

Morgan Launch Remarks (as prepared)

Thank you Steve for inviting me to speak on behalf of the City of New Bedford on this historic occasion. And thanks to Gov. Malloy, Senator Blumenthal, Senator Maynard, and Congressman Courtney for your devotion to the Charles W. Morgan and her 38th voyage.

The people of New Bedford are especially grateful to Mystic Seaport, which, under the leadership of Steve White, Matthew Stackpole, Dick Vietor, and many others, has been a devout steward of the Morgan.

Today we celebrate their pursuit -- your pursuit -- of the big, bold idea of getting the Morgan in sailing shape so she can ultimately return to her birthplace and original home port of New Bedford, as well as the whaling grounds where her crews plied their trade.

It would have been understandable, and certainly easier, to dismiss the whole notion of sailing this old wooden ship again as pie in the sky - totally unrealistic in the face of the unprecedented economic challenges of the last few years.

The Morgan restoration and voyage has been an expensive, complex undertaking, which, like the endeavor in which she was engaged for most of her sailing life, required boldness, vision, commitment, and tremendous hard work from so many to come to fruition.

Yankee whaling was the quintessential American enterprise. At its core was the audacious proposition that men were to venture forth across the globe in wooden boats to hunt the largest creatures in the sea -- with hand weapons. In the spirit of those old whalers, the folks at Mystic instead chose

resolve over certainty, and struggle over ease.

Mystic, you have dreamed big, and acted boldly.

From the first time I met with Steve and Matthew last fall to begin planning for the New Bedford leg of the 38th Voyage, it was clear to me that they agreed that the voyage was an opportunity for New Bedford to heal old wounds from the loss of the Morgan to another port. The wounds may not be as raw as they once were, but to a great extent the people of our city still think of this ship as their own, a leading vessel among the world's largest whaling fleet that made New Bedford the wealthiest city in America on the eve of the Civil War and that has shaped our identity as a community down to the present day.

New Bedford looks to the Morgan's return less than a year from today as the central plot point of the story of this 38th Voyage.

This is a story of homecoming seven decades in the making. We in New Bedford will get goose bumps upon the sight of Morgan entering our harbor. It will be a profoundly validating moment for our great city.

I'm here to deliver the message that the City of New Bedford will be ready to welcome her home with open arms and open hearts. And as much as we in New Bedford miss and love the Morgan, don't get me wrong, I promise to let her sail out of our harbor to return to Mystic.

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you on the dock in New Bedford next year.