Clarke, John, b. 1817.

On board the ship *Governor Morton*
1852 March 10-1852 December 20

**Abstract:** Journal kept by the passenger John Clarke aboard the ship *Governor Morton* documenting the trip from New York to San Francisco between March 12, 1852 and December 20, 1852.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 097, Item 013
Creator: Clarke, John, b. 1817.
Title: On board the ship Governor Morton
Inclusive Dates: 1852 March 10-1852 December 20
Extent: 1 v. (ca. 200 p.) ; 15 cm.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

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Historical Note

John Clarke was a passenger on the ship Governor Morton traveling from New York to San Francisco around Cape Horn from March 10, 1852 to December 20, 1852. The journal contains a list of the second cabin passengers including such details as name, age, occupation, and city and state from which they hailed. John Clarke (b. 1817), a carpenter, was a second cabin passenger from Providence, Rhode Island, traveling with a relative, Joseph Clarke, a laborer.

The Governor Morton was a clipper ship that made many voyages around Cape Horn to California between the years 1851 and 1855 and after 1866. The Mystic Seaport G. W. Blunt White Library has records of registry for this ship from 1858 to 1878. The captain, John A. Burgess, was well known for his cruelty to sailors and passengers alike.

The journey was taken during the California Gold Rush. Gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill in 1848 and many people flocked to California to make their fortune, leaving their families behind. The author of the journal wrote, "I have left the dearest I have on earth for paltry gold."

Sources:

"Governor Morton (ship)." Mystic Seaport.  

Additional information derived from the collection.
**Scope and Content Note**

The journal documents the journey on the clipper ship *Governor Morton* from March 12, 1852 to July 15, 1852 from New York to San Francisco around Cape Horn. The journal is a personal narrative, including some navigational data such as the weather and knots as well as a few entries concerning marine life (whales, sharks, flying fish), but most of the entries are dedicated to life on the ship. The quality of the food, homesickness, and the cruelty of the captain are frequent topics. The journal contains a list of the second cabin passengers including such details as name, age, occupation, and city and state from which they hailed. After the author disembarked in San Francisco, he used the journal as an account book for his wages and to list the tools he bought for his trade as a carpenter.

The journal is a small leather bound volume, circa 200 pages, 136 of which are filled in pencil and ink entries.
Selected Search Terms

Corporate Names
Governor Morton (Ship)

Topical Terms
Clipper ships--19th century--Sources.
Ocean travel--19th century--Sources.
Voyages to the Pacific coast--19th century--Sources.

Form/Genre Terms
Diaries.

Occupation
Carpenters--Diaries.
Travelers--Diaries.

Related Materials in this Repository
This item forms part of MSS 097 Diaries, Journals, and Ships' Logs collection.
Detailed Description of the Collection

On board the ship Governor Morton, 1852 March 10-1852 December 20 [Item 013]

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