

JOHN MANJIRO (NAKAHAMA MANJIRO)



JOHN MANJIRO

1827



Manjiro was born, son of a fisherman in the village of Nakanohama of southern [Japan](#) (a village now known as Tosashimizu). In the Japan of that time, working-class people did not have family names.

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1836



When the fisherman father of Manjiro lost his life at sea, at about the age of nine this boy needed to join the crew of a [Japanese](#) fishing boat.

1841

Manjiro was fourteen years of age and had worked on fishing crews for five years or so. The boat on which he was working was driven by a storm and wrecked on a deserted island 300 miles off the coast of [Japan](#), Torishima. The five-man crew of the fishing boat was reduced to eating albatrosses for six months, until they were picked up by a passing American whaler, the *John Howland* out of [New Bedford](#).



Captain William Whitfield would drop the older four of the Japanese fishermen off in the Hawaiian Islands and take Manjiro, whom the crew referred to as “John Mung,” back home to Fairhaven with him (Fairhaven is 55 miles south of Boston and 35 miles east of Providence, near the bridge to Cape Cod). In Massachusetts, the Japanese boy would be learning English from two elderly sisters. When Whitfield’s Congregational Church was unwilling to allow John to worship with them, he would convert to Unitarianism. The Unitarians welcomed Japanese John.



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The whaler *Sharon*, Captain Howes Norris, sailed from Fairhaven, Massachusetts bound for the South Pacific. Captain Norris, a racist, would lash and mistreat his black steward, George Babcock, to his death. Later, fed up with mistreatment by this vicious captain, some of the ship’s crewmen, in collaboration with some Pacific-Islander replacement crewmen, would attack him on deck, hacking him quite into two pieces by the use of their long flensing spades. These crewmen would then attempt to hijack the vessel, refusing to allow whaleboat crews to reboard the mother ship. The remainder of the crew would recapture the *Sharon* after the third mate, Benjamin Clough, crept aboard during hours of darkness and dispatched two of the mutineers with

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musket and cutlass. An account would be written by Clough, and another account would be written by Andrew White, the *Sharon*'s cooper.

1843

[John Manjiro](#) began his formal education, at the rubblestone schoolhouse in [Oxford](#), Massachusetts.

1847

[John Manjiro](#), who had been plucked off the active volcano Tori Shima in the Pacific Ocean (St. Peter's Island or Hurricane Island) in 1841 as a starving 14-year-old by the whaler *John Howland*, had been living since then in the Fairhaven, Massachusetts home of the William Whitfields. At this point, turning 20 years of age, he left for points west. He would adventure via California and the gold rush, on across the Pacific first to Okinawa and then to [Nagasaki](#). He would be 1st mate on a 40-month whaling voyage around the world.



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1850

At the age of 24, [John Manjiro](#) determined to return from Fairhaven, Massachusetts to [Japan](#), despite the good likelihood that as a Japanese who had made contact with foreigners, he would simply be beheaded by the officials of the Shogunate under what had been the national policy for several centuries. He traveled across the USA to California and would work in a gold mine there for a year, accumulating \$600, and then go on to the Hawaiian Islands to rejoin his fellow shipwrecked fishermen.



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[James Pierson Beckwourth](#) discovered the lowest mountain pass through the Sierra Nevada toward California, now known as the Beckwourth Pass.¹



1. State Route 70 now crosses the Sierras along the Feather River route east of Portola, California at an elevation of 5,221 feet, making it one of the lowest crossings of the Sierra Nevadas. This was the route that the Western Pacific Railroad track would follow (a track now owned by Union Pacific).

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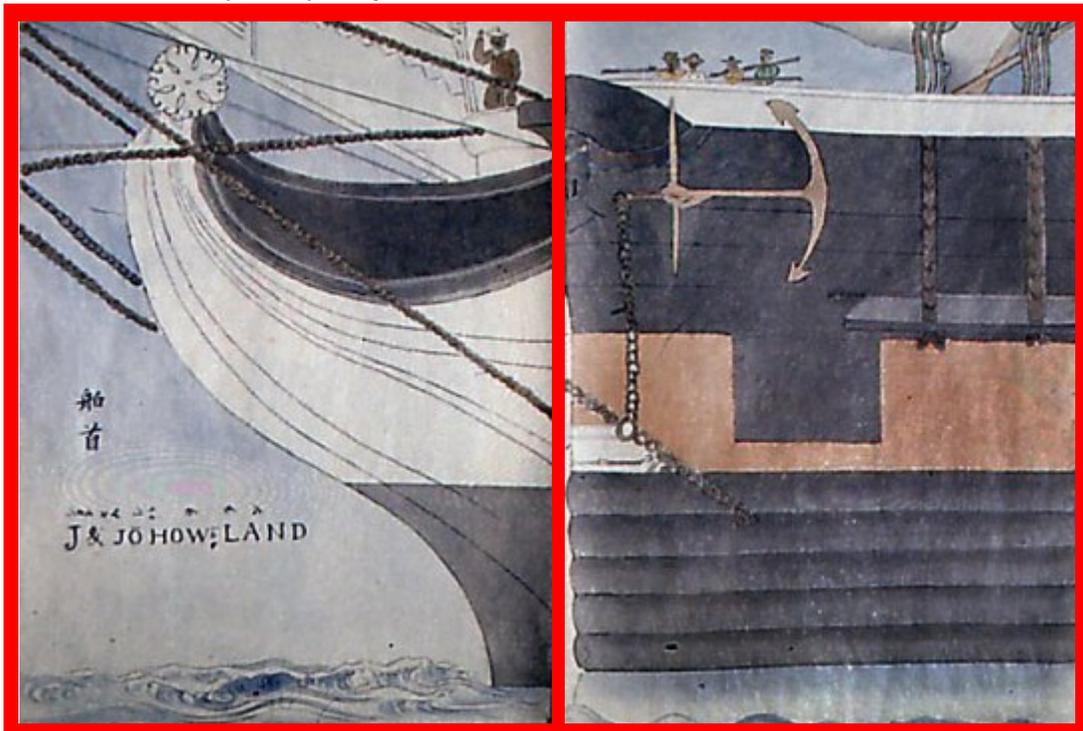
1851

John Manjiro sailed from California to Hawaii and then from Hawaii on across the Pacific Ocean, first to Okinawa and then to Nagasaki. He was of course arrested and interrogated, since Japan had had an official isolation policy for several centuries, but rather than beheading him the Shogunate would release him, and allow him to spend three nights in the home of his mother.



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The Shogunate kept a careful record of his interrogation, which would in 1918 be presented to the town of Fairhaven, Massachusetts by the Japanese ambassador to the US. The interrogation record included some artwork which evidently was by Manjiro himself.





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1852

October: After a year and a half of detention as a person who had had contact with the outside world, and considerable interrogation, [John Manjiro](#) was allowed to travel to the village of Nakanohama in southern [Japan](#) (a village now known as Tosashimizu) to spend four days with his mother, whom he had not seen since he had been fourteen years old twelve years before.

1854

February: The US naval force under the command of Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#) that had landed in [Nagasaki](#) in 1853, at this point returned to Japanese waters, this time with seven ships (four sailing vessels and three steamships) and 1,600 men, demanding that they were going to open trade with [Japan](#) or know the reason why. After a standoff, the Commodore would be able to land and begin peace and trade talks on March 8, 1854. Nakahama Manjiro, known to us as [John Manjiro](#), was granted a rather minor samurai title and given the family name of Nakahama, after the village Nakanohama in which he had grown up, and was employed as an interpreter for the Shogunate in dealing with Commodore Matthew Perry’s “four black ships.”

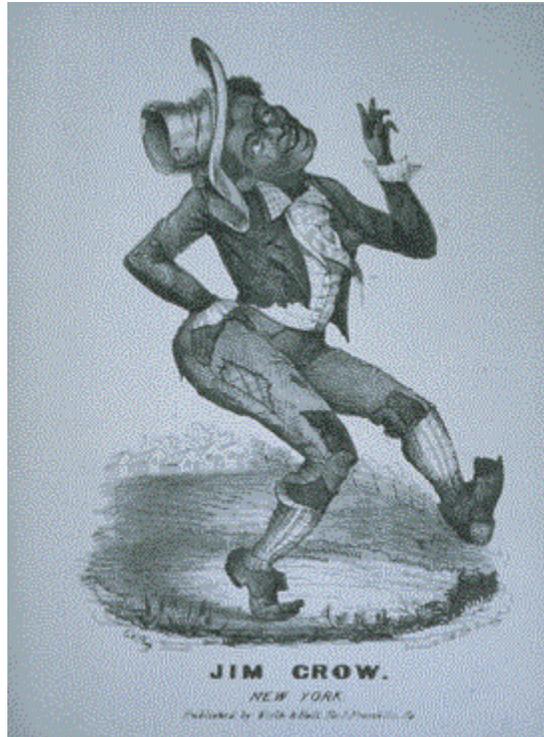


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As Nakahama Manjiro he would teach naval science, ship-building, and navigation.

Aboard the USS *Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry*, or on the beach, a trade treaty to be known as the Treaty of Kanagawa was signed with a Japanese delegation. The Japanese put on a demonstration of sumo wrestling, and in return the American sailors gave a minstrel show starring Bones and Tambourine.

The Japanese fascination with black Americans, noticeable even today, began here.



ME HAPPY SO ME SING

(By the way, this was the year in which, back home, Stephen Collins Foster was writing “Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair.”)

I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair,
 Borne, like a vapor, on the summer air;
 I see her tripping where the bright streams play,
 Happy as the daisies that dance on her way.
 Many were the wild notes her merry voice would pour,
 Many were the blithe birds that warbled them o'er:
 Oh! I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair,
 Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

I long for Jeanie with the daydawn smile,
 Radiant in gladness, warm with winning guile;
 I hear her melodies, like joys gone by,
 Sighing round my heart o'er the fond hopes that die:-
 Sighing like the night wind and sobbing like the rain,-
 Wailing for the lost one that comes not again:
 Oh! I long for Jeanie, and my heart bows low,
 Never more to find her where the bright waters flow.

I sigh for Jeanie, but her light form strayed
 Far from the fond hearts round her native glade;
 Her smiles have vanished and her sweet songs flown,
 Flitting like the dreams that have cheered us and gone.
 Now the nodding wild flowers may wither on the shore
 While her gentle fingers will cull them no more:
 Oh! I sigh for Jeanie with the light brown hair,
 Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

1860

A delegation was sent by the Shogunate of [Japan](#) to Washington DC, to sign a commercial treaty. Selected to go to the US with this delegation was Nakahama Manjiro, known to the Americans as John Manjiro. The delegation traveled aboard the Kanrin-maru, Japan's first large ocean-going ship, which he had helped to create. During this visit Manjiro would return to Fairhaven to pay his respects at the grave of Captain William H. Whitfield, and to have a reunion with the elderly sisters who had taught him English there when he had been fourteen years of age.



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1898

Nakahama Manjiro died at the age of 71. (The village in which he had been born in southern [Japan](#) in 1827, now known as Tosashimizu, and his American hometown, Fairhaven, Massachusetts, have since declared themselves sister cities.)

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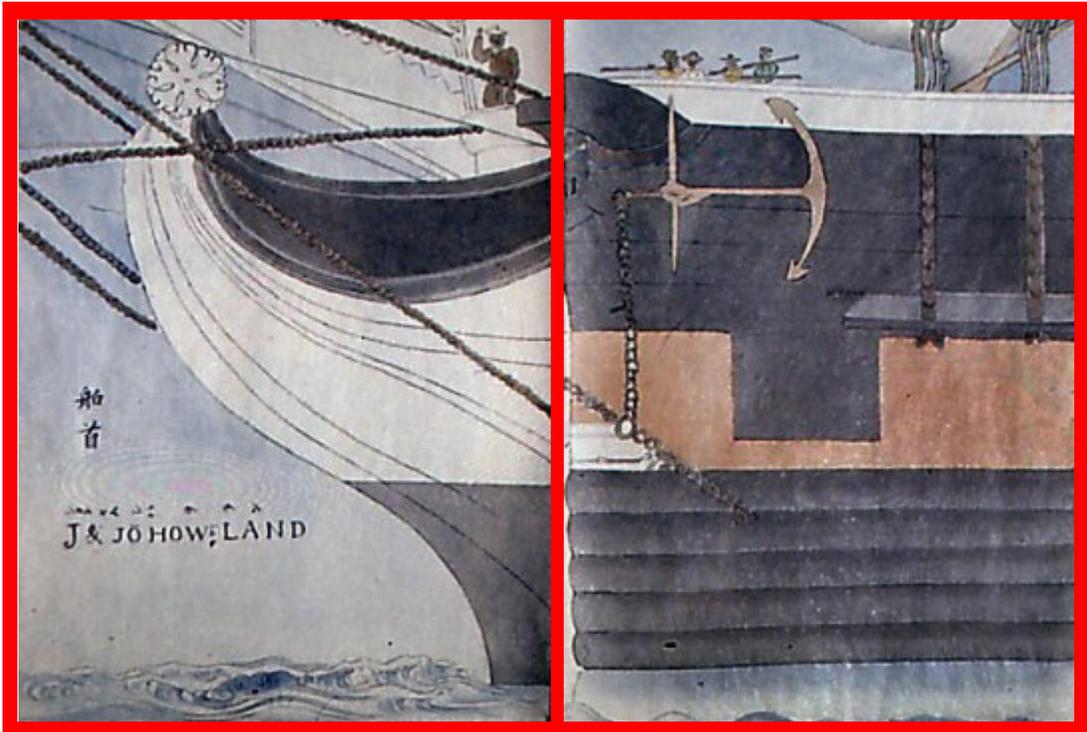
1902

In this year and in 1939, the volcano that was Tori Shima (St. Peter's Island or Hurricane Island near [Japan](#)) erupted, killing 125 and driving away the island's entire human population. The volcano remains active and the island empty of human occupants to this day, but the area now serves as a breeding refuge for the endangered short-tailed albatross.

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1918

The Japanese ambassador to the US, Viscount Kikujiro Ishii, accompanied by a son of Nakahama Manjiro (John Manjiro), presented a Samurai sword and a presentation-bound record of the extended 1851-1852 interrogation of his father by the Shogunate, in four volumes, entitled RECORDS OF THE DRIFTERS, to the people of Fairhaven. The book included a number of illustrations, some evidently by Manjiro himself.



1939

In Japan, Toshiba was founded to produce home appliances.

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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: November 7, 2013

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT
GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.



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Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.