MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION
MARINE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
MYSTIC SEAPORT
Coll. 102
GEORGE COMER PAPERS
Journal kept by George Comer, Master, aboard Schooner ERA; 1900-1901.
Box/Vol. 2

29.1164

ML
E65
1900
ERA, Schooner
Master, Comer, George
June 26, 1900 - Feb. 17, 1901
Library Bureau-Division of Remington Rand Inc.
Label No. 1700L
Made in U. S. A.

Started May. 6, 1913.

[LOG
~~356~~]
now: Col. 102
Vol. 2

Microfilmed 1-4-63 39, 1164

written from notes kept during the voyage

Voyage of the Schooner Era from New Bedford Mass June 29 1900

we towed down the Harbor bound on a whaling voyage to Hudson Bay

after we got below Clarks Point Mr Gaunny (Gouney) the Mate refused to any farther in the vessel his excuse being that he was not having the man he wanted as harpooner in his boat and he would not have a colored man as harpooner in his boat the men whom had been shiped as harpooners were Passengers from the Cape Verd Islands and to judge from appearances we have three smart fellows one of them has been with me for 7 years

as Mr. Gaunny became very abusive to the Owners especially to the son Charles Luce the Tow boat was hailed to let go, this being done we rounded to and let go the anchor the mate and owners returning to the City

another man was obtained from Provincetown by name of Benjimin Sparks but when he learned that the voyage was to be at least 27 Months long he did not care to go unless he could be allowed to return at the end of 16 months

as we would not sail on Friday we waited till Saturday then the new Mate Mr Sparks arrived at 6 p m with the wind west and broken irregular sea passed No Mans land at dask

Our crew consists of 12 men in the
Forecastle a Cook a Steward two
harpooner 1st 2nd and 3rd mate and
my self one of the crew is a
Cooley from the East Indies the
others are English speaking and Dutch
the Cook is a Portogee the Steward
is from St Helena

Our third mate sent as
harpooner for the mate and is from
an Island in the Indian Ocean which
belongs to France
our 2nd mate hails from Fall River
the mate from Provence Town while
I come from the good Old Town of
East Haddam
(which will take in all New England in
200 years to come)

We have had very pleasant weather
so far and all goes well and
harmonious

Weather from water

Wednesday 18 of July 1900
wind south blowing to East thick fog
most of the time.
So far we have not seen
any Ice or Bergs
Lat to day was 54 32 N
have not been able to get an longitude
for a number of days
Each day bring it work puting
the vessel in order and the Boats also
temp of sea water 35+

Thursday July 19
Still foggy moderate breeze from
East have now put on woolen
clothes though the weather is not so
cold it is the dampness makes
it uncomfortable
we have discontinued puting up
side Lights or blowing horns
in foggy weather
as it is not Expected
that there are other vessels near
us our Mate Mr. Sparks is
much troubled with a lame back
Lat 56° 15' N
Long 52° 51' W
temp of sea water 42+

Sunday the 22nd July 1900
The weather cleared up this p.m. though the wind still continues from the S.E. we pass occasionaly pieces of drift wood apparently having been long adrift
we are to day 320 miles from Resolution Island wind still S.E.
we are having a great deal of S.E. and east winds with fog and rain

Tuesday the 24
we are now within 120 miles of Resolution Island and have not seen any Ice as yet
we have made no effort to get along fast but have taken pains to go slow hoping the wind would come to the west as I have thought that this S.E. wind would keep the Ice in a solid pack which with a westerly wind would open up and give the vessel a chance to work through it

July 26 Thursday 1900
Made the land Resolution Island
in a strong L E breeze
saw the Hudson Bay ship which I
think is the Lady Head of London
H. B. Co
at first we tried to keep out
and away from the Pack but as the
Ice was coming out and the wind was
blowing us on we finaly picked out
an opening and worked in and at
night tied up in the pack
later the Bark worked in twoards us
but finaly worked off to the southard

July 27
we worked in to clear water
in Gabrill Straits

July 28
passed the lower Savages

July 29
we were up to the Middle
Savages but no Natives came off
Neither did we see any though
we were close in
there were a number of Bergs

Monday July 30 1900
Early this morning we passed
North Bluff met some scattering ice
all along but comparatively clear
water quite a swell from S.E.
our 2nd mate Mr Barden is suffering
with neuralagy wind S.E. fresh to
moderate breez

Tuesday July 31

Wednesday August 1 1900
passed Wholestenholme this morning
met a little ice near Nottingham
Island during the night had to
lay to on account of ice and fog
Mr Barden is some better but
not able to be on deck

I might say here is where an
incident occured
on the morning of the 2nd of
August we made the land which
though it could not be seen
but could hear the wash on the
shore I took to be Cape Pembroke
and was much surprised to think
that we had come the distance so
soon as we had steered so as to
enter Fishers Straits
but I was forced to think
that it was Cape Pembroke so
steered to the north west to clear
were in Fishers straits

in the Fog thinking we were in Fishers straits when we actually were north of Bell Island

August 2nd Thursday 1900

we kept on steering west saw a number of Narwhales these were the first I have ever seen we finally came to land which I could not place on the Chart the Ice became so thick that we had to tie up to a large Cake of it (on the 3rd) do not know just where we are High land running N.W. and S.E. about 5 miles off

I might Explain here that the Cause of all our trouble now and later was brought about by the Steward placing a package of new Spoons (6) beneath the Compass on a shelf which was below the Compass

filled 2 Cast of fresh water from the Ice

August 4 Saturday

Last night we remained tied up to this large Cake of I no water in sight we had a hard time as the wind came on to blow from S.west a strong gale this caused the smaller Ice to move before it and made more open water to windward of us this caused a moderate swell to make up and the vessel began to rase and fall each time hitting the large field piece we were fast to and could not let go of

the only thing there was to do was to keep the lines as light as we Could so as not to give the vessel a larger space to sag off in and in this way avoid a heavier blow all the time the Ice was becoming less to windward and the swell larger our next move was to set the Foresail and jibs the best we Could as the wind was now a gale this pressed the vessel against the Ice and held her to it

August 4th Continued

to have let the lines go would have
ment the loss of the Starboard boat
and the Boat across the stern of the
vessel as the Cake we were tied to
war in many place of its edge 6 and
8 feet high from Ice which during the
passed winter had been rafted up on
it and was now part of it
it was around the hummocks that
our lines were fast
after the sails wer set we did
not pound so much and finaly
the sails produced a circular
motion to the large mass and by
morning we had slewed the mass
around so we were on the lee
side and we all felt safe again
all this with rain and fog

Sunday August 5
To day weather Clearing wind coming
around to north
got a latitude which was
64°.20' N at least 60 mile north
where we thought we might be
in trying to find out the Cause
of our being so far out of our
Posision I found the Spoons under
the Compass
we made sail and tried to
sail down between Bell Island and
Southampton Island
but got in to shallow water
and then come to anchor then
later got underway and Come out
around the East side of Bell Island
at 6 pm we are between N.W. End and Terror Point
The Scotch Captain, Murry had
once told me he had passed through
here
afterwards admitted he was Mistaken

Monday August 6th 1900
We are between Mansfield Island and Coats Island where we again fell in with the H B Ship Lady Head but to much wind to approach near her
wind N W strong
we would like to have put letters for Home on her but to rough

Tuesday August 7
Passed the west end of Coats Island at 5 p m Fog and rain moderate Breze from S.E.

Wednesday August 8

Thursday August 9

Friday August 10
we are now at the lower end of Southampton Island at what I afterwards called Cape Low in honor of Mr. A P Low of Ottawa Canada it is just 2 miles above this Point where the Scotch Station for whaling is located
there being to much swell on the People could not come off wind moderate NW set our Colors and the Station set theirs for us

Hudson Straits

Saturday August 11 1900.
understook to pull a tooth pas
the Cook but broke it off

Sunday August 12
arrived at Cape Fullerton
about 8 pm Shuting in thick
fog wind moderate South East
went ashore and found the
Buildings we had left here are gone
also a boat a number of Casks
and small stores
probeseably taken by the Capt of
the Frances Allen Capt Gibbons
(of Norwich Conn)

Monday August 13
unloading extra stores
and provision this is done to
lighten the vessel and also make
room in case we get whales
and also the Provision will be safe
in case vessel is lost

Tuesday August 14
unloading stores and
Provision and placing the stores
on one of the Island which former
part of the Harbour

Wednesday August 15
Still at work in preparing
the vessel for whaling and
also for the winter

Thursday August 16 1900

Friday August 17

Saturday August 18

Sunday August 19

Monday August 20

Tuesday August 21
came out of Cape Fullerton and up to Whale Point and Yellow Bluff
The natives came off to us and reported that the Schooner Frances Allyn had arrived last fall 4 days after we left for Home
She wintered at Fullerton they took one whale in the fall and 3 this spring have put a station at Wager River and are now at Repulse Bay

Hudson Bay

Tuesday August 21 1900
Continued
I received a note from Capt Gibbons and also the mail that he brought out which is now quite a little over a year old some photographs but none of the goods sent by my people or the Owners to me
the Natives brought off quite a number of Musk ox skins and Bear skins

Wednesday August 22
cruising off Whale Point

Thursday August 23
Raised a whale but did no success in geting it
we are off Whale Point

Friday August 24
Raised the whale again to day but did not get it it is the same one we know it by a white spot which it have

Ranes Wellcome
Hudson Bay

Saturday August 25 1900
cruising off whale Point

have had two N.E Gales since leaving Cape Fullerton Harbar



Sunday August 26
rained the whale again and lowered Mr Barden 2nd mate got fast first Boat this whale made 60 bbls of Oil and 1200 lbs of whale Bone
The 3rd mate Mr Fuller rained the whale
Pleasant weather

Monday August 27
Pleasant weather
cruising off Whale Point



Tuesday August 28
Pleasant weather rained a whale this A M lowered but did not get it

Friday August 29
looking for whales off whale Point

Saturday August 30
Cruising up and down the Coast from South of whale Point to Wager River

Cape Fullerton Harbar

Sunday August 31 1900
came in and anchored in
cape Fullerton Harbar
and Bailed out the Oil

Monday Sept 1
Bailing out and cleaning
the whale Bone wind N E

Tuesday Sept 2nd
still at work Bailing
oil and cleaning whale Bone

Wednesday Sept 3
Finished the oil and Bone
the wind still remains S.E. to N.E.
we have 60 bbls Oil 1200 lbs
of whale Bone and 71 Musk Ox skins
7 Bear skins 4 wolf and 8 fox

Thursday Sept 4

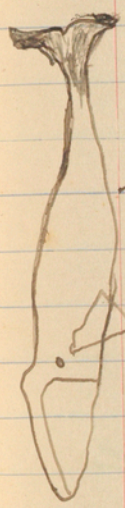
Friday Sept 5

Saturday Sept 6

Sunday Sept 7 1900

Monday Sept 8
cruising up around whale Point
and yellow Bluff

Tuesday Sept 9
cruising up around whale
Point



Wednesday Sept 10
took a whale this morng
this whale later made 65 bbls of
oil and 1200 lbs of whale Bone

Thursday Sept 11
we are in sight of Cape Fullerton
but South of it
finished cutting in the whale we
took yesterday

Friday Sept 12

Saturday Sept 13

Hudson Bay near Marble Island

Sunday Sept 14 1900
cruising near Marble Island

Monday Sept 15
worked up towards Whale Point

Tuesday Sept 16
our Foresail gave out at the Clue during a gale last night and nearly blew to pieces but finally Save and got it in and fixed up after much difficulty

Wednesday Sep 17
we substitute two Tri sails for a Foresail by sewing them together one being upside down the one forming the Leach or after part of the sail

Thursday Sept 18
Came in to Cape Fullerton to day to get ready for winter
and Boil out and clean the Bone of the whale we took the 10th

Friday Sept 19 1900
at anchor in Cape Fullerton outer Harbor preparing for winter

Saturday Sept 20

Sunday Sept 21

Monday Sept 22

Tuesday Sept 23

Wednesday Sept 24

Thursday Sept 25

Cape Fullerton

Friday Sept 26 1902

Saturday Sept 27

Came in to the inner Harbar back of the Island on which our Provision are on and their stores a small Harbar and quite well protected

Sunday Sept 28

each day preparing for winter there is some snow on the land and all the fresh water Ponds are frozen over

two Families of Natives are Camped here

Monday Sept 29

Tuesday Sept 30

Cape Fullerton Winter Quarters

Wednesday Oct 1 1900

We are now engaged in building a House over the after part of the vessel

Thursday Oct 2nd

Friday Oct 3

Saturday Oct 4

Sunday Oct 5

Monday Oct 6

Tuesday Oct 7

Friday Oct 8

Winter Quarters Cape Fullerton

Saturday Oct 9 1900

All the men who can be spared from work work on the canal are sent a shore to a near by pond & cut Ice for winter use two & three feet square and is now 8 to 10 inches thick this is pulled out to the shore of the pond and stood up against each other

Sunday Oct 10

As it taken two day & cut enough Ice & last through the winter about 700 Cakes they have finished cutting to day

The Harbar is now Covered with young Ice and is difficult to pull a boat through

Monday Oct 11

Tuesday Oct 12

Winter Quarters

Cape Fullerton

Wednesday Oct 13 1900

Thursday Oct 14

Friday Oct 15

Saturday Oct 16

The Ice about the vessel is now 4 inches thick to day took up the anchors and cut the Ice so as to place the vessel in position for the winter with head do North

2° —

The Ice is not the same thickness all over the Harbor

Sunday Oct 17

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Monday Oct 18 1900
The Ice broke up to the East of us and for fear it would all go out we let the anchors go but it did not though the wind was N W

Tuesday Oct 19
Still laying by both anchors

Wednesday Oct 20
Lay by both anchors fearing the Ice would break up & windward and come down on us

Thursday Oct 21
Took up the anchors and made fast to the edge of the Ice as it was becoming stronger each day Have had three warm spells of N & N winds

Friday Oct 22

Winter Quarters Cape Fullerton

Saturday Oct 23 1900

Sunday Oct 24

Monday Oct 25

Tuesday Oct 26

Wednesday Oct 27

Thursday Oct 28

Friday Oct 29

winter Quarters Lake Fullerton

Saturday Oct 30 1900

Sunday Oct 31

Monday November 1st

Tuesday Nov 2

Wednesday Nov 3

Thursday Nov 4

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Friday November 5 1900

Saturday nov 6

Sunday nov 7

Monday nov 8

Tuesday nov 9

Friday Nov 10

Saturday Nov 11

Winter Quarters

Sunday November 12 1900

Monday Nov 13

Tuesday Nov 14

Wednesday Nov 15

Thursday Nov 16
We all well a long in Banking
up the vessel with a heavy
wall of snow around her
Our natives are all here now
33 of them, and 13 out side natives
our natives consist of 8 familys
we give the out side natives
some Bread and Coffee for dinner
each day

Friday November 17 1900
We have been making sleds this last week they are made of plank 14 feet long shod with the Bone from the whale jaws one jaw bone being sufficient for two sleds 14 feet long weighed one sled which was 214 lbs they are tiped with Hoop Iron and have 16 slats of Oak my weight to day was 207 lbs

Saturday nov 18
Part of our natives have been quite successfull in hunting some getting as many as 40 deer and others as few as 7 during the Fall

Sunday nov 19
Our men are now quite well supplied with winter Clothing (Deer skin)

Saturday nov 20

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Sunday November 21 1909

Paid 14 1 wash

Monday nov 22

Tuesday nov 23

Wednesday nov 24

Thursday nov 25

Friday nov 26

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

July 7

Saturday November 27 1900

Sunday nov 28

Monday nov 29

Tuesday nov 30

Winter Quarters
Cape Hallaston

Wednesday December 1 1900

Thursday Dec 2

Friday Dec 3

Saturday Dec 4
A party of Natives (Kenepetau)
came up from Depot Island
to trade for Tobacco they
brought very little with them
but are to come later

Sunday Dec 5

Monday Dec 6

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Sunday Dec 7 1900

July

The Natives who came to trade on the 4 started on their return to Depot Island .30

we have had quite a little snow which has caused drifts around the vessel causing the Ice to settle and overflow

we are not entirely banked up as the banking becomes wet and settles away

we all waiting for the Ice to become stronger for the more we bank up the weight forces the Ice down

the banking which has been 5 feet high is now level with the overflow

The weather has been mild for this time of year ranging from 0 to 20—

a child was born a few days ago in one of our Native Families

Monday Dec 8

Tuesday Dec 9

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Wednesday December 10 1900

Thursday Dec 11

Friday Dec 12

Saturday Dec 13
each Saturday the Steward lets the Mate know what provision he will need for the coming week and the mate breaks it out of Course taking two men to do the work then the Hold is locked up

Sunday Dec 14
most of our natives have gone hunting starting out to day for Wager River where they will spread out there were three sleds Paul, Stonewall, and Jack were the principle men

Monday Dec 15
we are having a very pleasant winter the natives are making their snow Houses near the vessel

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Tuesday Dec 16 1900

Ice bringing off the Ice & the vessel the Harpooner attend to this going with the men to the Pond where the Ice has been cut in the Fall and they must look out for the mens faces as they often freeze the cheeks and not know it

Wednesday Dec 17

when the cheeks freeze they turn white and often a man does not know it but the person who sees it tells of his mitten and presses his hand on the spot taking the frost out in this way

Thursday Dec 18

If the feet freeze there is no better way then to put them up against a womans stomach providing there is a woman around I have had a woman put her frozen feet against mine but is no fun

Friday Dec 19

Saturday Dec 20

Sunday Dec 21

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Monday December 22 1900

July 1 Each day one man takes his turn
July 7 and comes in to the House (the one
July 14 built over the after part of the Vessel)
bring in Ice for the cook carry out
and sift the ashes and sweep up
before supper.

Tuesday Dec 23
There is also one man each day
who looks out for the fire in the
Forecastle and keep the place clean
and keep the water Barrel filled with
Ice for drinking and washing
and keep the Fire

Wednesday Dec 24

Thursday Dec 25
we had a very pleasant entertainment
this evening with Christmass presents for all
including natives 4 of our crew took the
part of Colored Minstrelle and did the
Cake walk 54 people all told

Friday Dec 26
of Course Ice has to be kept
on hand for melting for Cooking
or washing so about 3 times
a week the men are all harnessed
to a sled and bring off enought
to keep ahead of our wants

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Saturday December 27 1900
Some natives came to us to trade
gave them a few supplies and they
are to bring their trade later
they stayed a few days and then
returned 4 men and one boy
they are living near Depot Island

Sunday Dec 28
One of the queer things is that
what ever is started such as working
or ivory such as carving or making
Cairns each an all follow suit
and want to do the same
if a man shaves or has a hair
cut all do the same

Dec 29
one of the natives has been off
two different days hunting has taken
two Deer each day
Cairn making is an favorite
Occupation these days

Dec 30
The weather is now much Colder
40- but as no one has to be out
more then they wish no one mind the
Cold Cairn making is now the
fad I have been busy making
a set of Taps and Dies which
has taken much of my time for
a month
New years we had a dance
and at the close the crew wished
my self and mate a happy new years
the weather holds quite steady
temperature 30-

Winter Quarters
Lake Fullerton

December 31 Monday 1900
a pleasant evening with a dance
and cake walk by members of
the crew

Tuesday January 1 1901

Wednesday Jan 2

Thursday Jan 3

Friday Jan 4

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Saturday January 5 1901
So far this winter we have had no great amount of wind but steady weather

Sunday Jan 6
Two Baby girls have been born lately their Mothers are not permitted to leave their house for two Months

Monday Jan 7
Coldest day so far the thermometer going down to 48—
a Couple of Natives (Kenepetues) came with Deer meat to trade 16 Ladles for which I gave them Ammunition
all hands are well

Tuesday Jan 8
when New Natives Come in to trade I endeavor to make Plaster Casts of their Faces and Some times their Hands having brought up a lot of Plaster for that purpose

Winter Quarters Cape Fullerton

Wednesday January 8 1901

Thursday Jan 9

Friday Jan 10

Saturday Jan 11

Sunday Jan 12

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Monday January 13 1901

Tuesday Jan 14

Wednesday Jan 15

Thursday Jan 16

Friday Jan 17

Cape Fullerton winter Quarters

Saturday January 18 1901

Sunday Jan 19

Monday Jan 20

Tuesday Jan 21

Wednesday Jan 22

Winter Quarters Cape Fullerton

Thursday January 23 1901

Friday jan 24

Saturday jan 25

Sunday jan 26

monday jan 27

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Tuesday January 28 1901
Some Natives of the Kenepetew have been here trading brought a few wolf and Fox skins

Wednesday Jan 29
I have taken Plaster Casts of the Natives face our own natives and also those who come to trade
These are for the American Museum of Natural History New York City

Thursday Jan 30
At first in taken the Plaster Cast some of them are a little afraid but when they come and see it done they can not restrain from laughing out loud it looks so comical to them to see some old Friend with such a mask on
I have had to put them out

Friday Jan 31
we have had much stormy weather lately which has accumulated much snow around the vessel and native snow houses
Causing the Ice to settle and the water & come up over the Ice
this causes the Natives to build new Houses where the Ice is Clear of snow or away from the drifts

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Wednesday February 1 1901
all are now interested in making
jack knives or repairing old ones
this is the Rad just now

Thursday Feb 2
we are having very pleasant
weather

Friday Feb 3

Saturday Feb 4

Sunday Feb 5

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

July 14

Monday February 6 1901
Some of our natives have gone down toward Depot Island to hunt seal

Tuesday Feb 7

Wednesday Feb 8

Thursday Feb 9
The men gave us a Serenade this evening Vocal and Instrumental the Instruments consisting of an Accordian a drum which had once been a Nail Keg and a number of Bazoos, the Entertainment lasted about an hour
Then they were treated and the Party broke up all well pleased

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Friday ~~Quarters~~ February 10 1901
~~Out~~ 2nd mate Mr Barden is
in poor health other wise
we are all well

June 2

Saturday Feb 11
The sun is now getting high
enough so that I can print Pictures

Sunday. Feb 12

Monday Feb 13

Tuesday Feb 14

Winter Quarters
Cape Fullerton

Wednesday February 15 1901

A sled come up from our Station who are down at Depot Island reporting they have taken 11 sled & 4 ground seal there may get that name from their habit of laying on the Bottom and calling (or singing) these seal are large (200 to 500 lbs?) their skins are used for Boat Battens and whip lacher Dog harnesses and lines where much strain is put on Needed
also have taken one walrus

Thursday Feb 16
Quite a blizzard has started in

Friday Feb 17
we have been having much pleasant weather so far this month the Thermometer ranging from 30 to 48 — below
still storming hard

A. Greenberg

July 14 1 bag
July 21 2 "

Paid

~~F~~ Greenberg
B wash

#1.50

John Mack

July 1	Wash	.25
" 7	"	.25
" 14	"	.25

July 2 Morris Gorman
1 wash .50

July

July C W. Potter $1.00

	Peter Larsen	
July 14	1 wash	Paid

July 14 J. Ivers
1 wash

Paid

July 21 Mrs McKenny
1 bag 50

Hamilton

July 7	1 bag	.50
July 21	1 bag	.50
June	1 "	.50
July	1 bag	00

CHRISTMAS EVE 1900

Christmas Carnival and Dance

onboard

Schooner ERA.

Cape Fullerton

Hudson Bay.

July 21 Thomas Carroll 1 bag. 50