

THE *CHARLES W. MORGAN* BY THE NUMBERS

Length: 113 feet 11 inches

Beam (width): 27 feet 8 inches

Sailing Draft (depth): 17 feet from the waterline to the bottom of the keel

Height of mainmast: 110 feet above the deck

Sail area: 7,134 square feet of sail

Number of whaling voyages: 37

Years whaling: 1841 to 1921

Average length of whaling voyages: 2 to 5 years

Longest voyage: Voyage 12 at 1,801 days (1881-86)

Shortest voyage: Voyage 37 at 262 days (1920-21)

Average number of whales caught per voyage: 60

Gallons of whale oil needed to fill the hold: 75,000

Number of crew needed to work the ship:

30 with four whaleboats (1841-67); 35 with five whaleboats (1867-1921)

Largest number of crew on one voyage: 113 men over the course of Voyage 6 (1859-63); since only 30 men were needed to work the ship, many sailors joined, then deserted, and very few of the original crew remained aboard for the entire voyage.

Number of men who served on the *Charles W. Morgan*:

over 1,600 from around the world, including Cabo Verde, Azores, Europe, Japan, and the Pacific Islands, especially Guam.

Number of women who sailed aboard the *Charles W. Morgan* while whaling: 5 women on 9 voyages

Last time the *Charles W. Morgan* sailed: 2014 on what was called the "38th Voyage"

Length of time to build the *Charles W. Morgan*:

7 months at the Hillman Brothers Shipyard in New Bedford, Massachusetts

Cost to build and outfit in 1841: \$52,800
(about \$1.9 million in 2025 dollars)

To learn more about the skills needed to outfit a whaleship, please visit these other exhibits at Mystic Seaport Museum:

Whaleboat Shed

Cooperage

Shipsmith

Sail Loft (above the Rigging Loft)

Shipyards Exhibit Gallery

WELCOME TO
THE *CHARLES W. MORGAN*



THE CHARLES W. MORGAN SELF-GUIDED TOUR

1 Mainmast

The mainmast is the ship's tallest mast at 110 feet. Imagine how much force the wind and sea put on the mast and consider what an astounding feat of technology it took to keep it upright. The *Morgan* had about 150 different lines that controlled the sails. Sailors had to know what every line did and where it was fastened down.

2 Mrs. Tinkham's Cabin

Clara Taber was 20 years old when she married Captain John Tinkham (age 36) and went to sea on the *Morgan* in 1875. She suffered terrible seasickness. Captain Tinkham had the cabin built to give her fresh air and some precious privacy. Clara continued to suffer, however, and finally left the *Morgan* after 19 months at sea. She later said part of her discomfort was "the smell of blubber, and pigs and hens running loose about the deck and having to eat food made of sour dough."

3 Galley

The galley is the kitchen where the cook made meals for up to 35 crew members. The food was boring: mostly salted beef, pork, dried fish, and hardtack—a thick, double-baked, long-lasting cracker. Hardtack was so hard that sailors had to dip pieces into sauce to bite into them. It was hot, grueling work to be a cook on a whaleship.

4 Wheel

The wheel to steer the ship is mounted directly on a short tiller. Known as a "shin-kicker," the wheel and tiller moved back and forth as the sailors steered. Those at the wheel could not see the front of the ship and used the compass or the angle of the wind in the sails to steer.

5 Captain's Quarters

The captain had more space than anyone else aboard, including a sitting room, bedroom, and his own toilet. The bed was gimballed—hung on hooks with weight on the bottom—so it stayed level when the ship rolled on the waves.

6 Officers' Dining Area

The captain and officers ate at this table, unlike the sailors who ate wherever they worked or slept. The mizzenmast passes right through the table. All three of the ship's masts go through the deck and fit into sockets on top of the keel, the backbone of the ship.

7 Cabins

The cabins in the back, or aft, part of the ship were for the officers, harpooners, and "idlers," crew with specific skills such as carpenters, smiths, or coopers (barrel-makers). The bunks may look short, but they range from 5 feet 8 inches to over 6 feet in length.

8 Blubber Room

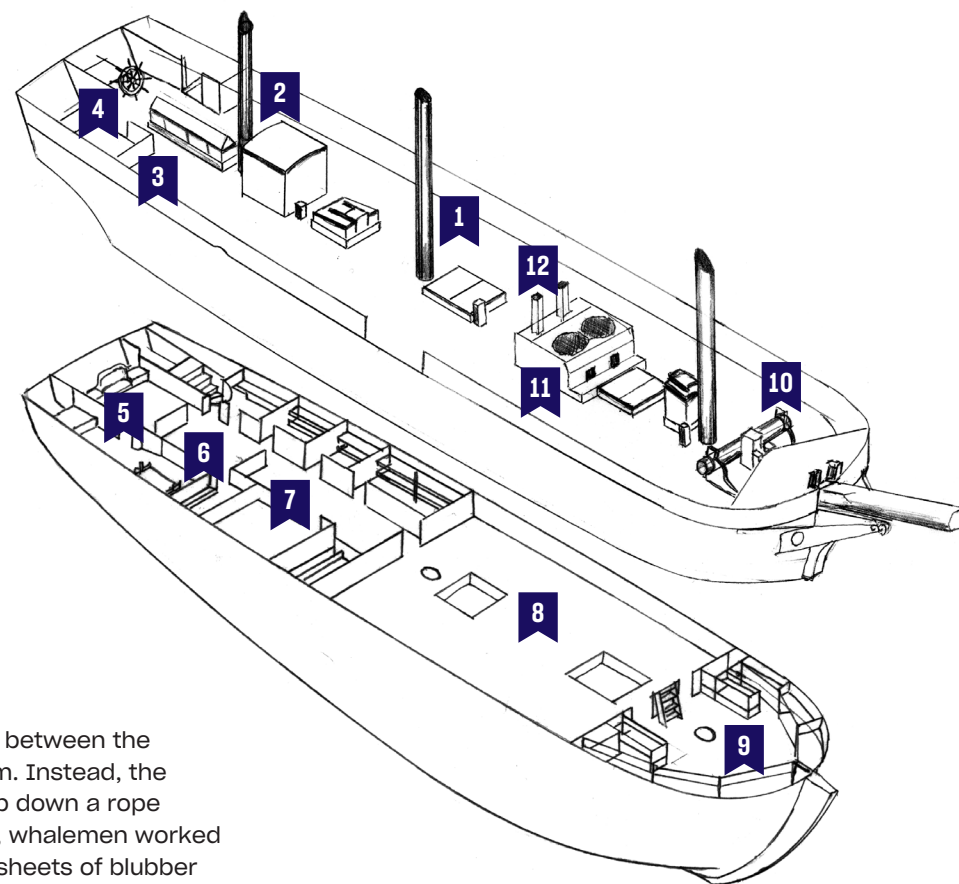
There was originally no hole in the wall between the officers' quarters and the blubber room. Instead, the crew had to go on deck and then climb down a rope ladder to enter it. In the blubber room, whalemens worked on their hands and knees to cut large sheets of blubber into "horse pieces" for rendering in the tryworks on deck. Below the blubber room is the hold where supplies and casks of oil were stored. It took roughly 75,000 gallons of oil (from about 60 whales) to fill the ship.

9 Forecastle (Fo'c'sle)

Twenty-two sailors lived here. Officers' cabins had light, air, and privacy, but the sailors' quarters were dark, crowded, poorly ventilated, and very damp. The only way in or out of the fo'c'sle was the steep ladder. Each whaleman had his own bunk, but there wasn't much space for personal belongings.

10 Windlass

Up on deck is the windlass. Sailors pumped up and down on the windlass handles to bring in the anchors, which weighed between 1,000 and 2,000 pounds, and the heavy anchor chain. Heaving in an anchor could require half a day of hard manual labor, followed by cleaning the chain and stowing it below. The windlass was also used to lift the one-ton pieces of blubber onto the deck.



11 Tryworks

The tryworks are a large brick oven with two cast-iron trypots used to boil the blubber after it was removed from the whale. Blubber was cut into "horse pieces" belowdecks then sent up on deck where it was sliced into "books" or "bible leaves" that opened like pages in a book. This exposed more surface area to heat and made the blubber melt more quickly. It was impossible for the ship to carry enough firewood, so the tryworks were fueled with "cracklings," pieces of skin and tissue that remained after the rest of the blubber had been rendered into oil. It usually took 24 to 48 hours to cut in and "try out" a whale.

12 Carpenter's Bench

The ship's carpenter performed repairs, particularly to the whaleboats, using this bench and the vise at the end. Chickens were kept in pens underneath the bench, both for eggs and for fresh meat.