

## Chalk's Stories Captain Joseph Thing

### Captain Thing

#### In the Pacific Northwest in 1834

### Chalk Courchane

Captain Joseph Thing (Thyng) was a sea captain that hired out to work for Nathaniel J. Wyeth on his Oregon fur trade and salmon enterprises in 1834. He had been brought on the expedition West to measure the route by astronomical observation. He stayed with Wyeth a few years and built Fort Hall in Idaho.

Joseph Thing [original spelling was Thyng] was the son of Dudley Lyford Thyng (of Industry, Maine) and Rachel Sanborn (born Jan. 25, 1771), daughter of Abram Sanborn, in 1790. Rachel was born in Fremont, Rockingham, New Hampshire. Dudley was born on May 23, 1770 in Brentwood, New Hampshire and Nov. 15, 1855 in Newburyport, Essex, Mass.

Dudley and Rachel had nine children all born at Brentwood, Rockingham, New Hampshire:

1. Joseph born January 25, 1791-1849
2. Jonathan born August 15, 1792-1848
3. Samuel born May 13, 1795
4. Nancy born August 8, 1799-1858
5. John born April 9, 1802-1879
6. David born August 18, 1804-1812
7. Dudley Haynes born March 7, 1806-1879 (Reverend)
8. Jesse born August 22, 1808-1848
9. Elizabeth born March 31, 1813-1885

There is also another daughter mentioned on <http://www.next1000.com/family/GRUBB/thing.dudleyL.html>:

#### Mary R Thing

b. 23 Jan 1812 Industry, Franklin Co., Maine [Maine Birth Rec].

One note from Dean Dudley says on page 927 "Rev. Dudley L. Thyng, wrote his name "Thyng." His brothers, Joseph, Jonathan, and Samuel were all sea captains, and John, the fourth brother, settled at Valparaiso, South America." <http://www.next1000.com/family/GRUBB/thing.dudleyL.html>:

This genealogy says that Joseph Thing was born at Brentwood, Maine on January 25, 1791. He married twice:

1. Abigail Brown in 1818
2. Mary Allen on March 20, 1830.

Captain Joseph Thing's brother Jesse Thyng (born August 22, 1808) married Mary R. Allen, and he died on December 18, 1847. They lived in Industry, Maine.

Are the two Mary's sisters?

History of the Dudley Family, vol. 1, page 92-927, Dean Dudley, Wakefield, Mas., 1886;  
[https://www.myheritage.com/names/john\\_thyng](https://www.myheritage.com/names/john_thyng)

Name: Joseph Thing  
Arrival Date: 14 Nov 1821  
Age: 28  
Gender: M (Male)  
Port of Arrival: Boston  
Place of Origin: United States of America  
Occupation: Trader

Joseph Thing was from Kentucky and by the 1830s he lived in Boston, Massachusetts. Some sources say Captain Joseph Thing, was a former sea captain whose home was at 30 Washington Place, Boston.

Joseph Thing made his way overland in 1834 onto the Pacific slopes as a land-travelling Boston sea captain employed by Nathaniel J. Wyeth for his ill-fated attempt to establish the Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company in the Columbia. Thing, who had been brought in to measure the route by astronomical observation, was part of Wyeth's 2nd Expedition which left Independence, Missouri on April 28, 1834. On the way, he headed hunting and trapping parties. Nathaniel J. Wyeth's assistant and second in command on his 1834 venture.

He was a mapper for Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth's Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company. "Observing the stars, shooting the sun and, making accurate recordings of longitude and latitude with his feet set firmly on the ground rather than on the heaving deck of a ship, was Wyeth's second in command, and old sea dog, Captain Joseph Thing." Snake River Country  
By Bill Gulick, page 59; [http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~goudied/genealogy/PDF/Goudie/Lives\\_Lived\\_Entire-Bruce-McIntyre-Watson.pdf](http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~goudied/genealogy/PDF/Goudie/Lives_Lived_Entire-Bruce-McIntyre-Watson.pdf)

Cincinnati Feb 28th 1833  
Capt Thing Present,

Dear Sir I leave here no business for you to attend to but wish you would call at the Post Office in Louisville where if I purchase any thing I shall leave a letter for you. Should you be in want of money here you will obtain it of Mess. Josiah Lawrence & Co. I am Yr obt Servt.

Cincinnati March 1st 1834. Mess Tucker & Williams Boston Gent Yours of 18th ulto. received here. What you say of the traps is good. I presume that you have rec[e]ived notice before this that Capt. Thing joined me in N. York, and of the arrangement I made in regard to drafts from St Louis. From this place I drew on you for \$300 in fav. of Lawrence & Co sight. I purchase no goods here Sublette preferring to buy his Powder in St. Louis which is better for us. \$165 of this

money goes to pay a draft which Abbot drew on me in fav. of Mr. Sublette of which I had no notice until lately and did not justly owe but choose to pay to save discredit. After I have finished spending I shall endeavour to forward means by which you will be in funds to the extent of my deficiency so far as I shall then know it but am afraid that if money continues as present in Boston I shall not be able to come quite up to the mark. Duplicate notice Draft fav. of Mess. Wyeth & Norris [at] sight for \$300.00 Feb. 20th 1834

Cincinnati March 1st 1834 Mess Grant & Stone Philad. Gent I write only to inform you that my first draft will be from St Louis No 11 having since I wrote you had occasion to draw one draft more on Boston than I expected And remain yr obt Servt N J W

Louisville March 3d 1834 Mess Allison and Anderson Louisville Gent. For fear that in the hurry of buisness you might forget my directions I recapitulate viz Mark from 20 upwards. W. and ship to Mess Von Phull & McGill of St. Louis by first direct opportunity. Capt. Thing calls on you before you have done this deliver them to him, and oblige Yr Obt. Servt. N. J. W.

Louisville March 3d 1834 Capt. Thing (Louisville) Dear Sir You will find at Mess Allisons & Andersons 3 bbls Alcohol and 11 packages Tobacco, provided they do not ship the same before you arrive in this place in which case you will proceed direct to St. Louis. I am &c N J Wyeth.

The Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1831-6.

"Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth contracted with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company on Aug. 14, 1833 at the Big Horn River, to supply them with goods for the 1834 rendezvous. His plan was to use this as a starting point for a business whereby goods would be shipped to the Columbia River and from there packed to the mountains. Wyeth calculated that this could be done for less than half the cost of shipping goods overland from St. Louis. Further, once the goods were unloaded at the Columbia, the ships would be free to carry a cargo of salmon back to Boston. The deal with the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. was to be Wyeth's entry into the business.

To this end, Wyeth formed the "Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company", and began assembling his expedition at Independence, Missouri in the spring of 1834. Men for the trip were hired locally in Missouri, and among them was one Osborne Russell."

"Before leaving the settlements, the men outfitted themselves for the journey. The company provided the equipment required for their employment, but the men were expected to have their own personal gear."

"Some of the men bought part of their personal outfit from the company before they left."

"On landing [in St. Louis], we had the satisfaction to learn that Captain Wyeth was already there, and on the afternoon of the next day, we called upon him, and consulted him in reference to the outfit which would be necessary to purchase for the journey. He accompanied us to a store in town, and selected a number of articles for us, among which were several pairs of leathern pantaloons, enormous overcoats, made of green blankets, and white wool hats, with round

crowns, fitting tightly to the head, brims five inches wide, and almost hard enough to resist a rifle ball." <https://user.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/RuslPaper.html>

Townsend made another observation describing how the men camped while preparing for the journey that suggests that the men apparently all used tents, and that each one was equipped with some sort of lantern or candle:

"The men of the party, to the number of about fifty, are encamped on the bank of the river, and their tents whiten the plain for the distance of half a mile... The beautiful white tents, with a light gleaming from each, the smoldering fires around them, the incessant hum of the men, and occasionally the lively notes of a bacchanalian song, softened and rendered sweeter by distance." The party spent 23rd to the 27th of April near Independence making preparations, and on the 28th, the men were equipped and mounted "hunter-like," and began the march."

"At the town of Independence, Mo., on the 4th of April, 1834, I joined an expedition fitted out for the Rocky Mountains and mouth of the Columbia River, by a company formed in Boston under the name and style of the Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company. The same firm had fitted out a brig of two hundred tons burden, freighted with the necessary assortment of merchandise for the salmon and fur trade, with orders to sail to the mouth of the Columbia River, whilst the land party, under the direction of Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, should proceed across the Rocky Mountains and unite with the brig's company in establishing a post on the Columbia near the Pacific.

Our party consisted of forty men engaged in the service, accompanied by Messrs. Nutall and Townsend, botanists and ornithologists, with two attendants; likewise Revs. Jason and Daniel Lee, Methodist missionaries, with four attendants, on their way to establish a mission in Oregon, which brought our numbers (including six independent trappers) to fifty-eight men. From the 23rd to the 27th of April we were engaged in arranging our packs and moving to a place about four miles from Independence. On the morning of the 28th we were all equipped and mounted hunter-like. About forty men leading two loaded horses each were marched out in double file with joyous hearts, enlivened by anticipated prospects, led by Mr. Wyeth, a persevering adventurer and lover of enterprise, whilst the remainder of the party, with twenty head of extra horses and as many cattle to supply emergencies, brought up the rear under the direction of Captain Joseph Thing, an eminent navigator and fearless son of Neptune, who had been employed by the company in Boston to accompany the party and measure the route across the Rocky Mountains by astronomical observation." *Journal of a Trapper: Or, Nine Years in the Rocky Mountains, 1834-1843*, Osborne Russell.

The expedition proceeded uneventfully across the prairie and arrived at the Kansas River crossing on May 3. There, they encountered the Caw or Kansas Indians. Wyeth unpacked some of his goods to trade with the Indians at that point:

"On the 5th of May having crossed the Kansas at the agency without accident and in one Half of a day and traded as many cuds and apishemas as I wanted and some deer skins for which I paid Bacon." note indicates that the party had bacon as part of their provisions for the journey. The

"apishemas" are robes or furs used for saddle padding. While he was trading at the Kansas, Wyeth also sold goods to some of his men, mainly tobacco.

Rendezvous on Ham's Fork [The 1834 trappers' rendezvous was held at a meadow around Hams Fork, (near present-day Granger, Wyoming)]

On May 5, they resumed their march, and continued, still uneventfully, to the Rocky Mountain Rendezvous. There, Wyeth found that his business plan had fallen apart. He tersely described the situation:

"19th. About S. by W. 8 miles and camped 1 mile above the mouth of Sandy on Green river or Seckkedee on the night of the 17th I left camp to hunt Fitzpatric and slept on the prairie in morning struck Green river and went down to the forks and finding nothing went up again and found rendesvous about 12 miles up and much to my astonishment the goods which I had contracted to bring up to the Rocky Mountain fur Co. were refused by those honorable gentlemen. Latt. 41 deg 30'."

The Rocky Mountain Fur Company partnership was in financial trouble, and was forced to break the contract with Wyeth. Consequently, William Sublette got most of the business. Years later, Joe Meek told his version of what happened:

"Thus was Wyeth left, with his goods on his hands, in a country where it was impossible to sell them, and useless to undertake an opposition to the already established fur traders and trappers. His indignation was great, and certainly was just. In his interview with the Rocky Mountain Company, in reply to their excuses for, and vindication of their conduct, his answer was:

'Gentlemen, I will roll a stone into your garden that you will never be able to get out.' "

This "stone" was to be a permanent fort and trading post that Wyeth decided to establish in the vicinity, to hold his unsold goods and to compete with the rival companies.

After leaving rendezvous, Wyeth led his party towards the Snake River, in search of a site for building the fort. Before long, they passed by what is now called Soda Springs, Idaho, where the men had the opportunity to see the natural features there. Russell described what was used for laundry soap in the Rocky Mountains:

"The ground about these springs is very strongly impregnated with Sal Soda There is also large beds of clay in the vicinity of a snowy whiteness which is much used by the Indians for cleansing their clothes and skins, it not being any inferior to soap for cleansing woollens or skins dressed after the Indian fashion."

Establishment of Fort Hall

The party continued west to the Snake River, and began work on Fort Hall. [It was located on the Snake River in the eastern Oregon Country, now part of present-day Bannock County in southeastern Idaho.]

"We emerged from the mountain into the great valley of Snake River on the 16th - We crossed the valley and reached the river in about 25 miles travel West. Here Mr. Wyeth concluded to stop build a Fort & deposit the remainder of his merchandise: leaving a few men to protect them and trade with the Snake and Bonnack Indians. On the 18th we commenced the Fort which was a stockade 80 ft square built of Cotton wood trees set on end sunk 2 ½ feet in the ground and standing about 15 feet above with two bastions 8 ft square at the opposite angles. On the 4th of August the Fort was completed; And on the 5th the "Stars and Stripes" were unfurled to the breeze at Sunrise in the center of a savage and uncivilized country over an American trading Post."

They constructed the wooden storehouses at Fort Hall. Wyeth named the fort after a major expedition investor, Henry Hall. They finished a palisade around the fort on July 31, 1834; it was the only outpost of European Americans in that area of the Oregon Country.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort\\_Hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Hall)

Wyeth had specific instructions for Robert Evans, the man he put in charge of the fort. One of these instructions was:

"When goods are sold you will make memorandum of the sale in a Book kept for the purpose entering at the same time the articles for which they are sold and to whom." Evans therefore began keeping the accounting books, which survive today and are at the Oregon Historical Society. In accordance with usual accounting procedures, daily transactions were recorded in chronological order in a journal (not to be confused with Russell's Journal of a Trapper, which is a personal journal, not an accounting "Journal"). Periodically, these transactions were posted to a Ledger, which held the individual accounts for each of the men.

Here we see an interesting reference to musical instruments being used at Fort Hall. On June 11, fifteen of the men chipped in to buy a fiddle from James Conner. This was left at the fort in the care of A. Baker during the Fall Hunt. Later that July, it was stolen by one McCary, who left with Capt. Thing for the Columbia. Once the theft was discovered, two men rode express to recover the fiddle.

On Nov. 16th, Capt. Thing arrived from the Columbia with additional supplies for the fort. The number of scalping knives purchased suggests that these were popular items for trade.

"(Dec) 24th Capt. Thing arrived from the Mouth of the Columbia with 10 men fetching supplies for the Fort. Times now began to have a different appearance. the Whites and Indians were very numerous in the valley all came to pass the winter on Snake River."

After Cap't Thing's arrival, sales of ready-made clothing became common; the goods he brought from the mouth of the Columbia apparently included a good supply. The moccasins could have been traded from the neighboring Indians. During this period, the men could apparently purchase all the sugar, coffee, tobacco, and liquor they could afford. Goods were plentiful at Fort Hall that winter, and substantial sales were made to men from other fur companies that visited the fort.

1834

Joseph Thing made his way overland in 1834 onto the Pacific slopes as a land-travelling Boston sea captain employed by Nathaniel J. Wyeth for his ill-fated attempt to establish the Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company in the Columbia. Thing, who had been brought in to measure the route by astronomical observation, was part of Wyeth's 2nd Expedition which left Independence, Missouri on April 28, 1834. On the way, he headed hunting and trapping parties. Nathaniel J. Wyeth's assistant and second in command on his 1834 venture.

He was a mapper for Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth's Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company. "Observing the stars, shooting the sun and, making accurate recordings of longitude and latitude with his feet set firmly on the ground rather than on the heaving deck of a ship, was Wyeth's second in command, and old sea dog, Captain Joseph Thing." *Snake River Country*

By Bill Gulick, page 59

Nathaniel Wyeth had gone the lower Columbia to meet his supply ship "May Dacre" [it had been hit by lightning and came in 3 months late and at the end of the salmon season.] and try to catch salmon but his men disgusted quit him. Wyeth sent back to Fort Hall 13 Kanakas (Sandwich Islanders) with Captain Thing and fresh supplies. By the time the party reached the area west of the Blue Mountains the Kanakas not liking the looks of the country deserted Wyeth and returned to the lower Columbia." But at Fort Hall Captain Thing spent a brutal, frustrating winter there, "competing with the Hudson's Bay Company and fighting Blackfeet, then came back to his employer's fishery just across the river from Fort Vancouver in July, 1835. ..emaciated, pale, and apparently seven years older than he was the season before." *Snake River Country*, Bill Gulick, page 61. [Hawaiian Islanders, called Sandwich Islanders, Owhyees and, most frequently, Kanakas. Kanaka was originally a Polynesian term for a man of aboriginal blood.]

On the 15th, after traveling down to Vancouver, he met his ship, the May Dacre, Captain Dan Lambert in charge. The captain " . . . was well and brot [sic] me twenty Sandwich Islanders and two Smiths and a Clerk." Wyeth and his new employees started back up the Columbia on October 13. On the 26th Wyeth sent out Captain Joseph Thing, thirteen Kanakas, and eight whites to reach Fort Hall. Thing's party had all the best horses, and when Wyeth started out his four Kanakas had to travel by foot " . . . for want of Horses and goods on miserably poor animals."

Before Wyeth's party had traveled very far he learned that all of Thing's Kanakas had deserted him. On November 11, 1834, Wyeth traveled to Thing's camp and learned that " . . . the Kanakas had taken about two bales of goods and twelve horses[.]" Wyeth sent out a search party, gave Thing his four Kanakas and another ten employees so he could proceed to Fort Hall, and awaited the outcome of the search. The next day he was notified " . . . that the Kanakas had not touched the Columbia nor passed the Utalla (Umatilla) River and that Richardson had got a party of Indians to accompany him and horses and had taken up pursuit on land." Through November until March, 1835, Wyeth received various information on the whereabouts of his deserters. He suspected that much of the information given him by the Indians was merely for the purpose of receiving tobacco, but he recorded each item in his journal. Six Kanakas were reported at the

John Day River; later Indians at the Des Chutes said two had stolen Indian horses, shot a chief, and then started down the river. Wyeth hoped this last occurrence was untrue because he did not want to make an example of the Kanakas to quiet the Indians; obviously he was unaware of the animosity that existed between the two races.

In February Wyeth heard that of the runaways " . . . ten took the trail over the Blue[,] one was drowned in crossing some ford[,] one froze in the upper country[,] that the residue rafted on the Snake river[,] one more died somehow about the falls[,] that seven are gone down to Vancouver[.]" When he reached the fort on February 12, Wyeth found the Kanakas there completely sick of their job so he decided not to treat them severely. According to the ledgers of Fort Hall, the Kanakas were paid \$10 per month, most of which they spent on clothing and tobacco. Most of the recovered deserters were returned to Fort William at the mouth of the Multnomah (Willamette). The runaways were identified as Bill King, Lawler, Isaac, Dick, Charley, George Adams, Jack, Harry, Negro, Tom Bull, Harry Parker, John Palmer, and Harry Pickard. The total value of the property they stole was recorded as \$3135.54.

Wyeth wrote Thing at Fort Hall that he wished the Kanakas returned to their homes, " . . . unless an arrangement mutually satisfactory can be made to transfer them to the service of the Hudson Bay Company, and it will be proper to write to the American Counsel at Oahu stating to him the names of those who have died in the country, and the disposal of the residue."

On January 9, 1837, Wyeth received a reply to his letter to the HBC in London. It stated that the HBC would purchase his goods and provide passage to Hawaii for the Kanakas, Joseph Thing, Abel Baker, and C. W. Walker " . . . charging a fair and moderate passage money. . . ,"

Some of the Islanders, however, did not wish to return to their homes. In a ledger entry for June 18, 1837, Joseph Thing wrote that the Kanakas turned over to the HBC were Bill King, Dick, Jack Lawler, Charley, and Harry Parker. Rice, Pig, John Bull, and Dido evidently accepted the HBC's passage to Hawaii. "Kanaka World Travelers and Fur Company Employees, 1785-1860, Janice K. Duncan,(Janice K. Duncan did her M.A. thesis on the Kanaka contribution to the West, and has since published a booklet on the same general topic.)

From Fort Hall Accounts 1834-39, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, OR.

Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company at Fort Hall

Chart of Accounts

Name Page in Ledger

McKay & Thing 53

Thing Joseph 89 & 90, 141 & 142, 351, 440

<https://user.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/fthall/fthaccts.html>

1835

In April, 1835, Thing took twelve men with him to establish a post on the Salmon River but the plans had to be abandoned when the Blackfoot caused them to escape to Fort Hall with only their horses. In 1835, he took charge of Wyeth's operations at Fort Hall and became known for his Southern hospitality.



September 2, 1835 "Captain W[yeth] and two men, left us early this morning for Walla-Walla [Fort Nez Perces], where they expect to arrive this evening, and send us some provision, of which we shall be in need, to-morrow.

Our camp moved soon after, under the direction of Captain Thing, and in about four miles reached Utalla river, where it stopped, and remained until 12 o'clock."

At Fort Nez Perces, the group found little food, only bread and fish, but Pierre Pambrun, the post's chief trader, was willing to supply what he could and agreed to care for the missionaries' cattle and rent a barge to carry the missionaries and Stewart to Fort Vancouver."

<http://www.oregonhistoricaltrailsfund.org/trails/nathaniel-wyeth-route-1832-1834/>

The naturalist John Townsend wrote about their course through the Blue Mountains on the way to Fort Nez Perces.

"It was the most toilsome march I ever made, and we were all so much fatigued, when we arrived at the summit, that rest was as indispensable to us as to our poor jaded horses. Here we made a noon camp, with a handful of grass and no water. This last article appears very scarce, the ravines affording none, and our dried salmon and kamas bread were eaten unmoistened. The route, in the afternoon, was over the top of the mountain, the road tolerably level, but crowded with stones. Towards evening, we commenced descending again, and in every ravine and gulley we cast our anxious eyes in search of water; we even explored several of them, where there appeared to exist any probability of success, but not one drop did we find. Night at length came on, dark and pitchy, without a moon or a single star to give us a ray of light; but still we proceeded, depending solely upon the vision and sagacity of our horses to keep the track. We travelled steadily until 9 o'clock, when we saw ahead the dark outline of a high mountain, and soon after heard the men who rode in front, cry out, joyously, at the top of their voices, "water! water!" It was truly a cheering sound, and the words were echoed loudly by every man in the company. We had not tasted water since morning, and both horses and men have been suffering considerably for the want of it.

1836

He was in charge at Fort Hall and at the Rendezvous.

"Captain Joseph Thing, one of Wyeth's men, was in charge of Fort Hall when the missionary party of 1836 arrived. He was a cultured southern gentleman whose gracious hospitality was long remembered by the missionaries. He drew upon the produce of his little garden to supplement the heavy diet of meat on which they had been living. And especially appreciated was the bread he gave them. Both Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding commented on this in their respective diaries." *Where Wagons Could Go: Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding* By Narcissa Prentiss Whitman, page 78.

In the spring of 1836, with the knowledge that Wyeth's financially failed Company was to be sold and, with the power to sell off the Fort Hall assets (the fort, traps, horses, furs, etc), Thing went to the June 1836 American Rendezvous on Green River. There, as HBC's John McLeod Jr.

found his prices too high, Thing sold the traps and horses to Lucien Fontenelle and Andrew Drips of the American Fur Company.

1837

In 1837, he sold the fort, for \$500 as well as the furs, goods, etc. to a mutually satisfactory amount to HBC Chief Trader John McLeod. After the dissolution of his company, Wyeth wrote to the HBC securing a passage for Thing by the "route of Communication, or to the Sandwich islands, if required."

"Captain Joseph Thing replaced Robert Evans as factor at Fort Hall sold Wyeth's equipment, supplies and furs to Drips and Fontenelle at 1837 Rendezvous. Wyeth had returned to New England became successful in the ice business." Fort Hall was owned by Wyeth from August 4, 1834 until its sale to the Hudson's Bay company in August 1837. *The Fur Trade of the American West: 1807 - 1840 ; a Geographical Synthesis*, By David J. Wishart, page 160.

HBC Fort Vancouver sundries accounts

1838

He left Fort Vancouver and shipped to Oahu, Hawaiian Islands, then returning to Monterey, California. boarding another ship at Santa Barbara for Boston arriving there in 1839.

Autograph Letter, Signed, From Joseph Thing on the Oregon Coast, to Boston Merchants William Tucker & Sin, Relating His Plans to Return East.

[Oregon]: Thing, Joseph:

At the Mouth of the Columbia River. Feb. 12, 1838. [1] p. autograph letter, signed, on a 10 x 8-inch sheet. Docketed in manuscript on verso. One-inch tear in left edge, with loss of paper but no loss of text. Two other closed tears, not affecting text. Very good and easily legible. Item #WRCAM45329

An early letter from the Oregon coast, written by a pioneer who travelled there with Nathaniel Wyeth in 1834. Joseph Thing was second in command on Wyeth's 1834 expedition, and apparently spent much more time in the Columbia River region than many of his cohorts, Wyeth included. By early 1838, Thing had secured passage eastward on the Hudson's Bay Company ship, *Nereide*, but his return was delayed when the ship's captain, David Home, and four others were drowned in the Columbia River.

Thing writes: "This is merely to let you know that I am detained here much longer than it was intended by the agent of the H.B. Co. or my wishes in consequence of the death of Capt. Home who commanded this ship and was drown on the 26 of last month with four of his men by capsizing the ships long boat in a squall in crossing the river. This has been a tardy trip one delay after an other it seems as if we shall never git clear of this port. I am quite out of patients & all most made up my mind to turn back a crost the Mountains." Thing goes on to write that he expects to depart by sea on another ship as soon as they have a "fair wind," and that he is sending this letter to Boston by express across Canada.

Price: \$2,250.00 <https://www.williamreese.com/pages/books/WRCAM45329/oregon-joseph-thing/autograph-letter-signed-from-joseph-thing-on-the-oregon-coast-to-boston-merchants-william-tucker>; <https://stampauctionnetwork.com/F/f12112.cfm>

Name: Joseph Thing

Arrival Date: 9 Apr 1839

Age: 47

Gender: M (Male)

Port of Arrival: Boston

Place of Origin: United States of America

Occupation: Mariner

"Granite State and California Overland Mining Company Started from South Boston, April 17, 1849, to go overland via Independence and the South Pass. George W. Houston, president; Joseph B. Gage, vice-president; Edward Moore, secretary; Calvin S. Fifield, treasurer. Some from New Hampshire but most from Boston and vicinity. 30 in company." Argonauts of '49: History and Adventures of the Emigrant Companies from ... by Octavius Thorndike Howe

In 1849 he charged \$5 per emigrant to guide the Granite State and California Mining and Trading Company to California. He got the company temporarily lost.

The pack mule train comprised of 69 men of which several died of cholera at Independence, Missouri, and 140 pack and riding mules and horses and cattle. "Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography: P-Z By Dan L. Thrapp, page 1415.

"The Granite State and California Mining and Trading Company and the Mt. Washington Company joined forces and put themselves under the command of Captain Thing, an experienced plainsman formerly employed by the American Fur Company. Their route lay by the Platte River, the South Pass, and the Humboldt River. They used wagons and mules and drove before them a herd of cattle. On reaching the Humboldt they took what was called the Cherokee cut-off or Green Horn's cut-off, and lost three hundred miles by so doing. They arrived at Sacramento five months from Independence and six from Boston."

[https://books.google.com/books?pg=PA44&lpg=PA44&dq=Capt.+Thing+and+the+Granite+State+and+California+Mining+and+Trading+Company&sig=ACfU3U1HoRnO3MmH3UH8IHqY\\_GXOyE4WdQ&id=kwsVAAAAYAAJ&ots=kR8qPDB9Lq&output=text](https://books.google.com/books?pg=PA44&lpg=PA44&dq=Capt.+Thing+and+the+Granite+State+and+California+Mining+and+Trading+Company&sig=ACfU3U1HoRnO3MmH3UH8IHqY_GXOyE4WdQ&id=kwsVAAAAYAAJ&ots=kR8qPDB9Lq&output=text)

He and his brother Jonathan both died in California, 1849.