

A Treasure Trove: the William H. Goodell Collection

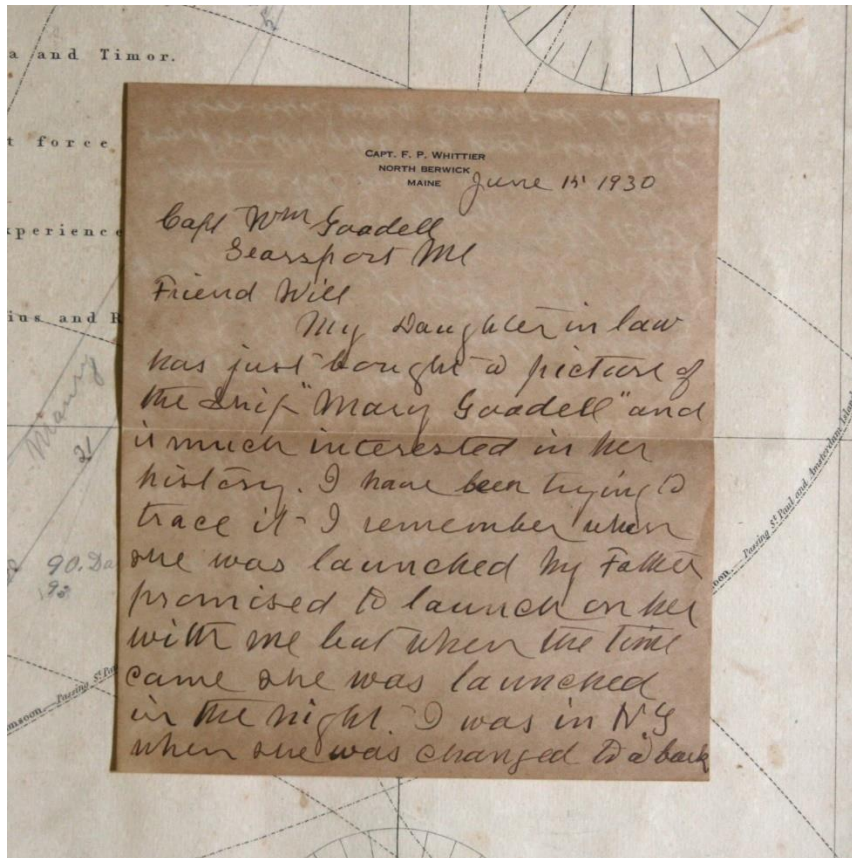
By Cipperly Good, the Richard Saltonstall Jr. Curator of Maritime History

Daniel S. Goodell arrived in Searsport in 1855, and in 1859, set up a shipyard at the foot of Navy Street with William McGilvery. When not overseeing the shipyard, he captained various ships, including the family namesake, the ship MARY GOODELL, from 1854-1859. As soon as his two sons were old enough to go to sea, he sent them to apprentice as—and later become—master mariners in their own right. His eldest son, Daniel Jr., was active from 1875 to 1895. His youngest son, William Heagan Goodell, captained the bark GOODELL from 1882-1883, as well as the Searsport-built ROBERT PORTER, retiring from sea in 1886. Recently, we received a bequest from the estate of William's son, William H. Goodell, Jr. This large bequest contains ship paintings, shipboard tools, shipping papers and logbooks, and other ephemera from the Goodells' time at sea.

Here are a few items of interest that we have uncovered as we sort through the Collection.



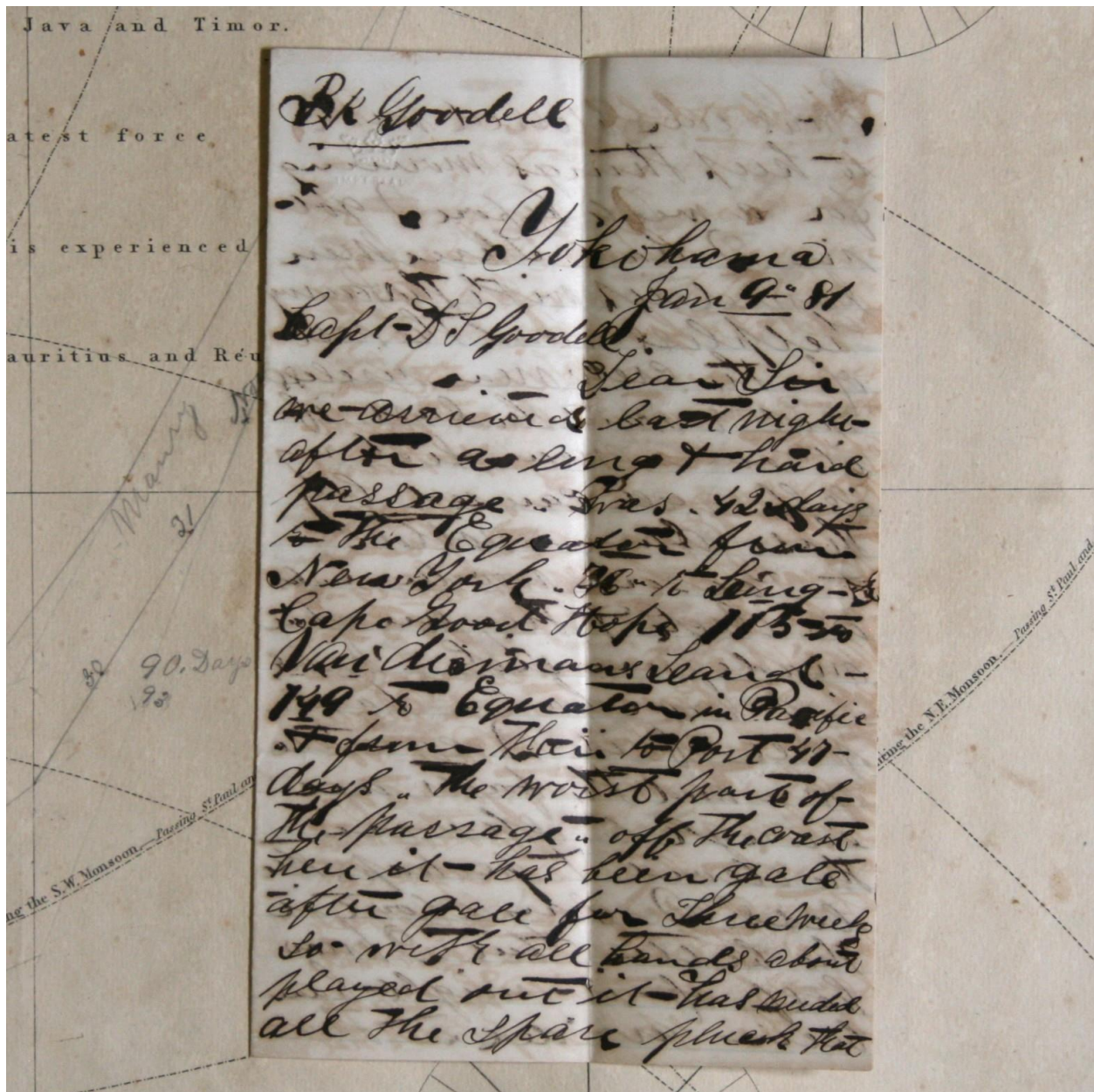
Painting of the ship MARY GOODELL at the mouth of the Elbe River by Petersen of Hamburg, Germany. The artist was either Lorenz or his son Heinrich A.H. Petersen. Daniel S. Goodell Sr. commissioned master builder Eben Mayo to construct the MARY GOODELL in 1854 and was its master until 1859.



Letter from Captain Frank P. Whittier to Captain William Goodell in 1930 reminiscing about how he missed out on the chance to attend the launching of the MARY GOODELL because they launched it in the night, way past the bedtime of a 5-year-old boy.

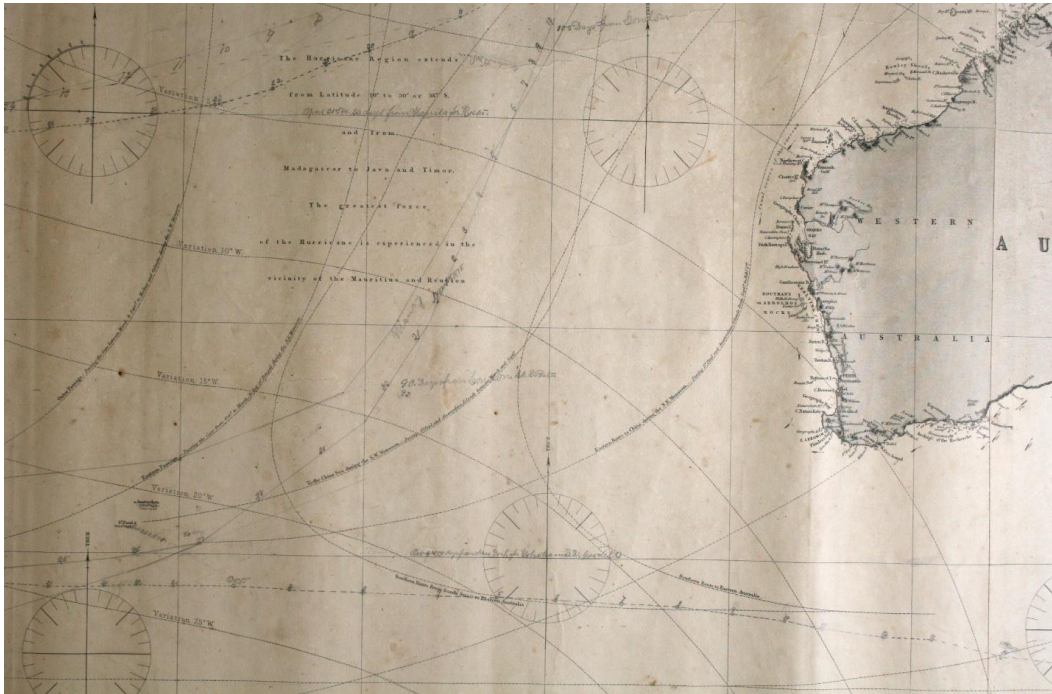


Painting of the bark GOODELL by Percy Sanborn of Belfast, Maine, copying a ship portrait by W.H. York that was also donated to the Museum. Daniel S. Goodell Sr. commissioned master builder Elisha Dunbar to construct the GOODELL in his yard in 1866. William H. Goodell was its captain from 1880-1883.

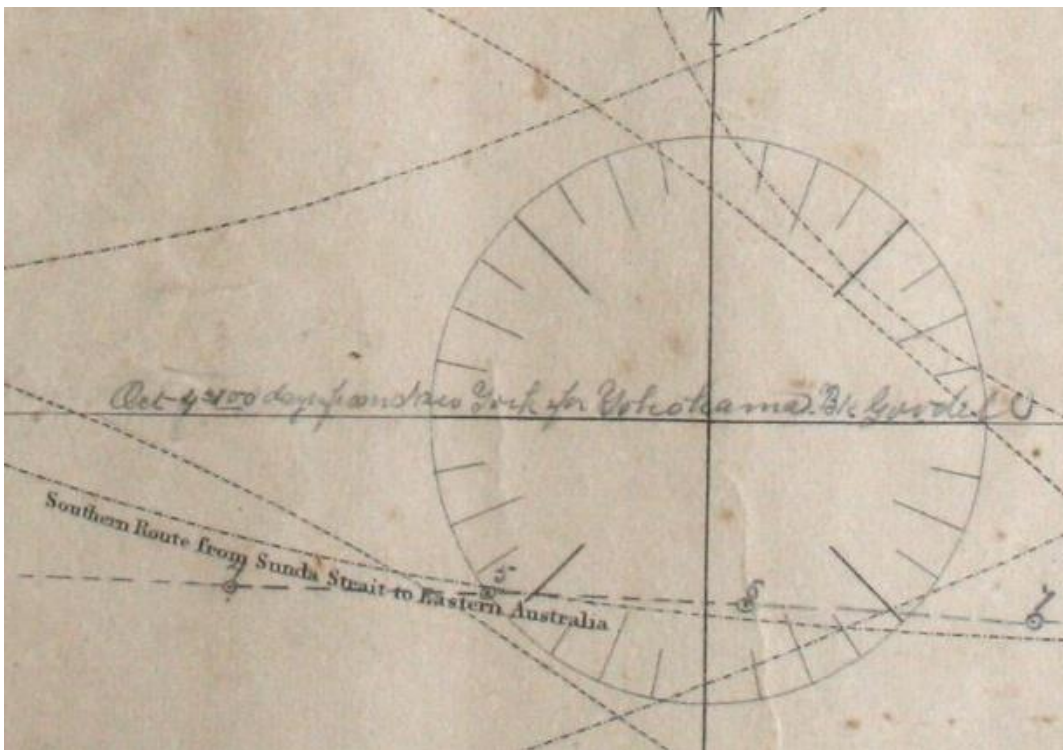


Letter from Captain William H. Goodell to his father Captain Daniel S. Goodell Sr. from Yokohama in 1881 while the bark GOODELL was in port.

“We arrived last night after a long & hard passage. Was 42 days to the Equator from New York, 72 to [illegible] Cape Good Hope 115 to Van Diemens Land- 149 to Equator in Pacific & from there to Port 47 days. The worst part of the passage off the coast here it has been gale after gale for three weeks so with all hands about played out it has needed all the spare pluck that I was ever blessed with to keep things moving for a week before I got in. I had three men layed up with the Scurvy helpless and the rest of the crew near useless and toward the last of it ever near sick myself.”



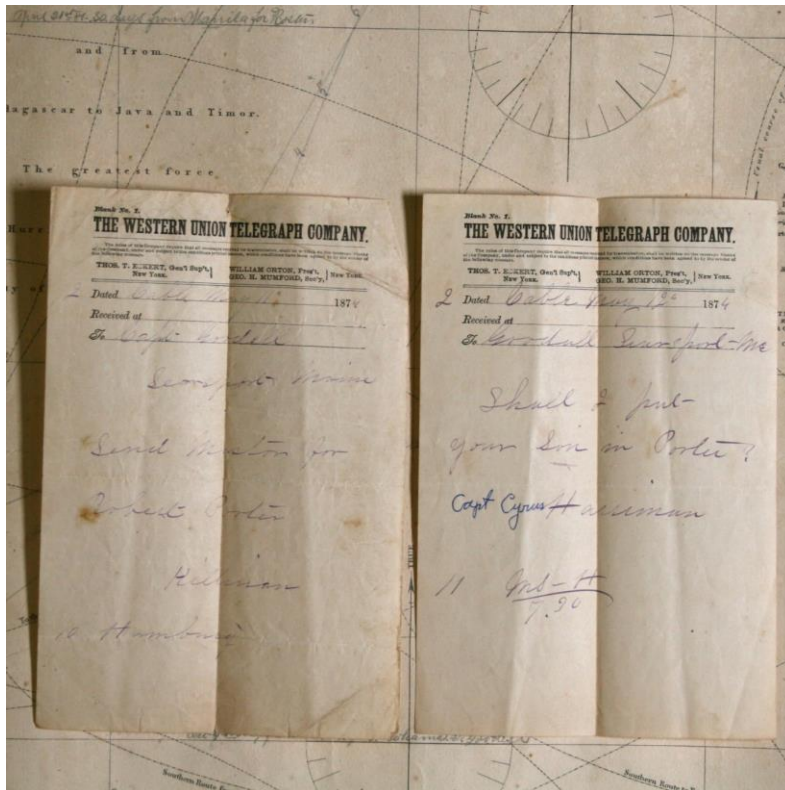
Nautical chart of the Indian Ocean with course tracks handwritten by the Goodells. Of note are the two tracks for the bark GOODELL and the bark ROBERT PORTER.



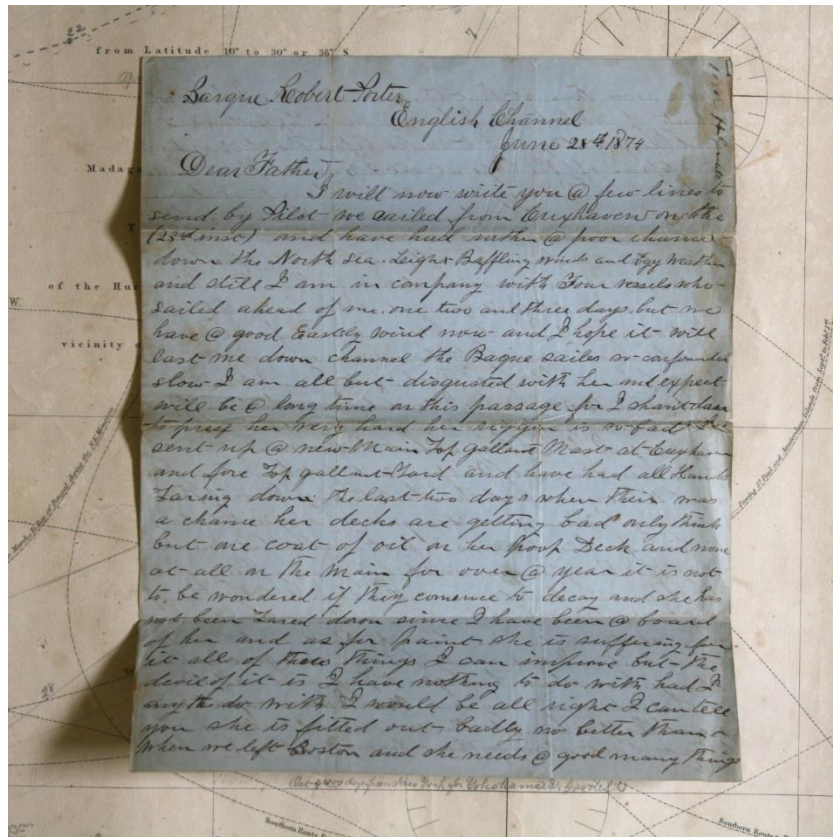
*"October 4th 100 days from New York for Yokohama Bk. Goodell"
Could this be a record of the voyage that William referenced in his letter?*



Painting of the bark ROBERT PORTER of Helgioland in the North Sea by Heinrich A.H. Petersen and Peter C. Holm of Hamburg, Germany. Robert Porter commissioned master builder Elisha Dunbar to construct the ROBERT PORTER in 1865. William H. Goodell was its master from 1874-1878.



Telegrams from shipping agent in Hamburg to Daniel S. Goodell Sr., the owner of the bark ROBERT PORTER, requesting a captain for the ship (left) and the query the next day, "Should I put your son in Porter?" Thus began William H. Goodell, Sr.'s command of the ROBERT PORTER.



Letter from William Goodell to his father a month after taking command of the ROBERT PORTER. Although the letter does not reference the ship's painting, William sailed past the mouth of the Elbe River at Cuxhaven and by Helgoland on his way to the English Channel.



"90 Days from London Bk. R. Porter" Detail from Indian Ocean Chart. Could this be William's ongoing voyage from the English Channel referenced in the letter above?



1878 documentation of the ROBERT PORTER shipping guano from Punta de Lobos, Peru to “Queenstown, Falmouth or Plymouth” in the British Isles Signed by Wm. H. Goodell.

As we process the Collection, we are sure to find more treasures. Having logbooks, nautical charts, and shipping papers for the same cargo vessels will lead to even more interconnections and allow us to tell the story of Searsport ships and captains even more fully. Stay tuned as we dig in!