

The Mystery of the *Mary Celeste*

The *Mary Celeste*, a Canadian-built 100-foot brigantine, set sail from New York on November 7, 1872, with Captain Briggs, his wife Sarah, his two-year old daughter Sophia, and a crew of seven. Five weeks later, on December 13, 1872, the *Mary Celeste* sailed into the Bay of Gibraltar with a completely different crew.

Condition of the *Mary Celeste*, as Reported to Captain Morehouse

- The ship's hull was not damaged.
- No original crew or passengers were on board.
- No boats were on board and ropes were dangling over the sides of the ship.
- Only one of two pumps was working.
- The forward and stern hatches were open.
- Water was found between the decks.
- The only dry clothing was found in a watertight chest.
- Kitchenware was scattered and loose in the galley.
- The galley stove was out of place.
- No chronometer or sextant was found on board. Both of these instruments are used for navigation.
- The ship's clock and compass were not working.
- The ship's register was missing. The ship's register is a document that notes home port and country of registration.
- The ship's papers were missing. These papers could have included a bill of sale, ownership information, crew manifest, and cargo information.
- The cargo, 1701 barrels of commercial alcohol, had not shifted. When unloaded in Genoa, 9 barrels were found to be empty.
- The alcohol was not safe to drink, but it could have been burned.