

## Winthrop's Journal, Part 1:

the Voyage aboard the Arbella, March -

July, 1630

### The Journal of John Winthrop, Part 1

The Voyage of the Fleet and its Arrival in New England

March 29 to July 8, 1630

#### Introduction

This is the best known account of the voyage of the fleet of 1630, including nine weeks and 2 days in the open Atlantic Ocean, April 8 to June 12, 1630. John Winthrop, aboard the Arbella, gave a spare account of the weather and the ship's progress. There was some excitement as they expected attack from French enemy ships on leaving the English Channel. But we greatly regret that he would not add many human details of life aboard ship and an anecdote or two, but such diaries of the time seldom did. Nevertheless, we can read somewhat between the lines to imagine what such a passage was like, for this was perhaps a typical westward transatlantic voyage of that period. Mainly cold, rough, and wet weather: headwinds on most days, with fastest travel during the occasional northerly gales. On the rare calm day, fires could be lit to cook food. Other times there was fasting. We invite the reader to exercise the imagination and relive this exciting episode in our 17th century history.

This text was prepared from Winthrop's original by John Porter, secretary to Gov. Trumbull, 1788, then redacted by the famous historian James Savage a few decades later. The Winthrop Society has made a few negligible changes to make the text more accessible to the modern reader, notably the modernization of spelling and a few parenthetical clarifications in italics.

Easter Monday, 29 March, Anno Domini 1630

Riding at the Cowes, near the Isle of Wight, on the Arbella, a ship of three hundred and fifty tons, whereof Capt. Peter Milborne was Master, being manned with fifty-two seamen, and twenty-eight pieces of ordnance, (the wind coming to the N by W the evening before,) in the morning there came aboard us Mr. (Matthew) Cradock, the late Governor, and the Masters of his two ships, Capt. John Lowe, master of the Ambrose, and Mr. Nicholas Hurlston, master of the Jewel, and Mr. Thomas Beecher, master of the Talbot, (which three ships rode

then by us, the Charles, the Mayflower, the William and Francis, the Hopewell, the Whale, the Success and the Trial being still at Hampton and not ready,) when, upon conference, it was agreed, that (in regard it was uncertain when the rest of the fleet would be ready) these four ships should consort together; the Arbella to be admiral, the Talbot vice-admiral, the Ambrose rear-admiral, and the Jewel a captain; and accordingly articles of consortship were drawn between the said captains and masters; whereupon Mr. Cradock took leave of us, and our captain gave him a farewell with four or five shot.

About ten of the clock we weighed anchor and set sail, with the wind at N, and came to an anchor again over against Yarmouth, and the Talbot weighed likewise, and came and anchored by us. Here we met with a ship of Hampton, called the Plantation, newly come from Virginia. Our Captain saluted her, and she us again; and the master, one Mr. Graves, came on board our ship, and stayed with us about two or three hours, and in the meantime his ship came to an anchor by us.

Tuesday, 30 March, 1630

In the morning, about ten of the clock, the wind being come to the W with fair weather, we weighed and rode nearer Yarmouth. When we came before the town, the castle put forth a flag. Our captain saluted them, and they answered us again. The Talbot, which rode farther off, saluted the castle also.

Here we saw, close by the shore of the Isle of Wight, a Dutch ship of one thousand tons, which, being bound to the East Indies, about two years since, in passing through the Needles, struck upon a rock, and being forced to run ashore to save her men, could never be weighed since, although she lies a great height above the water, and yet she hath some men aboard her.

Wednesday, 31 March, 1630

The wind continued West and Southwest with rain. Our captain and some of our company went to Yarmouth for supply of wood and other provisions (our captain was still careful to fill our empty casks with water).

Thursday, April 1st, 1630

The wind continued very strong at W and by S with much rain.

Friday, 2 April, 1630

We kept a fast aboard our ship and the Talbot. The wind continued still very high at W and S and rainy. In the time of our fast, two of our landsmen pierced a rundlet of strong water (Rum), and stole some of it, for which we laid them in bolts all the night, and the next morning the principal was openly whipped, and both kept with bread and water that day.

Saturday, 3 April, 1630

The wind continued still at W and with continual storms and rain.

Sunday, 4 April, 1630

Fair, clear weather. In the morning the wind W and by N, but in the afternoon SSW. This evening the Talbot weighed and went back to the Cowes, because her anchor would not hold here, the tide set with so strong a race.

Monday, 5 April, 1630

The wind still W and S with fair weather. A maid of Sir Richard Saltonstall fell down at the grating by the cook-room, but the carpenter's man, who occasioned her fall unwittingly, caught hold of her with incredible nimbleness, and saved her; otherwise she had fallen into the hold.

Tuesday, 6 April, 1630

Capt. Burleigh, captain of Yarmouth castle, a grave, comely gentleman, and of great age, came aboard us and stayed breakfast, and, offering us much courtesy, he departed, our captain giving him four shot out of the forecastle for his farewell. He was an old sea captain in Queen Elizabeth's time, and, being taken prisoner at sea, was kept prisoner in Spain three years. He and three of his sons were captains in Roe's voyage.

The wind was now come about to NE with very fair weather.

In the afternoon Mr. Cradock came aboard us, and told us, that the Talbot, Jewel, and Ambrose were fallen down into Stoke's Bay, intending to take their way by St. Helen's Point, and that they desired we could come back to them. Hereupon we came to council, and wrote unto them to take the first opportunity of the wind to fall down to us, and Mr. Cradock presently went back to them, our captain giving him three shot out of the steerage for a farewell.

Our captain called over our landsmen, and tried them at their muskets, and such

as were good shot among them were enrolled to serve in the ship, if occasion should be.

The Lady Arbella (Mrs. Isaac Johnson, the sister of Theophilus, Earl of Lincoln) and the gentlewomen, and Mr. (Isaac) Johnson and some others went on shore to refresh themselves.

Wednesday, 7 April, 1630

Fair weather, the wind easterly, in the morning a small gale, but in the afternoon it came about to the south. This afternoon our other consorts came up to us, and about ten or twelve Flemings, and all anchored by us, and the masters of the Jewel and of the Ambrose came aboard us, and our captain and they went on shore.

Towards night there came from the west a Fleming, a small man-of-war, with a Brazil man (ship) which he had taken prize, and came to anchor by us.

Thursday, 8 April, 1630

About six in the morning (the wind being E and N and fair weather) we weighed anchor and set sail, and before ten we got through the Needles, having so little wind as we had much to do to stem the tide, so as the rest of our fleet (we being nine in all, whereof some were small ships, which were bound for Newfoundland) could not get out all then till the ebb. In the afternoon the wind came S and W and we were becalmed, so as being not able to get above three or four leagues (a league was about 3 nautical miles) from the Needles, our captain tacked about, and putting his fore-sheets aback stays, he stayed for the rest of the fleet, and as they came by us we spoke to them, and about eight in the evening we let fall an anchor, intending to stop till the ebb. But before ten at night the wind came about to the N a good gale; so we put up a light in the poop, and weighed and set sail, and by daylight, Friday, 9 April, we were come to Portland; but the other ships being not able to hold up with us, we were forced to spare our mainsail, and went on with a merry gale. In the morning we descried from the top eight sail astern of us, (whom Capt. Lowe told us he had seen at Dunnose in the evening.) We supposing they might be Dunkirkers, our captain caused the gunroom and gundeck to be cleared; all the hammocks were taken down, our ordnance loaded, and our powder-chests and fireworks made ready, and our landsmen quartered among the seamen, and twenty-five of them appointed for muskets, and every man written down for his quarter.

The wind continued north with fair weather, and after noon it calmed, and we

still saw those eight ships to stand towards us; having more wind than we, they came up apace, so as our captain and the masters of our consorts were more occasioned to think they might be Dunkirkers, (for we were told at Yarmouth, that there were ten sail of them waiting for us) whereupon we all prepared to fight with them, and took down some cabins which were in the way of our ordnance, and out of every ship were thrown such bed matters as were subject to take fire, and we heaved out our long boats, and put up our waste cloths, and drew forth our men, and armed them with muskets and other weapons, and instruments for fireworks; and for an experiment our captain shot a ball of wild-fire fastened to an arrow out of a cross-bow, which burnt in the water a good time. The lady Arbella and the other women and children were removed into the lower deck, that they might be out of danger. All things being thus fitted, we went to prayer upon the upper deck. It was much to see how cheerful and comfortable all the company appeared; not a woman or child that showed fear, though all did apprehend the danger to have been great, if things had proved as might well be expected, for there had been eight against four, and the least of the enemy's ships were reported to carry thirty brass pieces; but our trust was in the Lord of Hosts; and the courage of our captain, and his care and diligence, did much encourage us. It was now about one of the clock, and the fleet seemed to be within a league of us; therefore our captain, because he would show he was not afraid of them, and that he might see the issue before night should overtake us, tacked about and stood to meet them, and when we came near we perceived them to be our friends, the Little Neptune, a ship of some twenty pieces of ordnance, and her two consorts, bound for the Straits; a ship of Flushing, and a Frenchman, and three other English ships bound for Canada and Newfoundland. So when we drew near, every ship (as they met) saluted each other, and the musketeers discharged their small shot; and so (God be praised) our fear and danger was turned into mirth and friendly entertainment. Our danger being thus over, we espied two boats on fishing in the channel; so every of our four ships manned out a skiff, and we bought of them great store of excellent fresh fish of divers sorts.

Saturday, 10 April, 1630

The wind at E and by N a handsome gale with fair weather. By seven in the morning we were come over against Plimouth.

About noon the wind slacked, and we were come within sight of the Lizard, and towards night it grew very calm and a great fog, so as our ships made no way.

This afternoon Mr. Hurlston, the master of the Jewel, came aboard our ship, and our captain went in his skiff aboard the Ambrose and the Neptune, of which one

Mr. Andrew Cole was master. There he was told, that the bark Warwick was taken by the Dunkirkers, for she came single out of the Downs about fourteen days since, intending to come to us to the Wight, but was never heard of since. She was a pretty ship of about eighty tons and ten pieces of ordnance, and was set out by Sir Ferdinando

Gorges, Capt. Mason, and others, for discovery of the great lake in New England, so to have intercepted the trade of beaver. The master of her was one Mr. Weatherell, whose father was master of one of the cattle ships, which we left at Hampton.

This day two young men, falling at odds and fighting, contrary to the orders which we had published and set up in the ship, were adjudged to walk upon the deck till night with their hands bound behind them, which accordingly was executed; and another man, for using contemptuous speeches in our presence, was laid in bolts till he submitted himself, and promised open confession of his offence.

I should have noted before, that the day we set sail from the Cowes, my son Henry Winthrop went on shore with one of my servants to fetch an ox and ten wethers (sheep), which he had provided for our ship, and there went on shore with him Mr. (William) Pelham and one of his servants. They sent the cattle aboard, but returned not themselves. About three days after, my servant and a servant of Mr. Pelham's came to us to Yarmouth, and told us they were all coming to us in a boat the day before, but the wind was so strong against them, as they were forced on shore in the night, and the two servants came to Yarmouth by land, and so came on ship-board, but my son and Mr. Pelham (we heard) went back to the Cowes and so to Hampton. We expected them three or four days after, but they came not to us, so we have left them behind, and suppose they will come after in Mr. (Thomas) Goffe's ships. We were very sorry they had put themselves upon such inconvenience, when they were so well accommodated in our ship. This was not noted before, because we expected daily their return; and upon this occasion I must add here one observation, that we have many young gentlemen in our ship, who behave themselves well, and are conformable to all good orders.

About ten at night it cleared up with a fresh gale at N and by W, so we stood on our course merrily.

Sunday, 11 April, 1630

The wind at N and by W a very stiff gale. About eight in the morning, being

gotten past Scilly, and standing to the WSW we met two small ships, which falling in among us, and the admiral (leading ship) coming under our lee, we let him pass, but the Jewel and Ambrose, perceiving the other to be a Brazil man, and to take the wind of us, shot at them and made them stop and fall after us, and sent a skiff aboard them to know what they were. Our captain, fearing lest some mistake might arise, and lest

they should take them for enemies which were friends, and so, through the unruliness of the mariners some wrong might be done them, caused his skiff to be heaved out, and sent Mr. Graves, one of his mates and our pilot (a discreet man) to see how things were, who returned soon after, and brought with him the master of one of the ships and Mr. Lowe and Mr. Hurlston. When they were come aboard us, they agreed to send for the captain, who came and showed his commission from the Prince of Orange. In

conclusion he proved to be a Dutchman, and his a man-of-war of Flushing, and the other ship was a prize he had taken laden with sugar and tobacco; so we sent them aboard their ships again, and held on our course. In this time (which hindered us five or six leagues) the Jewel and the Ambrose came foul of each other, so as we much feared the issue, but, through God's mercy, they came well off again, only the Jewel had her foresail torn, and one of her anchors broken. This occasion, and the sickness of our minister and people, put us all out of order this day, so as we could have no sermons.

Monday, 12 April, 1630

The wind more large to the N a stiff gale, with fair weather. In the afternoon less wind, and our people began to grow well again. Our children and others, that were sick, and lay groaning in the cabins, we fetched out, and having stretched a rope from the steerage to the mainmast, we made them stand, some of one side and some of the other, and sway it up and down till they were warm, and by this means they soon grew well and merry.

Tuesday, 13 April, 1630

The night before it was calm, and the next day calm and close (headwinds) weather, so as we made little way, the wind with us being W.

Wednesday, 14 April, 1630

The wind SW, rainy weather in the morning.

About nine in the forenoon the wind came about to NNW a stiff gale; so we tacked about and steered our course WSW.

This day the ship heaved and set more than before, yet we had but few sick, and of these such as came up upon the deck, and stirred themselves, were presently well again; therefore our captain set our children and young men to some harmless exercises, which the seamen were very active in, and did our people much good, though they would sometimes play the wags with them. Towards night we were forced to take in some sail to stay for the vice-admiral, which was near a league astern of us.

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Thursday, 15 April, 1630

The wind still at NNW fair weather, but less wind than the day and night before, so as our ship made but little way.

At noon our captain made observation by the cross-staff, and found we were in forty-seven degrees thirty-seven minutes north latitude.

All this forenoon our vice-admiral was much to leeward of us; so after dinner we bare up towards her, and having fetched her up and spoken with her, the wind being come to SW we tacked about and steered our course NNW lying as near the wind as we could, and about four of the clock, with a stiff gale, we steered W and by N, and at night the wind grew very strong, which put us on to the W amain.

About ten at night the wind grew so high, and rain withal, that we were forced to take in our topsail, and having lowered our mainsail and foresail, the storm was so great as it split our foresail and tore it in pieces, and a knot of the sea washed our tub overboard, wherein our fish was a-watering. The storm still grew, and it was dark with clouds, (though otherwise moonlight) so as (though it was the Jewel's turn to carry the light this night, yet) lest we should lose or go foul one of another, we hanged out a light upon our mizzen shrouds, and before midnight we lost sight of our vice-admiral.

Our captain, so soon as he had set the watch, at eight in the evening called his men, and told them he feared we should have a storm, and therefore commanded them to be ready upon the deck, if occasion should be; and himself was up and down the decks all times of the night.



Friday, 16 April, 1630

About four in the morning the wind slacked a little, yet it continued a great storm still, and though in the afternoon it blew not much wind, yet the sea was so high as it tossed us more than before, and we carried no more but our mainsail, yet our ship steered well with it, which few such ships could have done.

About four in the afternoon, the wind still W and by S and rainy, we put on a new foresail and hoisted it up, and stood NW. All this day our rear-admiral and the Jewel held up with us.

This night was very stormy. All the time of the storm few of our people were sick, (except the women, who kept under hatches,) and there appeared no fear or dismay among them.

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Saturday, 17 April, 1630

The wind SW very stormy and boisterous. All this time we bore no more sail but our mainsail and foresail, and we steered our course W and by N.

This day our captain told me, that our landsmen were very nasty and slovenly, and that the gundeck, where they lodged, was so beastly and noisome (stinking) with their victuals and beastliness, as would much endanger the health of the ship. Hereupon, after prayer, we took order, and appointed four men to see to it, and to keep that room clean for three days, and then four others should succeed them, and so forth on.

The wind continued all this day at SW a stiff gale. In the afternoon it cleared up, but very hazy. Our captain, about four of the clock, sent one to the top to look for our vice-admiral, but he could not descry him, yet we saw a sail about two leagues to the leeward, which stood toward the NE.

We were this evening (by our account) about ninety leagues from Scilly, W and by S. At this place there came a swallow and lighted upon our ship.

Sunday, 18 April, 1630

About two in the morning the wind NW; so we tacked about and steered our course SW. We had still much wind, and the sea went very high, which tossed our ship continually.

After our evening sermon, about five of the clock, the wind came about to SE a good gale, but rainy; so we steered our course WSW and the ship's way was about nine leagues a watch; (a watch is four hours).

This day the captain sent to top again to discover our vice-admiral. We descried from thence to the eastward a sail, but we knew not what she was.

About seven of the clock the Jewel bare up so near as we could speak each to other, and after we bated some sail; so she went ahead of us, and soon after eight put forth her light.

Monday, 19 April, 1630

In the morning the wind was come about to the NW a good gale and fair weather; so we held our course, but the ship made not so good way as when the wind was large.

This day, by observation and account, we found ourselves to be in forty-eight degrees north latitude, and two hundred and twenty leagues west from the meridian of London.

Here I think good to note that all this time since we came from the (Isle of) Wight, we had cold weather, so as we could well endure our warmest clothes. I wish, therefore, that all such as shall pass this way in the spring have care to provide warm clothing; for nothing breeds more trouble and danger of sickness, in this season, than cold.

In the afternoon the wind came to SW a stiff gale, with rain; so we steered westerly, till night; then the wind came about to NW and we tacked again and stood SW.

Our rear-admiral being to leeward of us, we bare up to him. He told us all their people were in health, but one of their cows was dead.

Tuesday, 20 April, 1630

The wind southerly, fair weather, and little wind. In the morning we stood S and by E, in the afternoon W and by N.

Wednesday, 21 April, 1630

Thick, rainy weather; much wind at SW. Our captain, over night, had invited his consorts to have dined with him this day, but it was such foul weather as they could not come aboard us.

Thursday, 22 April, 1630

The wind still W and by S fair weather; then WNW.

This day at noon we found ourselves in forty-seven degrees and forty-eight minutes, and having a stiff gale, we steered SW about four leagues a watch, all this day and all the night following.

Friday, 23 April, 1630

The wind still WNW a small gale, with fair weather. Our captain put forth his ancient (flag) in the poop, and heaved out his skiff, and lowered his topsails, to give sign to his consorts that they should come aboard us to dinner, for they were both a good way astern of us, and our vice-admiral was not yet seen of us since the storm, though we sent to the top every day to descry her.

About eleven of the clock, our captain sent his skiff and fetched aboard us the masters of the other two ships, and Mr. Pynchon, and they dined with us in the round-house, for the lady and gentlewomen dined in the great cabin.

This day and the night following we had little wind, so as the sea was very smooth, and the ship made little way.

Saturday, 24 April, 1630

The wind still W and by N, fair weather and calm all that day and night. Here we made observation again, and found we were in forty-five degrees twenty minutes, north latitude.

Sunday, 25 April, 1630

The wind northerly, fair weather, but still calm. We stood W and by S and saw two ships ahead of us as far as we could descry.

In the afternoon the wind came W and by S but calm still. About five of the clock, the rear-admiral and the Jewel had fetched up the two ships, and by their saluting each other we perceived they were friends, (for they were so far to windward of us as we could only see the smoke of their pieces, but could not

hear them). About nine of the clock, they both fell back towards us again, and we steered NNW. Now the weather begins to be warm.

Monday, 26 April, 1630

The wind still W and by S close weather, and scarce any wind.

The two ships, which we saw yesterday, were bound for Canada. Capt. Kirk was aboard the admiral. They bare up with us, and falling close under our lee, we saluted each other, and conferred together so long till his vice-admiral was becalmed by our sails, and we were foul one of another; but there being little wind and the sea calm, we kept them asunder with oars, etc., till they heaved out their boat, and so towed their ship away.

They told us for certain, that the king of France had set out six of his own ships to recover the fort from them.

About one of the clock Capt. Lowe sent his skiff aboard us (with a friendly token of his love to the governor) to desire our captain to come aboard his ship, which he did, and there met the masters of the other ships and Capt. Kirk, and before night they all returned to their ships again, Capt. Lowe bestowing some shot upon them for their welcome.

The wind now blew a pretty gale, so as our ship made some way again, though it were out of our right course NW by N.

Tuesday, 27 April, 1630

The wind still westerly, a stiff gale, with close weather. We steered WNW. About noon some rain, and all the day very cold. We appointed Tuesdays and Wednesdays to catechize our people, and this day Mr. (George) Phillips began it.

Wednesday, 28 April, 1630

All the night, and this day till noon, the wind very high at SW, close weather, and some rain. Between eleven and twelve, in a shower, the wind came WNW, so we tacked about and stood SW.

Thursday, 29 April, 1630

Much wind all this night at W and by N and the sea went very high, so as the ship rolled very much, because we sailed but with one course; therefore, about

twelve, our captain arose and caused the fore topsail to be hoisted, and then the ship went more steady. He caused the quartermaster to look down into the hold to see if the cask lay fast and the . . . (illegible)

In the morning the wind continued with a stiff gale; rainy and cold all the day. We had been now three weeks at sea, and were not come above three hundred leagues, being about one third part of our way, viz., about forty-six north latitude, and near the meridian of the Terceras.

This night Capt. Kirk carried the light as one of our consorts.

Friday, 30 April, 1630

The wind at WNW, a strong gale all the night and day, with showers now and then.

We made observation, and found we were in forty-four north latitude. At night the wind scanted towards the S with rain; so we tacked about and stood NW and by N.

Saturday, May 1, 1630

All the night much wind at SSW and rain. In the morning the wind still strong, so as we

could bear little sail, and so it continued a growing storm all the day, and towards night so much wind as we bore no more sail but so much as should keep the ship stiff. Then it grew a very great tempest all the night, with fierce showers of rain intermixed, and very cold.

Lord's day, 2 May, 1630

The tempest continued all the day, with the wind W and by N, and the sea raged and tossed us exceedingly; yet, through God's mercy, we were very comfortable, and few or none sick, but had opportunity to keep the Sabbath, and Mr. Phillips preached twice that day. The Ambrose and Jewel were separated far from us the first night, but this day we saw them again, but Capt. Kirk's ships we saw not since.

Monday, 3 May, 1630

In the night the wind abated, and by morning the sea was well assuaged, so as we

bare our foresail again, and stood WSW; but all the time of the tempest we could make no way, but were driven to the leeward, and the Ambrose struck all her sails but her mizzen, and lay a hull. She broke her main yard. This day we made observation, and found we were in forty-three and a half north latitude. We set two fighters in the bolts till night, with their hands bound behind them. A maid-servant in the ship, being stomach-sick, drank so much strong water, that she was senseless, and had near killed herself. We observed it a common fault in our young people, that they gave themselves to drink hot waters very immoderately.

Tuesday, 4 May, 1630

Much wind at SW, close weather. In the morning we tacked about and stood NW and about ten in the morning WNW, but made little way in regard of the head sea.

Wednesday, 5 May, 1630

The wind W and by S thick, foggy weather, and rainy; so we stood NW by W. At night the Lord remembered us, and enlarged the wind to the N; so we tacked about and stood our course W and by S with a merry gale in all our sails.

Thursday, 6 May, 1630

The wind at N a good gale, and fair weather. We made observation and found we were forty-three and a half north latitude; so we stood full west, and ran, in twenty-four hours, about thirty leagues.

Four things I observed here. 1) That the declination of the pole star was much, even to the view, beneath that it is in England. 2) That the new moon, when it first appeared, was much smaller than at any time I had seen it in England. 3) That all the way we came, we saw fowls flying and swimming, when we had no land near by two hundred leagues. 4) That wheresoever the wind blew, we had still cold weather, and the sun did not give so much heat as in England.

Friday, 7 May, 1630

The wind N and by E a small gale, very fair weather, and towards night

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