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MY FIRST WHALING VOYAGE

By JARED JERNEGAN

SOME EDGARTOWN INTERIORS

By RICHARD L. SCHUTE

TWO SONGS OF SHIPWRECK

From the Society's Archives

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The Intelligencer will be mailed free to all members of the Society. Non-members may purchase it for fifty cents a copy.

This Society is supported entirely by membership dues, gifts, and bequests.

Your gift or bequests will be deeply appreciated and should be made to the "Dukes County Historical Society, Inc." All such contributions are deductible under Federal Income Tax Law.

SOCIETY NEWS

The Society now has a membership of well over seven hundred. Thus in one year we have almost doubled in size. The credit for this accomplishment goes to Mrs. Guy W. Stantial and her membership committee. And may we continue to grow, for a society is its members.

The work of repairing and renovating the lighthouse tower has finally been completed with the installation of curtains protecting the Fresnel lens. And they do dress the tower up.

There is a new floor in the northeast room of the Cooke House. The old joists, laid directly on the ground had completely disintegrated necessitating a major operation. Fortunately it was possible to save most of the wide boards.

Other changes will be in evidence when the 1964 season opens including more shelves in the museum building. There the society has a very valuable library, and it is always available for research and study.

A permanent life membership fund has been established in the Dukes County Savings Bank. And we hope that this fund will grow as the Society grows. A life membership in the Society is something to think about. It could be a smart investment.

Lastly, the Intelligencer has a new editor, or rather, it has its old editor back again. Miss Scoville asked to be relieved of this duty in order to be able to devote full time to her work as curator.

G. H.

MY FIRST WHALING VOYAGE

By JARED JERNEGAN

My son, Marcus Wilson Jernegan¹ wants me to write, or give him an idea of my sea life, which I will try to do with much pleasure.

I will commence at the time I sailed on my first voyage which was on the 3rd day of January, 1839. I was then thirteen years and six months old, was five feet high and weighed ninety-two pounds. I sailed from Edgartown on the ship Alexander Barclay of Bremerhaven, Holland.² My uncle was captain of this ship.³

I was very anxious to get to sea. I do not believe there was ever a happier boy than I was that morning I went on board of that ship. But I must say here that before the day ended I had altered my mind. For when we had sailed up the Vineyard Sound and headed the ship out by Gay Head and met a heavy swell it took the wish from me.

The first night out I was very seasick and dreamed my father and mother was swimming after the ship to take me home. If you could have seen me that night one thinks you would have said you are a hard-looking subject to go to sea.

After a voyage of about one month we touched at one of the Cape da Verde Islands, Brava. The captain let me go on shore with him. I had a fine time while the Capt. was trading for recruits.⁴ I was on shore all day. We all went on board at night having a fine recruit from this Island.

We took our departure for the equator and nothing of importance happened until we arrived at the island of Tristan de Cunha.⁵ in Lat. 36° south. Here our captain went on shore but soon returned to the ship minus of recruits. The day following we spoke with Capt. Luce of the bark Statira of New Bedford bound direct home.⁶ I had not got over my seasickness. But I was some better. Our captain told me I could go home with Capt Luce who belonged in Vineyard Haven.⁷ But I declined because I thought the boys at home would laugh at me.

Soon after this I got over my seasickness. Then I was alright and felt very anxious to see some whales. My work was to assist the steward about the cabin work which I must confess I very much

disliked, and I must say I did not try to please those in the cabin. I wanted to be among the sailors so I could learn all about ship work. Because the Captain told me before leaving home he would promote me from cabin boy to one of the foremast hands, i.e. if I was smart. I kept this in mind.

One day I was going down the cabin stairs with a coffee pot full of hot coffee. The steward told me to hurry up. This I did not like, and I suppose I did not mind him. He came toward me with a carving knife and said he would hurry me along. He did not frighten me much. I just turned the coffee pot upside down right over his head. I rather guess I gave him a good scalding and he gave me plenty of room after this.

Now I expected the captain would give me a licking, but he said to me, you young scamp bundle up your clothing and go forward among the sailors. The joke of it was he knew this was just what I wanted. Well I rather guess I was not long in getting my traps together and forward I went. Now I felt all right. I made up my mind I would learn enough so I could go boatsteerer another voyage.

The first officer took me as one of his boat crew. This was just to my liking. I was at this time most fourteen years of age and growing fast. Well I rather guess I did not let anyone get ahead of me when an officer called out this way one of you fellows.

From Tristan Island we took our departure for Cape of Good Hope and had a good run all down through the Indian Ocean. We stopped at St. Paul Island. Sent the boats fishing and captain went on shore. I went with him and here we saw a spring of boiling water.⁸ We boiled a fish in this stream of water. There is a fine schooner harbour in this Island, can carry about ten feet of water. At night we returned to our ship. We caught a large lot of nice fish, and salted about twenty barrels and had a lot fresh.

From here we took our departure for New Zealand. I well remember the day we came to this land. It was a stormy day and the vessel was running under small sail. The captain seemed to be very anxious that we were headed right to run between Steward's Island

and New Zealand. We soon entered Cook Straights and run the vessel down to an anchorage in Steward's Island. This is a fine harbour.

Lots of natives came on board our vessel. We stayed here a few days and from thence took our departure for a harbour in the Island of New Zealand where we arrived the next day. Here we anchored and moored the ship as was to remain in this harbour three months to be engaged in what is called along shore whaling. That is every morning that the weather was good our boats —five in number — left our vessel just before daylight so to be up the coast ten or twelve miles by the time it was good daylight. For there were two whaling companies that whaled from the land. These are called shore whalemen.

The best time to find whales is early in the morning. These whales have small calves with them. If you can strike one of the small whales you are sure to capture its mother, for they will never abandon their young. When we secured a whale we would sometimes be obliged to tow them twenty miles to get them to the ship. While we were in this harbour I did not get to go in the boat as I was not yet strong enough to row — pull — such a long distance.

I shall never forget how surprised I was when I saw the first whale. The boats were towing the whale to the ship and I kept looking and expecting to see the whale some twenty feet above the water. But to my surprise it was not over three feet above the water line. Well, I said to myself, I rather guess I shall never be afraid to go alongside of a whale. And in later life I do believe anyone who went in a boat with me never had it to say I was afraid of a whale.

I did not fancy being one of the ship keepers⁹ as we had the whales to cut in. In fact we had about all of the cutting of whales, boiling them out and stowing the oil below deck. When the gales of wind came, most of the ship's company would go into the woods and chop wood and get it ready for the ship keepers to boat to the ship. It was but a short distance to the shore and right abreast of our ship there was a rum shop where one could get all the strong drink they wanted. This caused much trouble to our captain.

We remained in this harbour until the 13th day of August 1840. This being my birthday, fourteen years old. We secured three hun-

dred barrells of oil and about two thousand pounds of whalebone. This being a small ketch for so long a time.

From here we took our departure for what is called the New Zealand off shore right whaling ground. The second day after leaving port land still in sight some twenty miles, we captured three small sperm whales. I now laugh to myself when I remember how frightened the captain appeared to be while we were cutting in these whales for fear the ship would drift to the land, when I now know the ship was not in the least danger of drifting to the land.

It was some time before we found right whales but when we did we were among them for most of the season. These whales were working to the south and east slowly. In five months we took three sperm whales and ninety right whales and thirty-six more that sunk. I went in the first mate's boat. We took thirty-six whales to our boat and sunk twelve more. We also took forty-four thousand pounds of whalebone. That is all told.

About the first of March we had all our oil casks full and we took our departure for a New Zealand port which is now called Port Russel over in the Bay of Islands where we arrived sometime in April. Here we remained about one month and took on board a large recruit. Thence we took our departure for our home port Bremerhaven in Holland.

Our ship was loaded very deep and the weather was very heavy all the way to Cape Horn. When in the longitude of the Horn we came to large mountains of ice, and after getting past them we came to much field ice. We ought not to have gone so far to the south. It is much better for a ship to pass close in with the land say within ten miles. We ran along this ice field for several hours and was obliged to steer to the north. By doing this we soon passed to the east of the ice and continued our course to the northeast and soon got to the eastward of Staten Island. From there we shaped our course to the equator and had a good and pleasant run.

Nothing of importance happened until we was passing the Azores or Western Islands. Here we saw many small vessels and very rough sea and foul weather with much thunder and lightning. From there we worked our way up to the English Channel. Shortly

after entering the Channel we took a pilot from a pilot boat. This boat was an open vessel i.e. no deck.

We passed up the channel passed the city of Dover early in the morning. We were near enough to see people crossing the streets. Then we entered and crossed the North Sea, and we were now on shoal sounding and water of a yellow cast. This is a very rough sea for a vessel when the winds are high.

After getting across this sea we worked our ship up the River Weaser until we arrived near the harbour at Bremerhaven. Here we anchored our ship and our voyage was now ended.

This harbour is what is called a made harbour, that is it is dug out and walled up. At the entrance there is heavy wooden gates opened by capstans placed on each side of the entrance. When the tide is full ships are towed in and out and before the tide falls the gates are closed. Outside this harbour there is not over ten feet of water at low tide. This harbour would hold five hundred sail of vessels.

The next day after our arrival our ship's company took a river steamer and sailed up to Bremen city which is about thirty-five miles. Here we found Mr. Haniskan who was agent for our ship. We all called on him for a settlement of the voyage. I had shipped for the 225th lay of the net proceeds of the ship's cargo. When I came to settle, our first officer Mr. Fish said to the agent this boy has done a man's duty and should have a handsome present. Well, so the agent gave me the 190th lay and my voyage amounted to four hundred dollars. I was then sixteen years and two months old and five feet and seven high. So in the voyage I had grown seven inches and had gained in weight forty-three pounds.

Our captain took care of me. He took two hundred dollars of my money and carried it home to my father. The other money I spent for clothing and in fitting out for another voyage after my uncle left for home via Hamburg. I made up my mind I would like to make another voyage whaling before going home.

Our second mate was going chief mate on the next voyage and he wanted me as boatsteerer. He said if I would go he would give me

all the spending money I needed until our ship was ready. I told him I would go with him. So I went to the captain who had been our first mate and told him I wanted to go in the ship again and that Mr. Austin wanted me as his boatsteerer. The captain said he would be pleased to have me go but that he had promised my uncle Mr. Norton that he would see to it that I took passage for home.

I said to him if you do not sign me I will sign on one of the other vessels, and also I have spent all the money my uncle left with me. He said I will look out that your passage home is paid. So I found I was obliged to return home.

Now I thought I would look around for some present to carry home to my mother. Mr. Austin gave me some money so I took enough to purchase a nice set of china which I thought would please her. When I arrived home I told my mother I had a little present for her so I took the cover from the box it was in. When she saw the china oh you ought to see the kind look she gave me. That look paid well for the present. Then I gave my father eighty dollars from the two hundred my uncle took home for me.

I had been in Bremerhaven about six weeks. Then I took passage on the bark Jean George as passenger for New York. We had a long passage and arrived in New York on the twenty-fifth of December 1841. So from New York I took passage in a small sloop down to New Bedford where I arrived Sunday evening. The next day I took passage home on the sloop Hero of Edgartown.¹⁰ I will here mention that I remained at home until May 1842 and enjoyed myself well.

After that first whaling voyage Jared Jernegan went up the ladder of command very quickly. He did do boatsteerer his next voyage on the ship Milton of New Bedford. His third voyage when he was nineteen he was second mate of the ship Chandler Price, John Pease master. When he was twenty-two he sailed first officer on the whaleship Erie of Fairhaven, Ichabod Norton, master. And he was not yet twenty-five when he sailed as master of the ship William Thompson.

Captain Jernegan came into the news again in the January 10, 1964 issue of the Gazette when his fine old house on School street in Edgartown was sold to the Leo P. Converys.

¹Marcus Wilson Jernegan for whom Captain Jernegan wrote this story of his life was his youngest son, and became quite a noted historian, particularly of the colonial period. He taught variously at the Universities of Washington, Chicago and Harvard. So far as the editor knows he never made any use of the story of his father's life. Perhaps he was disheartened by the Captain's spelling and syntax which the editor here somewhat corrected.

²Bremerhaven, of course, is not in Holland but is the port of Bremen at the mouth of the River Weser. But in 1840 there was no German nation and Bremen was a free city, so Holland will do. In the heyday of whaling American whalers were so much more successful at their craft than the whalers of any other nation, that not only German, but Dutch, French and English owners of whaleships considered themselves fortunate if they could procure American crews.

³Captain Clement Norton.

⁴Brava is one of the smaller of the Cape Verde Islands but so many recruits from Brava served on American whaleships that for many years the local name for all Cape Verders hereabouts was "Bravas."

Through all the years of whaling it was common practice for a whaleship to sail short-handed, with the sure knowledge that a crew could be pieced out either in the Western Islands or the Cape Verdes. Indeed it was almost entirely as whalers that the Portuguese first came to the United States.

⁵Tristan da Cunha, that little speck of land in the South Atlantic, has lately been in the news. As the result of a volcanic eruption the island became unlivable and the entire population was evacuated to London. But the good people of Tristan da Cunha, mostly descended from American whalers, and women from many parts of the world, found modern London unlivable, too, from their point of view that is, and they have since all returned to their bleak island.

⁶Captain Jernegan's memory played him false here, for a Captain Coon, and not a Captain Luce was the master of the Statira on that voyage. And it was not until after 1849 that she returned home to New Bedford. So it must have been some other vessel.

⁷Note also that Captain Jernegan uses the name Vineyard Haven for Holmes' Hole. But he was writing his story long after the name had been changed. He wrote this account of his life in 1891 when he was sixty-six years old.

⁸St. Paul is another volcanic island even smaller than Tristan da Cunha. In 1839 it was uninhabited. It lies in the Indian Ocean about midway between Africa and Australia.

⁹The ship keepers would have been the steward, cook, cooper, carpenter, sailmaker, and Jared Jernegan.

¹⁰The sloop Hero ran as a packet between New Bedford and Edgartown in competition with the early steamers. She carried both freight and passengers.

SOME EDGARTOWN INTERIORS

By RICHARD L. SCHUTE

Mr. Schute lived in Edgartown most of his active life where he was both a photographer and an insurance agent. He is said to have been the youngest volunteer from Edgartown in the Civil War. He served as a drummer boy.

These photographs of Edgartown interiors have been printed from the big old-fashioned glass plates that Mr. Schute used. They seem to have been made about sixty-five years ago. The Society has hundreds of these negatives, and it is planned to print interesting ones from time to time until finally we have prints of the entire collection. And who knows what interesting side-lights on Vineyard history may not be uncovered in the process.

The scene on the next page is of Dr. Walker's Drug Store. Dr. Walker practiced medicine in Edgartown for many years and operated the store in connection with his practice which was common procedure in times past. The present Edgartown Post Office occupies the site of this store.



Dr. Walker's Drug Store. Site of the present Post Office.



Will Mayhew's hardware and boat supply store. The site of this store with its amazing confusion of goods, is now occupied by Robert de Paris, Beauty Solon.



William Cottle, candy, tobacco and news. The present A & P store now occupies this site.



Tilton's Pool Parlor. Note particularly the hanging lamp.



Monroe's Gent's Haberdashery. The gentleman with the beard is Jonathan Monroe the proprietor. The customer is William Cook Pease. The site of this store is now occupied by the Orient Trader.



This is Look and Washburn's meat market and grocery store. It was located at the east corner of Main and Water Streets.



And last but not least, Ed Nichols' barber shop. Please note the prices: shave 15c, haircut 25c, and shampoo 15c.

TWO SONGS OF SHIPWRECK

From the Society's Archives

The "Shipwreck Near Gay Head" is from a typed copy in the archives of the Society. It does give the date of the wreck but not the name of the vessel or the exact spot where the tragedy occurred. But the mention of the rock to which some of the survivors clung suggests that it may have been in Squibnocket Bight. The big rock well off shore there is high enough above the sea so that survivors might indeed have clung to it until help came to them from the beach.

There is no guess work about when or where the wreck of the City of Columbus took place. The song that commemorates the event must have had some currency, for the editor got this particular version from the cook of a little hole-in-the-wall restaurant in Long Beach, California back in 1929. The Cook's name was Harris and he was a mountain man from Tennessee and full of songs. "The Wreck of the City of Columbus" was one of them.

SHIPWRECK NEAR GAY HEAD

(JANUARY 14, 1782)

On the fourteenth day of January last
 Be sure it was a dismal night
 The famous ship away was cast
 It was sometime before 'twas light
 The captain being something ill
 Down in his cabin he did lay
 The wind sprung up and blew so hard
 The mate unto him did say
 We must either go to sea
 Or surely run the ship ashore
 The captain says do as you please
 For I am sick I can do no more

The men was all for going to sea
 And all agreed with one consent
 The pilot chose to run her ashore
 Which proved to all their discontent
 Whilst they all stood consulting there
 What was best for them to do
 The ship was fast upon the rocks
 Which quickly stove her bottom through
 There were five boats all on the deck
 Then suddenly she gave a screen
 A terrible wave made them a wreck
 Which quickly swept her decks clean
 The mainmast and the yards came down
 Which put the men into a fright
 Knowing not which course to take
 It being a dark and stormy night
 The ship was split from stem to stern
 Which filled their hearts with surprise
 When these poor mortals came to see
 Surprising death before their eyes
 Don't you think this must be shocking
 If one could hear their dismal cries
 Whilst on the bar the ship was rocking
 The seas they run full mountains high
 On broken pieces of the ship
 These poor distressed men were tossed
 All striving for to get on shore
 Till in the ocean they were lost
 Twelve men hung to the quarter deck
 If I do rightly understand
 And nine of them was drowned
 The other three got to land
 There were fifteen poor souls in all
 That the raging ocean proved their grave
 I hope they did for mercy call
 Though but little warning seemed to have

No man could grant to them relief
 Poor souls they were in great distress
 But when the news got to their friends
 It sure will fill their hearts with grief
 There was a few poor souls preserved
 Beyond what they could think or see
 Whilst others perished in their sight
 Their time was come so it must be
 All those that were preserved and kept
 The fatal news to tell
 They all hung fast upon the rock
 'Twas where the foaming billows swell
 It was sometime the following day
 The people did the wreck espy
 They brought twelve living souls ashore
 And two of them did quickly die
 A shocking sight for to behold
 To see them put into a cart
 And carried to Chilmark meeting house
 The sight would pierce you to the heart
 Six men belonged to Edgartown
 They left four widows in distress
 And parents did for their sons mourn
 And twenty-six little children fatherless
 The other six that strangers was
 Next day the people did provide
 To lay their bodies in the dust
 There was six graves side by side
 Not far from Gay Head was the place
 Where these poor creatures lost their lives
 The young men left friends to mourn
 The others left both children and wives
 I hope all of them that was preserved
 Will bear in mind their great distress
 And will not forget to prepare
 For their eternal happiness

THE WRECK OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS

(January 18, 1884)

Each day as we read the newspapers
Of crimes and disasters we hear
Occurring all over the country
Casting sorrow and gloom far and near

CHORUS

Nearly all were asleep as the ship plowed the deep
And the wind blew the waves very high
With a terrible shock she struck on a rock
And many were doomed there to die
'Twas the wreck of the fatal Columbus
On the Devil's Bridge Rocks of Gay Head
Where the lives of one hundred poor people
Were lost in the wild waves 'tis said
The people were wild with excitement
Their cries were so sad to hear
Loudly calling for someone to save them
But alas none to save them was near
Captain Wright tried his best to console them
But to calm them he vainly did strive
Yet he bravely remained on his vessel
Till the last man had left her alive
All the blame has been placed on poor Harden
Who steered from his course toward the shore
It was little those poor souls was dreaming
Such a sad fate for them was in store
But I can't help condemning the captain
Of the Glaucis that swiftly sailed by
Leaving forty poor souls in the rigging
From exposure to suffer and die

BOOK NOTICES

1963 witnessed the publication of two books by the Dukes County Historical Society. The first is a new edition of the guide-book, officially, *Martha's Vineyard, A Short History by Various Hands together with a Guide to points of interest*. Eleanor Ransom Mayhew, Editor. In the seven years since the first edition was issued a good many changes have occurred in the physical aspect of the Island, and such are duly noted in the new edition.

The guide is published and sold directly by the Society. The price of the paper covered volume is still \$2.00 but because of publishing costs the hard cover had to be increased to \$4.00.

The other book is *Bartholomew Gosnold Discoverer and Planter New England — 1602 — Virginia — 1607*, by Warner F. Gookin and completed by Philip L. Barbour. It is a scholar's book and by no means light reading. And it is the Society's first venture in this field. The price is \$8.50. It is copyrighted by the Society, but released under the imprint of Archon Books, Hamden, Connecticut and London, England.

This book is of vital importance to scholars and historians as it sheds much entirely new light on the period of Elizabethan discovery and exploration. But with others of us who are not scholars and historians it also fills a long felt want, if for no other reason than it answers the perennial question, How did Martha's Vineyard get its name? To find the answer to that, read the book.

The story of how the book came into being is a fascinating one which this reviewer does not intend to divulge here. All he will say about that is that had it not been for the unremitting efforts of Mrs. Benjamin C. Mayhew, our former secretary, the manuscript, unfinished and undocumented, would still be reposing in the Society's somewhat musty archives.

The curator will gladly fill mail orders for both the guide and "Gosnold."

A few back issues of the *Intelligencer* are available at fifty cents each at the Dukes County Historical Society in Edgartown.

Vol. 2, No. 1 — Dr. Sidney N. Riggs' illustrated article on "*Vineyard Meeting Houses*."

Vol. 2, No. 2 — "*The Episcopal Churches of Martha's Vineyard*," by Dr. Riggs; the "*Annual Report and Account of Accessions*" by Eleanor Ransom Mayhew, and second installment of Rebecca Smith's *Journal*.

Vol. 2, No. 3 — "*Years of Innocence on Martha's Vineyard*," by Henry Beetle Hough. "*Some Gay Head People About Sixty Years Ago*," by Eva Ryan. "*A Cache of Indian Artifacts*," donated by George Magnuson.

Vol. 2, No. 4 — *The Singing Tiltons and Some of Their Songs* by E. G. Huntington, also a continuation of Rebecca Smith's *Diurnal Records For The Year 1813*.

Vol. 3, No. 1 — *Merrily They Rolled Along — On Skates — Five Miles At Sea*, by C. Nelson Bishop; *Sand Dunes and Sea Law* by Stanley King.

Vol. 3, No. 2 — *The Peddle Cart* by Flavel Gifford; *Rounding Cape Horn* by Elon O. Huntington; *Annual Report* by Eleanor Ransom Mayhew.

Vol. 3, No. 3 — *The Story of Pasque and the Pasque Island Club* by Alice Forbes Howland.

Vol. 3, No. 4 — *Adventure on St. Augustine Island* by Capt. Henry Pease, 2nd; *Some Vineyard Authors* by Dorris S. Hough.