

## Transcripts of letters from Henry Colt, 1835 - 1843

Sandwich Island March 14<sup>h</sup> 1835

My dear mother,

....The time has again come round that gives me another opportunity of writing to you, and as it has been my [?] to give you a brief sketch of our proceeding, so I commence this where I left off in my last leaving St. Francisco we pursued our course to the southwest along the coast of California touching at Cape St. Lucas, from there to near the Galapagos Island, around about 4 or 5 months, saw sperm whale but three times now have but little success, and now returned as I told you I should at this Island, for a new recruit, and then as our last resort to the North West [?] Kamtschatka Coast; one hundred barrels is all we have obtained since our last report at St. Francisco making us 1800 bbls in all 120 of which is sperm. We are all well on board and in tolerable good spirits as we have but one season more to stay, when we hope to be homeward bound, and not only that thought cheers my spirits But the arrival of the ship York within a few days bringing such good news that you and my dear Children were well, and likewise the arrival of the Ship Vineyard bringing the same good news of a still later date, is cheering indeed to my drooping spirits. But O Mother in the midst of my rejoicing sad news has come to my knowledge that causes me to grieve. In a paper of a later date than any of my letters I saw the death of Frederick Coffin....

There is now 25 or 30 ships laying here some of them from 14 to 20 months out, others 6, 7, and 8 months, some cooping their oil, others getting their recruits, and most every day more or less flocking in, and I am every moment expecting some one direct from home when I shall receive more letters and still later accounts from you, We have now cooped our oil and repaired our foremast which we found in a bad condition. By the ship Iris of Boston... I have shipped home our whale bone, seventeen thousand one hundred and sixty eight pounds - 17168 lbs, at one cent per pound for freight. Tell Brother Edgar when it arrives, he can receive my share which it is sold which is the one sixteenth....

Henry Colt

Lombock July 30, 1839

Dear Frederick,

I am at a loss for words to express my obligations to you for so soon fulfilling your promise in writing to me it was a favour I shall not soon forget it is now about 5 weeks since I read it.... Though your letter had been wrote 10 months before I read it, it was the first time I had heard from home, since I left and truly you may know it meet the kindest reception,.. But at present I must be content here, with the fond hope of in do time being returned which is the joy of a sailor and all that keeps our spirits up, that through Divine favour we shall in a few months more be returned to our home & Friends, there to enjoy the social fireside with those we love....Consequently you will not expect much news from such a remote corner of the Globe as this However I will try to find something First we are all well on board we have 1950 bbls of oil 5600 of which is sperm. Our ship is strong and tight have found none that could out sail us The place that we are now laying at you can look on the chart of the Indian Ocean and see its situation not far from the Isle of [?]. Malays vary thickly inhabit. Govern by a great chief called the Raja the greater produce of the Island is Rice for export it abounds with all kinds of vegetables fruit and plenty of Bullock Buffalou fowl and hogs, all of which we can get a plentiful supply at a cheap rate. There is now 15 or 20 sails of shipping laying here mostly whalers recruiting for a cruise...A. fair Voyage about 700 more will fill us I hope to get home in 6 7 or 8 months from now.....

Henry Colt

Ship Lagoda Port Praya Cape Verd  
Dec. 26\* 1843

Dear Aunt Belinda

...and trust you will allow me as usual to come to you with some of my troubles Our passage thus far as you will see in Mothers letter has been a lonesome long tedious and rough one. I need not undertake to tell you the feelings of the Mariner in common when on his outward bound passage, after leaving home and friends, not to mention those heart rending parting scenes from those he loves, My pen would fail in the attempt suffice it to say they are painful many and often is our wishful thought and looking turn backwards but in vain, we have put our hands to the plough and must not turn back

Oh Aunt Belinda it is no place to come to sea to get clear of cares and troubles I assure you, though if we could have some behind a thousand others are added to a sea life not only the dangers of the sea the anxieties of getting a voyage and conducting every part to the satisfaction of all concerned. But then cares and anxieties some of which you will see more than common seem to fall to my lot two of our crew taking a bad cold when first out and having a long siege of seasickness as high fever and inflammation on the stomach followed they have been confined to their births, most of the time since we left home seem to be getting worse every day, so that they are now reduced to a very low state of health. I have done everything for them that our means would admit of Bled blister bath xc but to little or no affect, their names is Francis McDonald and Henry Johnson. the later tells me he belongs to a consumptive family that he has lost 2 Brothers by that complaint, by the symptoms of Johnson I have no doubt but that is his disorder I think he was far along with the consumption before he came on board, I think it very doubtful whether he ever recovers He is 29 years old, place of residence is Buffalou has a father and Brother living there. MacDonald is not so sick he belongs in New York There is also one of our Boatsteerer William Perry who has had a severe turn so that I thought is vary doubtful whether he recover but he is now getting better the cause of his sickness was the affects of hard drinking about the time we sailed,( astonishing in deed that men will do so)

By the request of Johnson and Macdonald and my own judgement I thought we had to come to this port and leave them in care of the Counsel, Thus you see I have had for so short a time out extra cares by sickness; all whale ships ought to have a good physician.

We have a good ship and a good set of officers and a tolerable good crew, among which there is four pious men good Christians I believe they are the fourth

male who is a colored man by the name of Reuben Winslow; the Cooper Sailmaker and one or two more, and I feel as though I ought to have some Devotional Service with the crew on Sundays at least, I think I shall, Oh may the Lord make duty plain and enable me to perform what ever he requires that I may be of some little use in his cause, Our carpenter is the only man on Board old as myself he lost his wife three years ago, he has two sons at trades he seems to be a man, of good morals if not a Christian, and is deserving a better station than he now occupies, the most of our foremast hands are young men from 17 to 25 years of age, those that I have questioned in regard to their situation in life seem to be without parents and but few friends turned out upon the wide world to look out for themselves Oh I often look on them with pity knowing the privations and hardships, they will have to encounter in following a sea life I regret, that I had to sail fore noon for probably I should have recd a letter by the steamboat that at day from....

Love to Mother and the Dear Children tell Susan I shall write to her.... Best regards to

.... so I must conclude. Dear Aunt

Yours most affectionately,

Henry Colt