

Matt Porter, sailing deckhand

August 6, 2014

I was one of the lucky people chosen to travel on board the Charles W. Morgan as a sailing deckhand. Before I started working here at Mystic Seaport I didn't know anything about whaling or boats nor did I even realize people still sailed vessels like this. Now four years later I have been sailing on the worlds last wooden whale ship with the crew, the guests, the voyagers and the rest of the sailing deckhands, all of us experiencing something we never thought would happen.

During the Morgan's sails, We were able to get a glimpse of what the crews for the Morgan saw on its 37 previous voyages; scrubbing down the deck, getting the ship to heave to, stowing the sails in less than ideal conditions, sailing near Martha's Vineyard and heading back home to New Bedford. Leaving New Bedford after a brief stay and setting off in search of Whales. Getting to witness whale boats being lowered away and rowing after whales, coming within an oars length of them. Realizing how large a whale is compared to these small boats and what may have been running through the crew head as they approached this giant animal. Its not everyday you hear the phrase "Aaaah... We can't come back right now, there's a whale underneath us". All of these experiences bringing us so close to the history we impart to our patrons.

I believe the sailing deckhands and everyone else who participated in the 38th voyage, are able to bring new information to their respective departments about this vessel and its voyage and use it to speak of our own experiences and its history in a new light. For me personally it was learning a lot more about sailing the morgan and sailing in general from the Morgan's crew, that whales don't like to stay in the same place for long so theres a lot of rowing in different directions until you finally get close to one, And after a long day of work, those Fo'c'sle bunks are actually pretty comfortable. This has been such an amazing experience for everyone who took part in the Charles W. Morgans 38th Voyage, and I am so grateful to everyone who made this experience possible.