Family, Finance, and the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company, 1836-1862

1 Located on the north shore of Long Island not 40 miles east of Manhattan, Cold Spring Harbor, at the beginning of the 19th century, was a small community that was home to a lesser-known whaling business run by John H. and Walter R. Jones. These brothers, along with a long list of investors, oversaw forty-four voyages with nine ships. A small firm by New Bedford or even Sag Harbor standards, the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company lasted more than twenty-five years and changed the community in durable ways. Many questions regarding the company, its investors, and its sailors remain. However, one thing is clear: John and Walter Jones, despite having no actual whaling experience, made some savvy choices that benefited all those involved.

The Jones Brothers' Background

2 By the early 19th century, Walter R. Jones and older brother John H. Jones were partners in key Cold Spring Harbor businesses. These included a gristmill, a general store, and two woolen mills, all businesses built by the previous generation. Motivated by the slow decline of their award-winning mill and a drop in flour prices, both turns caused by domestic and international economic factors, the brothers made a dramatic and potentially risky business decision. They started a new venture: the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company.

3 The foundations for their new endeavor were laid by the previous generation, when their parents, John Jones and Hannah Hewlett, married in 1779, conjoining two influential local families. While theirs was a predictable union, the families seemed particularly close-knit even considering the customs of the time as they intermarried, deeded land to one another, and engaged in shared business ventures. Unlike some Long Island movers-and-shakers, however, they extended their influence beyond the north shore of Long Island. The families made their mark in New York City as well as in Albany, becoming judges, justices of the peace, and businessmen. Political and religious concerns during this tumultuous time may have encouraged the families to forge closer bonds.[1] Many Long Island families found themselves split along political and religious lines. Regardless, these relationships were the base of industry in the region. The Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company, a successful venture, was part of a larger web of economic choices made by the families.

4 Between 1819 and 1825, both families shifted their holdings in the gristmill and the two woolen mills. They also transferred deeds to various properties, including shoreline parcels to the next generation. After these changes, John H. and Walter R. Jones were responsible for a substantial portion of family undertakings. Both brothers had demonstrated business acumen and dedication to the family's well being.

5 Walter R. Jones, born in 1793, became increasingly involved in the marine insurance business during this time, joining the first Atlantic Insurance Company in 1824 as an associate of Archibald Gracie.[2] On April 15, 1828, Walter was appointed trustee to oversee the dissolution of the company – something that would not be resolved until long after his death in 1855. During his time, Walter helped settle the company's debts and even paid capital stockholders dividends, avoiding litigation – a popular tool at the time.

6 The second Atlantic Insurance Company was founded in 1829, with Walter R. Jones named as President. [3] The second company, later reorganized and renamed Atlantic Mutual, became fantastically successful, reaping profits of more than six million dollars in the ten years after its conversion.[4] The company remained in business until 2011 and many of the Jones family members were integral over the years. Walter's experience with managing risk and returns for investors certainly played a key role in family choices going forward. He was well known in New York City and although his funeral took place at Trinity Church, he remained connected to Cold Spring Harbor and was buried there.[5]

7 John H. Jones, born in 1785, spent much of his childhood living with and caring for his grandfather and namesake, John Hewlett, who died in 1812.[6] Before Hewlett's death, his son, John H. Jones' maternal uncle, Devine Hewlett, deeded property on the east side of the harbor to John, who was just 19 at the time. His father held the trust. When the property was transferred three years later, in 1807, the parcel included additional land John received from a cousin on the west side of the harbor for his son. In 1810, his parents also gave him an interest in the lower mill, associated dam and canal, the gristmill, its site, and half the Cooper shop, as well as shore and harbor rights.

8 That same year, John H. Jones married Loretta, daughter of Devine and Ann Hewlett. The property became John and Loretta's home. It also became the site of the general store. That store eventually served as the core of the Jones brothers' whaling endeavor. John provisioned the whaling ships moving from Cold Spring to New York as needed.[7] Like the majority of their business partners, John H. Jones remained a farmer. He even was awarded honors for growing the largest pumpkin in 1852 at the 11th Annual Exhibition of the Queens County Agricultural Society in Flushing. It weighed in at more than 175 pounds![8] Like his brother and partner Walter, John cared about those they chose to do business with, many of whom were relatives and neighbors. Neither brother had any experience actually whaling. Working as a team, the brothers brought together land, existing businesses, and financial acumen to found the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company.

Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company

9 A discussion of Cold Spring Harbor's whaling history can be a convoluted affair. The brothers and their investors blended tools emerging from the new economy with traditional business relationships to form a hybrid firm. Together with investors, they purchased two ships, one in 1836 and the second a year later. This represented a significant investment in a short period of time. The first ship, the *Monmouth*, required outfitting to make it suitable, as it was not originally a whaler. The *Tuscarora*, already a proven whaling ship, was purchased from the Billings brothers, the ship's captain, and another investor—all of New London. N. & W.W. Billings was among the most successful whaling firms in that port. Built in 1819, the *Tuscarora* was already an old ship, but came fully rigged. [9]

10 Both of these purchases involved an unusual number of investors for the time. According to Hilt, the average number of owners invested in a single vessel at the time was nine – but the *Monmouth* had thirty-three.[10] Together, the two ships had 50 investors, with many individuals investing in both. It could be argued this was less a partnership and more a community affair.

11 The year following the purchase of the *Monmouth*, a recession began, which lasted until the mid 1840s. This period of economic unevenness, emanating from New York City, was felt keenly in the whaling industry. The lack of capital generally available may have required a larger number of investors. The large number of investors may have supported the firm's quick growth. Regardless, the Jones brothers, including eldest brother William, several community members, and their New York lawyer, joined together in a wave of incorporation becoming popular in the whaling business.

12 An Act of Incorporation, passed on March 24, 1838, cleared the way for the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company.[11] It was at this point that the company bought the *Monmouth* and *Tuscarora* from the initial investors. However, it did not have the minimum amount of initial capital dictated by the Act to legally begin operations. This was no deterrent, and the ships still went out. Groups of investors, rather than the company itself, went on to purchase more ships. It was not until after a second legislative act passed in 1840, revising the initial capital investment downward, that the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company officially began operations.[12] At least six voyages had already been made.

13 Strictly speaking, before 1840, the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company was incorporated but unable to do business. Each voyage, therefore, was treated as a separate venture, like those of traditional whaling companies. The Jones brothers and investors bought six more ships between 1843 and 1845. The final addition to the fleet came in 1852. All voyages except those made by the two ships owned by the corporation — the *Tuscarora* and the *Monmouth* — were traditional whaling ventures. After 1840, whaling out of Cold Spring Harbor was not a company

business but a hybrid community affair. These choices highlight how Long Islanders put together economic opportunities emanating from the city and traditional relationships to engage the new economy they faced mid-century.

14 It was well known that whaling offered potential high returns for investors but carried great risks. Large outlays of credit or cash were required to outfit a whaler for a voyage. Ships wrecked due to storms or human error may not have had enough cargo to satisfy creditors or crew, much less to compensate investors. Investments in the two “corporate” ships were protected by limited liability, as outlined in the Act of Incorporation.

15 The history of legislation regarding incorporation demonstrated changing concerns for both investors and creditors over time. The question focused on the weight of responsibility for debts amassed by a company. When companies dissolved, in the case of unlimited liability, creditors could seek payment from investors regardless of their initial outlay. In this situation, a small investor could literally be risking everything he owned. This initial concern for creditors shifted more toward protection for investors — who rarely saw compensation. The development of limited liability held investor responsibility to a level equal to their investment, protecting them from open-ended exposure to the company’s debts. This change also encouraged smaller investors by protecting them. With a limited initial outlay, small investors could make even a little capital work, without risking everything if disaster occurred.

16 This may have been a consideration for Cold Spring Harbor. In 1841, 12 of the company’s 50 stockholders owned fewer than five shares. The shift toward limited liability was advantageous for these small investors, particularly in the case of a whaling company — where capital investments were almost as great as the risk involved. The outfitting ships often required could only be accomplished with large lines of credit. These debts were paired against the profitability of any particular voyage. Limited liability decreased exposure to losses beyond what investors chose to risk in the first place. For Cold Spring Harbor, most local investors were farmers whose source of capital, and therefore family wealth, was land. Protecting land from a company’s creditors would have been in the forefront of everyone’s mind. Limited liability allowed investors to risk only what they could bear to lose.

17 However, discussing Cold Spring Harbor whaling as a single corporate venture obscures much of the complexity of whaling in the region. While the Jones brothers were certainly a driving force, many others helped make it happen. For example, in 1840, investors with the surname Jones comprised only 16% of the total number of stockholders. Together, they owned only 22% of the outstanding stock. The Hewletts represented an additional 10%, with less than 5% of the outstanding stock. Together, the extended families, including members of the Jones, Hewlett, Cole, Gardiner, and Gracie families, owned less than 31% of Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company stock in 1840.[13] The Jones family members were neither detached company directors seeking to take advantage of corporate protection nor were they big investors using the company as a type of family trust.

18 John and Walter’s intentions in entering the whaling business are unclear, not to mention curious. In 1836, its first year of involvement, Cold Spring Harbor joined thirty-four other whaling ports, a year when New Bedford alone launched 66 whalers. This count does not include those ships not yet returned from voyages begun in years prior. The golden age of American whaling was arguably approaching a saturation point, conditions that could drive prices down and potentially put firms out of business. Whaling was at this point a business full of experienced competitors, where risks were occasionally incalculable. Four years into what was otherwise a traditional whaling venture, the Jones brothers, accompanied by local investors and New York business contacts, chose to incorporate a portion of the business, joining a wave of new whaling firms. However, they had no actual whaling experience, a hybrid firm structure, and a large number of investors to keep happy.[14]

Whaling Companies in the 1830s

19 Traditional whaling ventures were often referred to as “companies,” possibly due to arrangements of shared ownership. However, these more closely resembled partnerships, rather than formal corporations. Incorporation at this time required an act of legislature. Unlike today, where a company registers as a corporate entity in a particular state, a business seeking to incorporate proposed a bill before legislature who in turn dictated the general structure

of the company and terms for the sale of stock. Beginning in the 1830s, entrepreneurs increasingly sought incorporation as a tool for financing whaling ventures. However, in a study of 846 voyages of incorporated firms, Hilt concluded that none of these corporations lasted beyond the 1840s and few were profitable.[15] Incorporation of whaling companies, according to Hilt's study, typically placed a corporate structure on top of traditional whaling ventures, rather than reorganizing company relationships top to bottom. In these cases, the people who were key to a voyage's success did not fare as well. Agents' compensation, for example, declined from a peak of as much as 44 % interests in partnerships to as little as 5% in corporate ventures. By taking on this structure, Hilt argues, owners decreased the motivation for agents to act in the interest of all those invested.

20 Hilt found other problematic commonalities among those who chose to incorporate whaling ventures. More often founded by newcomers, these companies were based in areas new to whaling. This served to compound the already substantial outlays facing any voyage by adding inexperience and higher costs for outfitting ships in non-specialized ports. Higher local production costs came in the form of increased time, the necessity of retooling existing products and producing new ones, and sourcing new materials. Alternately, expenses incurred purchasing needed supplies from elsewhere included added transportation costs. This meant a larger haul was required to pay creditors and crew before turning a profit.

21 In some ways, Cold Spring Harbor reflected these problematic commonalities. The port was certainly new to whaling, as were the Jones brothers. The local economy was not built to support whaling, lacking the local industries of New Bedford or even Sag Harbor. However, the Jones family had resources other than capital that they were willing to contribute. Barrels were made for whale oil as well as for flour by the family-owned cooper shop, and the family's mills began to produce rough cloth for sailors' clothes. This offset some of the higher costs of doing business.

22 Thanks to his diverse business dealings, Walter realized the myriad things that could go wrong with a high-risk venture like whaling. This was despite his lack of firsthand experience. Not only concerned with material losses, in 1849, he was elected the first President of the Life Saving Benevolent Association, an organization that made ready supplies needed to save lives in case of a shipwreck.[16] These activities would have kept him informed about costs, as well as enabling him to build business relationships with suppliers. Dry goods merchant Abner Chichester, for example, was a large stakeholder in the Cold Springs Harbor Whaling Company, owning almost 5% of the stock. Walter also took advantage of his other relationships in New York City. Five voyages set sail from there, allowing ships to be outfitted in that port and potentially avoiding difficulties with customs.

23 The critical distinction between the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company and others of its time is found in its organization. Instead of placing a corporate structure on top of a traditional firm, the brothers formed a hybrid company that extended the blending of traditional and corporate ventures. First, John H. Jones served as the company agent. In this way, motivation to perform was as high as in traditional firms. Next, there was little distinction between investors in the company and its directors, as noted. William and Walter R. Jones were tied as the second largest single investors, and many other investors were local farmers in the area.

24 By comparison, the Staten Island Whaling Company, which was incorporated at the same time, had little local involvement. To the contrary, members of the surrounding community expressed deep reservations about the company. Much of their anxiety centered on the overlap between local bank directors and proposed directors of the whaling company. The Staten Island Whaling Company made at least one voyage and built a processing plant in the port that burnt down. It seems that not only was the company unsuccessful but that community concerns about it were warranted. Long after it ceased operations, the company apparently continued to deal in and transfer bonds, actions that landed it in the New York State Supreme Court.[17]

25 Cold Spring Harbor's initial investors availed themselves of new options afforded by incorporation and kept key components of traditional firms intact. The owners' assessment for the sale of the *Tuscarora* to the company detailed accounting from the 1840 change of ownership and included old subscribers for both the *Tuscarora* and *Monmouth*. Subscribers at the time all became shareholders in the company and appear on the formal list of investors.

Subscribers to the *Tuscarora* were charged a fee per share — a fee not charged to Monmouth subscribers. That column was labeled as lay to be paid by the *Tuscarora* and debt charged to the *Tuscarora*.[18] This accounting, related to the transfer of the ships from a traditional venture to corporate ownership, also appears to use the transfer as a means to settle debt. Even more interesting, Edward Halsey, or possibly Edward Halsey Jr., sailed as captain of the *Tuscarora* in 1839 and the *Monmouth* in 1846.[19] Captain Halsey owned ten shares of stock in 1840, converted from his initial investment in the *Tuscarora*. The *Tuscarora* was at sea for 22 months, whaling in the South Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and South Pacific.[20] Halsey's investment in the early voyages of the *Tuscarora* would not have been unusual. His conversion to stockholder ensured that traditional relationships remained part of the corporate structure.

26 The Jones brothers did not just join a wave of incorporation. There is evidence that they considered their options carefully. As noted, Walter had served as a trustee, settling with creditors and investors of the first Atlantic Insurance Company. He was aware of the challenges faced by investors when a company dissolves. In 1827, John H. and Walter R. Jones, seeking to grow the family businesses, announced their intent, along with other local investors, to incorporate the Cold Spring Steam Ship Company.[21] The *American Eagle* ferried passengers to and from New York under the guidance of Captain Peck.[22] The Jones brothers were jointly listed with Owen and George D. Coles, both likely relatives of John H.'s mother-in-law, as well as Robert W. Mott. However, no act of incorporation appears in records for 1827 or subsequent years. The *American Eagle* and Captain Peck advertised in the July 27, 1838 *Evening Post*, but made no mention of either the company or the Jones family. It seems they did not or could not go through with the incorporation of that entity. There is no indication they ever owned the *American Eagle* or its successor the *Croton*. Why the brothers did not pursue this incorporation is unknown. As it was over a decade earlier, debates about degrees of liability for corporate entities may not have been as favorable at the time. In 1822, an amendment clarified that corporate trustees could mortgage property owned by the company to pay debts.[23] This additional source of credit may have seemed inviting against the potential risks of a steamship line. Also, since the Peck family was not mentioned in advertisements announcing intent to incorporate, that arrangement may have been less inviting for them. Walter and John may have had difficulty securing outright ownership of the vessel by a potential future company. This would make incorporation impossible.

27 Although the brothers mitigated many of the pitfalls associated with incorporation, they were perhaps ill-advised in hiring captains who had little or no offshore whaling experience. Of the forty-four voyages, at least eleven captains either started their career in Cold Spring Harbor or sailed their second voyage as captain for the Jones brothers.[24] The job of captain was difficult, requiring skills beyond seafaring. Jeremiah Eldridge, captain of the *Monmouth* in 1857, failed to negotiate with the crew for their labor, necessary to take on extra oil while in port. This required outside arbitration, costing time and money.[25] The *Richmond*, commanded by Philander Winters, struck rocks in the Bering Straits and wrecked in 1849. The cargo was salvaged by several ships. One, the *Elizabeth Frith*, was under the command of Captain Winters' brother. The salvage was long contested in the courts by the *Richmond*'s owners.[26] In another instance, Captain Samuel C. Leek sailed his first voyage, a successful voyage to the South Atlantic,[27] as captain out of Sag Harbor. His next voyage, as captain of the *Tuscarora*, was a bit more difficult. Leek took on needed sailors in the Cook Islands, who changed their minds and subsequently left. It was not long before the crew discovered large holes drilled in the hull. Captain Leek sailed to Australia and negotiated the sale of the ship after it had been condemned. It seems, however, that he may have been tricked, as the ship was refitted and sailing under another name in under a year.[28]

28 Labor troubles were not limited to captains. Cold Spring Harbor ships often had difficulty finding experienced crew when signing men on in New York and Cold Spring Harbor. With the bustling port of Sag Harbor nearby, experienced sailors were difficult to find and keep. The captains of Cold Spring Harbor, as was common, took on sailors along the way. Not all were like the sailors encountered by Captain Leek; many were valuable crewmembers. Some sailors appear on crew lists several times with common European first names followed by "A. Kanaka" written like a family name, rather than a designation of their Pacific Island heritage. On other ships' logs these sailors were listed as "Canaka" or "Canaca." Three sailors named Canaka appear on the 1841 log of the *Tuscarora*, two from the Society Islands and one from South Hampton. All listed Cold Spring Harbor as their current residence, but no census records connect them to a particular household. It is possible the company housed the sailors by paying locals to

take them in. Housing expenses are often noted on receipts and ships' log books but rarely indicate the name of the sailor. The importance of these sailors to the company is suggested by John H. Jones' pocket daybook. A small note, one of very few pertaining to sailors, appears in his accounts "to Cash in gold to exchange for silver for pay Kancas."[29] These sailors helped ease labor shortages and contributed experience to the crew.

29 As important as they were to the business, it also appears the Canakas became a part of local lore. It is said that when the ships came in, Main Street was renamed "Bedlam Street" and the Pacific Islanders could be seen carving on the steps of the Stone Jug, a boarding house friendly to them.[30] However, no documentation of the boarding house or the men in Cold Spring Harbor has been found. Captain Manuel Eños, a native of the Azores, was an exception. He sailed often from Cold Spring Harbor as part of its regular crew. The Azores were uninhabited until the mid-15th century, when the Portuguese and others started to colonize the islands. Jews, Moorish prisoners, African slaves, Spanish, Flemish and French people were all early colonists. Captain Eños's home still stands in Cold Spring Harbor.

30 Although a large community of free African Americans resided in the area, and many historians discussed the impact of whaling on African American communities, there is little to suggest the Jones brothers employed many local African Americans on their ships. The same log from the 1841 voyage of the *Tuscarora* is often cited as evidence that local African Americans sailed aboard these ships.[31] However, clear connections to local households are difficult to find. Sailors who stated they were born in Cold Spring Harbor, currently lived there, or both do not appear in the census records of Cold Spring Harbor or surrounding communities. Other ships' logs, like that for the 1851 voyage of the *N. P. Tallmadge*, included notes on the crewmembers' physical appearance. Physical descriptions were not always noted and occasionally conflict. William Price is on a version of the *Monmouth* crew list for 1846 and identified as dark. An earlier crew list for the same ship in 1840 has no physical description of him or any other sailor.

31 Again, potential connections to households are difficult. Whalers new to the area and to some degree transient by occupation would be difficult to find as 1830 and 1840 censuses only record heads of household. Many African Americans with different last names appear in single households in the 1850 census. These individuals would be "invisible" in earlier census records. Two African American households apparently took in mothers with young children between 1830 and 1840 when whaling began in the region. It is possible these were sailors' families but without additional information, it is impossible to know for certain.

32 Many African Americans were being squeezed out of whaling in other ports during this period by racism. Some turned to working coastal waters so they could stay home tending crops.[32] Three men are listed as being in the coastal trade in 1850 but no connection between them and crew lists has been found. For now, the impact of the whaling business on African American households in Cold Spring Harbor is unclear.

Success, Community and Change

33 In spite of the challenges, Cold Spring Harbor's whaling business was successful by many definitions. The Jones brothers built a rhythm with the first two ships key for flows of capital. For the first voyage, the *Monmouth* went both in and out of Sag Harbor where crew, supplemental supplies and knowledge abounded. Subsequent voyages of the Monmouth were efficient and short, with an average four-month turn around time. In the meantime, the Tuscarora was outfitted and set sail. Then, in 1846, the *Monmouth*, with an experienced captain at the helm, left New York for the firm's longest voyage yet. In 1844, 1846 and 1848 the firm had between six and seven ships out at a time. Despite their initial inexperience in whaling, they were able to put the growing fleet to work.[33]

34 The year 1849 was successful for Cold Spring Harbor. The *Monmouth*, *N.P. Tallmadge*, *Splendid* and *Tuscarora* were all out on long voyages. Between February and April, the *Alice*, *Huntsville* and *Sheffield* all came in with an estimated 88,000 pounds of bone and more than 10,000 barrels of oil between them. Between August and September, the *Alice*, *Huntsville* and *Sheffield* all set sail again. This balanced and well-timed exchange smoothed flows of capital and allowed accounts to be settled, ships to be re-outfitted, and left investors encouraged.

35 However, in 1850, this cycle changed. The *Monmouth* returned and did not go back out for almost sixteen months, idle for the longest period since the ship was purchased. In fact, in 1850, no whaling ship departed from Cold Spring Harbor at all. Having set sail in 1848, the *N.P. Tallmadge*, *Splendid*, and *Tuscarora* were all still in the South Pacific, Alaska, or other whaling grounds. The *Alice*, *Huntsville* and *Sheffield* joined them the following year. All but the *Sheffield*, out for the second longest voyage the firm would sail, returned in March of 1851.

36 This change in timing followed on the heels of the loss, in 1849, of the Richmond and its cargo. The ship sent 430 barrels of oil home, but wrecked with an additional 3,500 barrels aboard. The legal battle over the salvage of the *Richmond*'s cargo went all the way to the Supreme Court.[34] The case was not decided until 1858 providing little help to the owners with immediate capital needs. The corporation appears to have been dissolved in 1851; the *Tuscarora* was sold, but whaling continued.

37 Although 1850 may have been a difficult year great rewards came with the five whalers returning to port. According to Schmidt, Cold Spring Harbor's best voyage brought the Jones brothers, their investors and crew a record cargo worth $100,000.[35] This was delivered by the *Sheffield*, which set sail in 1849 and returned in 1854 to New York, He estimated the fleet brought in bone and oil worth 1.5 million dollars during its years of operation. The bark *Alice* was the last ship home in 1862. Both Walter and John had died, passing in 1855 and 1859 respectively. Only three voyages went out after Walter's death. Two were relatively long voyages.[36] The *Monmouth*, however, did not return to Cold Spring Harbor and was sold in Chile.

38 The durable impact of this venture on Cold Spring Harbor and the surrounding communities may lie beyond the business of whaling. By mid-century, the shift from agriculture to manufacturing was occurring in many places, including Cold Spring Harbor. Between 1850 and 1870, for example, wage labor jobs increased by about 82 % in near-by Oyster Bay. Non-population statistics show the transition from piecework to light industry, represented by sewing machines, rolling mills and lathes. By 1870, industry included specialists. Although hand power still dominated, steam had begun to take hold and one person listed his business as refurbishing machines. This growth was driven in part by investments in capital, purchasing machines, and paying wages.

39 In the preceding decades, volatility in money supplies and structural changes in the economy made banks risky for small investors. Often, wealthy neighbors made loans using land as collateral. Farmers borrowed against land to mediate the cyclical needs of the agricultural seasons. These debts were converted to mortgages, with land as a medium of exchange and of equal value to all parties. If the farmer defaulted, the person making the loan had more land to borrow against. For the farmer, neighbors, unlike banks, could more readily be negotiated with, which helped lengthen repayment schedules and buffered against the ups and downs of agriculture. Few had money to purchase additional land to leverage for capital to invest in new ventures.

40 Corporate ventures like the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company offered small investors limited liability and a new means to gain interest on capital. For a relatively small investment that was far less than the price of more land, they could expect some return, or at least recourse, in the event of corporate failure. Walter R. Jones demonstrated his honor in these affairs during the dissolution of the first Atlantic Marine Insurance Company. Also, the brothers were rooted in several longtime local families. In this manner, the whaling venture and company could stimulate local economies in different ways and may have helped shape how a community entered the new national economy. By combining traditional investment options (ones that favored the whalers and wealthy owners) with the sale of stock in a company (which protected small investors and helped organize a large number of investors), the Jones brothers made it possible for the local community to participate in the ventures.

41 Certainly this transition was taking place across the country, but in Cold Spring Harbor a durable whaling community co-existed with an industrial identity. How integral the whaling component of this shared identity was became clear in 1938, when the American Museum of Natural History offered to donate a ship to Cold Spring Harbor if they had a proper means of housing it. The announcement came in July, and in August a call went out for neighbors to "search their garrets, cellars and closets for relics of the days of ships and industry from Cold Spring Harbor."[37] Plans to create a new museum soon became contentious when so-called outsiders, from neighboring

Oyster Bay and Lloyd Neck, sought to participate, invoking the wrath of one of the Jones brothers' direct descendants —Mrs. Phoebe Hewlett Willets. Her impassioned letter, read to the Town Board and reprinted in the paper, spoke of a community of whalers still in Cold Spring Harbor seventy-six years after the *Alice* came in. These were histories held by families and made present by the whalers' papers, handed down and cared for over generations. Mrs. Willets represented a group who felt the organizers lacked historical accuracy and sufficient local ties; in her words, it was impossible that ". . . we who have family museums in our homes would be lured into placing sacred relics in the hands of those who have no relation to them and no relation to Cold Spring Harbor's important age."[38] Nonetheless, the museum was founded shortly thereafter and remains an important part of the community.

42 Cold Spring Harbor's history of investment in early industry is equally important. The recent publication by the town historian, Robert Hughes, connects the earliest mills in the community to more recent history.[39] The Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories, for which the area is best known today, still use several buildings that belonged to the whaling company and were donated by John H. Jones' son. These histories are intertwined.

Conclusion

43 Whaling out of Cold Spring Harbor was a successful hybrid venture and had a clear impact on the area and its cultural heritage that is still visible today. It does not appear this was a story of elite families expanding the family empire at the expense of others. The combined Jones-Hewlett families worked for themselves and with the local community. It is possible this was out of necessity, with the families lacking capital to undertake the venture themselves. Regardless, it is certain the business grew bigger and faster with community help.

44 Incorporation may have served as a useful tool on several fronts. The structure of the corporation, with its board of directors and voting rules, may have seemed an attractive method for managing the large number of investors. Provisions for limited liability may have attracted additional smaller investors. Coupled with traditional financing options, larger investors could participate in multiple ventures—some corporate, others not. Laws of incorporation also allowed the company to mortgage corporate property to cover debt. In this way, the ships served the company much like land served farmers— by providing capital to hedge against seasonal fluctuations.

45 In the end, the Jones brothers did serve as some sort of glue, whaling ceasing shortly after their deaths. However, this was not a cult of personality. The brothers willingly repurposed family resources to serve what was, at best, a risky venture. If the whaling business failed, then their efforts to create a specialized port for outfitting by turning family businesses to that end meant they were risking a large proportion of the family wealth. They also made evenhanded choices that relied on traditional ways of doing business on Long Island. They adhered to key aspects of traditional whaling firms that helped foster success. This included keeping agents and captains invested in each voyage's success. In the long run, it is possible these efforts stimulated capital growth in the community through encouraging and supporting its entrance into industrial endeavors.

46 In addition to ongoing research on the long-term economic impact of whaling, work on the relationship between the African American community and whaling in the region is still required, as is research regarding those sailors named "Kanaka" who appear on ships' logs. Both of these represent internally diverse groups who were underrepresented in documentary records. The relationships these sailors had with Cold Spring Harbor and the surrounding communities are still unclear.

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Notes

[1]“It will be noticed how strongly the members of the family were tied together; living near the boundary line between Queens and Suffolk Co., through a long civil war, the hostilities and jealousies which convulsed the whole country doubtless taught them to adhere firmly to each other and avoid giving offence. (MSS. C. B. Moore.)” John H. Jones, *The Jones Family of Long Island; Descendants of Major Thomas Jones (1665-1726) and Allied Families* (New York: Tobias Write, 1907), 19. Mr. Charles B. Moore was a charter member of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society and friend of Jones. He assisted with methods and research. His work is cited throughout the larger work.

[2]Gracie’s widow and daughter would later invest in the whaling company, and his granddaughter married Walter’s youngest brother. David W. Armstrong Jr., William Otis Badger, Jr., and Edwin Warren De Leon. *International Insurance Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Theory, and Practice of All Branches of Insurance Throughout the World from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Chicago, IL: American Encyclopedic Library Association, 1910), 341, 413.

[3]Walsh (Atlantic Insurance Company, Trustee) v. State of New York. Claimant no. 18287 Sup.Ct. A.d3 (1927). Find the link here. (accessed 3/17/2016)) see pages 5, 53–77.

[4]Freeman Hunt, *Lives of American Merchants* (New York, NY: Hunt’s Merchant Magazine, 1856), 415–428.

[5]Ibid., 426.

[6]Jones, *The Jones Family of Long Island*, 140–143.

[7]*John H. Jones Pocket Daybook*, Knight Collection, Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company. Folder Z, Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum.

[8]*Long Island Farmer & Queens County Advertiser*, Oct 12, 1852.

[9]N. & W.W. Billings Papers, Coll 233 Box 7/5; Frederick P. Schmitt, *Mark Well the Whale: Long Islands Ships to Distant Seas* (Cold Spring Harbor, NY: Whaling Museum Inc., 1971), 10–15.

[10]Eric Hilt, “When Did Ownership Separate from Control? Corporate Governance in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *The Journal of Economic History* 68, no. 3 (2008), 260.

[11]New York State Legislature, Senate. *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at their Sixty-First Session, Begun and Held at the Capital in the City of Albany on the Second Day of January, 1838* (Albany, NY: E. Croswell, 1838), 177, 234, 296, 305.

[12]New York State Legislature, Senate. *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at their Sixty-Third Session, Begun and Held at the Capital in the City of Albany on the Seventh Day of January, 1838* (Albany, NY: E. Croswell, 1840), 1190–1197.

[13]Meeting of the Commissioners of the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company, 11 July 1840. Knight Collection, Folder S, Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum Company Meeting. Nancy Grace, widow of Archibald, an early employer of Walter R. Jones in marine insurance, had several children, including a daughter, Fanny R. Gardiner. Both these women owned shares of the Cold Spring Harbor Company in 1840. After her death in 1847, Walter R. Jones, Charles H. Jones and Michael Ulehoeffer executed Nancy’s will. Ulehoeffer was Nancy’s son-in-law, married to her oldest daughter MaryAnn. It also appears that Charles H. Jones was married to Fanny’s daughter Elizabeth. He would therefore be Nancy’s grandson by marriage, explaining why he and his brother served as Nancy’s executors and why she and Fanny owned stock in the company. They are two of the four women listed as stockowners.

[14]It should also be noted that the ships were a risky investment in themselves. The *Monmouth* was known to be leaky. The *Edgar*, purchased in 1846, had been rebuilt after it was wrecked running as a packet ship out of New Orleans. (Schmitt, 21–22). The Jones brothers did not convert it to a whaler until 1852, possibly testing its seaworthiness. That ship wrecked amidst an otherwise successful voyage. Some oil and bone was salvaged and the ship and its rigging insured.

[15]Hilt (2008), 198.

[16]Advertisement, *Motor Boating* (June 1938), 11.

[17]Oliver Lorenzo Barbour, *Reports of Cases in Law and Equity in the Supreme Court of the State of New York* (Albany, NY: W.C. Little & Co., 1876), 113.

[18]Knight Collection, Folder Z, Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum.

[19]For example, the National Digital Maritime Library (NDML) has both Edward Halsey and Edward Halsey, Jr. sailing out of Cold Spring Harbor. However, the dates of these voyages and earlier voyages for the same individual listed in the case of Edward Halsey seem unlikely. Edward Halsey is listed as captain of the *Warren* in 1812 and the *Monmouth* in 1846. It is likely the second voyage belongs to the Captain Edward Halsey, Jr. listed in the database. Other inconsistencies exist in the record. An Edward Halsey found in the 1850 census was a seaman and by 1870 is listed as a farmer. His birth date is approximately 1812, making him 16 when the NDML lists him as captain of the *Union*. More research is necessary.

[20]Schmitt, *Mark Well the Whale*, 138-139

[21]*Long Island Farmer and Queens County Advertiser*, March 15 and 29, 1827. www.nyshistoricnewspapers.org (Accessed 8/28/2015).

[22]Apparently several Captain Pecks took charge of the ship over time. In 1838 a Richard Peck was captain and in 1840 a Charles Benson Peck is listed as captain. Apparently Charles Benson Peck died young. It is unclear who took over next. *House Documents, Otherwise Published as Executive Documents, 13th Congress 2nd Session — 49th Congress 1st Session*. Accessed Google books (8 August, 2015). J. Disturnell, *The New York State Register* (New York State, 1845), 259.

[23]Charles M. Haar, "Legislative Regulation of New York Industrial Corporations 1800-1850," *New York History* 22, no. 2 (April 1941), 191–207. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23134666

[24]Judith N. Lund, Elizabeth A. Josephson, Randall R. Reeves and Tim D. Smith, *American Offshore Whaling Voyages: A Database*. http://www.nmdl.org. (Accessed August 7, 2015).

[25]Schmitt, *Mark Well the Whale*, 63.

[26] Jones et al. v. The Richmond, (1853) http://law.resource.org.

[27]Lund, et al.

[28]Schmitt, *Mark Well the Whale*, 62.

[29]*John H. Jones Pocket Daybook*. Knight Collection, Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Company. Folder Z, Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum.

[30]James Arthur Harris, *The Cold Spring Harbor Library: Containing a Sketch of the Library, the Addresses Delivered on the Occasion of the Opening of the New Library Building October Twenty-third 1913; together with an Historical Sketch of Cold Spring Harbor* (Cold Spring Harbor, NY: Gillis Press, 1914), 24, 51.

[31]Linda Day, *Making a Way to Freedom: A History of African Americans on Long Island* (Interlaken, NY: Empire State Books, 1997), 75; Schmidt, *Mark Well the Whale*, 142–143.

[32]W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 165.

[33]*N.P. Tallmadge*, *Huntsville*, *Richmond*, *Splendid*, *Alice*, and *Sheffield* were all purchased between 1843 and 1845. The Edgar was purchased in 1852.

[34]Jones v. The Richmond, New York, April 26, 1858. https://law.resource.org/pub/us/case/reporter/F.Cas/0013.f.cas/0013.f.cas.1012.pdf

[35]Schmitt, *Mark Well the Whale*, 122.

[36]The *Splendid* was out for more than 43 months and the *Alice* for 44 months. Schmitt, *Mark Well the Whale*, 139.

[37]"Cold Spring Harbor Has Novel Exhibit," *The Long Islander*, May 29, 1936.

[38]"Whaling Museum Starts Arguments," *The Long Islander*, Aug 7, 1936.

[39]Robert Hughes, *Cold Spring Harbor (Images of America)* , (Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014).