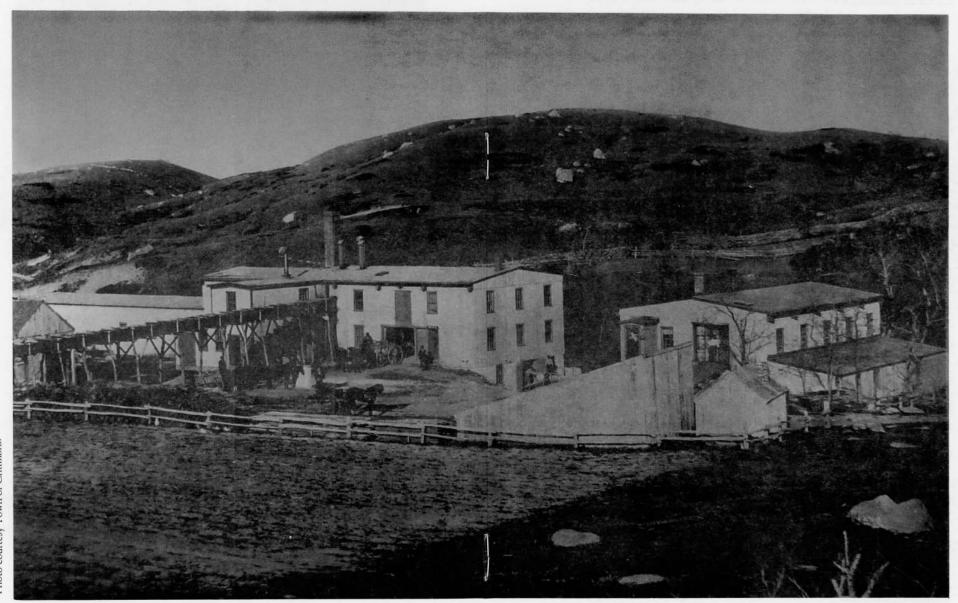
The sale marked the end of what Francis Reed called "one of the biggest industries Chilmark ever had." The new owner, lawyer Everett Allen Davis, probably had no interest in

operating the obsolete mill. Instead, he concentrated on expanding his land holdings in what had come to be known as the Paint Mill Brook area. In 1910, he sold the 228 acres he had accumulated, that later came to be called Holly Holm (or Hollyholm) to George Dexter Eustis, who maintained the area for more than twenty-five years as his personal estate.

The mill property is now owned by the Robert Ganz family. Mr. Ganz graciously provided pictures of the area, gave valued counsel and allowed the author to visit and photograph the site of one of the forgotten "manufactories" of the Island during the late 1800s.

The volumes of business records of the Chilmark Paint Mill were given to the Society by Mrs. Everett D. Whiting (deceased) of West Tisbury in 1948. We are grateful to her and her family.

# PAINT MILL AND ITS EMPLOYEES (PLUS A FEW MORE) POSE FOR A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE 1880S



Carefully posed photo in the 1880s shows 11 persons in doorways of the Paint Mill. A barrel of paint is being rolled onto a hand cart out the basement door. Two women stand in the small doorway of building at the right. Empty barrels are stacked inside.

Man in the buggy with the bay horse is thought to be Everett Allen Davis, who was an attorney. His involvement with the mill is unknown, but in 1897 he bought the property for \$300. He was Judge of Probate from 1915 until he died in 1929.

**Documents** 

# "Allie" Smith, Teenage Journal Writer, Gives Us a Fresh Look at Whaling

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

JAMES ALLEN SMITH (1849–1901), son of Capt. Francis Cottle Smith of Chilmark, may be the Vineyard's most experienced mariner, devoting 40 years of his life to the high seas. He made the transition from sail to steam in 1871 aboard the *Wzanoke*, the first of his 28 voyages on steamers, being the master on 16 of them. His last voyage was in 1884. When he died in 1901 at 52 years, he was still a mariner, being superintendent of Old Dominion Steamboat Line, a Virginia company, on whose vessels he had sailed for most of his career.

At 12 years of age, he began his career on the merchant sailing ship, Governor Morton, from June 1861 to September 1862. On June 25, 1864, after a year ashore, he returned to the sea on the William Thompson, a New Bedford whaler commanded by his father, Captain Smith. It was her last voyage. She was destroyed off Alaska by the Confederate raider, Shenandoah, on June 21, 1865, an experience the young Allie must never have forgotten. His journal entry, skimpy though it is, may be the only surviving account by a crew member aboard the victim.

Along with the entire crew of the William Thompson, the father and son were transferred to the reprieved whaler, Milo, and taken to San Francisco, where they boarded a steamship to return to the Vineyard. Less than six months later, on December 6, 1865, both father and son sailed out of New Bedford aboard the whaler Janus on a voyage into the Pacific Ocean. Allie, as he was called by his family, celebrated his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday during this voyage.

ARTHUR R. RAILTON is Editor of this journal. He thanks Ed Ambrose for the work he did in transcribing parts of the journals from which this article was fashioned. As mentioned in the text, thanks also go to the Kenneth Southworth family.

Many questions come to mind. How was he accepted by the crew? Certainly not as a seaman. He did not bunk in the forecastle, but seems to have been quartered in the captain's cabin with his father. Was he assigned an oar in a whaleboat? If so, it was probably on the captain's Starboard Boat. The Whalemen's Shipping List did not include him as a crew member on the Janus when she sailed, although he was on board.

The Society has two journals kept by the father and son on the voyages of the William Thompson and the Janus. They were given to us by the Kenneth Southworth family of Edgartown, descendants of Captain Smith. We are grateful for their generosity. The Janus journals do not go to the end of her voyage. The captain's stops June 14, 1868. The son's runs much longer, until Nov. 2, 1869. His is in very poor condition, mostly loose sheets, the binding having failed, so it may have continued until the voyage ended on December 6, 1869 and the final pages lost.

Some years after the voyage, Allie added to the journal a list of the many vessels he had served on. It tells us that he was discharged from *Janus* in Honolulu on December 6, 1869, and joined the whaler *Vineyard* on January 1, 1870, serving on her until he was discharged on November 11, 1870, returning home by rail across the continent.

On June 8, 1871 he sailed aboard the Casilda, a merchant vessel, and never went back to whaling. His father does not seem to have gone to sea after the Janus voyage ended in Honolulu. He became a major Vineyard real-estate promoter when he retired from the sea.

The quotations that follow are taken from Allie's journals of the two voyages. They have been assembled chronologically under various headings. He was 15 years old when they start.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

July 29, 1864. I have not been very attentive to my studies Since leaving home but shall try to do better for the future.

November 11. Father made a stamp of a whale's flukes. [When a whale is chased and not captured, a drawing of a whale's tail is placed in the log (if it is killed, a silhouette of an entire whale is shown). Allie had been free-handing the images and his father ob-

Begins with light airs and calm Sheep head ning Sp. by S. with a thick for and rain nothing in sight. We past light winds from S. of M. Stering bull and by safethe part the same same him then again about 12 oclory law another whale close to the Shife me through it was a hight whale hat we did not see at again Wednesday War Ith Lang 14.545 & Sight winds of the Shife craising this aphenoon Father made a stump of a habit fluter. We part Calm by the winds of a habit from N. Sty Sails in sight and sof them billion San the Islander than a supple and sof them billion San the Islander than a metal and father San the Islander than a habit with San the Islander than a metal and father San the Islander than a metal soft the San the Islander than a supple and father San the Islander than a supple to the San the Islander than San the Isl

Blurs, top, inspired Captain Smith to carve a stamp for Allie to use in his log, as he did soon after, at bottom. Stamp was lost when the ship was destroyed.

viously decided a better representation was needed. Stamps were carved in a small piece of wood.]

November 25. Spoke Gypsy and went aboard of her with my Kind and indulgent Father whare I spent a very pleasant afternoon, Capt. Robinson has a very fine large Dog that I wanted very much, but would not ask him for it as I thought he would not like to part with it. After spending the afternoon and taking 'T' [tea?], we returned to our very good old ship again. After getting onboard, I made a fire in the cabin – had a gam with the boys on deck and have now come to retire for the night. [This clearly indicates that he is not in the forecastle.]

My Dear Mother, Sister, and Brothers, how I long to see them, I hope and pray that they are in good health. God Bid them, and in due season, unite us all again at our happy home. November 30. Lost one of my stockings off my line today. December 2. At 4 PM, Father, Mr. Smith [First Mate] and

the rest of the officers and I Weighed. [I weighed] 103 lbs and Father weighed 197.

December 21. At 3 o'clock wore ship and Spoke the Benjamin Cummings, Briggs [Master]. I went on board and got a dog and a pair of needles and Mr. Smith [First Mate] took them and when he was coming up the steps he droped them overboard [Allie doesn't tell us if the dog was lost, but he never mentions it again].

January 12, 1865. I was very much grieved to hear of the Death of a Dear little brother, Saw his death in a New Bedford paper. Dear little babe, I shall not see his Dear sweet little face anymore in this world. But I pray God that I may so live that when I too am called to leave this world, I may meet his Angel Spirit with Dear sweet Sister Tena in Heaven, where parting and sorrow will be no more. [Tena had died in September 1859, before he went to sea. He never did see his baby brother.]

January 29. At 6 o'clock consigned the remains of [seaman] Duke Johnson to the deep. [He doesn't explain Johnson's death.]

February 2. Died, at 10 o'clock AM, [seaman] Thomas Chapman and soon consigned his remains to the deep.

March 17. Yesterday was my Father's birth day and I forgot to give him a <u>ducking</u>.

May 23. I have been shoe making.

June 18. Spoke ship Euphrates. Got some papers from him and we saw the death of Abraham Lincoln, &c.

Then came the eventful day when the William Thompson was captured and burned by the raider Shenandoah:

June 21. Father is not very well to day. . . raised [saw] a sail, thought it was a whaler boiling, [she] clewed up her sails and came down to us. It was the Rebel Pirate Shenandoah. Capt. Wadell sent two of his officers on board of us and ordered us on board of his vessel then broke out all the Provisions he wanted and then set fire to the Ship. At four o'clock the next day put us on board of the Ship Milo and sent us to San Francisco. Then took the Steamer and came home.

written after

The final sentences of that entry were obviously written after the father and son arrived on the Vineyard. The father's entry for that memorable day ends before the Shenandoah incident, so the only account in the journals is Allie's, succinct though it is.

The burning of the William Thompson along with many other whalers became the subject of great controversy as it took place many weeks after the Civil War ended early in May. Capt. James I. Waddell, master of the Shenandoah far north in the Pacific near the Aleutian Islands, had no way of knowing the war was over. His first suspicion came when his officers brought back months-old newspapers from the William Thompson, before sinking her, that told of General Lee's surrender to Grant. He, a stalwart Confederate, refused to believe it. Capt. Jonathan C. Hawes of the whaler Milo, another of the whalers that Waddell was threatening to destroy, is quoted by Lynn Schooler in his book "The Last Shot," as telling Waddell: "Good God, man! Don't you know the war is over?" The Confederate Captain refused to accept the statement and demanded proof, but Hawes had none, only that he had heard it from other captains. Waddell, after destroying thirtyeight Union vessels, realized that he was likely to be hanged as a pirate if he returned to the United States so he sailed the Shenandoah to England where he lived as a refugee until the nation's demands for retribution abated.

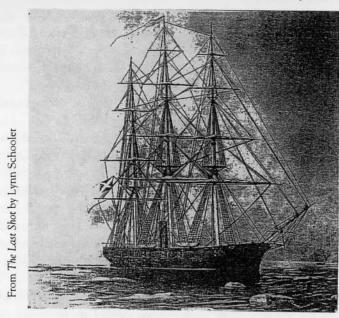
Soon after Allie and his father got back on the Vineyard, they signed on the Janus of New Bedford for another whaling voyage in the Pacific, leaving December 6, 1865. The Smith family was by this time living in Edgartown, having moved from Chilmark some time before 1850.

The following excerpts are taken from Allie's journal aboard the Janus after leaving New Bedford in December 1865:

February 25, 1866. Today I am 17 years of age and I am 220 miles W of Cape Horn, bearing NE by E. I opened one of my cakes and treated all of the Officers, Cooper & Steward with cake & wine and they drank and eat my health.

[The Fourth Mate wrote a poem in his honor and Allie copied it into the journal.]

To James A. Smith on his birthday, the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1866 on board Ship *Janus*, By George G. Faville, 4<sup>th</sup> Officer:



Painting of the raider Shenandoah in Arctic in June 1865, about when she sank William Thompson (see text, p. 23).

The 24th of February hath come to thee, Far out upon the deep blue sea In years gone by you have been at home With friends around when Birthdays come. Friends you have here, though not long tried But still I think he will abide Till two or three years pass away, If we are blessed with health each day, Then take this note and read these lines, If you doth feel so inclined, And think one friend I have with me Far out upon the deep blue sea.

A month later, Allie's entry sounds a bit homesick as the Janus sails north toward the cold waters of the Arctic:

May 26. "Home sweet Home." I love my home as well as ever.

June 11. [As Janus was sailing past.] On Americata [?] Island there is a large volcano, which sends up Volcanus and smoke in perfect clouds

September 24. Put the stove in the forecastle.

December 27. Heard of the death of Joseph Thaxter Esq., of Edgartown. He died in Honolulu. [Joseph Thaxter was a mariner, born in Chilmark, married to Jane W. Norton. We don't know of any relationship to the late Rev. Joseph Thaxter.]

February 16, 1867. Two boats went ashore. . . brought off late California newspapers. Latest date, January 5<sup>th</sup>.

February 23. Capt. Scoffy [ship not mentioned] sailed for Magellan then to San Francisco. He took letters from us to San Francisco, to forward to home.

February 25. A short nasty sea sprung up very suddenly. Got the whale to the Ship and cut it in to the Small [the "small" is the narrow section just in front of the tail], hove that out of the water, clear of the Sharks. Too rugged to take the fat from the inside of the whale. . . In the morning finished Cutting. 12 Bbls gut fat.

May 9. I can say that I have finished reading the [New] Testament for the first time.

October 11. Put a sick Kanaka [native seaman picked up on one of the islands] aboard the Cornelius Howland to take him to the Island [of Hawaii – they were leaving the Arctic].

November 6. [Off San Francisco] Spoke a Pilot Boat.... tried to charter her [to take] us into San Francisco but could not make a bargain. We then lowered a boat and pulled to a Merchant Ship. It was the *Cutwater* of Boston. We asked the Captain to give a passage in and he said he would. So we went on board and at 12 o'clock PM we anchored in the Harbor. We stayed on board of `her all night and in the morning took a boat and went on Shore.

November 10. Arrived on board [the Janus] at 9:50 AM from the Shore with supplies. Shipped the bone ashore by the Coon that brought us off.

November 11. My Uncle Rufus came off [the shore] to see his eldest son who he had not seen for five years. [His father's brother, Rufus, had a son, Rufus Jr., a seaman on Janus.]

[They sailed south from San Francisco, heading for the whaling grounds off Mexico. From December 1866 through February 1867, they killed 23 whales in three months, a remarkable catch.

Allie filled the pages with huge stampings and drawings of whales, giving the barrels of oil produced, plus numbering them 1 through 23. He clearly was overwhelmed by so much success, his first such experience (see the following two pages).

December 17. Boats off, struck one whale and iron drew [sketch shows iron pulling out of whale's tail]. At 5 o'clock came back and found Kanaka Moses [seaman] dead. Took him ashore and buried him.

December 27. At 12:30 p.m. Mr. George G. Faville [4<sup>th</sup> Mate] was killed by a whale while in the act of darting the second iron in him. At 5 p.m. took his remains ashore and interred them beside the native [Kanaka Moses] who died the 17<sup>th</sup>. Capt. and Mrs. Smith of the Seine came on board to attend the funeral. When we lost Mr. Faville we lost all.

Allie then copied the poem Faville had written for him on his 17th birthday. Two other deaths occurred that year. His comments:

June 6, 1868. John Savage died. Had 5 boatloads of Tartars [natives] on board. [John Savage was probably a Kanaka, a native of one of the Pacific islands. The boatloads of visiting natives do not seem related to his death, a coincidence only.]

June 7, 1868. Committed John Savage's remains to the Ocean.

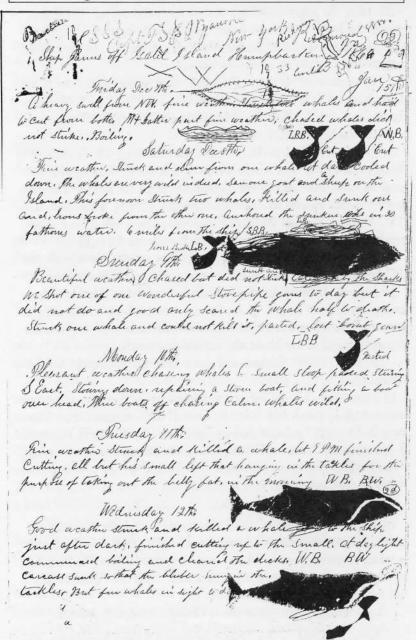
September 15. Lying at anchor in Janet Bay. At 20 minutes past 6 O'clock Mr. John P. Carroll died. Cause Heart Disease & Dropsy. He belonged in Troy New York. Aged 38 years 9 months and 3 days. [Carroll was not in the crew when they left New Bedford. He must have signed on later. The "Mr." would indicate he was a boatsteerer or an officer.

### FOOD

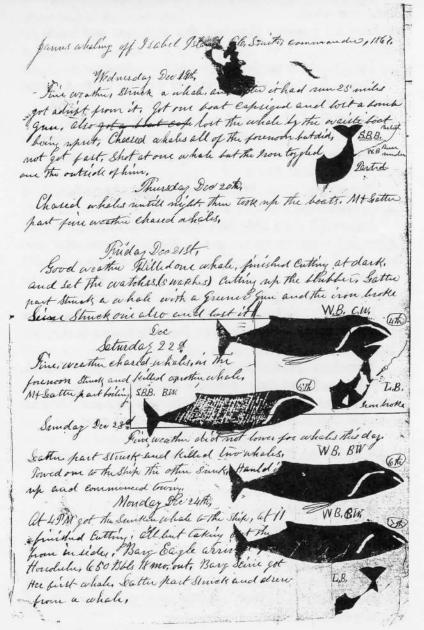
Conventional wisdom tells us that men on whalers did not eat well, living mostly on dried meat and bread. But Allie's journal provides a different view. These whalemen seem to have had a good supply of fresh food. Remember, of course, that the "good supply" had to feed more than 30 men.

The first excerpts are from the William Thompson journal:

July 17, 1864. The Stuart [steward] killed four hens to-day.



Janus struck it rich off coast of Mexico, killing 23 whales in three months. Allie's journal is filled with stampings and sketches, some good, some less so.



Tails indicate whales that got away. The initials identify the boats that made the catch. Allie was so excited he got the year wrong at top of page. It was 1866.

July 24. S. [Steward] killed a Turkey and a Rooster for dinner tomorrow.

July 25. I caught a Skip Jack this afternoon and had it for supper.

July 28. The house leaks again and wet the onions.

August 8. I have got a lamp over the side trying to catch some flying fish.

August 10. Did not catch any flying fish last night.

December 23. This afternoon I opened my strawberries and they were first rate. [The berries must be months old. How were they preserved? As a jam?]

January 18, 1865. Went on shore [on Mocha Island off Chile.] a-gunning, killed 34 ducks.

January 19. At 3 PM, the Gypsy arrived, Capt. Robinson, Father & I went a-gunning, got 5. Went on shore after quahogs got 1/2 a bucket full & Killed 5 ducks & a Curlew.

January 20. At 1/2 past 3, Capt. Robinson, Father & Mr. Pease went a-gunning & got 25 geese & 3 sea otters.

January 21. Father, Capt. Robinson and Mr. Pease went after otters. Capt. Rob got one and Father got none & they got 31 geese.

February 4. At 7 o'clock went on shore bought a bullock and killed it & got some potatoes and sent them on board. Then we went up to the Governor's house to dinner. Then he let me take his horse and I had a good ride.

April 30. Sow had 11 pigs.

May 17. At 2 o'clock let all the little pigs out and let them get the air.

May 18. Sow had 18 pigs.

May 20. Killed a pig.

Next month, June 1865, the William Thompason was destroyed by the Shenandoah. The father and son returned to the Vineyard and soon after shipped out on the Janus from New Bedford. They sailed to Honolulu, arriving there May 9, 1866, killing two sperm whales on the way. After taking on provisions in Honolulu, they left May 20 to go Arctic whaling.

The following excerpts are from Allie's journal on Janus. Immediately after Janus left Hawaii, she encountered rough seas:

May 22, 1866. Obliged to kill one bullock as it could not stand [due to the rough seas].

May 23. Another bullock down, obliged to kill. We brought out from Honolulu 4 Bullocks, 12 sheep and 6 pigs. . . employed in painting Boats and picking over potatoes and curing Beef.

June 1. Killed a sheep.

June 2. Supplied the crew with slops. Killed a bullock.

June 17. Killed a hog & made some candy.

June 18. Killed 4 sheep.

June 19. Killed a Bullock.

June 26. Opened one of my cakes. Just as fresh as ever. [The cake was apparently a birthday cake, brought from home and not eaten at his party on February 24. How was it kept fresh?]

September 13. Ship working in ice. Killed a polar bear. [They have been sailing north for four months and are now in the north Pacific.]

December 1. Sent in a boat for hay. Also Capt. went ashore and bought cow calf and small bullock.

February 1, 1867. Sent two boats into Tecapa [?] Lagoon. There is a small village on the beach the inhabitance of which seems to be very poor. The people report that there is a large inland sea and in February & and March the Devilfish go in there in great numbers to calf. They report also that the whales have not been troubled as there was never a whale ship here before. The Lagoon abounds with oysters.

February 8. Brought off a bullock, paid \$16.

May 25. In Japan Sea Whaling. . . Landed at White Rock and got two buckets full of nice eggs.

May 31. Killed six sheep. . . killed two rats.

June 7. Two boats went into White Rock and bought 1000 eggs.

September 1. Put the lines over the side and commenced catching Codfish which are very good on this Coast. Spoke Wm Rotch [another New Bedford whaler]. Got some beans & Rice out of her.

October 9. Killed a hog.

November 12. Employed stowing away Vegetables.

November 21. [Anchored in Margarita Bay. They spent a week there getting supplies of wood and capturing turtles.] Captain went ashore and bought a cow and some bullocks. Sent three boats ashore for wood, turtles and game.

November 24. [Off Cape St. Lucas, the southern tip of Baja California] Captain started for the shore at 10:30 AM, at noon arrived there.

November 25. At 6 PM arrived on board with one bullock, 1000 oranges, 1200 Limes & two cheeses.

[These two entries seem to indicate that Allie had gone ashore with his father, Captain Smith, although he doesn't say he did.]

November 29. Brought off 800 oranges. Gave 400 to the foremast hands, 200 to the boatsteerers, also the Officers were well supplied. [There were 22 foremast hands to share 400 oranges, four boatsteerers to share 200 oranges. The 200 oranges that remained make it clear that "the [five] officers were well supplied." Is this a clue as to how food was usually rationed out?]

December 1. Sent in a boat for hay [for the animals]. Also Capt. went ashore and bought a cow, calf and small bullock.

May 8, 1868. Killed two hogs.

May 14. Killed one Sheep.

May 15. Killed two Sheep.

November 20. Killed one sheep.

November 21. Cook killed a hog.

November 24. Cook killed a pig.

November 25. Took two casks of potatoes out of the fore hold, culled them over then put them into bags.

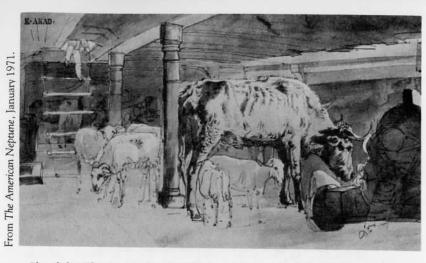
December 1. Killed two sheep.

December 5. Carpenter building a hen Coop.

[This entry brings a question to mind: With all the animals on board, as many as 41 pigs on one time, not to mention hens, a cow and several bullocks, where did they live on the crowded whaleship? Were they all kept 'tween decks? What about the mess, the odor?

December 6. Killed a pig, roaster.

December 7. Raised McAskill [?] Island. Capt. went on shore, got Coconuts, Ducks, Chickens, turtle and a Hog. [Lat. 6 N, Long. 161 E, vicinity of Marshall Islands in mid-Pacific.]



Sketch by Thomas Ender, 1817, shows farm animals kept below decks on a whaler to provide fresh meat, creating an overwhelming mess and odor.

December 16. Run down close to the village. Lowered a boat, went on shore & got 8 pigs, 3 ducks and some coconuts. 41 hogs in all.

December 24. Killed a pig.

December 27. Killed one hog.

March 12, 1869. Cook killed a pig.

May 25. [Heading atop page now reads:] "In Japan Sea Whaling." . . . Landed at White Rock and got two buckets full of nice eggs. Wm. Rotch in sight.

June 7. Two boats went into White Rock and bought 1000 eggs. [It is amazing that so many eggs were available.]

September 1. Put the lines over the side and commenced catching Codfish which are very [plentiful?] on this Coast. Spoke Wm. Rotch, got some beans & Rice out of her.

October 28. Bent a new Mainsail. and broke out Bread.

Allie's journal aboard the Janus ends soon after this entry. He was discharged from her December 6, 1869, although the vessel continued to whale in the Pacific for some years. His father is listed in other whaling records as having died on the Janus during this voyage, but he did not. He returned to the Vineyard and lived for many years. Allie joined the Edgartown whaleship Vineyard after being discharged from the Janus, but served on her for less than a

year, being discharged in mid-voyage once again in Honolulu on November 11, 1870, returning to the Vineyard from San Francisco by rail.

# WHALING GUNS

The use of whaling guns, harpoons with bombs and other ballistic devices to kill whales was being introduced in the middle of the 1800s. As is usual with most innovations, the new devices were not quickly accepted. Whaling historian Elmo Paul Hohman, in The American Whaleman, wrote:

The average harpooner, justly proud of his own hand and eye, had little patience with such newfangled ideas as shooting harpoons from a gun, exploding bombs containing everything from gunpowder to prussic acid within a whale's vitals, or paralyzing a victim with an electric shock.

But with the switch to Arctic whaling, attitudes about whaling guns began to change. The first guns were primitive and difficult to use. And, of course, there was a learning curve before harpooners became proficient. Allie mentions two types of guns that were aboard the Janus: the stovepipe gun and the Greener. The stovepipe was an early form of today's bazooka; the Greener was a gun from England, that was mounted on a swivel in the bow of the whaleboat. Both presented problems.

During his first whaling voyage, on the William Thompson, Allie, then 15, made only one journal entry about guns It does not describe the type of gun nor does it mention any use of guns to kill whales. Perhaps they were never used:

October 21, 1864. At one o'clock saw a School of Black fish lowered but did not get any. . . Mr Smith got the Bomb Lances and guns out today and fixed them.

After the William Thompson was destroyed by the Shenandoah and Allie sailed on the Janus, he mentioned guns a number of times, but did not seem impressed with them:

December 9, 1866. Shot one of our wonderful Stovepipe guns today, but it did not do any good, only scared the whale half to death. Struck one whale but could not kill it. [The line] Parted. Lost bomb gun.

December 14. Shot one whale and the iron broke.

December 17. Struck and drew from a whale. Also shot at

one. Chased whales, shot at two, but did not fasten.

December 19. Struck a whale. Got one. Boat capsized and lost a bomb gun. Lost the whale. . . shot at one whale but the iron toggled at the outside of him.

December 21. Struck a whale with the Greener gun but the iron broke.

January 4, 1867. Shot a whale and the link broke.

January 7. Shot at a whale and the iron toggled on the outside.

January 8. Shot and killed a whale instantly.

January 11. Starboard boat got up to one and the gun misfired.

In March, after seeming unimpressed with the new ballistic device, he wrote this confusing item which seems to praise it:

March 2. Struck a large whale and had to cut from it, it was so bad [?]. This is the 43rd whale we have struck this season and we have been alongside of 4 others that we did not fasten to. We saved 23, making 900 Bbls. of oil. We used 2 Greener guns and if we had 2 more we would have done better. About all the whales we lost was on account of the irons, shackles and lines parting. All that we cut from were struck with hand irons with the exception of this one.

June 23. Saw four Right Whales. Struck one. Iron drew. Shot at a cow & a Calf but did not fasten.

September 2. Saw Right Whales, lowered, shot at two and missed them. Then about 5 o'clock got up to one other one and hove an Iron into it clear to the strap, took out 25 fathoms line and then it come out.

# LIQUOR

The day of sailing from a port often means drunkenness on board, especially when leaving for a long whaling voyage. That was true when the William Thompson left New Bedford for the North Pacific. Allie doesn't mention the occurrence, but his father did:

June 26, 1864. At 1 PM the Capt. Came on board. At 9:30 discharged the Pilot off Sow & Pigs light ship. Third and Fourth Mates Drunk. Also the Cook & Steward.

July 9. Today have discovered that the Steward was

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Drunk. Overhauled his chest but could not find any liquer, found some in the possession of the fourth mate – took charge of it – about two bottles full.

As mentioned, Allie does not say anything about the officers and the other two men being drunk, although surely he knew about it. These were his first days as a journal keeper. He was on his father's ship and perhaps he felt it was none of his business.

That was the start of the voyage of the ill-fated William Thompson. The Janus log also has two entries about liquor. This time, a more confident Allie recorded them:

December 12, 1867. This fore noon the Capt. had one quart of liquor taken out of his room. Found the cook intoxicated and very saucy. After being insulted repeatedly by him, he put him in the run. Two hours after let him out. When he began insulting him again put him back again into the run. At 10 PM he promised to behave himself. Let him go to his duty.

The "run" is a small hold used for storage and brief detention, as here. The second mention of liquor did not involve drunkenness; quite the opposite. This from Allie's journal:

July 6, 1866. Heard of the death of Capt. Fish of Bark Nile. He died on July 4. His remains are going to be put up in Liquor.

The dead captain was Asa W. Fish, master of the whaleship Nile from New London, Connecticut. He died of heart failure. The Nile holds the record for the longest whaling voyage: 12 years from 1858 to 1870, during which three of her masters died at sea. How many others were pickled in rum, we don't know.

July 9. [Three days later] Supplied Capt. Fish of the Bark Nile (brother of the deceased) with 10 gallons of rum for his diseased brother's body, which they have put up in liquor.

Allie does not describe the reaction of the seamen as they watched all that rum being "given" to a dead man. He also doesn't tell us how the captain's body was handled. Was it stuffed in a tightly sealed cask and stored below decks with the whale oil? It would be many months before the Nile got back to New London.

Only high-ranking officers were shown such respect in death. Others went overboard or into an unmarked grave on an island.

# IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

About ten years ago, perhaps more, Arthur Young of Edgartown, who had just bought himself a personal computer, was wondering what use he could put it to. He asked the Editor if he had any suggestions.

The Editor, in a grand moment of inspiration, said that it would be wonderful to have a computer listing of every proper name published in *The Intelligencer*. It was, in the Editor's mind, a dream, an impossible dream.

Arthur didn't see it that way. He bundled up a stack of old journals and went to work. A couple of years later, he stopped by with a print-out of the names in about a quarter of the issues and asked if that was what the Editor wanted. It was, so he went back to work.

Sadly, he had a stroke soon after, limiting his use of one hand and the task slowed down. He continued to have physical problems and when he died in 2003 the Editor assumed the dream had vanished.

What he didn't know was that widow Nancy had taken up Arturo's project (she often called him that). Early this year, 2005, she handed the Editor a CD with more than 29,000 entries, alphabetized.

The "Impossible Dream" had come true.

Nancy has had the list printed out and it is available (along with the computer listing) at the Gale Huntington Library of the Society. Any of you who would like to know whether a certain person (or vessel) was ever mentioned in this journal can now quickly find the answer, including the issue and the page. Come try it out.

We all owe Nancy a debt for her dedication, hard work and computer skills (plus another debt to Arturo for getting the project started).

Thanks, Nancy (and Arturo).

# YOUNG "ARTIST" STRUGGLES WITH HIS SKETCHES

good weather. San Bonkods, bowered Stuck + Killed one, let Is part



In 1867, Allie used a stamp to record whales killed (above), but he seems to have lost the stamp because by the end of the voyage, he was struggling with his pen to record (below) a busy week of kills and misses (tails) in June 1869.

