The view of Lahaina Roads from Dr. Winslow's home was magnificent. From his room, Captain Gilbert Pendleton, Jr. could watch the rising sun transform the crowds of mastheads with its light. But the prospect was cold comfort to the ailing young skipper. The "lung fever" that had forced him to leave his vessel and place himself in Dr. Winslow's care had not improved, and now his ship, the Charles Phelps of Stonington, reprovisioned, was riding at anchor in the roadstead, awaiting Pendleton's decision whether or not to go aboard her for the upcoming 1846 season "on Kamchatka." After much soul searching, and on the advice of Dr. Winslow and several skippers, Pendleton took his sea chest ashore, turned the Phelps over to James W. White, his first mate, and watched her get under weigh on 16 March 1846. Pendleton's six month recuperation on Maui did little good, either for him or the Phelps's whaling fortunes. But his record of his experiences affords posterity a priceless glimpse of Maui in her whaling heyday.

Pendleton's identity has become obscure over the years; he can be known mostly through the internal evidence of his journals. Like most whaling captains, he was dogged, resigned to the demands of the trade; and like most, he had worked his way up to his command of the Phelps, having served for years on Stonington vessels. He had married in 1840, less than a month before shipping out as a mate on the Thomas Williams. Returning in the Spring of 1842, he had shipped out that summer as first mate on the brand-new Charles Phelps. Despite long absences, he had sired two children, the younger of whom was unborn when the Phelps left Stonington in June 1844. Small wonder that, on leaving home, he had hoped for a short voyage:

Several Seasick ones onboard & all of us with heavy harts but hopeing with the blessing of God to be back in 20 months with a full ship ma God grant it Amen

Pendleton's journals reveal to us a man with a highly disciplined, conventionally pious, though not very inquisitive, mind. He ran a tight ship—a little

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too tight in the view of one of his mates for, throughout his career, he was willing to use the lash to keep shipboard order. Nonetheless, he was remembered as exemplary by others. Pendleton was thirty-one at the time of his stay on Maui. Moody, subject to attacks of despondence, he was nonetheless a competent, resourceful whaleman, who, unlike many skippers, personally commanded a whaleboat during the chase. Whale killing had long since ceased to hold Pendleton in awe, but he found other aspects of the trade fearsome, especially storms. (Once, after riding out a hurricane aboard the Betsey Williams, he penned a reminder to himself in his journal: “Think of these gales, Gi[l]bert, and Stay at home with Phebe.”) In short, Pendleton was a typical whaling master. It is the circumstance and time of his convalescence, rather than his extraordinary personal qualities, that make his journal so interesting today.

Pendleton’s ship, only two years old when he became her master, was a typical whaler: stoutly built, locally owned; her hull light umber with a row of painted ports, adorned with a figurehead and fancy scrollwork. In 1844–1845 she had whaled the Indian Ocean, South and North Pacific. When Pendleton left her she had just completed a grueling season in the North Pacific. In twenty months she had taken eleven whales. The toil of doing so is described by Pendleton in this characteristic passage:

Sunday June the 15 Commences with strong wind from S by W & thick foggy weather . . . at ½ past 5 AM saw 2 Right Whale they went out of sight in the fog at ½ past 7 AM the fog cleared off a little . . . thick Rainy weather . . . 2 whale came close to the ship lowerd & knocked off got the whale most ded came in thick fog Out from him & came to the ship lost 4 irons 1 lance & about 20 fathoms of line

Monday June the 16 The first & middle part calm thick weather imployed in mending Boat at Noon fog lit up Saw . . . 2 Right whale lowerd for them Came in thick fog came onboard thick fog the remainder of the day heard cannon Supposed it was a ship firing for her Boats lost in the fog at Sunset took in Sail So Ends

Such conditions may have brought on Pendleton’s lung disease. Neither his journal nor the Phelps’s logbook mentions his illness until mid-February 1846, at Lahaina.

The young master’s painful, debilitating affliction proved resistant to Dr. Winslow’s treatment. Its exact nature is conjectural in hindsight, and is obscured further by medical anacronisms of 1846. Its symptoms suggest consumption or pleurisy, however. Winslow insisted Pendleton exercise, forcing the skipper to take in the sights, first of Lahaina, then of Maui in general. What he saw, and described in his journal, gives us a priceless look at an island undergoing dramatic cross-cultural tension.

Passing “one of the Sandwich Islands, Bound for Mowee” aboard the whaleship Columbia of Nantucket, George Gould painted this 1844 view in his journal. Courtesy of the Kendall Whaling Museum, Sharon, Massachusetts.
Thursday 24
This morning at daylight got under weigh & com unto Mery got the Anchors in the Bow then down the Chains cleaved up the deck. Man the Mast heads for the Whales to Ends.

Friday 25 April
This morning land action bearing East by N 2 ship. In sight. Stead down the Promontory and stop then return the Bow. Boat to Ends.

sandwich Isle

Waka

Macani

Maui
How could an idler kill time in the Lahaina of 1846? There was plenty of activity: the town's population had lately risen to about 3,560, not to mention 600 visiting seamen, and the town's grass houses were now complemented by dozens of European-style structures. More vessels touched Lahaina in 1846 than in any other year... about 400. Foreign influence was reaching alarming proportions. It was easy, therefore, for Pendleton to find congenial Yankee company, to receive news and even letters from home. During spring he endeavored to make friends: he attended church, visited sick seamen at the hospital, called on the celebrated Baldwin family, and kept in close touch with Dr. Winslow. But much of the time Pendleton was overcome by weakness, homesickness and despondency: he puttered, read in his rented house and complained in his journal. Now and then he beheld a sight in town worth writing down:

... at 4 PM I went to the Native Church... the Roman Catholics have had quite a number with them to day their place of worship was in a yard simelar to a cow yard in the United States & their Congregation was made up of the very lowest clan of Natives & they made sport of the preists I long to be at home where the word of God is preached in purity & with power

Even more exotic to Pendleton's parochial sensibilities was a luau:

I witnessed a sight to-day that I never did before it was the killing Cooking of a dog... by tieing a string round its neck... they then Scalded it the same way as we do a pig—the manner of cooking was by heating a quantity of Small stone & then put some inside of him & covered him up with leaves &c. untill he was cooked—Doctor Winslow spoke for a peace & got it, we ate some & found it very good, if I had not known what it was I should called it Pig but knowing it was a dog. I did not Eat but a little, I think not enough to make me bark—the Natives think it is a nice dish but the Eating of them is not so common as it used to be

Pendleton's most enjoyable outing was an evening horseback ride with three companions. The group rode south of town “through the groves &c and returned by the Beech. ...” The moonlit surf breaking on offshore reefs raised Pendleton's spirits markedly.

Lahaina's temperature also rose in spring, prompting Pendleton to plan a trip to Wailuku on Maui's windward side, accompanied by a Captain Chever (or Cheever), a local merchant and newfound friend.

Baggage was shipped around the Island by schooner, and the travelers set off across the mountains by horseback on 8 June. Stopping at an “inn” of convenience, Pendleton was introduced to the pros and cons of early Hawaiian tourism:

The house was of Native Structure & rather an inferior one. The occupants were 9 grone People & 3 Children They were very glad to accomodate us thinking that money was ahead for which They will go all lenghts They gave us the Best Mats to ley on...
At 11 we dropped on the mats ... & the way the Flees & other vermin lit on us was a caution to all travilers. It had much more affect to keep us awake than a strong cup of Tea would—but we made the best of it & kept as still as possible which was about as much so as a toad would under a Harro.

Cheever carried memories of this interlude with him to Wailuku, stopping "every minute or so ... to ketch a flee and scald at them for getting on Him ... but they do not mind it & they hope on him like a hawk on a June Bug."

Wailuku was another matter altogether. The two rented a house by a flowing stream suitable for bathing, and Pendleton found the lush change of scenery a welcome relief after Lahaina:

everything is green & flurishing the village stands on the East Side of West Mowi; on an inclined plain at the foot of the Mountain that supplies it with an abundance of water. It is composed of About 50 Houses Native Bilt & 2 Missionarie Houses & a large Stone Church School Houses &c &c ... we took a walk out to ... look at the mission-aries gardens Houses &c. they look very pretty & very much like ... summer ... in the UnitedStates They have many kinds of Fruit and Flowers growing....

Joined by Dr. Winslow and a few other tourists, Pendleton visited the Iao Valley battlefield, where in 1790 the forces of Kamehameha I had conquered Maui:

The place is Covered with humane Bones for the Space of half an acher square. Doctor Winslow got a skeleton intire—To judge from appearance I should think there was many thousand Killed & thrown together in heaps.

On 20 June the group climbed 3,000 feet above Wailuku to survey the view. Descending to 1,000 feet Pendleton decided to make the last leg Hawaiian style. Putting a bunch of grass under his backside, he slid down a well-worn path to Wailuku, arriving rapidly and with a good appetite.

The next day, elaborate plans were made for a trek to the summit of Haleakala crater. On 23 June, seventeen people set out in all, including a guide, water bearers, and baggage handlers, struggling with "Cooked & live fowls Potatoes Taro & a number of Small Stores."

Pendleton and his few companions ascended on horseback, finding the lava-strewn path rough going indeed, although the party soon outdistanced its bearers. Stopping to wait at a cave halfway to the summit, the group took in a view which was enough to moderate their hunger pangs:

... we had a fine view of the Clouds brought in by the Traids Wind from one side and by the Variables from the other—They would come neerly in colition with Each other leeving a narrow strip through which we could look down beneath us with great delite ... at ½ past 6 took supper & made preparation for spending the Night in the Cave. ... The Sunset Seenary was the handsomest I ever [saw] The Clouds were fart below us & formed a deliteful scene it look like a large field of ice with here and there a snow topped mountain—Large Sittes could be seen in imagination with its domes and Steeples towering fare into the Skey. Takeing it altogether it formed a most Pictresque...

While master of the Betsey Williams of Stonington, 1851–1854, Captain Pendleton drew portraits of ships spoken at sea. Courtesy of the Kendall Whaling Museum, Sharon, Massachusetts.
Ship Betty Williams, of Noreington

Sat., 14th. Ships 2 of them closing. Sat. 17th, Spoke the Northern Light of Nantucket, Captain Hall, had taken one whale this season, and pursued a Noreington Bower, the Ship Close in to the Reck.
Sat., 25th. 40. N. 5 Long. 15. 22. 00. East.

Saturday, May 14th.

Commences with light airs from the westward, the ships lying close in with the S. in pursuit of a bower. Middle part of the wind from the east, marked the ships to windward, held 132. 15. Ships of Darling and 3 Cutting of a Republic, P'th we pursued bower, and spoke the Republic of Nantucket. Captain Hall, close in this season. and then the Master of Nantucket Capt. Hoblams, a drift whale this season. I went on board of the two brothers and got 9 hanks of twine for which I paid five dollars. The last part of the day, no sign of whales. So ended.
 Sat. 05.25. 12. N. Long. 15. 22. 00. East.

Sunday, May 15th.

All of these twenty-four hours pleasant day. From the S'w. and fine weather. All in the main hatch. Watching the ships to windward through the ice, and a number of whales that the ships were chasing. We heard for two and a half hours, and 15 ships 3 of them got whales. So ended.
Sat., 45.19. 02. 15 Long. 15. 23. 05. East.
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Scene I think if any one had seen us Setting around the Fire in Front of the Cave They
would said we made a moatly appearance—at 9 PM we made a Field Bed in the Cave &
all turned in. . . .

At dawn a grouchy, flea-bitten group emerged sleepily from the cave. Spirits
were restored by crackers and coffee; then came the climb to Haleakala’s rim:

... it Sirtenly is a grand sight, the bottom is 2700 feet below the highest part of the
rim . . . at the bottom there is 15 distinct cones . . . We passed around the N side
untill we came to the place where they go down with Horses We descened to the
bottom . . . When one gets to the bottom . . . they find the Cones which looked quite
small from the top to be very large we went up one of them it had a hollow in the
Senter about 100 feet deep & one mile in secumfrence . . . On crossing the Cratter
we found a number of caves where the laver had cooled & left it hollow underneath for
Several hundred feet . . . We crossed the Cratter & went out the opiset side to that
we Entered & heading for the ocean by Kaupo.

At Kaupo, where he stayed in the native-style home of French missionaries,
Pendleton was impressed by the sense of order and dedication of his hosts, and
by the attentiveness of the Hawaiians attending school there. This experience
may have broadened the young skipper’s religious outlook somewhat. But his
religious sensibilities were outraged as he headed for Lahaina again on Sunday,
28 June. All along the way, the travelers were refused food and water on the
grounds that it was the Sabbath. Pendleton could cite scripture to suit his
purpose, furiously condemning the island missionaries’ misplaced zealousness:

Christ himself went through the Cornfield on the Saboth & plucked the Ears of Corn
because he hungred & David Eat . . . for the same reason & considered he was doing
Right & I would thank any man whether missionary or what not to tell me why a weary
hungry traviler should not be fed on the Saboth in this day & age of the world—Christ
declared if any one give but a cup of cold water in his name he should not loose his
reward

The following day, rested and replete, he was assured by a teacher that the
missionary establishment did not discourage Sunday charity. Pendleton was
prepared to give missionaries the benefit of the doubt; for all along his opinion
of native Hawaiians had been low:

... the Natives have but little Sence of Right & Wong & the principle of honnor does
not Exist among them in my Opinion—If they do Right it is through fear of being
detected in doing Rong & not through any morral or Religious Princerple—Haveing
had some dealings with them I have proved the above Statements to be facts—

Travel did not prove therapeutic. In July Pendleton’s condition relapsed,
and he spent the next month largely at leisure at Lahaina and, when that town’s
heat became unbearable, Wailuku. It was almost time for his ship’s return.

The Charles Phelps had not been overlucky during Pendleton’s convalescence,
taking only two whales. In May, when the Phelps spoke the Tiger of Stonington,
the crew heard a premature report that Pendleton was on the mend. When
the Phelps neared Lahaina on 11 August, Pendleton eagerly met her, going

Captain Gilbert Pendleton, Jr.’s journal account of the Charles Phelps’s provisioning costs
at Lahaina, 1846. Courtesy of the Kendall Whaling Museum, Sharon, Massachusetts.
aboard with the harbor master and U.S. consul. In ten days the ship was ready for sea again. Despite his impatience to sail, Pendleton found it hard, on 21 August, to say goodbye to his friends and traveling companions, admitting that "I never left anyone with so much reluctance as I did Dr. Winslow & family accept my own." Pendleton's hoped-for twenty-month voyage had already stretched to twenty-six, and there was no end in sight: the Phelps was not nearly full. She would have to spend another season in the Pacific. Reflecting on this, Pendleton chose to view the situation with conventional humility:

"...I came home to my dear family they were glad to see me & gave me a hearty welcome So Ends this hard wearing voyage & I thank God for it."

A season in the Southeast Pacific provided four more whales, and 6 August 1847, Pendleton decided to head for home, citing poor weather, a leaky ship and the scarcity of whales as his reasons, not his deteriorating health or the growing sullenness of his crew.

The Charles Phelps made Stonington on 15th April 1847, with an estimated cargo of about 1,765 barrels of oil (65 sperm) and 16,000 pounds of Baleen. There was room aboard for another 1,000 barrels. But Pendleton was grateful just to be home, and, no doubt, to behold the daughter he had never seen:

NOTES

1 Personal details of Captain Gilbert Pendleton, Jr.'s 1844–1847 voyage and his stay on Maui are taken, except where otherwise noted, from his Journal kept on board Ship Charles Phelps of Stonington, 1844–1847 (Kendall Whaling Museum, Sharon, Massachusetts). Hereafter cited as KWM. Dates given in the text correspond to those
in Pendleton's journal. An account of the Charles Phelps's 1844–1847 voyage may be
found serialized in James H. Weeks, "Charles Phelps and Progress. A Whale Ship's
History as told in Documents and Log Books," The Westerly (Rhode Island) Daily
Sun, 11–12, 14–19 and 21 January 1900.

8 Pendleton, Charles Phelps Journal, 16 March 1846 (KWM); Logbook kept on board
Ship Charles Phelps of Stonington, 1844–1847 (Nicholson Whaling Collection, Providence
Public Library, Providence, Rhode Island), ibid. Hereafter cited as NWC, PPL.

9 Gilbert Pendleton, Jr., Journal kept on board Ship Betsey Williams of Stonington,
1851–1854 (KWM), 19 July 1852.

10 Ibid., Journal kept on board Ships Thomas Williams of Stonington, 1840–1842 and
Charles Phelps of Stonington, 1842 (KWM); Weeks, Westerly Daily Sun, 2 and 3
January 1900.

11 Gilbert Pendleton, Jr., Journal kept on board Ship Mary and Susan of Stonington,
1848–1850 (KWM), 15 February 1849.


13 Francis A. Lester, Logbook or Journal kept on board Ship Mary and Susan of
Hereafter cited as CHS (Microfilm on file at International Marine Archives, Incor-
porated, Nantucket, Massachusetts), 16 August 1849.

14 Weeks, Westerly Daily Sun, 11 January 1900.

15 Ibid.

16 Lester, Mary and Susan Logbook Journal, 14 January 1850.

17 Pendleton, Betsey Williams Journal (KWM), 17 April 1854.

18 Weeks, Westerly Daily Sun, 2 January 1900.


20 Ibid., 17 February 1846; Charles Phelps Logbook (NWC, PPL), 16 February 1846.

21 Henry W. Balch, M.D., The Seamen's Medical Guide, A Treatise on Various Diseases,
... Designed for the Wants of Seamen, and Others, When a Physician Cannot be

22 Lahaina Restoration Foundation, Story of Lahaina (second printing, Lahaina:

23 Opinions vary slightly on the exact number. See ibid., Maui Historical Society,
p. 7; or Maxine Mrantz, Whaling Days in Old Hawaii (Honolulu: Aloha Graphics


26 Ibid., 23 June 1846.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., 24 June 1846.
29 Ibid., 28 June 1846.
30 Ibid., 14 June 1846.
31 Charles Phelps Logbook (NWC, PPL), 7 May 1846; quoted also in Weeks, Westerly Daily Sun, 18 January 1900.
32 Charles Phelps Logbook (NWC, PPL), 11 August 1846; Pendleton, Charles Phelps Journal (KWM), ibid.
33 Pendleton, Charles Phelps Journal (KWM), 21 August 1846.
34 Ibid., 25 August 1846.
36 Pendleton, Charles Phelps Journal (KWM), 15 April 1847.
37 Pendleton, Mary and Susan and Betsey Williams Journals (KWM), passim. Statistics of these voyages may be found in Starbuck, pp. 450-451 and 490-491.
38 Weeks, Westerly Daily Sun, 11 January 1900.
39 "Fate of Bark Progress Warning to Those Who Urge Taking Constitution to Chicago," The New Bedford Sunday Standard, 26 October 1930. Hereafter cited as "Fate of Bark Progress."
40 Ibid.; Starbuck, pp. 612-613.
42 "Fate of Bark Progress."