

# *The Voyage of the Margaret in 1801*

## *The First Salem Voyage to Japan*

BY JAMES DUNCAN PHILLIPS

FIFTY years ago Salem prided itself that the *Margaret* was the first American ship to visit Japan. This is not so. The first voyage was made by the ship *Franklin*, James Devereaux, Master, and reportedly owned in Boston, but the captain was a Salem man. The *Franklin* is reported as sailing from New York in December, 1797, and again at the Isle of France in April, 1798, each time as a Salem vessel<sup>1</sup>, and there are a lot of cancelled notes payable of the ship *Franklin*, of May, 1798, among the Derby MSS.<sup>2</sup> This ties her pretty closely to Salem down to May, 1798. She left Boston December 11, 1798, left Batavia June 17, 1799, left Japan November 25, 1799, and reached Boston May 20, 1800.<sup>3</sup> In October, 1801, she entered Salem from the next voyage with a cargo of over 600,000 lbs. of coffee, pepper, and sugar for Joseph Peabody from Batavia and paid nearly \$30,000 in duties.<sup>4</sup> She was registered as a Salem ship, November 3, 1801. Undoubtedly she must be legally called a Boston ship, but it looks very much as if the brains behind her trip were Salem brains. The trip from Batavia to Nagasaki was under charter from the Dutch East India Company as were the two subsequent voyages.

The next voyage in 1799 was that of the ship *Massachusetts* of Boston but we should have known very little

<sup>1</sup> *Salem Gazette*, Dec. 12, 1797, and April 30, 1798.

<sup>2</sup> Essex Institute MSS., Derby Family MSS., vol. 4, Commercial Papers, 1796-1804.

<sup>3</sup> *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, vol. 2, p. 287.

<sup>4</sup> *Salem Gazette*, Oct. 8, 1801. Salem Custom House Impost Book, Oct. 15, 1801.

about it if the Captain's clerk had not been William Cleveland of Salem, one of the three remarkable Cleveland brothers who had not only a flair for exploration and adventure but also for journalism and could write as well as they could sail. Cleveland's manuscript journal in tattered condition came to light and is excellent reading. The *Massachusetts* reached Japan in July, 1800, and left there in November, but that is a Boston story.

The ship *Margaret*, the third American to visit Japan, was certainly entirely a Salem venture but there was no intention of sending her to Japan when she left Salem. She was built in Salem by that famous builder of fine ships, Retire Becket, at his yard just below the House of the Seven Gables. She was launched in July, 1800, and registered, November 13, 1800, with John Derby, Benjamin Pickman, and Samuel Derby as owners.<sup>5</sup> She was 91 feet long, 27 feet 5 inches broad, and 13 feet 8 inches deep and rated at 295 tons. Her main mast was 60 feet with a topmast of 37 feet and a top gallant mast of 31 feet 6 inches and her main yard was 51 feet.<sup>6</sup> She was coppered for the eastern trade and was considered an excellent and fast sailing ship.

She was hardly launched before the owners planned a voyage for her. Samuel Derby, then thirty years old, one of the owners, was appointed master, and James Stuart and Thomas West first and second mates, and George Cleveland assistant, which probably meant captain's clerk. These four with the steward signed the Portledge Bill and went on board for duty September 15. The rest of the crew, including twelve seamen, a carpenter, and a cook, were not entered for duty till nearly two months later and only ten days before the sailing. The rates of pay are interesting. The able seamen got \$18 a month, two ordinary seamen got \$16 and an

<sup>5</sup> Phillips & Hitchins, Salem Ship Registers.

<sup>6</sup> Leavitt, "Ship Building," in *Essex Institute Hist. Coll.*, vol. 7, pp. 208, 212.

apprentice \$10. All the seamen had old Salem names like Cheever, Phippen, Rea, Ingersoll, and Cloutman. The apprentice was the only member of the crew with his monthly wages less than those of the captain who got only \$12 a month but he also had 5% commission on the voyage. The first and second mates had \$25 and \$23 respectively but also had cargo privileges of three tons and one and one-half tons. George Cleveland, the "assistant," got the same pay as an able seaman but his status was recognized by one and one-half tons privilege, and Nathaniel Cheever, evidently the Boatswain, got 800 lbs. It will be noticed that this is all based on the sound fundamental principle that only basic wages are paid, and if a man wants to really get up in the world he has got to do it by his own exertions. The full payroll of the ship was \$341 a month for officers and men.<sup>7</sup>

The voyage planned for the *Margaret* was to the Northwest coast of Sumatra. Just at this time the abundant supply of pepper on that coast had recently been discovered and pepper voyages were all the fashion. Fifty thousand dollars in specie were provided to buy the pepper which the *Margaret* was then to take to Manila and sell at 25% advance. If this profit could not be obtained the pepper could be brought home. With the proceeds, sugar and indigo were to be bought and if the price of indigo showed a 90% profit the captain was authorized to sell drafts at three or six months sight up to \$30,000 to buy it with. The question whether he could negotiate such drafts was up to the Captain. As an after thought, it occurred to the owners that he might slip across to Canton, and they furnished a list of prices there that would be desirable. They also want a few handsome sets of blue and white china including

"One set particularly elegant for Mr. Wm. Pickman  
One set           "           "           " Mr. John Derby"

<sup>7</sup> Derby MSS. at Essex Institute, vol. 23. This volume has no page numbers.

In all these pages of complicated instructions there is only one sentence that had the slightest influence on the voyage, namely, "It may be of importance to you to have discretionary orders and . . . we do explicitly authorize you to undertake any voyage while you are abroad which you have good reason to suppose will promote our interest." In other words, once out of sight of Baker's Island the voyage was entirely in the hands of the captain to do what he pleased with the ship and her \$50,000 in specie.

These old merchants discuss specie with such freedom that one is a bit intrigued to know where it came from. Apparently \$30,000 was received on board on October 21 from the Merrimack Bank in Newburyport<sup>8</sup> and the rest from Salem banks, but the primary source was the West Indies in exchange for lumber, cod-fish, and barrel staves. The lack of real facilities of foreign exchange required the carrying of large quantities of specie, more especially silver, around the world. Spanish silver dollars were good apparently anywhere and solved the problem of keeping foreign exchange at a parity.

The *Margaret* apparently largely in ballast with her \$50,000 in silver left Salem, November 25, 1800, and arrived in Table Bay, February 4, seventy-one days out of Salem. Cleveland says in his journal that "a finer, better fitted or better manned ship never left the port before."<sup>9</sup> On the way down they crossed the track of a fleet of merchantmen convoyed by a frigate which immediately gave chase. "We distanced her so much that in a very short time she gave it up." Cleveland does not say what nationality she was.

In this glorification of the *Margaret's* sailing qualities, Cleveland tactfully omits a little episode which appeared in John Crowninshield's little journal of the voyage of the

<sup>8</sup> Derby MSS., vol. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Cleveland, "Journal," in *Essex Institute Hist. Coll.*, vol. 2, p. 167.

*America* in 1801<sup>10</sup> when he met the *Belisarius*, Captain Skerry, homeward bound from Sumatra. Skerry said he left Salem the afternoon of the day the *Margaret* did and many bets were laid on which would arrive first. Skerry said he arrived twenty-one days ahead of the *Margaret*. He loaded with pepper and may have helped to cause the shortage on the *Margaret's* arrival.

They saluted the Admiral's ship in Table Bay, which civility was returned. Cape Town was then held by the British for a few years. Captain Derby wrote a letter to his owners and pushed on for Sumatra, February 10, after taking on water and fresh provisions which cost \$82.40.

They had a tedious passage across the Indian Ocean with contrary winds and currents which the *Belisarius* probably escaped, but reached Bencoolen, Sumatra, on April 10, and here Captain Derby encountered the difficulty which changed the whole voyage. There wasn't any pepper to be bought on the coast at prices which interested him. There had been a drought. Other ships had bought up what pepper the Rajahs had for sale. The whole voyage as planned must be discarded, but that did not spell disaster for a determined man like Captain Derby and, in two weeks, he was in Batavia, the headquarters of the Dutch administration, to see what he could do. He was soon in touch with the Director General of the Dutch East India Company, one Johannes Siberg. Siberg wanted a staunch fast ship to carry the annual freights to Japan. The *Margaret* just fitted the occasion and within ten days of his arrival Derby had signed an agreement to go to Japan for 45,000 Spanish dollars, taking 250 tons of 1850 lbs. or its equivalent according to an agreed schedule, 80,000 lbs. of tin and 185,000 lbs. of powdered sugar in bags were to be rated at the full 1850 lbs. per ton, but of the powdered sugar in canisters 1400 lbs. were to be

<sup>10</sup> Peabody Museum MSS.

considered as a ton while Saspa wood (whatever that is), pepper and cotton yarn went at only 1250 lbs. per ton. On the return trip 3060 cases of copper were to be reckoned at 1850 lbs. per ton and 62,500 lbs. of camphor at 1250 lbs. per ton. The ton rating of 2000 copper cases and 1000 deal boards is not provided for.

The *Margaret* must load and sail before June 20th, must go direct to Japan and back without stopping anywhere. The Company's servants in Japan could not hold her after December first. Derby was to receive full freight whether he was permitted to deliver or receive cargo and he was to carry the Company's civil servants who might wish to go.

All of these clauses were as might be expected but there were others which I suspect were of even greater value to Derby. He was presently to find himself with the \$50,000 in specie he brought out and \$45,000 more he earned, less expenses. The Company held a near monopoly on the coffee and sugar trade and had been inclined to favor other purchasers than Americans. The seventh clause, therefore, provides that the freight shall be paid in Charibon or Jaccatra coffee at 13 or 11 dollars per picul, and the eighth clause, that he can also buy black pepper, sugar and indigo at his option at quoted prices.<sup>11</sup>

This provision for cargo was wise and profitable but another question now intruded itself into Captain Derby's puzzle, namely, how was he to get all this coffee and pepper and sugar and stuff home. Salem merchants had a well founded prejudice against leaving their property lying around in the chaotic world unless there was an able honest Salem skipper in direct charge of it. Fifty thousand dollars worth of pepper was reckoned to be a full cargo for the *Margaret* and now he was going to have \$95,000 worth of various commodities. Moreover as he had a little spare time

<sup>11</sup> Original Charter Party in Derby MSS., vol. 23.

before he left for Japan, he ran down to Charibon and brought a cargo of coffee up to Batavia for the company which netted him nearly \$1500 more in freights.

There were no ships for sale or hire at Batavia suitable for the voyage to America, so Captain Derby decided to buy a small craft and send her to the Isle of France in command of James Stuart, his mate, to buy a suitable vessel there and bring her back to Batavia to meet him on his return from Japan.

Captain Derby got a little too economical on this venture. He bought a little brig of 30 tons just before he left for Japan.<sup>12</sup> Stuart started to load her and found her leaky so bought the little brig *Theodora* and departed for the Isle of France on July 6.<sup>13</sup> He wrote the owners that if he could not buy a ship he would go back with opium.

At the Isle of France, Stuart had his troubles. He found a fine ship of 400 tons but could not raise the money to buy her. He finally did get a good Calcutta built ketch of 198½ tons coppered. He renamed her the *Three Friends* and manned her with Lascars as they were cheaper to feed.<sup>14</sup> This was financed by two bills of exchange on Thomas Amory of Boston for \$1400 and on Moore Wharton of Philadelphia for \$435 which he bought at 40 and 45% respectively, and presently sold his little brig and her cargo. The papers to tell just what Stuart did do are not in the files but there is a statement that he made \$217.80 on this side trip. It was September 23 before he reported the sale of the brig and final clearing up at the Isle of France but he was back in Batavia on November 12, before Derby arrived in the *Margaret*.

We have all been so indoctrinated with the idea that Japan was a sealed up country till Commodore Perry pried

<sup>12</sup> Derby to owner of *Margaret*, June 19, 1801, Derby MSS., vol. 23.

<sup>13</sup> Stuart to the owners July 1, 1801, Derby MSS., vol. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Stuart to owners Sept. 11, 1801, Derby MSS., vol. 23.

open the door in 1853 that it may be well to explain that the Portuguese discovered Japan in 1542 and that Spanish and Dutch traders followed close behind. St. Francis Xavier with a band of Jesuits introduced Christianity in 1549. Some of the Japanese officials became very hostile to the Jesuits and massacres of Christians began early in the seventeenth century. In 1624 Christianity was prohibited, and all foreigners excluded except one Dutch trading post in the harbor of Nagasaki on the Island of Deshima. That continued for over two hundred years as the only portal for European trade and it was to that island that the *Margaret* was now going.

The *Margaret* stood out of Batavia at 8 a.m. on the morning of June 20, 1801. On July 19 they were off the harbor of Nagasaki and hoisted twenty different colors and in the afternoon entered the harbor. "We had much ceremony to go through," writes Cleveland, "among other things to fire several salutes."

The goods brought for the Dutch East India Company were turned over to the Company's agents of course but it will be remembered that the officers all had "privileges" of cargo space and that the captain could fill all space in excess of 250 tons for the benefit of the owners. These ventures they had to dispose of themselves and this brought them in touch with Japanese manners and customs, but they were never allowed off the island of Deshima except by special permission.

It is worth while to quote Cleveland's own account of how they disposed of their articles. He says:

All these articles were landed on the Island, opened and displayed in a ware house, and on certain days the merchants were allowed to go on the Island to examine them. Nothing could exceed the minuteness with which they examined everything. Among other articles we had a quantity of tumblers and wine glasses; these they measured with the

greatest care, running their fingers over every part to determine what irregularities there were on the surface, and then holding each piece to the light to see the color.

After the goods had been sufficiently examined, a day was appointed for a sale, in the City of Nagasaki, and was conducted with the greatest fairness. Capt. Derby and myself went into the city, attended by the requisite number of officers, and proceeded to what the Dutch call the Geltchamber, where we found one or more upper Banyoses seated in their usual state, and a general attendance of merchants. We were placed where we could see all that was going on, and receive such explanations, as were requisite to a thorough understanding of the whole business. The goods being all disposed of, we were escorted back to the island, with much formality, not, however, until a day had been appointed by the great men for the delivery of the goods.

On the 20th September, 1801, we went into the city of Nagasaki. The first place we went to was Facquia's, an eminent stuff merchant. Here we were received with great politeness and entertained in such manner as we little expected. We had set before us, for a repast, pork, fowls, meso, eggs, boiled fish, sweetmeats, cake, various kinds of fruit and sacky and tea. The lady of the house was introduced, who drank tea with each of us, as is the custom of Japan. She appeared to be a modest woman. The place we next visited was a temple, to which we ascended from the street by at least two hundred stone steps. We saw nothing very remarkable in this building excepting its size.

From this we went to the glass house, which was on a small scale; thence to a lac ware merchant's, where we were entertained with great hospitality. Thence we went to a Tea House or Hotel, where we dined. After dinner we were entertained with various feats of dancing and tumbling. Towards dark we returned to the island, and so much was the crowd in the street to see us pass that it was with difficulty that we could get along. The number of children we saw was truly astonishing. The streets of the city are narrow and inconvenient to walk in, as they are covered with loose stones as large as paving stones. At short distances you have to go up or down flights of stone steps. At the end of every street is a gate, which is locked at night. They have no kind of carriages, as it would be impossible to use them in such streets.

As the time was approaching for our departure, we began to receive our returns from the interior, brought many hundred miles. These consisted of the most beautiful lacquered ware, such as waiters, writing

desks, tea caddies, knife boxes, tables, etc. etc. These were packed in boxes so neat that in any other country they would be considered cabinet work. We also received a great variety of silks, fans in large quantities, a great variety of porcelain, and house brooms of superior quality. The East India Company's cargo had been loading some time previous. The principal article was copper in small bars; other things were camphor, soy, sacky, porcelain, etc. etc. The Company's ships have been obliged to take their departure from the anchorage opposite Nagasaki on a certain day to the lower roads, no matter whether it blew high or low, fair or foul, even if a gale, and a thousand boats should be required to tow them down. We of course had to do as our predecessors had done. Early in November we went to this anchorage and remained a few days, when we sailed for Batavia, where we arrived safely, after a passage of one month.<sup>15</sup>

They arrived in Batavia, December 6, 1801, and delivered their freight to the Company. Captain Derby seemed well pleased with Captain Stuart and the general situation. On December 24, 1801, he wrote the owners fully and I cannot describe his plans better than he did in the following letter.<sup>16</sup>

Batavia, Dec. 24, 1801.

GENTLEMEN:

This will inform you of my arrival at this place the 6th inst. after having been five and half months on my voyage to Japan, and was very happy to find Capt. Stuart had arrived from Mauritius with a Ketch he had purchased there of about 200 tons burthen. She was built in Bengal five years since, coppered to the bends and appears to be a very good vessel. Capt. Stuart informs he has wrote you fully of all his transaction there, which letters I make no doubt you have rec'd long before this as he forwarded them by several different conveyances.

I calculate her cost here about 10,500 Spanish Dollars which considering the advantage of getting all our effects home is not very dear. I suppose the British may be disposed to make some trouble with her if they should have an opportunity, on acct. of her being a prize, therefore in making insurance it will be necessary to mention the circumstances. She has as good papers as can be secured in this part of the world, but the premium will be a little higher than on our vessels from America furnished with every document. However we will wait the event and doubt not

<sup>15</sup> George Cleveland, "Journal," *Essex Institute Hist. Coll.*, vol. 2, pp. 166-9.

<sup>16</sup> Derby MSS., vol. 23.

you will think under my present circumstances that the adventure to Mauritius is advantageous to the concern. The Ketch which I have called the *Three Friends* has now on board 2200 Peculs of Coffee, 417 Peculs of Pepper and 417 Peculs of sugar. It is probable I shall put a little more on board. The amount of her investment will be about 34,000 ds which with the cost of the vessel as before mentioned will make the whole 44,500 Spanish Dollars. You can govern yourselves accordingly as it respects insurance.

Capt. Stuart has good officers, Mr. Cheever and Mr. Sias [?] who was Capt. Devereaux's 2nd officer. I do not wish for better and we have been able to procure six American seamen so that she is manned nearly all with Americans. Shall detain her while I get ready to sail and shall not leave her until clear of the Streights.

I am sorry to inform you my freight to Japan has fallen short of my first calculation owing to the great weight of the copper which I was to take for the company. I loaded the ship as long as I dared and was finally obliged to take out a quantity of copper. I believe it to be the most trying cargo for a ship that can be laden and the *Margaret* (from her sharpness) the most unsuitable vessel in the world for such a voyage but I could not otherwise do. It would have been an imprudent step to load deeper and might have been attended with bad consequences.

My freights to Japan and Charibon will be 40,000 dollars, which I calculate will be about the investment of the *Margaret*. Her cargo will consist altogether of coffee, part Charibon at 13 and part Jaccatra at 11 dollars as you will observe by my charter-party. I cannot say how much of each at present. She will however load very deep with coffee alone. The *Margaret* is poorly able to be a pack horse and we must find some lighter business for her than copper lading another voyage. Her running qualities no one can dispute. The Company appear to be quite satisfied with the shortness of my voyage and I must confess so far that I have received every favour I could wish in my concerns with them, particularly from the General Overstraten [?] who I was sorry to find had paid the debt of nature while I was absent, and I have no reason to doubt of my finishing with them quite to my satisfaction and I flatter myself to theirs also.

I have all the copper out of the *Margaret* and have taken on board a quantity of coffee and have no doubt I shall be able to sail from here by the 10th of January if the weather is tolerably good but the west monsoon is generally dirty weather and retards loading very much.

We are all at present in good health but I am sorry I am under the necessity of mentioning the death of Henry Ingersoll. He was sick with a dysentery when I left this place for Japan which continued on him with little intermission till he died which was the 26th of September. I had every means used that I could obtain but the disorder baffled all medicine. You will give the melancholy intelligence to his father in what manner you think best. He was a worthy young man.

I shall go on with my loading as fast as possible and expect to be with you in the Spring if no circumstances intervene to deny me that pleasure.

I am with great regard your obedient servant.

SAMUEL DERBY

Messrs. Derby & Pickman.

As soon as Captain Derby left Batavia, he prepared a statement of account of the voyage still extant among the Derby papers<sup>17</sup> which is a very interesting paper. He charges himself with the \$50,000 in specie brought from Salem and the freights to Charibon and Japan amounting to about \$40,000 and a few other small items so the total is \$90,813.67, and credits himself with the cargo of the *Three Friends* at about \$34,000 plus the cost of buying and outfitting her, about \$10,500 more, and the cost of the cargo of the *Margaret* of about \$36,500, and his commissions on buying the cargoes of \$4,300, and about \$5,000 of miscellaneous expenses. The cost of only the *Three Friends* is reckoned in so he starts away for home actually with his original \$50,000 raised to \$70,000 plus a good ketch after all expenses are paid, including paying himself \$4,300. Therefore, with only the expenses of the return voyage still to come, he has already cleared 40% on the original investment. It should be remembered that the return cargoes are *at cost* in Batavia. The coffee, sugar, and pepper would be worth near twice as much in America or Europe when eventually sold, or even more, so we can assume that the \$50,000 by Derby's skillful disregard of all orders in a little less than two years brought

<sup>17</sup> Derby MSS., vol. 23.

back a net return above all expenses of between \$140,000 and \$150,000, or a net profit of near \$100,000. Captain Derby, as part owner, got one-third of this plus his commission of \$4,300 and his \$12 a month and food and lodging. This is about as near as you can ever get to the profits on a voyage. It is hardly surprising, however, that the merchants of Salem built beautiful large square brick houses finished with magnificent McIntire woodwork and filled with lovely furniture, china, and glass.

The *Three Friends* had on board about 135 short tons of coffee and about 28 tons each of pepper and sugar. There is no detailed invoice of the cargo of the *Margaret*, but if she brought all coffee, as the Custom House Impost Book indicates, there must have been nearly 250 tons. What either vessel brought of miscellaneous cargo including remembrances for friends and owners and their wives is nowhere enumerated, but we can, I think, assume that Mr. Pickman's and Mr. John Derby's requests for a set of china "very handsome" was commuted into some lovely Japanese lacquer or old Satsuma porcelain.

The two ships left Batavia, January 6, 1802, running along the north coast of Java for the straits of Bali and met baffling winds. The *Margaret* took the ketch in tow and towed her till January 13, and then tried to keep in touch with her. Some fishermen came alongside and sold them five turtles which weighed up to 300 lbs. for \$4. The airs continued very light and at 11 p.m. on January 18 still in Palembang Roads they heard distress guns and Captain Derby went to the rescue with six men in the pinnace. At one o'clock they returned to report the ketch ashore and then went for help. The Dutch resident said their pilot boat and fifty men had been sent at the first alarm. On the 19th with the crew of the *Margaret*, they got out the water casks, spare spars and 300 bags of coffee and got her off by 7 p.m., apparently uninjured. Then they reloaded her and on Jan-

uary 24 saluted the friendly Dutch with seven guns and departed. The next morning they felt a severe earthquake and at 10 a.m. the ketch reported she had sprung a leak which showed up badly on one tack, so Captain Derby and his carpenter went aboard and succeeded in stopping it. By February 11 everything seemed as good as circumstances permitted so they bade farewell to Captain Stuart and to quote the log "left him astonishing fast." At Batavia Captain Derby had billed the ketch and her cargo to the owners and now clear of the straits completely washed his hands of her.

Captain Stuart had his troubles, however. There is no record of what happened, but probably the leak began to trouble again and anyway he put into the Isle of France and wrote the owners, April 16. He filed a protest and had a survey of his ship. He lost two-thirds of his sugar and as most of his pepper bags were damaged, he had to rebag it. Mr. Sias, his mate, and the boy were sick in the hospital. His three black sailors sued him and he paid off the whole crew while he was delayed. All this cost him \$1800 and had to be met with drafts which required 30% advance at home, but in spite of it all, he got away April 17 and headed for Salem. There is no further records of the incidents of his voyage.

Meanwhile the *Margaret* rounded Cape Agullas, the southernmost point of Africa, and anchored in Table Bay on April 10 to find five American ships there. A few days after the ketch left the Isle of France, the *Maragret* had already sighted St. Helena, and on May 24 saw a schooner which proved to be the *Roboreus* of Salem, Captain Knight, bound home from Tobago. Captain Derby and young Cleveland went on board, no doubt hungry for news of home, and had a good old fashioned gossip. On June 3, Nantucket was recorded 22 leagues distant, and that is the last note in the Journal.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Log of the *Margaret* at the Essex Institute.

The *Margaret* was entered at Salem Custom House on June 5 and paid duties on 356,811 lbs. of Coffee of the owners and 107,189 lbs. for Captain Derby which were no doubt the proceeds of his commission. There was also merchandise which represented the things from Japan.<sup>19</sup>

It is interesting to note the number of ships that arrived in Salem during the next few weeks from the East Indies. July 13 came the *Belisarius*, the Crowninshield ship. The *Concord*, which was the first Salem ship to go around the world, came in from Canton on July 17, and Captain Stuart also arrived in the *Three Friends*. On July 30 the ship *Henry* arrived also from Batavia to Derby and Pickman.<sup>20</sup>

The total duties of the *Concord*, *Henry*, *Margaret*, and *Belisarius* which entered within 45 days were \$82,476. The *Concord* was practically full of tea, some 400,000 lbs. of it, the others brought 726,000 lbs. of coffee, 395,000 lbs. of pepper, 60,000 lbs. of sugar and considerable merchandise.<sup>21</sup>

The *Margaret* seems to have unloaded her cargo in Salem but the *Three Friends* cleared, before the end of July, for Havre de Grace<sup>22</sup> with her cargo consigned to Dudley L. Pickman who sailed apparently on her with instructions to sell both her and her cargo at Havre and remit the proceeds to Samuel Williams in London, agent and banker for the owners. Captain Stuart was to follow young Pickman's instructions. There were the usual options allowed to Pickman and as a matter of fact the market proved poor at Havre and she seems to have been sold at Antwerp. I have not yet found any final account so we cannot tell how much the venture of the *Three Friends* produced.

This therefore is as complete an account of an early and interesting voyage to Japan as it is possible to work up and

<sup>19</sup> Custom House Impost Book, June 5, 1802.

<sup>20</sup> *Salem Gazette*, July 16-30, 1802.

<sup>21</sup> Custom House Impost Book, 1800-1803.

<sup>22</sup> *Salem Gazette*, July 30, 1802.

it certainly shows three things: first, that our early merchants did not lack initiative in starting world-wide ventures; second, that the captains to whom they trusted their money were daring, skillful and wise; and third, that money was rolling into New England in no picayunish quantities.

The period of Salem commerce to which this voyage belongs is remarkable for any place or any age. The ordinary conception of the early trade is that the merchant in Salem loaded a vessel with some commodity, told the captain to take her to a certain port, exchange the cargo for some other commodity and come home again.

That might be very well nowadays but in a world without telegraphs or regular mails even, where the news of the other side of the globe was six months old and would be nearly a year old before the ship arrived, planning was a bit futile. Drougths, famines, wars, and even volcanic eruptions and tidal waves might easily change the whole picture and often did. In this world of unknown chaos, and it was almost as chaotic around 1800 as it is in 1944, the only possible reliance was on the man on the spot, and that for many years meant the captain. These captains were, taken all in all, a remarkable lot of men; splendid seamen, fearless and daring but very careful withal; courageous fighters quite able to do battle in defense of their ships; shrewd and able traders but absolutely honest and reliable. Most of them were in their twenties or early thirties but the owners calmly handed over to their absolute control a venture worth \$75 or \$100,000 and expected them to come home with a profit of 50 or 100%. Which one of you business men has a young man of say twenty-four to whom you would turn over \$100,000 and say "Good-bye, see you in a couple of years. Expect you to bring back at least \$150,000. No use sending for instructions. I can't tell you anything." That is the sort of world we are talking about and you will probably agree that the voyage of the *Margaret* confirms it.

*Accompanying Documents for the Voyage  
of the Margaret*

- I The Owners' letter of instructions to Captain Derby when he sailed from Salem.
- II The Contract with Johannes Siberg of the Dutch East Indies for the voyage of the *Margaret* to Japan.
- III Captain Derby's Account Current when he left Batavia bound home.

I

Nov. 19, 1800.

Capt. Sam'l Derby,  
Sir:—

The Ship *Margaret* of which you are Master being ready for sea, we would have you come to sail as soon as the wind will permit and proceed directly for the west coast of Sumatra. If on your arrival there you should find that pepper of a good quality may be bought at a price not exceeding twelve dollars per pecul, you will endeavor to buy as much as the ship will carry and will proceed from thence to Manilla. There you will dispose of your pepper provided you can readily obtain for it fifteen dollars per pecul and will vest the proceeds thereof and the dollars you may carry on in sugar and indigo provided you can buy the first so that it will pay 120 per cent and the last so that it will pay 100 per cent profit estimating them at the prices we shall mention at the foot of these orders. If your pepper will not sell at 15 dollars then dispose of no more of it than necessary to enable you to pay out the dollars you may carry on to Manilla in indigo of the first quality, and be very careful that you are not deceived with respect to the quality and with this indigo and pepper you will return home. If you should sell your pepper at Manilla and should find the prices of indigo and sugar so high as to render it in your opinion improper to buy them you may proceed to Canton and you will there vest the proceeds in such articles as you shall find will yield the best profit estimating them at the prices quoted hereafter, and if you should find that several articles will give about the same profit it will be more prudent to pay out your money in three or four of them than to trust wholly to one. If on your arrival at Manilla you should conclude to sell the pepper and should find sugar and indigo low it will be best to make your purchases immediately as the market there is very variable

and it may be of importance to you to have discretionary orders and you have a joint interest with us in the voyage we do explicitly authorize you to undertake any voyage while you are abroad which you have good reason to suppose will promote our interest, but carefully bare it in mind that the ship sails at a great expense and the terms ought to be very advantageous to indemnify us for the expense and risk of protracting your return to this country for any length of time. If you should load for home at Manilla and should be able to buy indigo so it will sell at 90 per cent advance with bills on us payable here at 3 months sight at *least* or payable in London at 6 months and as much *longer* as you can, we authorize you to draw on us to the amount of *thirty thousand dollars*. We expect to allow you five per cent on the net amount of the cargo you purchase for home which you are to deduct at the port where you may buy the same and as privilege 5 per cent of what the vessel will carry on cargo, and this is to be in full of all perquisites and emoluments whatever and all the money you may earn by the ship or cargo in any way during your absence is to be carried to our credit. Be careful not to violate the laws of nations or any treaty and not to break any acts of trade. If you should be so unfortunate as to be captured, exhibit all of your papers and do everything in your power to prevent the condemnation of the vessel and cargo and if condemned, enter an appeal. Write us particularly by every opportunity. Signal for the ship upon your return is a white flag at the main top G mast head with pendant over it. Sincerely wishing you a prosperous voyage and safe return, we are your friends and owners.

Salem, Nov. 18, 1800.

Sugar 1st quality	\$11.50	Clear of Duty	per cwt.	
Indigo do	1.40	"	"	per pound
Pepper do	.22	"	"	" "
Nutmeg —	5.75	"	"	" " Uncertain
Cinnamon —	2.20	"	"	" " "
Bohea Tea —	.25	"	"	" " "
Souchong Tea —	.70	"	"	" " "
Hyson Tea —	.80	"	"	" " "
Nankin —	.98	"	"	per piece
China	100 per cent			
Silks	80 " "			
Gunpowder Tea	— 1.50	Small quantity		

If you should go to Canton we wish you to buy a few handsome blue and white dining sets of china together with desert and tea sets. See that they are all well gilt and well covered of a deep blue and the figures of the pieces handsome.

One set particularly elegant for Mr. Wm. Pickman

One set " " " Mr. John Derby.

Your friends

JOHN DERBY

B. PICKMAN, JR.

SAMUEL DERBY

The above and foregoing I acknowledge to be a true copy of orders this day received from owners of the Ship *Margaret*, which I promise to obey and follow.

SAMUEL DERBY

Salem, 19th November, 1800.

## II

We, Johannes Siberg, pro-Interim Director General of the Dutch Indies, as thereto authorized by the High Regency, by a secret resolution of the 5th of May, 1801,

On the one part  
and

Samuel Derby, Captain and Supercargo of the American Ship *Margaret* of Salem, being at present in these roads of Batavia, likewise thereto authorized by his Owners, Derby & Company of Salem, on the other part, Declare by these presents that we have contracted, and closed this Charter party, viz:

### Art. 1.

That the second signer has lent to the first signer for the Dutch East India Company, the above said Ship *Margaret*, or the room in the same of 250 Tuns, although the same is said to be of the burthen of 275 Tuns, each Tun reckoned at 1850 lb Dutch weight, and such to do a voyage to Japan, and from there back again to this Capital, in order to transport and carry such Merchandize, and other goods, as will be loaded in said Ship in behalf of the Dutch East India Company, both from Batavia to Japan, as from Japan back again, for the freight Money agreed for to the amount of forty-five thousand Spanish Dollars, or per Tun 180 Spa. Dollars, for the voyage to and back again.

## Art. 2.

That the goods to be exported to Japan shall consist in

80,000 lb of Tin reckoned	1850 lb per Tun
20,000 " " Saspa Wood,	1250 " " "
20,000 " " Pepper	1250 " " "
10,000 " " Cotton Yarn	1250 " " "
292,800 " " Powder Sugar, viz:	
185,000 lb in Bags	1850 " " "
107,000 " " Cannisters	1400 " " "

Further several cases with Manufactures and other Merchandize as also some Casks with Provisions, and other necessaries for the Company's Servants at the aforesaid Place, which according to conjecture, will amount to 10 Tuns more or less of 1850 lb each.

## Art. 3.

That the Letter engages himself, and undertakes to import in return from Japan with his aforesaid Ship to this Capital 3060 Cases with Copper at 120  $\frac{7}{8}$  lb in each case reckoned per Tun at 1850 lb, 62,500 lb of Camphire, reckoned per Tun at 1250 lb, 2000 Empty Copper cases, and 1000 deal planks for stowage.

## Art. 4.

That nevertheless if in case the Letter brought here in return from Japan less copper and camphire than are mentioned by Art. 3, and that his Ship was not able to load the same, than there shall be deducted from the freight Money agreed upon, 180 Spa. Dollars for each Tun, both in regard to the copper reckoned at 1850 lb and of the camphire reckoned at 1250 lb per Tun.

## Art. 5.

That on the contrary, there shall be paid the same amount of 180 Spa. Dollars per Tun here to the Letter for such quantity of Copper and Camphire which he will bring with his aforesaid Ship, more than the quantity agreed upon by Art. 3, each Tun reckoned in weight as by Art. 4.

## Art. 6.

That in another case, if the said quantities of Copper and Camphire were not at hand at Japan, as is specified by Art. 3, and that on that account the Ship was loaded with a less quantity of those articles, that in such a case the full freight Money of 45,000 Spa. Dollars, as is mentioned by Article 1 shall be paid here to the Letter.

## Art. 7.

That after having fulfilled the Voyage, and arrived safe here, the freight Money agreed upon, as well for the 250 Tun weight in such manner as is mentioned by Art. 3 as for the larger quantity which will be brought here above the 250 Tuns of Copper and Camphire, by the Letter with his aforesaid Ship, shall be paid to the Letter in Cheribon or Jaccatra Coffee, at his choice, reckoned at such prices as is sold for by the Comp'y to Private Persons, to wit—the Cheribon at 13 Spa. D's and the Jaccatra at 11 Spa. D's the picol in Silver Money.

## Art. 8.

That if in case the Letter of this Ship wishes to lay out a part of the earn'd freight Money in Powder Sugar, Pepper, Indigo and Camphire, that these articles shall be given to him.

Sugar Jacc 1st sort at	4 1/8 Spa Dolls per picol.
Black Pepper - - -	13 " " " "
Indigo, 1st & 2d sort, of ea one half	2 1/16 per lb.
	or 2 3/4 " "
Camphire - - - - -	24 " "

but on the two last mentioned articles 5½ per cent more for Administration Money and Treasurer's Salary, likewise there shall only be sold as much of those Articles as the Company will be able to spare.

## Art. 9.

That if in case the Letter will not be able to load his earned freight in Coffee (by Art. 7) in his Ship *Margaret* and carry same away at once from here, that he will be permitted to dispose of the remainder to others, or else to load it in another Ship or Ships, provided it is exported direct from here.

## Art. 10.

That the Letter shall be obliged to furnish the aforesaid Ship for his own account tight and strong, and every way fit, and capable to do a voyage to Japan both with respect to the equipage goods, as also to take in cargo both here and at Japan.

## Art. 11.

That the Letter shall likewise be obliged to furnish said Ship for his own account, all necessaries, and likewise provide the Provisions for his Crew, for his own account.

## Art. 12.

That the Company on their side will exert themselves in every thing that the Ship is loaded on the 15th or 20th of next June, in order to go to Sea, this being the farthest sailing Day on which the Ship must leave these roads.

## Art. 13.

That the Letter shall provide the Ship with the necessary Men at his own cost, and likewise be obliged to victual them. But if the Company might think best to place an expert Seaman on that Ship, that the same shall be done at their cost.

## Art. 14.

That the Letter engages and binds himself, that he and his Officers will adhere in every respect, both in the voyage to as from Japan, to the tenor of this Charter Party, and to the instructions which will besides be given to them separately.

## Art. 15.

That the Letter shall be obliged to sail from here straight to the Harbour of his destination, and being unloaded, and loaded again there, proceed with all possible dispatch back again to this place, and not be permitted either in the Voyage to as fro, to touch at any harbour, unless having urgent reasons for doing so, and about which he will, in such a case be obliged at his return to answer for, in a satisfactory manner.

## Art. 16.

That the Company's Servants shall not be permitted to detain the Ship at Japan longer than at farthest untill the 1st of Dec'r, 1801. After which time the Letter shall be at liberty to undertake the Voyage to this Place, with such a Cargo as he will then have on board (See further Art. 26.)

## Art. 17.

That if in case the Company's Servants at Japan for some reason or other, might not be able to adhere to the orders, which they will receive respecting the loading of the Ship, and that the Letter then, on account of the expired time or after the 1st of December, 1801, should be obliged to undertake the voyage back to this place, without that the above mentioned articles, Art. 3, have been loaded in the ship, the Company will in that case nevertheless be obliged to pay to the Letter the full freight of 45,000 Spa. Dolls or 180 Spa. Dolls per Tun, just the same as

if the Voyage were fulfilled or performed according to the wish of the Freighter, or Hirer, and that the Ship had loaded the Merchandize fixed upon. Understanding nevertheless that this must not have been occasioned by the neglect of the Letter or his Officers.

Art. 18.

That if in case it happened by unforeseen circumstances that the Ship was not permitted by the Japanese to come into the roads, and that the Letter was obliged to return again to this place, with the cargo loaded here, that in that case, on his return here, after having properly answered for the Cargo which he has loaded at this place, the Letter shall be paid the full freight money agreed for of 180 Spa. Dolls per Tun in Coffee as it is fixed by Art. 7, just the same as if the Cargo of this place was properly delivered in Japan, and that the Merchandize to be loaded there according to Art. 3, had been imported here.

Art. 19.

That the freight Money agreed for of 180 Spa. Dolls per Tun shall likewise be paid to the Letter if in case the Ship *Margaret* after her arrival in these roads from Japan, might be lost by unforeseen Accidents, as storm or fire, either before the Cargo has been broken up, or has not been entirely unloaded.

Art. 20.

That the Company will be at liberty to send to Japan with this Ship, one, two or for the most three of her Civil Servants as they may judge necessary for that place, and that the Letter shall be obliged to grant them a free transportation or passage, both to as from Japan, and all such persons shall lodge in the Cabbin, without being at any further charge to the Letter, as the necessaries for their subsistance will be furnished by the Company.

Art. 21.

That the Letter shall be obliged both on the Voyage to as fro, to allow to the Chief and other Servants as much room in their Ship to place their Provisions and necessaries, but that no Merchandize shall be brought on board by them, for which no room in the Ship is allowed by the Letter.

Art. 22.

That the Bill of Lading and Invoices of the Goods which were to be loaded in the said Ship *Margaret*, both at Batavia for Japan as at Japan for Batavia, shall be signed by the Letter or by him who will represent

his Person. But that it will be sufficient that he the Letter in both cases, only signs for the number of Chests, Bales or Casks, to be delivered again by him in good condition, without being responsible for the Contents, or weight, but he the Letter shall nevertheless be obliged to take care that no defective or badly conditioned Chests, Casks or Bales are loaded, without mentioning it at the bottom of the Bill of Lading.

Art. 23.

The Company shall be obliged to deliver all goods without distinction free from and on board both here and at Japan, and that the Letter shall not be held accountable for them until they are received on board.

Art. 24.

That if in case the Letter might want any necessaries, that the same will be furnished to him for the payment of the Price according to the Price Current in as far as they can not be got by Private Persons, and as can be spared by the Company.

Art. 25.

That if in case the Letter might want any reparations to his Ship at Japan, that the Company's Servants shall assist him therein, but all at his expense.

Art. 26.

The said Ship on her arrival at Japan, shall be unloaded and loaded again with all possible dispatch, in order to be able, pursuant to the season, and custom of Japan to depart again from there in due time. (See Art. 16.)

Art. 27.

That all charges with respect to the loading and unloading of the Ship both in these roads and at Japan, shall be at the cost and for the account of the Company, and that the Comp'y shall both here and at Japan provide and furnish thereto the necessary assistance of Men.

Art. 28.

That if in case there were any sick among the Ship's Crew of the Letter, and that the Letter might wish to place them in the Hospital at Japan, the same shall be permitted to him, under conditions nevertheless that he the Letter at his departure from there will be obliged to take them again on board, to carry to this place, and all Hospital charges to be for his account.

## Art. 29.

That the Letter shall be obliged to sign two Bills of Charges for all such expences as are stipulated by Art. 24, 25 and 28, in order to restitute and restore the amount thereof to the Company here at his return from Japan, or otherwise to be deducted from the earn'd freight Money, for the performed voyage.

## Art. 30.

That the Ship mentioned in these presents shall at her return into Batavia Roads, be liberated and freed from anchorage Money, as also from all such charges at his arrival at Japan, as such charges remain for the Account of the Company.

## Art. 31.

That the Day after the arrival of said Ship in these roads, a beginning shall be made with unloading her, which may not last longer than 15 Days (the stormy and unnavigable Days nevertheless not to be reckoned) in which contrary case there shall be paid to the Letter after the expiration of the fixed time for each day 100 Rix Dolls of 48 heavy Stivers in Silver Money, by the Company.

For the performance of the above written, we confirm these presents with our common signatures and seals, and have made hereof three Charter parties of this Tenor.

Batavia, the 8th May, 1801, & sealed

Signed on one part by SIBERG  
and by SAM'L DERBY

NOTE: The Freighter still contracts by these presents as a further interpretation of Art. 2, that he reserves to himself the power and faculty to employ such other articles, instead of those mentioned, and fixed by that article for Exportation, as he will judge necessary, and fit, provided they are reckoned according to the Volume and weight, of the thereby proportionably fixed Pounds per Tun.

Date above written

SIBERG  
SAM'L DERBY

## III

OWNERS OF SHIP *MARGARET* IN ACCOUNT CURRENT WITH  
SAMUEL DERBY

Dr.

1801		
Feb. 10	To sundry expenses and disbursements at the Cape of Good Hope as per bill	82.40
April 13	To sundry expences & disbursements at Fort Marl[—?], as per bill	85.50
June 19	To expences & disbursements at Batavia	1069.35
	To sundries as per bill	59.78
Nov' 4	To cash paid the Compradores bill and other disbursements in Japan	490.56
Dec' 18	To cost outfits etc' of the brig <i>Three Friends</i> , as per Jas' Stuart's acct rendered	10515.70
" "	To amt of bills drawn in their favour on Messrs. T' Amory of Boston and Moore Wharton of Philadelphia	1300.
" "	To amount of investment on board brig <i>Three Friends</i>	34048.68
" "	To loss on American and counterfeit Dollars in the Treasury	24.00
Dec' 28	To expences & disbursements at Batavia as per bill	772.52
" "	To cash paid disbursements of Brig <i>Three Friends</i> at Batavia as per bill	595.54
Jan' 25	To cash paid Capt' Stuart's bill of disbursements at Batavia for brig <i>Three Friends</i> , as per bill	665.61
" "	To cash paid. Expences incurred in getting the Brig <i>Three Friends</i> off at Palembang and disbursements of ship and brig	352.50
" "	To my commission on 86615 \$ 91/100 at 5 per cent	4330.75
" "	To amt. of investment on board ship <i>Margaret</i> as per invoice	36413.52
	To cash as balance	7.26

Spa. Dolls 90813.67

Palemboang Jan'y 23d 1802.

Errors excepted

Samuel Derby

OWNERS OF SHIP *MARGARET* IN ACCOUNT CURRENT WITH  
SAMUEL DERBY

Cr'

1800

Nov' 25	By amount of invoice of specie brought from America	50,000.
1801		
Feb'y 10	By 1 bbl Molasses sold at the Cape	22.40
June 1	By $\frac{1}{4}$ bbl Turpentine	5.00
Dec'r 18	By amt of freight of Coffee from Cheribon	1434.36
" "	By amt. of freight to and from Japan	38745.
" "	By cash for Coffee bags returned	192.88
" "	By cash recd for Guns returned by Capt' Stuart	133.03
Jan' 3	By an anchor sold from the brig	130.
" "	By sales of old iron from "	31.
" "	By a bill drawn on Messrs' Derby & Pickman - - - for	120.
		<hr/>
	Spa' Dolls.	90813.67

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