

Historic Whaleship *Charles W. Morgan* to Launch on July 21 *Public Ceremony to Celebrate National Historic Landmark's Return to the Water*

Mystic, Conn. – After a multi-million dollar restoration lasting almost five years, the whaleship *Charles W. Morgan*, a National Historic Landmark and America's oldest surviving commercial vessel, will return to the water Sunday, July 21, 2013.

The launch will occur during a public ceremony at 2 p.m. at Mystic Seaport. Award-winning documentary filmmaker Ric Burns will deliver the keynote address, at which point the ship will be lowered into the Mystic River.

The *Morgan's* restoration has been conducted in the Museum's Henry B. duPont Preservation Shipyard. The comprehensive project, which began in November 2008, has focused primarily on restoring areas of the vessel from the waterline down to her keel and structural work in the bow and stern. Once launched, the Shipyard will complete the restoration with the vessel in the water. Remaining work includes rigging, internal carpentry, and reinstalling much of the ship's equipment.

"The *Charles W. Morgan* is an exceptional and truly unique artifact of our shared maritime heritage," said Mystic Seaport President Steve White. "She is the last remaining wooden whaleship in the world and the sole survivor of a fleet of American ships that once numbered more than 2,700. The *Morgan* is quite simply an American icon and a living portal into an important chapter of American history."

The 113-foot vessel was built and launched in New Bedford in 1841 and had a whaling career that lasted 80 years and 37 voyages that spanned the far reaches of the globe. The ship came to Mystic Seaport in 1941. More than 20 million people have walked her decks since she arrived.

In what will be the most significant living history lesson unfolding in the United States over the next 18 months, the flagship of the Mystic Seaport watercraft collection will once again set sail in late May 2014. The *Morgan* will embark on a ceremonial 38th Voyage to historic ports of New England to celebrate the importance of America's maritime heritage. After a period of refitting and sea trials based in New London, Conn., the ship will sail to Newport, Vineyard Haven, New Bedford, and Boston. She will also venture onto the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary near the mouth of Massachusetts Bay and participate in the centennial celebration of the Cape Cod Canal. The voyage will be a commemoration of the role of the sea in the history of America and an appreciation of our changing relationship with the natural world.

Images and other supporting materials available upon request.

About Mystic Seaport

Mystic Seaport is the nation's leading maritime museum. Founded in 1929, the Museum is home to four National Historic Landmark vessels. It is located one mile south of exit 90 off I-95 in Mystic, CT. Admission is \$24 for adults and \$15 for children 6-17. Museum members and children under 5 are admitted for free. For more information, please visit www.mysticseaport.org.

Media Contact:

Dan McFadden
Director of Communication
860.572.5317
dan.mcfadden@mysticseaport.org