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*Charles W. Morgan*  
**The 38<sup>th</sup> Voyage**

In late May, 2014, the *Charles W. Morgan* will depart her berth at Mystic Seaport and embark on an unprecedented voyage to historic ports on the New England coast. Over an 80-year whaling career, the ship sailed on 37 voyages to the remote corners of the globe. This voyage, her 38<sup>th</sup>, may perhaps be her most important.

The *Morgan*, a National Historic Landmark built in 1841, is the oldest American commercial ship still afloat. The ship has been undergoing a comprehensive restoration in the Museum's Henry B. duPont Preservation Shipyard since November 2008. She will be launched on July 21, 2013, an event that will be the kickoff to her return to sea.

Why sail her? The decision to embark on this voyage is based on the commitment of Mystic Seaport to make history come alive for today's audience and to call attention to the value of historic ships and the important role America's maritime heritage plays in this country's history.

The *Morgan* will begin by a short trip from Mystic, Conn. to nearby New London. New London's deep harbor and ready access to Long Island Sound makes it a prime location to prepare her for sea and to conduct sail training with the crew (the Mystic River is too shallow for this purpose). Once ready, the ship will proceed to sail to Newport, Vineyard Haven, New Bedford, Provincetown, Boston, and then back to New London and Mystic. The entire voyage is expected to take about six weeks and specific dates for the port visits are being developed at this time.

The ship's stop in each port will be accompanied by a dockside exhibit program customized for each location. For example, New Bedford's history is inextricably tied to its whaling heritage and it was here in 1841 that the *Morgan* was built and it was her homeport for 60 years. Provincetown will be a base for day sails over the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, a center for whale watching in New England. And Boston will be an opportunity to tie up next to the *USS Constitution*, the only American ship older than the *Morgan*.

Upon the return to her berth at Mystic Seaport, the ship will resume to her status as an exhibit at the Museum, but one with a new chapter to tell to the next generation of visitors.

Although she will not be able to carry passengers, the ship will be the center of a national programming initiative to tell her story "onsite, online, and onboard" to reach the largest possible audience. The goal is to utilize her journey and the latest technology to appeal to all ages and to build an experience that communicates four major themes: 1) the American sailor as an icon, 2) the influence of different cultures connecting at sea, 3) whaling as an example of American enterprise, and 4) America's changing relationship to the natural world. The last is the most significant: whales were hunted almost to extinction. Today, America celebrates the whale and works for its recovery. Where once the *Charles W. Morgan's* cargo was oil and bone, today her cargo is knowledge.