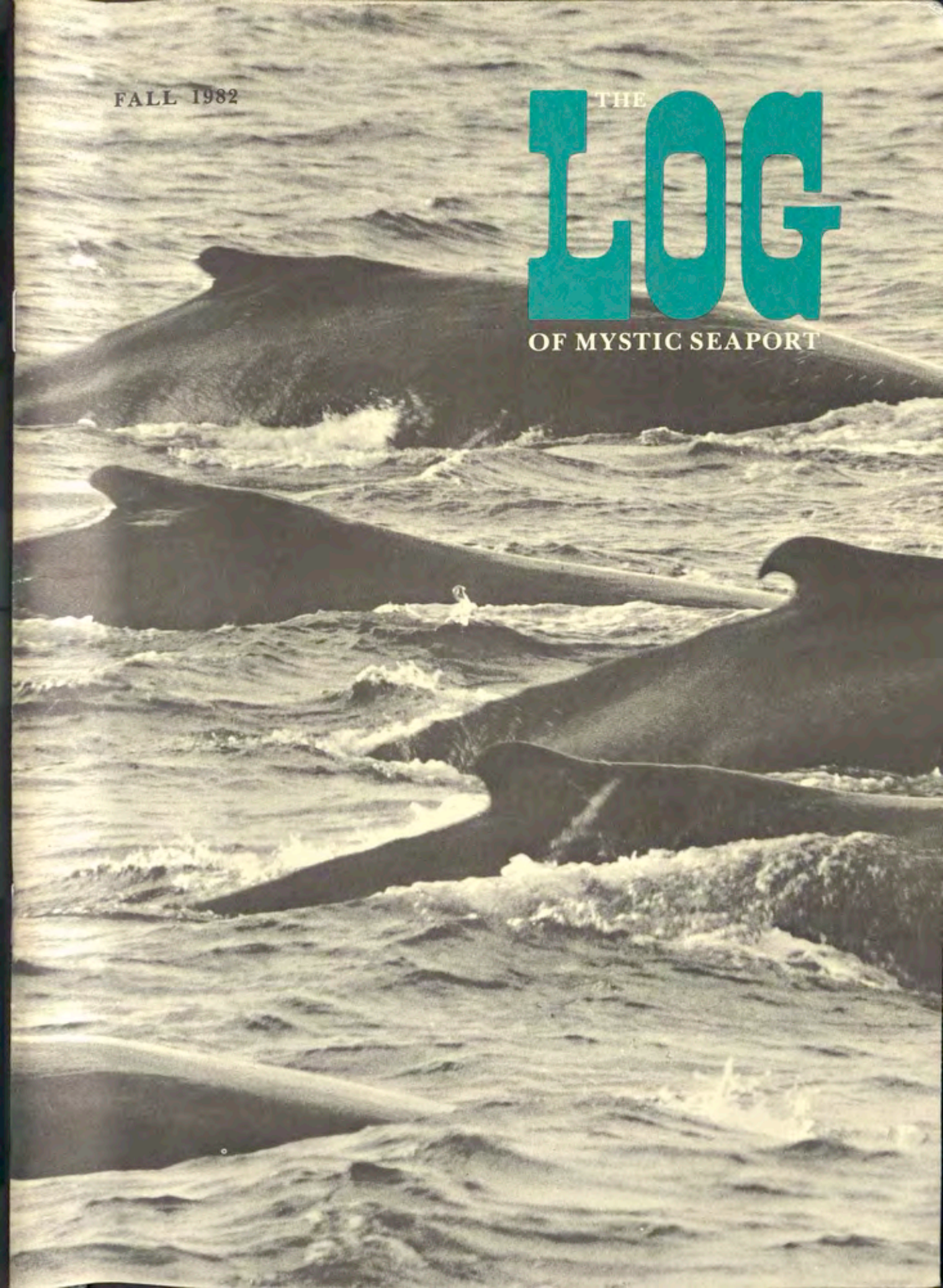
FALL 1982

THE LOG OF MYSTIC SEAPORT



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COVER: *Humpbacks observed off Bermuda in April 1970 from the M/V* Erline, *showing the wide range of dorsal fin shapes within one pod.*

BACK COVER: *Whaleboats withstood hard usage, as exemplified in "The Conflict," number two in a series of lithographs on sperm whaling executed by Prang & Mayer, from an illustration by Albert van Beest, for Charles Taber & Co. of New Bedford, May 1858. 19" x 28 9/16" (55.490)*

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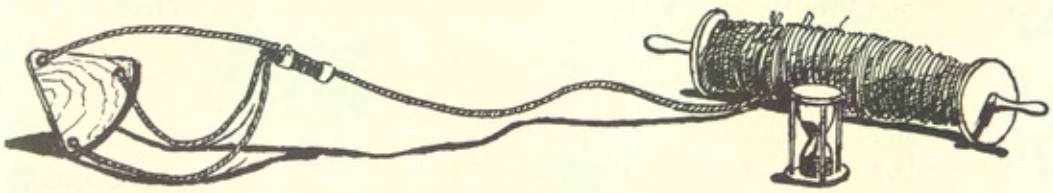
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SIGHTINGS



It is obvious to those who have gone to sea, whether in an Atlantic packet during the 1830s or aboard the smallest pleasure boat today, that they are constantly called upon to think for themselves and cooperate in carrying out the tasks required by the situation. The character that develops from these situations not only strengthens the individual but also benefits those around him or her.

Here at the Seaport we often refer to the importance of preserving not only the objects of the past but also less tangible elements, such as the skills of the nineteenth century. It is clear we should try to perpetuate attitudes like this dual sense of personal responsibility to oneself and the good of others. While it is not possible for all our staff and visitors to experience situations at sea that demand these responses, the Museum over the years has maintained a posture that encourages a similar reaction in many ways.

In a number of our programs this self-reliance is a subtle theme. It is certainly evident in both aspects of the Mariner Training Program. A crew member on the *Brilliant* has to evaluate a situation and act independently under the skilled supervision of the captain and mate. In the *Conrad* program, an inexperienced youngster assumes the responsibilities of skipper in one of the Museum's Dyer Dhows. The popularity of our adult education classes is evidence of a desire among many people to be prepared to assume this personal responsibility. Certainly in navigation courses where the safety of boat and crew is concerned this is evident. In our boatbuilding classes students seek the knowledge and skills that will enable them to create their own watercraft.

The formal educational efforts such as the Williams College – Mystic Seaport Program place great importance on both of these elements not only when these students go to sea for ten days but also in their everyday study and living here at the Seaport.

Even our regular Museum visitors are encouraged to find their own way through the Museum when supplied with basic information about the activities and layout of the Museum. While touring the grounds they encounter our interpreters who are expected to present information on their exhibits not in a prescribed manner, but in the most effective method suitable to their personal style and to the interests of the particular visitors.

Time and time again, day after day, the staff members of Mystic Seaport are expected to assess problems and opportunities and take action which is in the best interest of the Museum. It happens in the Shipyard, with restoration of our vessels or the construction of our bulkheads. We see it among the painters, carpenters, and technicians of the Maintenance staff. Certainly as registration, conservation, and exhibition decisions are being made in Curatorial, and as publication choices are made, it is necessary to combine self-reliance and teamwork. In every aspect of the Museum, from the administration of docks to the accounting office, we count on staff members to recognize their responsibilities and respond. The Seaport would be far different if they did not.

We are often referred to as a living Museum and it is the presence of these character traits of self-reliance and working together for overall benefit that breathes some of the life into this institution.

J. Revell Carr

How Many Humpbacks – Then and Now?

RANDALL REEVES *and* EDWARD MITCHELL

Provincetown knows how to change with the times. A century and a half ago right whales, the most valuable of the baleen whales, had become scarce in the North Atlantic. So, during the sperm whaling off-season, more and more of the Provincetown fleet of small schooners began visiting the West Indies and Cape Verde Islands, where humpback whales congregate to nurse their young and breed. Winter humpbacking gave the struggling Yankee whale fishery a needed boost for a while, but by the late 1880s petroleum had so undercut the price of whale oil that the blubber was almost no longer worth saving. The few bowheads and southern right whales remaining in the Arctic and the southern oceans, respectively, continued to be hunted, but only because of their long, springy, and therefore useful "whalebone," which greatly exceeded in economic value the short, coarse baleen of the humpback.

Today, a century later, Provincetown has revived its relationship with the humpback. This time, however, harpoons have been supplanted by cameras, as, each spring, a small fleet of boats deploys from Provincetown and other New England ports to greet the migrating whales on their return to summering grounds in the Gulf of Maine, off Nova Scotia, and northward. The whale-watching business is booming in New England, and humpbacks are the main attraction. Scores, possibly hundreds, of them stream close by Cape Cod during their spring migration. Some linger throughout the summer on or near Stellwagen Bank, a short sail from either Boston or Provincetown. Many of those that come within range of the whale-watching fleet have become habituated to the presence of man in their midst. They approach the boats, breaching (jumping high into the air), spyhopping (raising the head vertically above the sea surface), or lobtailing and "flippering" (smashing the water with their massive flukes and winglike flippers).

Whalewatchers are an enthusiastic lot. They have been primed by a decade of media exposure to the humpback's vocal and other esthetic charms. The humpback's "song," a distinctive blend of underwater belches, groans, and sighs, conjures up the fantastic and irresistible image of a 40-ton, air-breathing creature suspended in the dark water, breaking into a long, complex, haunting song. The humpback is the only marine mammal that strings together phrases of sound that comprise, in a technical sense, songs. No wonder officialdom included a segment of these unearthly melodies on a gold record aboard the Voyager spacecraft.

But this is not a story about the humpback's virtuosity in acrobatics or vocalization. Rather, it is a chronicle of humpback whaling in the North Atlantic Ocean.

Randall Reeves, a graduate of Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, is presently working as a research associate at the Arctic Biological Station, part of the Canadian government's Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Edward Mitchell, a vertebrate paleontologist educated at U.C.L.A. and the University of California at Berkeley, has worked as a research scientist at the Arctic Biological Station for the past fifteen years. The authors wish to acknowledge the financial support of the People's Trust for Endangered Species that facilitated their research.

In the long history of humanity's acquaintance with the humpback, the respect and celebration of today were preceded by centuries of utilization and over-exploitation. So extensive and protracted was the slaughter that the world's oceans, once vibrating with humpback songs, almost fell eerily silent. We nearly destroyed the humpback before even discovering that it could sing. Now it looks as though several humpback populations are coming back from near extinction, their choruses again echoing through the darkness and their exuberant antics once more enlivening the seascape.

Since 1946 the International Whaling Commission has been charged with conserving the world's whale stocks. Its performance has at times been inadequate, to say the least. Increasingly, however, scientific advice has been heeded, and whale exploitation has become a more rational, albeit still controversial, enterprise. A system was set in place in 1976 for classifying stocks according to a calculation of their status; that is, according to the percentage of "initial" stock size represented by the present population.[1] The Commission's objective is now to maintain stocks at more than half their pre-exploitation size, giving full protection to those that fall below that level. Straightforward as this classification scheme may sound, formidable difficulties are inherent in it. How do you estimate the "initial" size of a stock that was almost extirpated long before anyone even considered making a whale census? Indeed, what exactly is meant by "initial"? Before the first Indian or Eskimo drove a harpoon into a humpback? Before Europeans and Yankees took up the chase? Or simply prior to the introduction of modern, mechanized whaling?

We have tried to develop minimum estimates of early abundance for several heavily exploited whale stocks, most recently the western North Atlantic population of humpbacks.[2] Our method is relatively simple, involving some detective work and straightforward assumptions. We reconstruct the stock's history of exploitation in as much detail as possible and try to identify one or more periods of the highest catches. If it can be shown that a short period of intensive whaling was followed by a dramatic population decline, we can regard the cumulative kill during that period as a crude first approximation of the population's initial size. In other words, a body-count over a short time is a good indication of the minimum number of animals that were present. Analysis of catch trends before and after the peak period often allows us to push our estimate higher. Because the large whales have a very low rate of population increase, with mature females usually producing no more than one calf every two or three years, the error in our estimate caused by additional births during the relatively short period under consideration is minor.

Dr. David Sergeant, a colleague at the Arctic Biological Station, had actually used this approach before us to estimate the initial size of the humpback population hunted at Newfoundland and Labrador just after the turn of the twentieth century.[3] A commercial catch of about 1,100 was made between 1903 and 1915, after which the availability of humpbacks to the whaling stations was said to have declined drastically. This led Sergeant to estimate that in 1898, when modern whaling was introduced to this part of North America, there were about 1,500 humpbacks in the regional population.

Several factors made us suspect Sergeant's estimate to be far too low, especially as it was being used to represent the entire western North Atlantic stock. For one thing, humpbacks are known to have inhabited a much wider area than that being sampled by Newfoundland-Labrador whalers. For another, hunting had been taking place for some time on various grounds, including Iceland, West Greenland, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, New England, Ber-

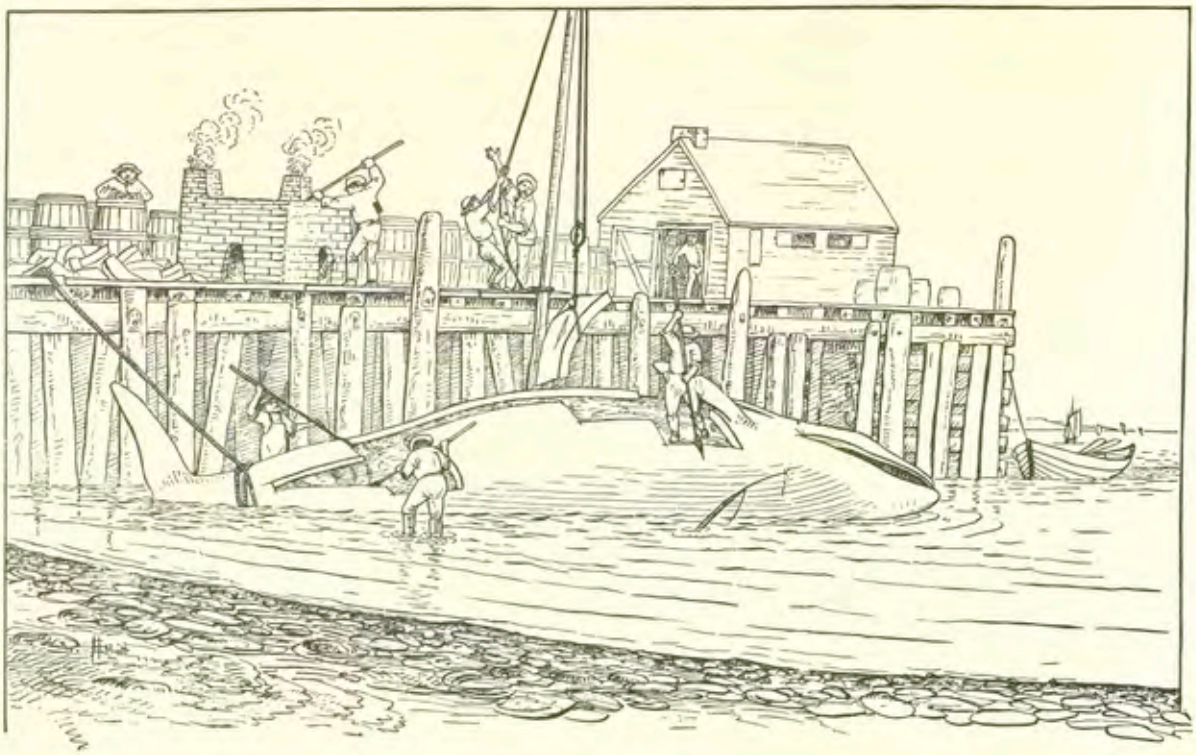
muda, and the West Indies. It seemed likely that the population had already been reduced substantially before the Newfoundland-Labrador fishery even opened. Finally, a number of investigators had been censusing humpbacks on their winter grounds in the West Indies during the 1960s and 1970s, and their estimates indicated that the population had grown to more than 1,500 whales by the late 1970s. We certainly could not rule out the possibility that the stock had recovered fully and was now larger than ever, but this seemed unlikely to us.

We began our search by looking at published accounts, including relatively obscure government statistical reports, as well as more familiar books and articles. These sources rapidly confirmed our ideas about the magnitude and extent of humpbacking by pre-modern whalers.

British colonists at Bermuda, where humpbacks have long been seen during their northward spring migration, began whaling in the early 1600s. A notice appeared in the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions* in 1667, "written from the Bermudas, giving an account of the Course of the Tides there; of Wells both salt and sweet, digg'd near the Sea; of the Whale-fishing there practised anew, and of such Whales as have the Sperma Ceti in them."[4] Statistics of the Bermuda shore fishery are available for only a few years. For example, in 1665 sixteen whales were landed and 117 hogsheads of oil were shipped to England. As many as 20 humpbacks were taken in some years during the mid-1700s. Although the effort was desultory at times, and other species such as the right whale and the sperm ("spermaceti") whale were occasionally mixed in with the predominantly humpback catch, whaling continued intermittently at Bermuda until the Second World War.

The earliest account of a whale capture at Nantucket Island, the cradle of Yankee sperm whaling, refers to the year 1608,

This illustration suggests the equipment and techniques for shore-based rendering of humpbacks at Provincetown, ca. 1880, but the carcass shown here is a finner rather than a humpback, as indicated by the shape of the flipper and the head. Note the tryworks on the wharf. Illustration by Henry W. Elliott after a sketch by J. S. Ryder. (George B. Goode, ed., *Fisheries . . . of the U. S.*, Washington, D.C., 1887, vol. 5, pl. 10)





Humpback whale entangled in salmon net on 30 June 1972 off Cavendish, Trinity Bay, Newfoundland. The whale, estimated to be about thirty feet long, was released alive on 30 June, with a piece of net still in its mouth. It was tagged with .410 Discovery mark no. 1572 and observed to swim away soon thereafter. (Photo by G. Horonowitsch)

"when a party of Indians killed a humpback whale which got stranded."[5] Colonists and aborigines alike took advantage of drift whales – whales that fortuitously washed ashore. They also weighed the comparative advantages for whaling when selecting a settlement site. The active pursuit of living whales began very early in New England. Certainly right whales were being hunted in the 1600s, and it was not until their numbers dwindled locally that the Yankee whaling empire spread to distant seas. Humpbacks were rarely chased as long as right whales could be profitably sought. By 1725, however, right whales had been reduced in New England waters to a level below that necessary to support a profitable fishery. After this time, short cruises were often made to Georges Bank or Nantucket Shoals, combining humpbacking and codfishing. The shorebased whale fisheries at Nantucket and along the coasts of Cape Cod and Maine continued to take a modest but regular harvest of humpbacks until the Civil War.

Another early fishery for humpbacks was conducted by the maritime hunters and fishermen of West Greenland. We cannot say how long ago these people began hunting the *keporkak,* as they call the humpback. Certainly this activity dates to at least the early eighteenth century, perhaps much earlier. The *keporkak* provided the Greenlanders with many of life's necessities, not the least of which was food. The skin, blubber, meat, and viscera were eaten. In particular, the flippers, dorsal fin, and flukes were considered such a delicacy that the people "put almost everything else aside" when a humpback had been killed.[6] Sinews were dried, split, and used as thread; some bones were fashioned into hunting implements; dwelling windows could be made from certain membranes; and the baleen was used for making small trays and dishes.

There is no published or readily available evidence that the landed catch by the Greenlanders in a season ever exceeded about 20 *keporkaks.* In most years it apparently was considerably less. However, there was probably a substantial loss of wounded whales that died without being recovered, and sometimes whales that had been secured could not be brought ashore because of inclement weather.

Yet another fishery developed late in the eighteenth century when Loyalists from New England settled along the shores of the Gaspé Peninsula in southern Québec. The Gulf of St. Lawrence, and particularly the Strait of Belle Isle, was well stocked with baleen whales, including humpbacks. In the tradition of their Yankee forebears, several of the men outfitted small schooners

for whaling. Dr. David McDougall, a professor in the Geology Department of Concordia University in Montréal, has made the study of this small fishery an avocation.[7] He has confirmed that there were at least nineteen vessels involved during 1819, which seems to have been the peak year. Presumably the Gaspé whalers captured right whales whenever the opportunity arose, but most contemporary written accounts describing the fishery refer to the humpback as the primary target. There is little information about the number of whales taken, but for some years oil production figures are available. In 1858 for example, more than 1,600 barrels were returned by six schooners, an average of 267 barrels per vessel. A large humpback could yield 50 or 60 barrels, so the landed catch per vessel must have been greater than five, assuming all whales taken were adult humpbacks. By 1878 only one schooner remained active, and she accounted for no more than seven or eight whales per year through the early 1890s.

The combined energies of Bermudans, New Englanders, West Greenlanders, and the Gaspé Loyalists probably rarely resulted in a landed catch of more than about 100 humpbacks in a given year, with the total in most years being well below this figure. However, when dead or moribund losses – animals killed but not landed and reported in the catch – are taken into account, it may be fair to assume that these whalers were removing 100 whales or more from the population annually during much of the nineteenth century. Such a kill would have rapidly reduced a population that initially numbered only 1,500.

The commencement of a Yankee pelagic but inshore humpback fishery in the West Indies during the 1830s, and its escalation during the 1860s, added appreciably to the scale of exploitation. The American nineteenth century whaling fleet was dominated by large vessels, mainly barks and ships, that sailed, often on multi-year voyages, from such major ports as New Bedford, Nantucket, Sag Harbor, and San Francisco. In addition, there were smaller vessels, mainly brigs and schooners, outfitted for shorter voyages from ports like Boston, Fairhaven, Edgartown, Westport, Mattapoisett, and especially Provincetown. The latter group usually cruised in the Atlantic Ocean for sperm whales and blackfish (pilot whales), often visiting the "Western Islands" (Azores) and Cape Verdes grounds on the east side, then catching the trade winds that carried them to the Twelve-Forty grounds in the tropical central Atlantic and on to Barbados, Bermuda, and home. Some vessels extended their voyages to the coast of Africa or the Brazil Banks, where southern right whales could still be found throughout much of the nineteenth century. Others stayed nearer home, fishing the Charleston or Hatteras ground during summer and fall, the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico in winter and spring.

Although there was no counterpart of today's Committee for Whaling Statistics to document the Yankee whalers' catches,[8] two invaluable contemporary sources of information are available: manuscript logbooks and journals, and published lists of oil and whalebone returns. Certain museums and libraries have collected logbooks and journals written by the whalers. Although the usefulness of these documents varies considerably, according to their legibility, the care with which they have been preserved, and the diarist's attention to detail, they constitute a data base of enormous potential. Not only does a good logbook give the date, position, species of whale, oil yield, and circumstances for each capture, but it includes comments on where different whales were sighted, their relative abundance, and occasionally, their behavior. Modern whale scientists and historians have hardly begun to mine the available sample of logbooks and journals for answers to important academic and practical cetological questions. For this study, we

used two of the largest sets of logbooks and journals in North America: the Nicholson Collection at the Providence (Rhode Island) Public Library, and the extensive holdings of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society in New Bedford.

The other primary source of information about Yankee whaling is the *Whalemen's Shipping List and Merchants' Transcript*, a tabloid produced weekly in New Bedford from 1843 to 1914. This was the whaleman's *Wall Street Journal*. It published everything from crew lists and prices of oil and bone to desperate letters from stowaways' mothers and extravagant advertisements for new kinds of whaling paraphernalia. Together with *The Friend*, another trade periodical published in Honolulu covering activities of the North Pacific and Arctic fleets between 1843 and 1885, the *Whalemen's Shipping List* comprises a comprehensive, if rather unwieldy, record of the industry's development and decline.

A shortcut exists for using the data in the *Whalemen's Shipping List*. Alexander Starbuck, a Nantucket native who became a prominent newspaper editor in Waltham, Massachusetts, compiled a "History of the American Whale Fishery from its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876," published in 1878.[9] This book consists mainly of tables summarizing basic information on many Yankee whaling voyage between 1789 and 1876: vessel specifications, master and owner, general destination, date sailed and date returned, barrels of sperm oil and whale oil (listed separately), and pounds of whalebone landed. Starbuck's painstaking and invaluable work was carried on and completed by another New Englander, Reginald Hegarty, former curator of the Melville Whaling Room, New Bedford Free Public Library.[10] Hegarty's "continuation," published in 1959, brought the Starbuck tables through 1928, by which time the Yankee sailing vessel whale fishery was finished. Thus, we can follow the activities and fortunes of the fleet in some detail across nearly a century and a half of whaling.

The earliest West Indies humpbacking voyage we could identify took place in 1822. That year the brig *Industry* of Westport stopped at St. Lucia on its way home from the Western Islands and Brazil. She took a few blackfish and lowered her boats regularly for humpbacks between mid-March and early April. Her crew gammed (visited) with that of the schooner *Liza* of Falmouth while on the humpbacking grounds, so we assume there were at least these two New England vessels involved in the fishery at this early date. Inward manifests of whaleship cargoes at New Bedford show landings there of 110 and 50 barrels of humpback oil by two vessels in 1824; and crew lists indicate that several New Bedford vessels cleared for Martinique, St. Lucia, and other West Indies destinations in 1820.

After about 1830, probably few years passed without a number of Yankee vessels invading the humpback's winter grounds in the West Indies. By the early 1850s a shore station had been set up on Monos Island, near Trinidad, for capturing humpbacks in the treacherous Serpent's Mouth strait and the Gulf of Paria. The bark *Solon* of Westport made a humpbacking cruise to this area in January 1853. She had miserable luck herself, wounding and losing at least five humpbacks while landing but one. The captain was inclined to blame his vessel's poor performance on the malfunctioning of bomb lances, new devices for simul-

A sample page from the journal of Josiah Robinson, Jr., of Mattapoisett, who was aboard the bark *William Lee* of Newport on a whaling cruise to the Pacific Ocean, 1856-60. Robinson wrote legibly and illustrated his journal with exceptional attention to detail. For example, on 29 June 1858, after "boiling" a 13-barrel humpback taken four days earlier, off the coast of Ecuador, the crew caught and "cut in" another small humpback yielding only eight barrels. On 30 June and 3 July they "got fast" to two more humpbacks, but in both instances the "line parted" and the whale was lost. (Private collection)

At anchor on ot Esmeralda Ecquador

Tuesday June 29th 1858

First part lowered for H.B no success finished boiling turned up 18 barrels Middle part more moderate on opposite tacks Latter part moderate lowered for H.B. W.B. got fast and got her fast abaney ride and commenced cutting at 12 Mer all in several sail in sight, 8 sounds



Wednesday 30th 58

First part strong breze and rugged Lowered again W.B. got fast line parted gammed the Barque Mary Frances of Warren Capt Pond 16 Mos out 200 Sperm Middle & latter parts fresh breze and pleasent working to the windward several sails in sight got a porpoise

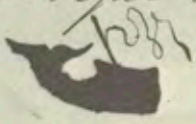


Thursday July 1st 1858

Light breze and pleasant First part started Middle and latter parts on opposite tacks several sails in sight finished boiling turned up 8 barrels

Friday 2nd 58

All this day light breze and pleasant by the wind on opposite tacks working to windward several sails in sight saw plenty of Humpbacks nothing more



Saturday 3d 58



First part fresh breze and fotear hazy lowered for H.B W.B. got fast line parted Middle part raining with a strong breze on opposite tacks by the wind Latter part more moderate several sails in sight the ship Phillips de la Skye and the Brig at anchor under the land so ends this day the third of July 1858

taneously wounding or killing the whale and "getting fast" to it. But when the *Solon* visited the whaling station on Monos Island and the captain had the opportunity to test the effect of his bomb lance on a whale carcass, there was nothing further to complain about. "Stood dist. 38 yds passed 4 feet from the whale in the water. Speared the whale 3½ feet and exploded in about 20 seconds. All well."[11] Cryptic, barely legible notations like this tell us that the shore station was active, that at least one whale had been successfully captured there, and that the *Solon*'s crew was humpbacking with bomb lances.

The 1850s were a period of innovation in the whaling industry. The seeds of modern whaling technology were being sown by inventors tinkering with exploding harpoons and darting guns. The most illustrious American experimenter was Captain Thomas Welcome Roys, immortalized in whaling history for his discovery of the Arctic Ocean bowhead grounds north of Bering Strait.[12] Roys made some of his earliest tests of rocket harpoons in the Serpent's Mouth, hunting humpbacks. Later he moved his operation to Iceland where blue and fin whales, in addition to summering humpbacks, came under attack.

This new capability to attack the fast-swimming balaenopterine whales stimulated a new phase of shore-based whaling in New England. In Provincetown there was activity in the harbor itself. In the spring of 1881 Captain Lavender, for example, "made preparations to regularly follow the finback business; having taken the schooner Lizzie A. Roby, of Boston, put try works on board, and with one boat will probably catch his share."[13] He was described as "a dead shot on a finback with a bomb lance." One of the products of this fishery was glue, much in demand as sizing by the manufacturers of oiled carpets. A single finback could yield about $50.00 worth of glue.

Brand's Patent Bomb Lance was especially favored by the Provincetown harbor whalers, but the Cogan and Cunningham Whaling Gun had its advocates as well. One Edgartown captain testified regarding the latter:

> I have shot five different whales myself, and never did I see guns or lances work so complete. I shot a large cow humpback this season; the first lance entered the rib and blew it entirely to pieces; the second one entered the heart, and you can imagine the result. The whale made 115 bbls.[14]

In effect, the New England whalers could now take aim at whales of any size or speed with a reasonable hope of killing them, but bomb lance whaling was often inefficient. A "Nantucket sleighride" behind a right whale or a sperm whale was dangerous enough, but fastening to a humpback or fin whale was a risk many whalers preferred to avoid. So they simply fired their explosive missiles into the whale and watched the dead animal sink. If the wind and current cooperated, the carcass would eventually float to the surface nearby or wash onto a local beach, allowing the whalers to retrieve their prize. Many dead or severely wounded whales drifted or swam outside the range of the whalers, never finding their way to a tryworks.

The establishment of shore whaling stations in the West Indies was an important consequence of visitation by Yankee whalers. In addition to Monos Island, small operations arose at Barbados, Bequia, Grenada, St. Lucia, and several of the smaller Grenadine islands. A whaling station was active through the 1880s at Salt Cay in the Turks and Caicos Islands, near Mouchoir Bank, an important present-day wintering ground for humpbacks.

Of about twenty shore-based whaling operations in the West Indies that came and went during the second half of the nineteenth century, those at Barbados and Bequia are the best known. Mr. Alleyne Archer wrote from Barbados in 1881:

> The whale fishery was started by me some fourteen years ago in this island, and I have carried it on every year up to the one last past. I find that the whales have not decreased, nor do they appear any wilder or harder to be caught; on the contrary, with the improved weapons that have been introduced of late years, and with the experience that has been gained by all who engage in it, the catching and killing of them may now be considered as pretty easy, although at times a very tiresome work.[15]

Archer was struggling to offset the effects of a glutted market for whale oil, and England was at the time the only profitable outlet for this, his main product. He was hopeful that the processing of the rest of the carcass for fertilizer would help prolong the life of the industry. We know that by 1913 the humpback fishery was still a going concern at Barbados, but within a few more years only a hardy band of Bequians persisted in whaling the old way at the West Indies.

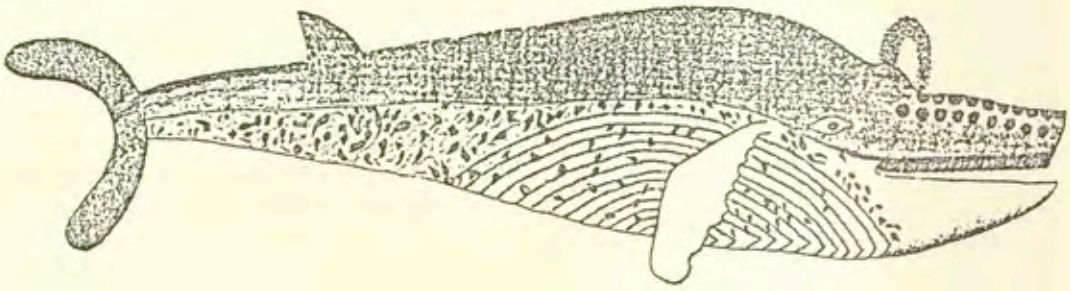
Bequia can boast a century of virtually continuous involvement in open-boat whaling. According to Dr. John Adams, a geography professor at the University of Minnesota in Duluth who has studied the history of West Indian whaling, "it should be emphasized that cash crop agriculture had been in a decaying condition for many years in the St. Vincent Grenadines and the small returns from the export of sugar was undoubtedly a major factor in stimulating the development of whaling activities."[16] William Wallace, who founded Bequia's first whaling establishment in 1875 or 1876, did so, at least in part, to augment the income of his Friendship Estate sugar cane mill and to produce employment for poor sharecroppers on the island. Before long, a third of the working male population of Friendship Estate and neighboring Paget Farm Estate were engaged in some aspect of the whaling industry.

Because whaling at Bequia was seasonal, it did not interfere with the island's agricultural cycle. By the time the rains began in May, whaling was winding down, and the men were free to redirect their energies to the planting of cotton, pigeon peas, maize, and cassava. Eventually, however, seafaring pursuits drew the whalemen away from their seasonal commitment to agriculture; many shipped aboard Yankee whalers and never returned to their island home.

Wallace himself had performed a short stint on a Yankee whaler during his youth, and the whaling techniques employed by the shore whalers he trained resembled closely those of the pelagic whalers. The double-ended Grenadine whaling boats were constructed of locally cut white cedar, often with imported pitch pine for planking. Bamboo for the masts and boom was grown locally, but sailcloth, rope, and nails



A humpback whale being processed at an eastern Canadian shore whaling station in 1971. It was part of an experimental catch designed to reveal information on the movements and population biology of the western North Atlantic stock. The whale is lying nearly on its back, thus exposing the wide grooves on its throat. A long white flipper forms an arch spanning the entire width of the carcass. (Photo by B. Peers)



This crude sketch of a humpback, known locally as the *Keporkak* in Greenland, is probably the earliest good published representation of the animal in these waters. The account by Otto Fabricius in which the drawing appears, published in 1818, documents the importance of the humpback to the subsistence economy of parts of West Greenland during the early nineteenth century. In spite of its crudeness, Fabricius's sketch shows several distinctive features of the species: the long white flipper with an irregular, serrated front edge; the knobs on the rostrum; the comparatively short, black baleen; and the furrowed, or grooved, underside. The humpback is readily distinguished from the bowhead whale, the only other large baleen whale hunted in early times off the west coast of Greenland, by these features and the presence of a dorsal fin. (*Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes-Selskabs Skrivter for Aar 1809, 1810, 1811 og 1812*, Copenhagen, 1818, vol. 6, pt. 1)

had to be imported from England. A crew consisted of six men, including the harpooner and boatheader. Whales generally were harpooned by hand, then finished off with a bomb shot from a shoulder gun. In the early 1920s the Bequian whalers adopted the darting gun or bomb lance, which allowed them to strike, fasten to, and kill the whale in one motion, although the shoulder gun was still usually required to finish off the harpooned whale.

Whaling in the islands was never a comfortable enterprise. The owners struggled to maintain product markets as the value of whale oil declined. Although fresh whale meat was prized by most residents of the Lesser Antilles, by the early 1900s much of it was being dried, ground, and sold as fertilizer or cattle feed to keep the fishery in business. Apparently an effort was even made to introduce canned Caribbean whale meat to gourmet palates in New York and Paris.

The individual crewman had his own risks to face. Frederic Fenger, a visitor to the Ile de Caille whaling station writing in 1913, suggested that the following notice was not exceptional there: "May 1st, 1909.–A whaleboat with a crew of five men left Sauteurs for Union Island; not since heard of."[17] He had been at Ile de Caille only a year previously, and since then four of the twelve men with whom Fenger whaled had been lost at sea. Recent visitors to Bequia have been told of how, in February 1980, one of the two active whaleboats was upset by a humpback cow whose calf had been harpooned.[18] The chief harpooner's leg was pinned against the gunwhales and nearly severed at the knee.

Open boat whaling as practiced today by the Bequia islanders is, of course, a technological relic. Even West Greenlanders, the only other whalers in the North Atlantic who continue to hunt humpbacks, have adopted modern, mechanized methods, using harpoon cannons mounted on large, powered fishing vessels to kill minke, humpback, and occasionally other large whales along their shores.

The Norwegian establishment of modern whaling plants at Newfoundland just

before the turn of the century was part of a global initiative, resulting ultimately in the depletion of humpback stocks along all continental and island coasts where they congregated in commercially harvestable numbers. Floating factories worked in Davis Strait from 1911 through the 1930s, accounting for well over 300 humpbacks. The Danish government operated a catcher boat on behalf of the West Greenlanders from 1924 to 1958. During this period slightly more than a hundred humpbacks were taken. In addition, more than 150 humpbacks were landed at an Icelandic shore station between 1898 and 1902, again by Norwegian whalers. Even at the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada, a processing plant was built and a Norwegian whaling operation commenced in 1925. The local concentration of humpbacks held up for only two years, after which the whaling station closed permanently.

Having surveyed the long history of humpback whaling in the western North Atlantic, we concluded that at least 4,400 whales comprised the population in 1865, for it would be difficult to reconcile known levels of exploitation with a smaller initial stock. Since we used conservative assumptions at every turn in our analysis, this should be an underestimate. Moreover, the population was probably considerably larger in the mid-eighteenth century, before humpbacking began in the West Indies and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Thus, the earlier problem of comparing an estimate of 1,500 whales for initial population with current estimates well above that figure has been obviated. Nevertheless, we still must decide how far along the road to recovery this whale population has come, and whether present safeguards are adequate to ensure that it rebounds to as full an extent as possible.

At its annual meeting in Brighton, England, in the summer of 1981, the International Whaling Commission's Scientific Committee reviewed recent census results and other attempts to estimate current population size. Figures for the banks northeast of Hispaniola alone in winter ranged from slightly less than 2,000 to as high as 3,500, but scientists could only agree that the population as a whole is 2,000 or greater. Even if, as some researchers insist, there actually are more than 3,000 humpbacks in the western North Atlantic today, there is no basis for believing that the population has recovered fully or even adequately. In fact, humpback mortality resulting from human activities, particularly incidental to codfish netting in Newfoundland and directly due to whaling in West Greenland, has increased significantly during the past decade, and the whale population's actual rate of recovery is probably well below its potential.

It is our opinion that everything possible should be done to reduce mortality. There is no convincing argument for expansion of the West Greenland and Bequia fisheries, and creative approaches to deter humpbacks from running afoul of fishing gear need to be tested and implemented. Some have reasoned that overfishing of capelin on the Grand Banks during the early 1970s forced humpbacks to move inshore in search of prey, thus contributing to the net entanglement problem around Newfoundland. However, even if the long-term recovery of capelin stocks allows many of the whales to remain offshore and away from cod traps and salmon nets in the future, some humpbacks may continue to die in fishing gear each summer. Recommendations by the IWC Scientific Committee that humpback whaling be discontinued at West Greenland have been ignored, and even the annual quota of ten humpbacks allocated to Greenland under an exemption in the IWC schedule of whaling regulations has been exceeded in several recent years. Therefore, prospects for a significant reduction in mortality are not encouraging.

Considering the humpback's popularity with whale watchers and the climate of pub-



Captain Thomas Welcome Roys, America's best-known experimenter in the field of whaling technology, developed the rocket harpoon, here shown being used in a competing Danish-backed whaling venture carried out from the 297-ton steamer *Thomas Roys* off the coast of Iceland. Although Roys's goal was to develop a mechanism for capturing the blue whale and the fin whale, much of the experimental activity using his technology involved the capture of humpbacks in the West Indies and near Iceland. (Courtesy of Kendall Whaling Museum, Sharon, Massachusetts)

lic opinion favoring whale conservation in North America today, a resumption of commercial whaling seems like a remote possibility. However, Newfoundland's inshore fishermen have complained bitterly about the economic hardships caused by gear damage and lost fishing days resulting from encounters with humpbacks. They would welcome some kind of control program that promised to keep whales away from the fishing grounds and out of their nets.

Intensive efforts to census the humpback population in winter or to calculate its abundance using indirect approaches have resulted in higher and higher estimates. It is impossible to say, on present evidence, whether the population has been increasing rapidly or that the apparent change in population size is merely an artifact of refined estimation techniques. Our preliminary attempt to estimate early population size has shown that there were many more humpbacks in the western North Atlantic during the last half of the nineteenth century than was believed previously. There is a clear need for further documentation of catch history and further analyses to improve upon our crude estimate of early minimum abundance. In fact, the need for a rigorous estimate of initial size is at least as crucial to understanding the population's present status as is the need for a reliable census. Only when it can be shown that

humpbacks have recovered to a high proportion of their original population size and that their biological survival is assured in the face of existing threats from direct hunting, incidental capture, and habitat degradation, can resource managers begin to contemplate a renewed fishery.

Society will then be able to decide whether humpbacks are for the watching or the catching. But at least there will be some guarantee that many more human generations live in a world where whales continue to sing.

NOTES

[1]International Whaling Commission, *Twenty-Sixth Report of the Commission* (London, 1976), pp. 25-26. The Commission's "New Management Procedures" are more fully explained and implemented in subsequent annual reports.

[2]Edward Mitchell and Randall R. Reeves, "Catch History and Cumulative Catch Estimates of Initial Population Size of Cetaceans in the Eastern Canadian Arctic," *Report of the International Whaling Commission* 31 (1981): 645-82; E. Mitchell and R. R. Reeves, "Catch History, Abundance, and Present Status of Northwest Atlantic Humpback Whales," *Report of the International Whaling Commission*, special issue 5, in press.

[3]D. E. Sergeant, "Populations of Large Whale Species in the Western North Atlantic with Special Reference to the Fin Whale," Fisheries Research Board of Canada, Circular No. 9, 1966.

[4]R. Norwood, "Of a Letter, written from the Bermudas, giving an account of the Course of the Tides there; of Wells both salt and sweet, digg'd near the Sea; of the whale-fishing there practised anew, and of such whales as have the Sperma Ceti in them." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 2 (1667): 565-7.

[5]A. Howard Clark, "History and Present Condition of the Fishery," *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States*, sect. 5, vol. 2, ed. George B. Goode (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887), p. 30.

[6]Otto Fabricius, "Otto Fabricius' Ethnographical Works," introduction by William Thalbitzer, Erik Holtved, ed., in *Meddelelser om Grønland* 140 (1962): 129.

[7]D. J. McDougall, "The Shipbuilders, Whalers and Master Mariners of Gaspé Bay in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Enterprising Canadians: Entrepreneurs and Economic Development in Eastern Canada, 1820-1914*, Proceedings of the Second Conference of the Atlantic Canada Shipping Project, 30 March-1 April 1978, L. R. Fischer and E. W. Sager, eds. (St. John's, Newfoundland: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1979), pp. 123-45.

[8]Committee for Whaling Statistics (Det Norske Hvalrads Statistiske Publikasjoner), *International Whaling Statistics* (Oslo: Grøndahl & Son), 1-86 (1930-80).

[9]Alexander Starbuck, "History of the American Whale Fishery from its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876." *Report of the U.S. Commission on Fish and Fisheries*, Part 4 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878).

[10]Reginald B. Hegarty, *Returns of Whaling Vessels Sailing from American Ports: A Continuation of Alexander Starbuck's "History of the American Whale Fishery," 1876-1928* (New Bedford: Old Dartmouth Historical Society and Whaling Museum, 1959).

[11]Log of the Bark *Solon* of Westport, J. Smith, Master, 19 February 1853. Old Dartmouth Historical Society, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

[12]Frederick P. Schmitt, Cornelius DeJong, and Frank H. Winter, *Thomas Welcome Roys: America's Pioneer of Modern Whaling* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia; for the Mariners Museum, Newport News, Virginia, 1980).

[13]*Whalemen's Shipping List and Merchants' Transcript*, 5 April 1881.

[14]*Whalemen's Shipping List and Merchants' Transcript*, 30 December 1879.

[15]Alleyne S. Archer, "Sea-fishing in Barbados," *The Field, The Country Gentleman's Newspaper*, no. 1504, 22 October 1881, p. 592.

[16]John E. Adams, "Historical Geography of Whaling in Bequia Island, West Indies," *Caribbean Studies* 11:3 (1971): 60-61.

[17]Frederic A. Fenger, "'Longshore Whaling in the Grenadines," *The Outing Magazine* 62 (1913): 664-79.

[18]K. C. Balcomb, "Whale Report from Bequia, St. Vincent Grenadines," *Cetus* 3:1 (1981): 4-6.

The *Polaris* Whaleboat

WILLITS ANSEL

In June 1871, Charles F. Hall led his third expedition to the Arctic. In five months he was dead of arsenic poisoning and his ship, the *Polaris,* was frozen in the ice at Thank God Harbour, Greenland. Divided by dissention and suspicion, the expedition floundered. In June 1872, a boat expedition was sent north from the ship, the departing crew singing a song composed during the winter, "We are going to the Pole." They were stopped by ice in the next bay to the north and there, only twenty miles by land from the *Polaris,* the whaleboat was abandoned. The boat lay on the shore of Newman Bay, Greenland, for over thirty years. It was sighted and reported upon by members of the British Nares Expedition in 1876 and by men from Greeley's expedition six years later. In 1905, Commander Peary recovered the boat during his polar expedition and brought it back to the United States. Today it is in the possession of the Stony Brook Community Fund on Long Island. The boat is probably the oldest whaleboat-type in existence in the United States. It is significant for a number of reasons: its age, its documentation, its association with four Arctic expeditions, and its potential as a unique historical source for boat design and construction information.

The Arctic drew many explorers during the nineteenth century: some seeking a northwest passage to the Pacific, some gathering scientific information, and some attempting to go where no humans had gone before.

Willits Ansel is the author of *The Restoration of the Smack Emma C. Berry* and *The Whaleboat.* He has worked at the Museum's du Pont Preservation Shipyard for twelve years doing ship restoration and building whaleboats and other small craft.



Charles Francis Hall (1821-1871) had been a blacksmith, journalist, and engraver before his fascination with the Arctic caused him to become an explorer. He made private expeditions in 1860 and 1864, and convinced Congress to finance his polar expedition in 1870. (Blake, *Arctic Experiences,* New York, 1874, p. 114)

Whaleboats were important equipment for these nineteenth-century Arctic explorers. Even early in this century Commander Robert Peary had whaleboats built by Charles Beetle for his polar expedition. Early Arctic explorers relied heavily on the knowledge and experience of whalers, and it followed that they adapted the boat used in whaling. The whaleboat's strength, lightness, and ease of repair, as well as its seaworthiness and good performance

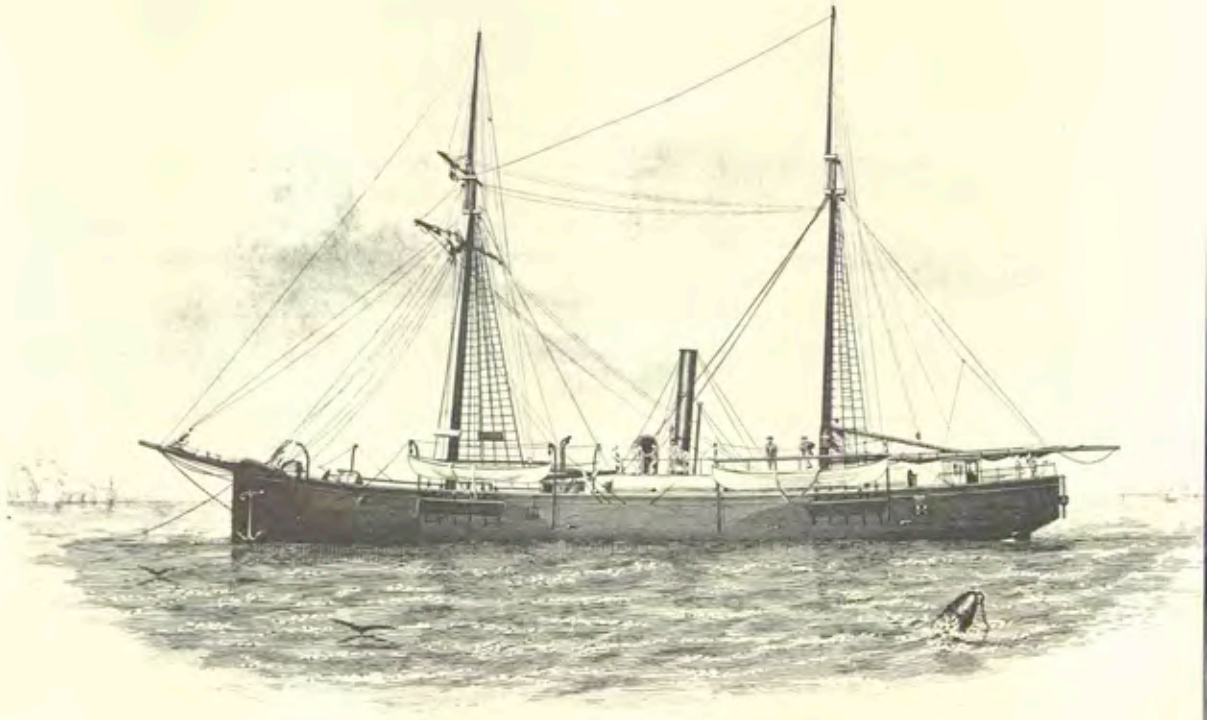
under oars and sails, recommended it for Arctic travel.

Numerous whaleboat builders produced boats for Arctic use, and there is no conclusive evidence to identify the builder of the *Polaris* whaleboat. However, circumstantial evidence suggests that George Rogers of New London, Connecticut, probably built the boat. The usual business of Rogers' shop on Bank Street was building stock boats for New London whaleships, but he gained a reputation for boats built especially for Arctic explorations. In the *New London Repository,* 24 May 1860, Rogers is described as a "distinguished Arctic boat builder" who had "constructed nearly all the boats that had ever been used in the various Arctic explorations which have been made."

Rogers had made boats especially designed for travelling over ice, some with bilge keels to serve as runners and some equipped with sleds for hauling the boats. The *Polaris* boat had an iron shoe on the keel for a runner. He built them for the Grinnell Expedition of 1853, and for the *Arctic,* a vessel sent in search of that expedition. One of his boats carried Dr. Elisha Kent Kane on a famous 1,400-mile trip in 1855. He built the boats for Hall's earlier expeditions in 1860 and 1864. It is very likely that he built the boats taken on the *Polaris* in 1871, particularly because three of the officers of the *Polaris* were from Noank and Groton, Connecticut, and had sailed from New London.

The *Polaris* was outfitted in 1871 at the New York Navy Yard. She carried four whaleboats, two twenty-four-foot boats, one of which is the boat at Stony Brook, and two longer boats, presumably twenty-eight feet long. Twenty-eight feet was a standard

The U.S.S. *Polaris,* 400 tons, 135 x 28 x 11.6, was built as the tug *America* at Philadelphia in 1864 and commissioned as the U.S. Navy tug *Periwinkle* in 1865. Rebuilt for service in the Arctic in 1870, she was renamed *Polaris* by Hall. The surviving *Polaris* whaleboat was carried in the forward davits. The *Polaris* was crushed in the ice after being abandoned in October 1872. (Davis, *Narrative of the North Polar Expedition,* Washington, 1876, frontispiece)



length for stock whaleboats of that period, and was the length of the boats in Hall's 1864 expedition. The smaller boats were carried in the forward davits of the *Polaris*.

Workmanship and materials of the *Polaris* boat are of a high order. The boat is fastened throughout with copper rivets; butts, where planks join, are fastened with a double row of copper tacks, clenched. A bronze breasthook is fitted in the bow, and iron seat knees brace the thwarts. Stem and stern posts are natural crooks. The boat is nicely finished; there is beading on the thwarts, sheer strake, wales, and the ceiling. The thwarts are beveled on the underside of the edges to give the appearance of lightness. The thwart riser is wedge-shaped in cross section, ¾ inch at the top edge and ⅜ inch at the botton, thus giving support for the thwarts and a top edge less likely to splinter, and a bottom edge that fairs into the ⅜ inch ceiling planking. The boat was lightly built for carrying over ice. Frames are light, ⅝ by ¾ inches, and widely spaced, 10 inches on centers. By contrast later boats had ¾ to ⅞ inch-thick frames spaced 8 inches apart. Strength was achieved by notching frame heads into the inwale and by intermediate floors of the same scantlings as the frames, set between the regular frames. A keelson one inch thick lies on, and is notched over, the frames and floors. Frames in the bow and stern are canted and dubbed on the inside and outside faces for fairness. Planking is a scant ½ inch thick. The top two strakes are lapped; below it is smooth planked. There are no battens behind the seams. The butts in the planking are scarfs with nibs rather than feather edge scarfs as was the general practice.

Despite the special features, the boat has some standard whaleboat fittings. There are bow chocks, and originally there was a loggerhead. In an earlier expedition, Hall had said he would take whales if he could, as well as collect scientific material. Presumably his boats were then outfitted for whaling.

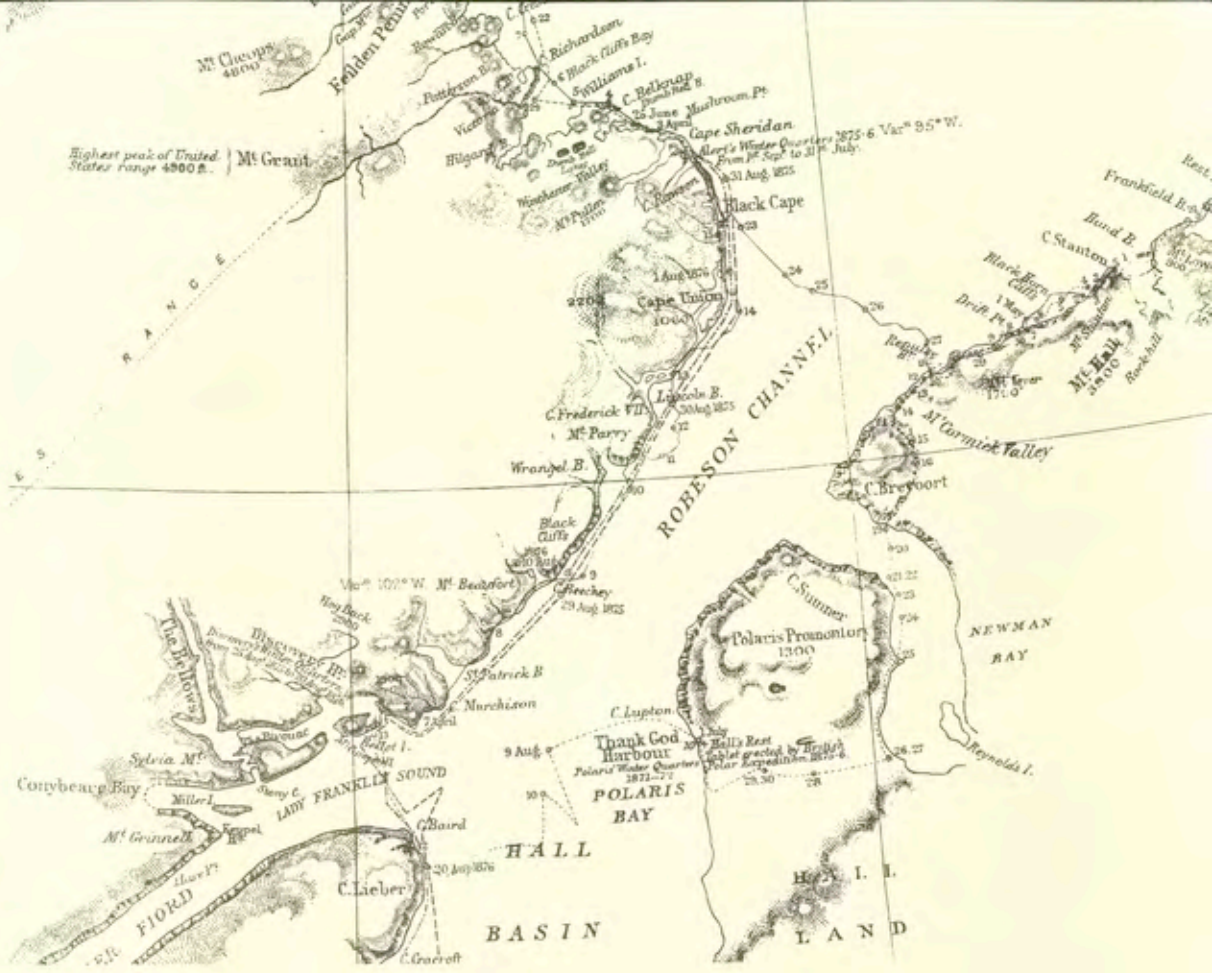
The report of Hall's Expedition has no special mention of the boat until after Hall's death.[1] The *Polaris* was frozen in at Thank God Harbour, on the coast of Greenland opposite Ellesmere Island in the winter 1871-72. In April 1872, the two smaller whaleboats were modified, named, equipped, and manned for a detached boat expedition with orders to proceed north as far as possible to take scientific observations. The expedition's scientist, Dr. Emil Bessels accompanied the boat expedition.

In modifying the boats, "provision lockers were built, and boards added, extending the height of the gunwale six inches."[2] Evidence of these changes are found in examining the boat today. The cuddy boards were replaced, which resulted in removal of the loggerhead, the step of which is still in place. The new cuddy boards had a hatch on top. A bulkhead was built under the after thwart and a cover with hinged lids was installed aft of the thwart. The height of the gunwale was increased by setting a plank on edge and fastening it with iron drifts into the wale. As this covered the thole pin holes, pads with oar lock sockets were fastened inside of the plank.

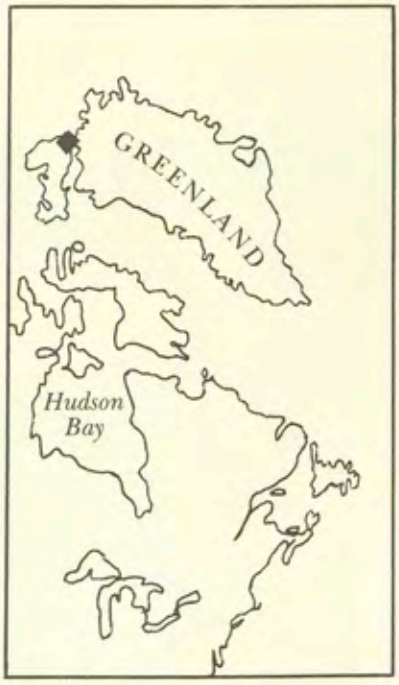
The boat was completely provisioned; the provision list, a copy of which was sent to the British Admiralty in 1875 when the British asked for the use of any supplies cached, has survived. Except for the food, which was largely consumed, much of the equipment was left in the boat when it was abandoned.[3]

The whaleboat was named the *Robeson*, after the Secretary of the Navy, and was manned by six men. In command was George E. Tyson, former whaling captain of Noank, Connecticut. Dr. Emil Bessels, Chief Scientist of the Expedition, was a member of the party. The other boat, the *Grant*, was in charge of H. C. Chester, mate of the *Polaris* and also of Noank.

The two men from Noank perhaps were not on the best of terms. Chester, starting first, lost his boat in the ice and made



This map of the Nares Expedition shows Hall Basin, Thank God Harbour, and Newman Bay. The Boat Camp was 1½ miles east of Cape Sumner. (Detail from map in Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea*, London, 1878). The sketch map (right) locates the detail map in northern Greenland.



another start with a patented canvas boat. Tyson wrote in his journal, "I called the Cape near which they lost the boat, Cape Disaster, and the Bay they were on, beyond Cape Lupton, Folly Bay, which I believe was rather displeasing to Mr. Chester."[4]

The two boats proceeded separately around Cape Sumner into Newman Bay, Greenland, but made camp together at what became known as the Boat Camp. There they stayed, unable to proceed because of ice, until recalled to the *Polaris* by crew members who had been sent back by land for provisions. The boats were hauled



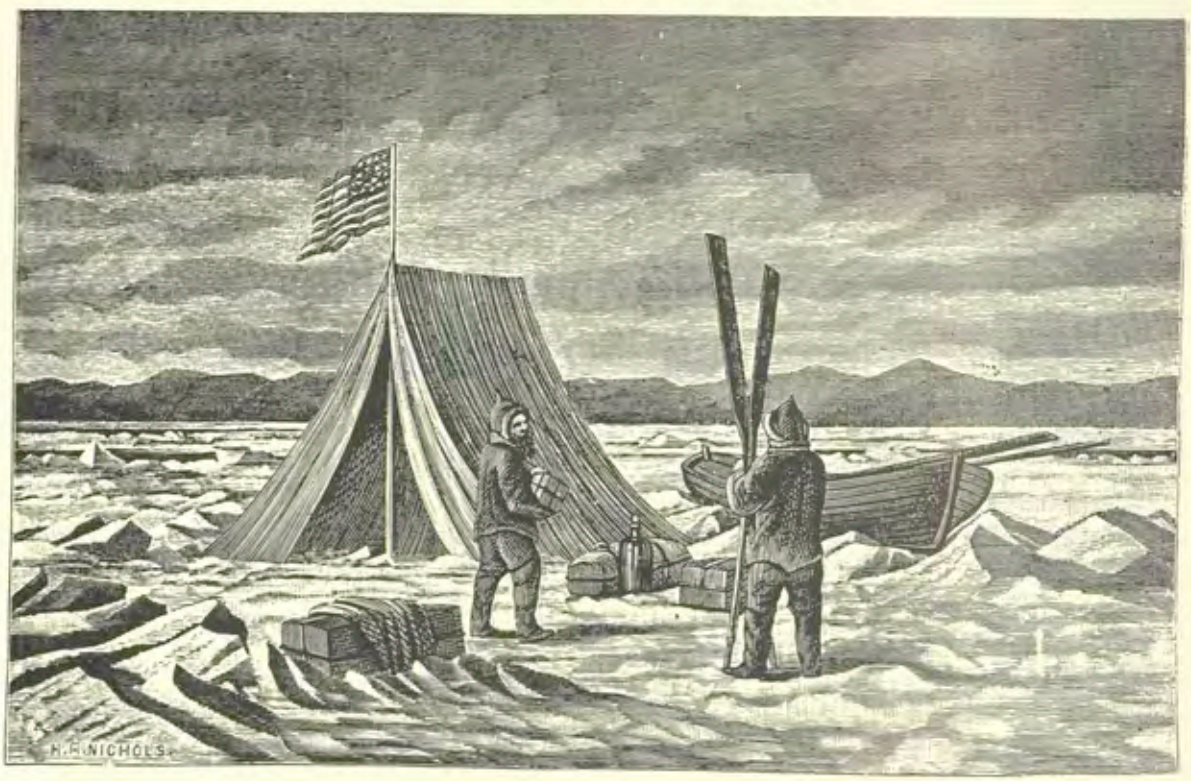
Captain George E. Tyson (born ca. 1829) commanded the *Polaris* whaleboat. Tiring of his work in a New York iron foundry, he went to sea as a whaleman in 1850 and rose to command Arctic whaleships out of New London and New Bedford. Hall asked him to join the expedition as assistant navigator. (Blake, *Arctic Experiences*, New York, 1874, p. 76)

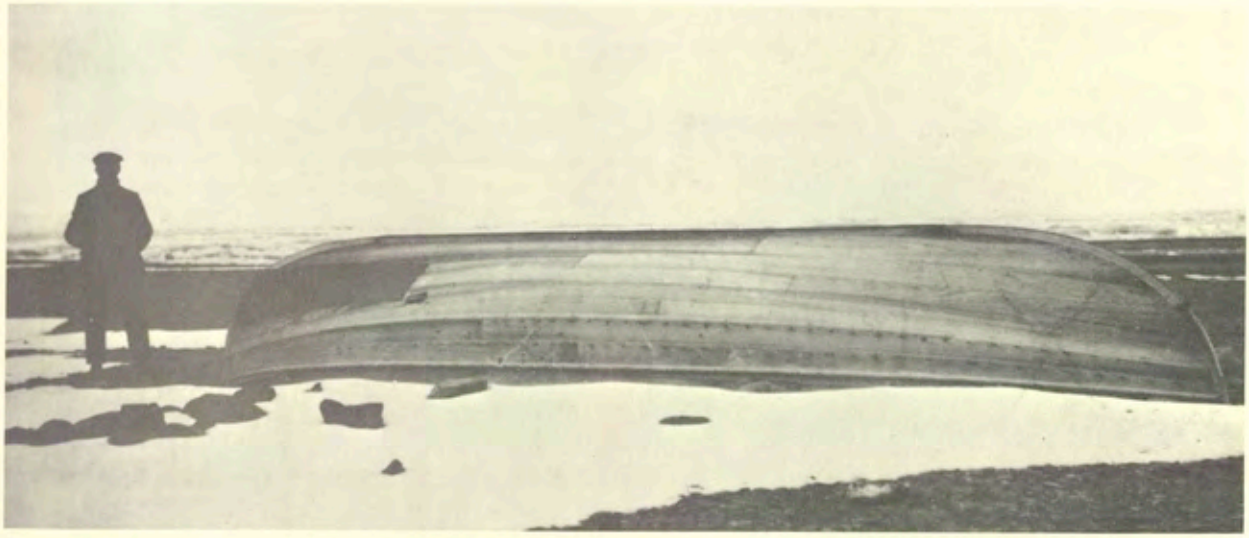
ashore. Tyson wrote, "July 5 – I started this morning to haul my boat in to the land with the help of Mr. Chester's crew, and after a tedious haul of eight hours reached the land with her."[5]

On 14 July 1872, Chester wrote: "Soon got into the tent near Tyson's boat and put dry clothing on; heavy squalls blowing down the mountains. A short time after we landed the boat was picked up by a heavy squall of wind, was carried a short distance, and a hole was stove in her... lashed her down with ropes and stones, took our tent up near a bluff, where we found a lee, and erected it."[6] The men of Hall's expedition eventually made their way back to the United States after losing the *Polaris* in the ice. The group became separated; one party in boats was rescued by Scotch whalers who took them to Scotland where they took ship to America. Tyson's group, on drift ice, was eventually picked up by sealers from Newfoundland.

Four years later, an English expedition under Captain George S. Nares was on the scene, provided with reports from the U.S.

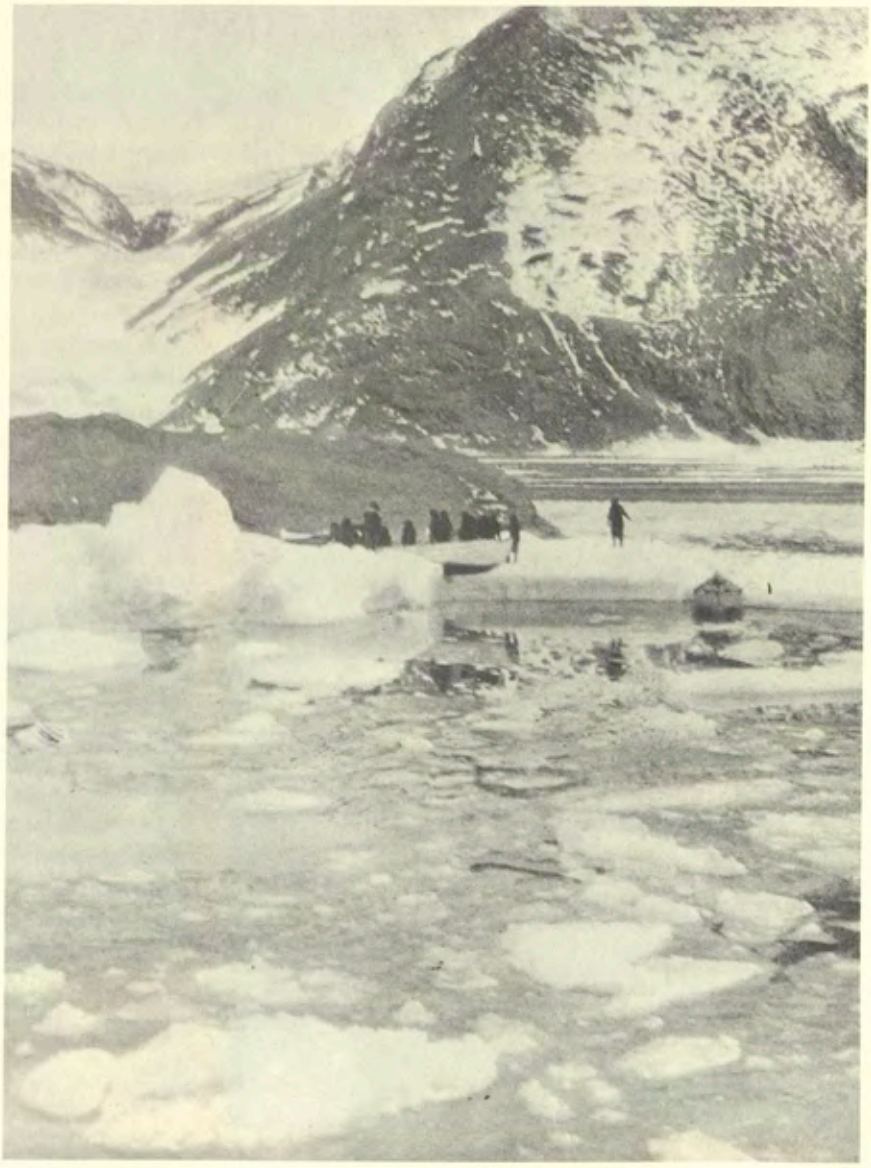
The Boat Camp on Newman Bay, where the whaleboat was abandoned. (Davis, *Narrative of the North Polar Expedition*, Washington, 1876, opp. p. 394)





The *Polaris* whaleboat as found by Peary's expedition in 1905. The small hole in the planking is just aft of the copper sheathing on the starboard bow (left). (Robert E. Peary Papers, Record Group 401/1, National Archives, Washington, D.C.)

Peary's men recovering the *Polaris* whaleboat from the Boat Camp, 1905. (Peary, *Nearest the Pole*, New York, 1907, opp. p. 40)



Navy Department on the location of the Boat Camp and what could be expected to be found there. On reaching the Boat Camp on Newman Bay, Nares wrote:

> We camped on the floe about a quarter-of-a-mile from the site of the tent and boats. Although our stay extended over forty hours, we were most of the time confined to our tents by a gale from the southward, and consequently unable to make a very complete examination of the American stores. One tent we found near the mouth of a ravine, collapsed, frozen to the ground and partially covered with snow. The whale-boat lay bottom upwards on a flat piece of land about a hundred yards from the beach, lashed down to heavy stones and frozen in by mud, while the canvas boat was with difficulty discovered, buried in snow, and lying about sixty yards from the whale-boat and two hundred from the tent. The whale-boat was stove in on the starboard bow, for which defects the materials necessary for repairs were at hand; in other respects, she was serviceable.
>
> The stores found under the boat seemed to have been but little affected by the weather; for instance, some biscuit, of which there was about twenty pounds, lying loose in the lockers, was in good condition. Great difficulty was experienced in getting at some of the gear, the bags, for instance, being frozen so stiffly that it was impossible to examine their contents without tearing them to pieces.[7]

The British later lost two men to scurvy. They were buried near Hall's grave.

The next visitors to the boat were members of the Greely Expedition some six years later. Greely had come to establish a scientific station above 81° north latitude to conduct meteorological observations and to explore the Arctic seas. Greely wrote: "Eight hours' travelling brought them [a party under Lt. Lockwood] to Boat Camp, where the whale and canvas boats were readily found. The latter boat had six oars, and was substantially in the condition described by the English Arctic reports. The hole in the whaleboat was very small, and otherwise it seemed, on careful examination to be in excellent order."[8]

Lockwood and twenty others in Greely's Expedition were later to die; one through drowning, one shot for stealing food, and the rest by starvation.

No one visited the Boat Camp for over twenty years until Peary in his 1905-06 Expedition arrived on the *Roosevelt* in his effort to penetrate as far north as possible, his final aim being, in his words, "the attainment of the Pole." The *Roosevelt* was the first ship to enter Newman Bay. He noted briefly, "In Newman Bay we remained five days mending the rudder, replacing the tiller chains with wire cables, and crossing to the south side of the bay, where I took on board the *Polaris* boat left here by Chester and Tyson of Hall's party in 1871, at Boat Camp."[9] Peary photographed his men taking the white-painted boat off the ice at the shore.

Presumably Peary took off the boat because he foresaw possible use for it. Despite having lain bottom up, unattended for over thirty years, after covering the hole in the starboard bow, it was serviceable. The debris of the white man in the Arctic, including boats, apparently is almost indestructable.

Peary offered the boat to the American Museum of Natural History in New York in 1907. The Director, Professor H. C. Bumpus, had space problems and asked for the boat's dimensions. He wrote Peary:

> In general I believe in the stimulating influence that objects of this kind have upon the public. It makes very real matters of history that ordinarily attract little attention. At the present time, however, I am not sure that we have an appropriate place for the exhibition of this specimen, but if you could give me the approximate size, I would look the matter up.

After looking around he wrote, "there seems to be no proper place for it in the building, and I fear it would disintegrate too rapidly if put outside where it would be exposed to the weather."

But Professor Bumpus found a place. "I



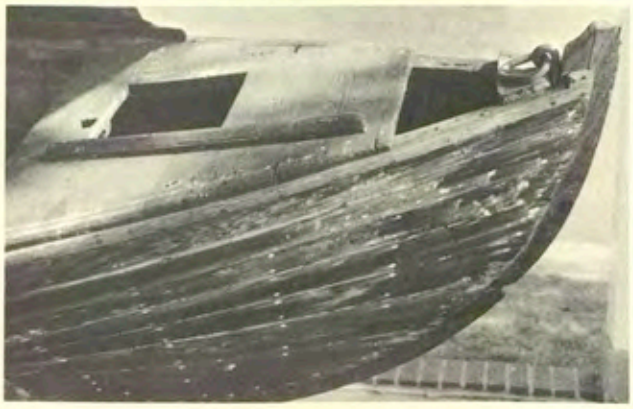
think that we have discovered a good place for the *Polaris* Whale-boat. Where and when may we get it?"[10]

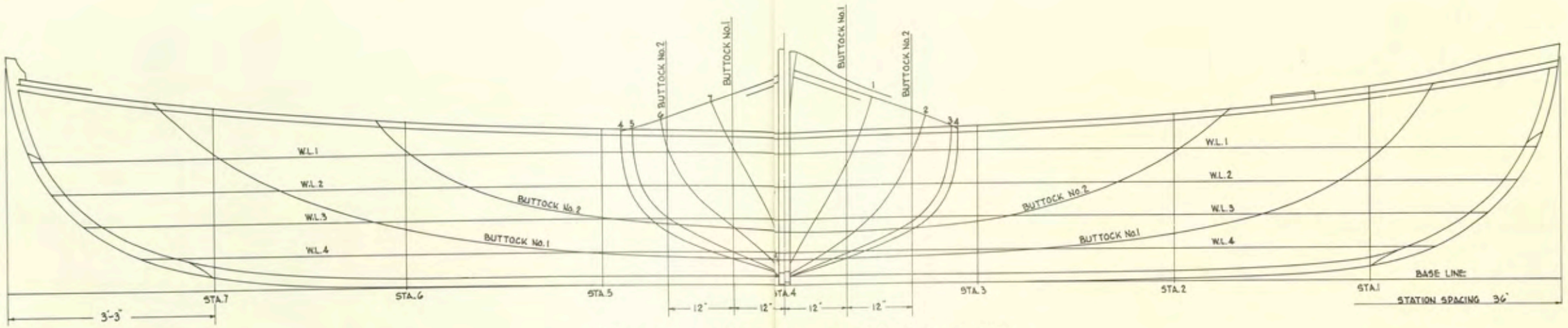
For many years the boat was suspended from the ceiling in the basement of the Museum. It was taken down in 1946, when a sprinkler system was installed, and through the efforts of Robert Cushman Murphy, Curator of Oceanic Birds at the Museum, transferred to the Museums at Stony Brook, Long Island. Robert Cushman Murphy's interest in whaleboat types presumably dated from the days of his cruise in the whaleship *Daisy* in 1912 and 1913.

For some years the boat was exhibited in an open pavilion near the shore at Stony Brook, where it suffered damage from vandalism, weathering, and improperly placed supporting poppets. Hood ends of planks began to pull away from the stem, a section of the stem at the forefoot rotted and came loose, the lockers built before the boat trip were broken open and the tops removed, the plank raising the gunwales on the starboard side was torn off, the warp box planking broken out, and a thwart broken.

The *Polaris* whaleboat on exhibit at Stony Brook, Long Island, 1981. The bow view (above) shows the raised gunwale and added lockers aft. The other two views show the stern. Damaged by vandalism in this exposed location, the boat has since been moved into protected storage. (Photographs by Willits Ansel)







Lines of the *Polaris* whaleboat, drawn by Robert C. Allyn from measurements made by Willits Ansel. Lines are to outside of planking. (Mystic Seaport Museum, Ships' Lines, serial no. 183)

Despite this damage, the boat is intact to a remarkable extent, which attests to the workmanship and materials that went into it. It is the oldest whaleboat-type that can be documented with certainty in the United States. As such it is a valuable source on construction and design. In 1981, it was placed under cover by the Stony Brook Community Fund. Supported in a cradle, it should be capable of being preserved indefinitely.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge Robert D. Farwell, Director of the Whaling Museum at Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, who informed me of the existence of the boat; William N. Peterson of the Seaport's Curatorial Department who found the references to George Rogers in *The Repository* and the *Daily Chronicle* of New London; Alison Wilson of the National Archives, who located the correspondence between Commander Robert E. Peary and Professor H. C. Bumpus; and Mrs. Gloria Rocchio of the Stony Brook Community Fund, who allowed the measuring and examination of the boat.

NOTES

[1]Hall died of arsenic poisoning, according to an autopsy performed in 1968. Chauncey G. Loomis treats the subject in *Weird and Tragic Stories, The Story of Charles Francis Hall, Explorer* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1971). Hall died in November 1871 and the boats were outfitted for the spring expedition in April 1872. Rear-Admiral C. H. Davis, *Narrative of the North Polar Expedition. U.S. Ship "Polaris," Captain Charles Francis Hall Commanding* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876), pp. 173-75, 337.

[2]Davis, *Narrative of the North Polar Expedition*, p. 338.

[3]*Ibid.*, pp. 665-68. The following is a complete list of what the boat took from the ship:

Provisions, &c., for whale-boat.

135 pounds pemmican.
192 pounds preserved meats.
23 pounds tripe.
76 pounds Polar cake.
24 pounds ham.
31 pounds molasses.
200 pounds bread.
30 pounds chocolate.
22 pounds coffee.
50 pounds oatmeal.
36 pounds sugar.
20 pounds cheese.
1 saw.
3 files.
6 sheath-knives.
Lead, canvas, and tacks for boat-mending.
1 dozen spare goggles.
1 spare oar.
6 pans, spoons, and pots.
1 small copper stove.
2 stove-kettles.
2 spare roullaum (?).
5 Sharps' rifles.
1 shot-gun.
2,500 fathoms of sounding-line.
1 patent log.
1 bag of shot.
3 pounds of powder.
12 cans of milk.
100 boxes of sardines.
400 cartridges (Sharps' rifle).
100 cartridges, center-fire (Navy pistol).
1 grapnel.
2 whale-irons.
2 lances.
25 fathoms spare lance-warp.
1 spare set of rudder-pindles (?).
6 sleeping-bags.
1 tent.
1 boat-cover.
2 rubber blankets.
1 box chronometer.
2 artificial horizons.
1 thermometer-case.
1 sextant-stand.
1 boat-sled.
1 fog-horn.
1 ball spun-yarn.
6 briar pipes.
4 jack-knives.
6 copper cylinders (for deposits).
2 telescopes.
1 pair of field-glasses.
1 apparatus for sounding.
Alcohol for specimens.
Blotting-paper for plants.

[4]E. Vale Blake, ed., *Arctic Experiences: Containing Capt. George E. Tyson's Wonderful Drift on the Ice-Floe, a History of the "Polaris" Expedition, the Cruise of the "Tigress" and Rescue of the "Polaris" Survivors.* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1874), p. 186.

[5]Davis, *Narrative of the North Polar Expedition*, p. 681.

[6]*Ibid.*, p. 677.

[7]Captain Sir George S. Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea During 1875-6 in H. M. Ships "Alert" and "Discovery."* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1878), pp. 337-38.

[8]Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely, *Three Years of Arctic Service: An Account of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition of 1881-84 and the Attainment of the Farthest North* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886), p. 224.

[9]Commander Robert E. Peary, *Nearest the Pole* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1907), p. 43.

[10]Bumpus to Peary, 10 August, 6 September 1907, 19 March 1908, Robert E. Peary Papers, Record Group 401/1, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

A Fishing Trip by Captain William Thomas

The following narrative of a voyage in a fishing schooner was originally published in the 1914 edition of Fishermen of the Atlantic, *the yearbook of the Boston Fishing Masters' Association. It was apparently written by an unidentified passenger, perhaps a journalist, who accompanied Captain Thomas on a six-day fishing trip.*

Captain William "Down East Billy" Thomas (1859-1951), a native of Maine, was a well-known Boston fishing skipper. He was an owner and first master of the Helen B. Thomas, *the first knockabout fishing schooner, built in 1902.*

The knockabout design, having no bowsprit, was adapted from small racing yachts of the 1890s by Thomas F. McManus, the celebrated fishing schooner designer. A fishing schooner's bowsprit, and her main boom far overhanging the stern, were extremely hazardous for fishermen furling sail, particularly when ice encrusted the footropes or the vessel plunged its head into rising seas. By eliminating the bowsprit and compensating with an extended bow, as well as heightening the masts and reducing the length of the main boom, McManus retained the performance features of fishing schooners while improving safety conditions. Captain Thomas's success with the Helen B. Thomas *was instrumental in the popular trend toward the knockabout fishing schooner design after 1905.*

The vessel featured in this account is the knockabout schooner Aspinet *of Orrs Island, Maine. Launched in 1908 by James & Tarr at Essex, Massachusetts, the* Aspinet *was modeled after the second knockabout, the* Shepherd King *of 1904. The* Aspinet *and her sister* John J. Fallon *were easily distinguished by their short bow overhangs and blunt "rater" bows, borrowed from "rater" or class racing yachts, and perhaps Boston pilot schooners. In his* American Fishing Schooners, *Howard I. Chapelle reports that the* Aspinet *was an excellent vessel in heavy weather.*

In winter, the Aspinet *was used market fishing, that is, bringing mixed fresh fish to market. In summer she often went after halibut, and occasionally caught swordfish as well. At other times she was used "shack" fishing: carrying both salt and ice, and preserving fish caught with the first supply of bait in salt and those caught on the second baiting in ice. Though documented in Maine, she landed most of her fish at Boston.*

In 1923, the Aspinet *was sold to parties in Christiansund, Norway. Equipped with a diesel engine, she crossed the Atlantic, probably to fish as an otter trawler or dragger out of Stavanger, Norway. She disappeared from* Lloyd's Register *after 1929.*

Boston developed as a marketing center for fresh fish in the mid-nineteenth century. With the establishment of her fish dealers on T Wharf in 1884, she began to challenge Gloucester as New England's major fish market. Shortly after 1900, Boston became the largest fish market in the Western Hemisphere, and nearly as important as Grimsby, England, the world's busiest fishing port. The fishing industry's cramped quarters on T Wharf were replaced by the spacious fish pier at South Boston in 1914. While Boston's fishing fleet was large (it included the Seaport's L. A. Dunton *in the 1920s), it never equalled that of Gloucester. Therefore, many Gloucester and outport vessels, such as the* Aspinet, *regularly landed their fish in Boston.*

The increasing demand for fresh fish, particularly haddock, shifted the emphasis westward, away from the prime codfishing grounds of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. The South Channel east of Nantucket, Georges Bank east of

Cape Cod, Middle or Stellwagen Bank between Cape Ann and Cape Cod, and the ledges and shoals alongshore provided the majority of Boston's fresh fish.

Captain Thomas's trip takes the Aspinet *to the Cape Shore grounds off Cape Sable at the southwest tip of Nova Scotia, nearly 300 miles from Boston. This area, which offered excellent catches of haddock and cod in winter, was resorted to in about 5 percent (nearly 200) of the trips landed at Boston in 1913.*

The market schooners caught mixtures of haddock, cod, hake, pollock, and cusk, depending on the season and the fishing ground. These schooners generally carried ten to sixteen "single" dories. In "single" dory vessels, one fisherman went in each dory, either sailing or sculling as he set his trawl. Larger schooners, such as the L. A. Dunton, *carried ten "double" dories, each handled by two men.*

The photographs on pages 95 through 98 are featured in Down on T Wharf: The Boston Fisheries as Seen Through the Photographs of Henry D. Fisher, *which has just been published by Mystic Seaport Museum as volume 10 of the American Maritime Library Series.*

"All right my boy you are just in time," was the salutation that I received as I stepped on deck. The lines were cast off, the sails were hoisted, and with a freshening breeze we sailed merrily down the harbor and started on a trip to the eastward. In less than an hour we had passed out by Boston Light and with the wind over our starboard quarter were bowling off a good twelve knots, which by dark took us many miles from land.

"We will have a good breeze tonight," observed the captain. "It looks smurry under the sun, and them mares' tails rising in the sou'west tell me that we will have plenty of wind. Set the watch at six o'clock and pass the word to call me at twelve; and if there is any change call me before. How are you

The *Aspinet* receives a new mainsail at T Wharf, Boston, February 1914. Photo by Henry D. Fisher. (76.208.380E)





Fishermen baiting their trawls around the after cabin of a schooner at T Wharf, ca. 1913. A skilled fisherman could bait a tub of trawl in about forty-five minutes. Photo by Henry D. Fisher. (76.208.78)

feeling? All right? Perhaps you had better go below and turn in; you are apt to get cold up here."

"O, no I don't feel cold," I replied. And indeed I did not, for in the excitement of watching the gallant little craft as she raced madly along on her course, with the wind on the quarter, and leaving behind her a wake that flashed and sparkled in the moonlight, I thought of nothing else.

"Hey there, mate, call the watch. Say, young fellow, you are frozen. You had better turn in." And I awoke to the fact that my teeth were chattering like castenets; so





Outward bound from T Wharf, fishermen aboard the *Ruth and Margaret* prepare to set the headsails, ca. 1916. Photo by Henry D. Fisher. (76.208.621)

going below I crawled in behind the captain, and knew no more.

"Breakfast," sang out the cook at 4 o'clock in the morning, and the men tumbled out of their bunks. The breeze held steady, and at 5 o'clock I beheld the first flush of daylight as it broke over the ocean, and, believe me, it was one of the most beautiful sights I ever beheld. First a faint pink blush appeared on the horizon, to grow broader and brighter, to mount higher in the sky, ever growing lighter, until at last, just showing its upper rim above the water, the sun slowly appeared in view; and as I beheld that sun as it arose in all its beauty I was led to realize how grand, how wonderful, are thy works, oh nature.

"Six o'clock," said the helmsman, "the watch has ran out."

"Set them till 10 o'clock," said the captain.

"Land on the weather bow," sang out the lookout.

"That's Cape Sable," said the captain.

"Ten o'clock; all hands to bait up," sang out the captain; and with oil skins on and sou'westers buttoned over their ears, the men tumbled up on deck, and taking off the hatches, began to hoist bags of herring, which they cut open and placed in piles along the after-house. They next began to hoist from the hold tubs filled with lines neatly coiled around the sides, each one full. These tubs are barrels sawed in half, with a hoop nailed around the top to keep the staves from spreading apart. I next saw each man armed with a knife about the size of a large meat knife, range themselves





The *Aspinet*, with a tug along her port side, off T Wharf, early 1912. The towboat/waterboat *Ida M. Chase* crosses her bow. Photo by Henry D. Fisher. (76.208.127)

alongside of each other, eight on each side of the vessel, and commenced chopping the herring into small, square pieces.

"That is the way we cut our bait," said the captain.

I next saw each man take one of the tubs and turn the line from it on to the house.

"These are our trawls; now watch us bait them." And I did watch.

These trawls are made of cotton lines, about one-quarter of an inch thick by 50 fathoms in length. Each man has four tubs of these lines, ten lines in each tub. To these lines are attached, at a distance of about five feet apart, a much smaller line, called ganging. Each one of these are about 30 inches in length. To the end of each one of these a hook about twice the size of a smelt hook is attached. This hook is pushed through a piece of herring about an inch square, and placed around the sides of the tub in layers, one above the other, until all are baited, which takes each man about three hours.

At half-past 11 the whistle blew for dinner, and the men tumbled into the forecastle. Then, one by one, they came on deck, and finished their work of baiting the trawls.

"Haul down your jib, and haul your forestaysail to windward; we will let her lay," said the captain. "Put the trawls below." And, with everything snug, we watched the sun sink below the horizon, and darkness crept slowly over the ocean. One by one the stars came out, and our second night at sea was on.

"Set the watch until 3 o'clock," said the captain, "and call me at 1."

All but the watch turned in, and in ten minutes the vessel was as silent as a gull on the ocean asleep, with his head beneath his wing.



Mealtime aboard a fishing schooner. Illustration by W. Taber. (*Century Magazine*, October 1886, p. 823)

"Breakfast!" sang out the cook; and they gathered around the table.

"Get the trawls on deck. All ready? Put them out!" bawled the captain. And they sprang to each side, and with tackles made fast at each end, began to hoist out dories, one over each side of the vessel. As fast as they went over the side each man was given a torch and four tubs of trawls, and dropped astern of the vessel.

"Heave your buoy!" shouted the captain.

This buoy is a keg about the size of a quarter of a barrel, to which is attached 75 fathoms or more of line and an anchor weighing ten or twelve pounds. As fast as one man is cast off another takes his place, and so on until all dropped off. The vessel then sailed along side by side with the last man until he has put out his last trawl. The vessel is then hove to.

These trawls are set before the wind, and cover an area of about five square miles, and in the night the lights from the dories look like a floating city.

"Pass me that horn, cook," said the captain; and looking, I saw the cook lifting out of the cabin what looked to me to be a small trunk. Setting this upon the house, the captain began to work a lever, and lo, from out this box came a sound not unlike the whistle of an ocean liner. Four times, loud and clear, it rang out over the water, and the captain stopped the lever with the remark, "If it was light enough, you would see them hauling their trawls."

It was already growing light, and as I kept a sharp lookout, I could soon see the men at work. The sun now arose o'er the ocean, and another day was on.

"They are finding fish enough. That fellow there is getting one on every hook, Cap.," said the cook.

"Good; we can take care of them," said the captain. "There is a fellow with his oar up. He wants to lighten. Put up the pens, cook." And the cook and the captain began to haul out boards a little over six feet long by three wide, which they placed from the house to the side of the vessel. This makes six feet long by five feet wide, a box that will hold about six thousand pounds.

"Here they come, six of them. We will fill her decks today, cook." And then the work began. As fast as one dory was emptied another came alongside, loaded to the brim with fish, until, when the men came with the last of their trawls, it was nothing but fish – fish forward, fish aft, fish everywhere.

How many are there, captain? I asked.

"Forty thousand pounds," he replied. "Get your kellers up, men. We have got to get a hustle on if we get dressed down time enough to bait up tonight."

The men then, four on each side, took a box about six feet long by two and one-half wide, which they placed from the house to the rail of the vessel, which they filled with fish. Then, standing two on each side, two of them ripped the fish open, using for that purpose a knife with a blade about six inches in length. The other two men removed the entrails of the fish, after which they dropped them into a tub filled with water, from which they were pitched into boxes on deck and drained, and then passed into the hold to be packed in ice.

At 4 o'clock in the morning the men again had breakfast.

"We will not have such a good day as we did yesterday. Set three tubs; that will be all you want today. Do you notice those little black puffs of wind, no bigger than your hand, striking along the surface of the water? That means wind," said the captain to me, after the men had left the vessel. "And do you see those little black clouds rising in the east? That means snow. We must get them on board as quick as we can today."

And indeed it began to look so already, for the wind was already coming in spiteful little gusts, and the sky looking more threatening each moment.

"They will soon be here now," said the captain, about two hours later. "Here comes one fellow now."

And sure enough, as I looked away in the distance I beheld a sail, so far away that it looked no bigger than my hand. Sometimes it would disappear, and I would look in fear that it was gone, only to see it appear again on top of a sea, to slide down again from sight, but ever drawing nearer, until at last, with a rush, the little sail came down, the oars came into play, and the man was alongside.

"Get them out quick as you can. They are all coming."

And so it was. As fast as one dory was unloaded another was alongside, until all were safe on board. And none too soon, for the vessel was beginning to jump around too much for comfort.

"Dress those fish on the lee side first. We will try to get hold of Shelburne before it gets thick." And before I knew it we were off, with the wind over the starboard quarter, in a smother of foam, in an endeavor to make a harbor from the storm.

We had been on our way about two hours, when I noticed that the captain's face wore an anxious look. Ever and anon he would cast an earnest look at the compass and then at the sky.

"We cannot make it. Finish up your dressing, and we will lay her head offshore. Put your trawls below, and make everything snug. See that the lashings on the dories are all right. Clear away your halyards. Have your crotch tackles all ready. All right, lower away. Haul in your main sheet." And with a rush the huge sail came down, the gaff was hauled in and secured, the vessel wore around, and as the heavy foresail came across the deck with a surge and jar that shook the vessel from stem to stern, the sail was furled and stopped on the boom, and the gallant little craft rode the sea like a gull asleep.

"Put two men in a watch; the rest turn in. Pass the word to call me at 12 o'clock," said the captain. And in less than fifteen minutes every man but the watch was sound asleep.

Fishermen setting a trawl while their schooner "jogs" nearby. Note the short gangings attaching the baited hooks to the groundline, and the keg buoy with "black ball" to mark the end of the trawl. The fisherman is setting the trawl with a "heaving stick," allowing him to pay it out faster than he could hand-over-hand. Illustration by Milton J. Burns. (*Scribner's Magazine*, April 1902, p. 393)



That is, every man but me. I could not sleep, but, incased in heavy oilskins, I stood with my head just out of the after gangway, and watched the storm. And it filled me with admiration to watch the gallant little craft fight her battle with the storm.

Out of the smother of snow would rise a giant wave, only to be surmounted with ease, and sent roaring and hissing from sight into the spume to leeward. So passed the night, until 2 o'clock in the morning, when the stars came out, the wind went down and the storm was over.

At 4 o'clock in the morning the mainsail was again hoisted, the trawls were again gotten out on deck, and the men again prepared for work.

"Bait up two tubs. That's all we will set today. I think it will breeze up this afternoon."

"Are you all ready there?" sang out the captain, about two hours later. "Put them out!" And away went the men for another day's fishing.

"They are doing well again today," said the cook, looking through the captain's glass, about an hour after the men had commenced to haul their trawls. "They will get a load apiece if they keep on at that rate.

"Let's hope they do," said the captain. "That's all we can expect from that much gear."

In about an hour the men began to come alongside, each with his dory loaded to the brim with fish.

"The glass is falling. We have had the best of it. We will let her off for home. Keep her west, one-half north." And with the wind about two points abaft the beam, we were off on the long thrash for home.

The men had their supper, the fish were dressed and put below, trawls stowed away, dories securely lashed and everything made snug for the night.

I saw the captain casting anxious looks at the sky. "Them clouds rolling up there to windward don't look good to me. We will have the wind ahead, and plenty of it. Set

Fishermen hauling a trawl. In this "double dory" one dorymate hauls while the other coils the trawl. The *Aspinet*'s "single dory" fishermen worked alone. the roller on the gunwale eased the task of hauling the line up from the bottom, 100 or more feet below. Illustration by Milton J. Burns. (*Scribner's Magazine,* April 1902, p. 393)



the watch and call me at the first sign of a change."

About 9 o'clock the watch came below and said: "Better turn out and have a look at it. It is coming at us good."

"Yes, it is coming at us, all right," said the captain, as he took a long, earnest look at the sky to windward. "All hands on deck to take in the mainsail! Tumble up, men!" bawled the captain; and the men came tumbling pell mell on deck.

The heavy boom was secured, the mainsail taken in and furled, the try-sail bent on and set, and we were again off on our course, with a freshening wind and a rising sea.

The next morning when day broke it was a fright. The seas would rear their ugly heads to windward, and, breaking into foam, rush down upon the gallant little craft in overwhelming fury. But that little vessel seemed a thing of life. On she went, sometimes half buried by the tons of water that were hurled upon her, reeling, staggering, plunging on, sometimes with her bows plunging down, only to rise again, with a snort of defiance, flinging the spray high in the air, with an ease and disdain that would stir your blood, ever bringing us nearer home, the goal of our ambition.

"Lights broad off the lee bow!" sang out the lookout at 10 o'clock in the evening.

"That's the highlands. The wind is hauling to northeast, and it looks like snow. All hands on deck! Haul down your try-sail, set your mainsail!" bawled the captain.

In ten minutes the try-sail was stowed, the mainsail hoisted and swayed up taut, and, with sheets slightly eased, we flew at racehorse speed across Massachusetts Bay, and at 4 o'clock in the morning, with seventy thousand pounds of fish in the hold, snugly packed in ice, and carrying all sail in the face of a gathering storm, the schooner *Aspinet* raced in by Boston Light and tied up at T dock, and the trip was over.

As the schooner sails slowly, dorymen pitch their fish aboard using two-tined forks called pews. The fish will be gutted on deck and then packed in ice in the hold. Illustration by Milton J. Burns. (*Scribner's Magazine*, April 1902, p. 399)



BOOK REVIEW

The Window to the Street. By Harriet G. Valentine. Smithtown, New York: Exposition Press, Inc., 1981. 142 pp. Illustrations, index. $8.00.

In 1843, a young woman of wit and considerable insight started a diary that for several years chronicled her own eventful life and also the bustling activity of a small whaling port. Helen Rogers was fifteen when she began her record of the events that made Cold Spring Harbor, on the north shore of Long Island, an interesting and enjoyable place to live. She wrote in prose and poetry of the foibles of her neighbors, the fates of local vessels, the pastimes and pleasures of that simpler age.

The Window to the Street is based on those writings, but goes well beyond them in its scope. As Harriet Valentine states at the outset, it is an "attempt to enlarge the subjects Helen mentions by adding historical facts, comments, and explanations of Helen's written words, and to enliven, as much as possible, this period of Cold Spring's history." In this, she has succeeded admirably.

Cold Spring Harbor of the 1840s becomes a real place where familiar people walk the streets, join the temperance movement, die at sea. Excerpts from the area newspaper, stories from local tradition, even quotes from other people's diaries are used to fill in the picture. And since Helen's journal tends toward historical rather than personal content, it is to Valentine's credit that the town and period become three dimensional. Helen writes moving, if overly sentimental to modern ears, poetry, and her essays on the "Free School question" are amusing in spite of her unabashed prejudice; but apparently, much of her journal keeping was the simple recording of facts: vessels launched, brides married, social affairs attended, etc. Without the larger context that Valentine provides, Helen's story might lose much of its emotional appeal.

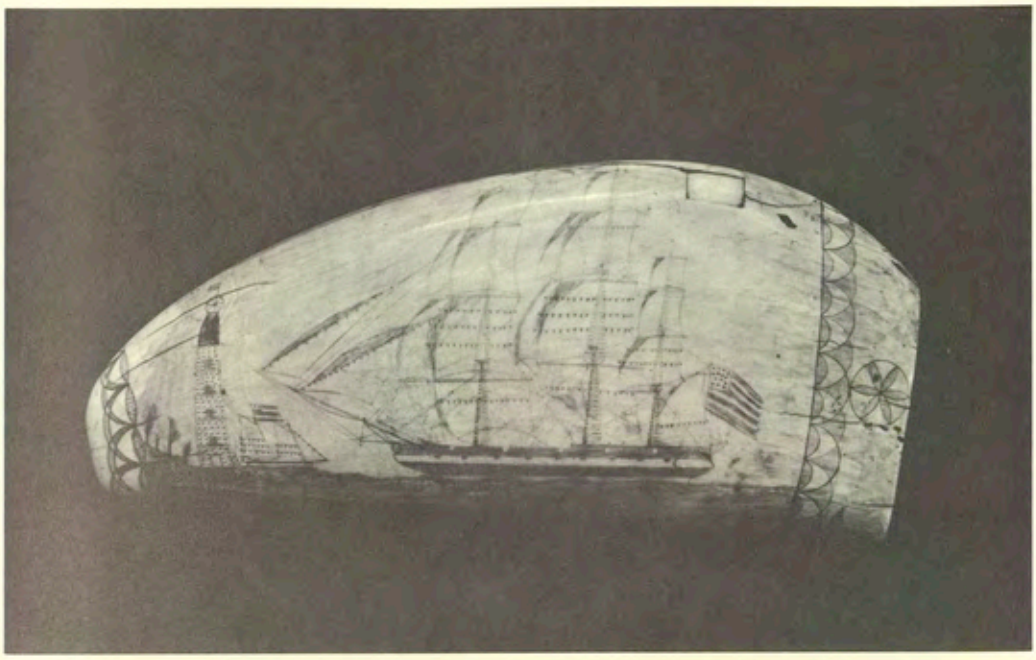
That is not to say that *The Window to the Street* is without its faults. It is difficult to organize diary material into a coherent whole, and the author has accomplished that task with mixed success. The division of the book into chapters on religion, schools, the sea's influence, the gold rush, and social life is logical and effective, but within each chapter, the flow is often disjointed and there is unnecessary repetition of ideas from one chapter to the next. Also, there is never a complete description of the diary itself. It would be helpful to know at least what period of time it covers and how much material exists. For readers unfamiliar with the area, a simple map of the town and its environs would create a clearer image and make the old photographs more meaningful.

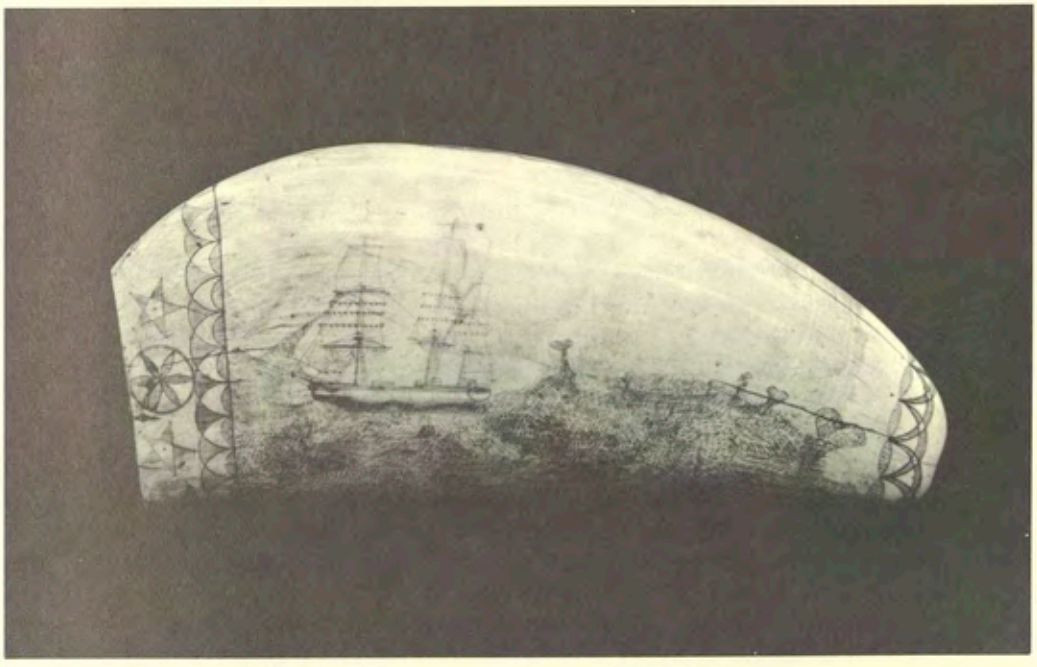
Despite these flaws, students of social history will find this a useful work. One of its strengths is the unique perspective of the diarist: that of a woman living in one of the smaller seaports at a time that currently gets less attention than it deserves. Another good feature is the variety of material presented in the book. I was delighted to find within its pages a list of popular songs, dances, and games of the period; a sermon delivered to Cold Spring whalers upon embarkation; several of Helen's favorite recipes; and a lengthy description of one man's adventures during the gold rush. Anyone who enjoys such discoveries will appreciate this book. And Long Islanders will probably like it if only because it confirms the notion that indeed there was such a place years before the Long Island Expressway was built.

Terri Roper
Assistant for Coastal Life and Culture, M.S.M.

ACQUISITIONS

Among the Museum's more significant recent acquisitions is a large sperm whale tooth engraved by Benjamin W. Bradford, master of the whaleship *Canton Packet* of Bristol, Rhode Island. Bradford labored on this tooth, a gift for his wife's parents, during an 1832-35 Pacific whaling voyage. One side bears an engraved scene featuring an American warship, schooner, and lighthouse. The reverse depicts fierce whaling action as a trio of whaleboats attacks a large group of sperm whales. Unusual stipple-style





engraving of both whales and water heightens the sense of pandemonium captured in the scene. The whaleship in the distance is most likely Bradford's own *Canton Packet*. The captain's initials and a two-headed sea serpent fill the bottom edge while the elaborate geometric border designs at each end testify to his skill with drawing compass.

This was Bradford's last voyage, for after his return home he moved to Cuba to manage a coffee plantation, dying there of a tropical fever in 1839. His scrimshaw handiwork, however, passed down through three generations of his wife's family until being purchased by the Museum earlier this year. Length 8½". (82.2)



This flat-bottom, lightly-built rail-bird skiff was presented to the Museum's distinguished small craft collection by the E. E. Dickinson Company of Essex, Connecticut.

Built in the late 1920s by Oliver Laplace, it was used by the Dickinson family of Essex to hunt waterfowl on the lower reaches of the Connecticut River. Initially used for going out after rail birds, the boat would be poled up tiny creeks by the guide or pusher, standing aft, while the "sport" sat forward on a stool ready for the birds when flushed. The locally developed variant of the guide's push pole had a lower end shaped like a duck's web foot, which would not pick up mud and could double as a paddle in deep water. The boat's light weight and upswept bottom forward made it easier to penetrate reeds or go out over the grass with the rising tide.

Markers were used to keep track of the perfectly camouflaged birds as they were dropped by the gunner. The birds would be picked up when the boat returned with the falling tide. As the rail bird population decreased in the forties, the boat was used increasingly for duck hunting.

The Museum's boat is an example of Oliver Laplace's early work and is more complex in construction than his later boats. Oliver Laplace's fifty years of experience fishing, turtling, guiding waterfowl gunning parties, and building boats developed a boat considered by many to be the ultimate for use on the lower Connecticut River.

Like the Delaware Ducker and Barnegat Bay Sneakbox, the Laplace rail-bird skiff is one solution to the problem of developing a mobile waterfowl gunning platform suited to local conditions. Length 15′1¼″, beam 4′3½″. [82.9]

Mystic Seaport Museum Publications

We are pleased to announce publication of volume ten in Mystic Seaport's American Maritime Library Series.

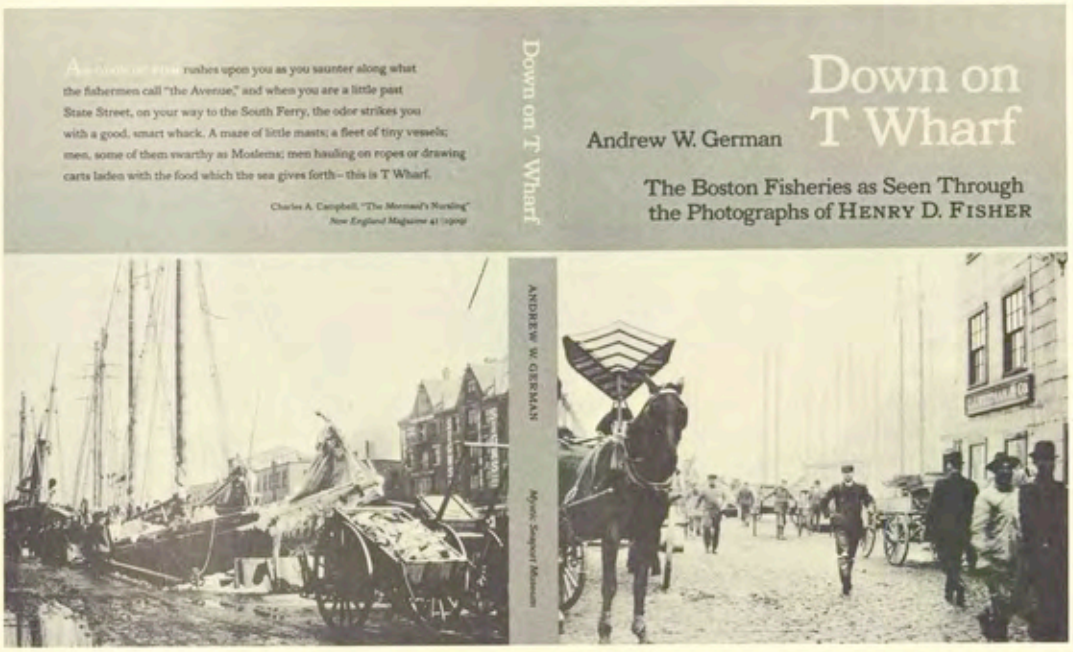
Down on T Wharf: The Boston Fisheries as Seen Through the Photographs of Henry D. Fisher
by Andrew W. German

Henry D. Fisher created a remarkable photographic record of the fishing fleet in Boston Harbor between 1908 and 1920, when Boston was the second largest fish market in the world, drawing New England's fishing fleet to its bustling T Wharf.

It was a time of transition, and these photographs record changes in fishing schooner design, fishing methods, and the modernization of shoreside facilities for the fisheries.

Rugged dorymen of the schooner fleet, steam trawlermen, and the newly-established Italian immigrant boat fishermen all appear in their element in these spontaneous photographs.

The 117 photographs are grouped by chapter, depicting T Wharf and its successor the South Boston Fish Pier; schooner construction at Essex, Massachusetts; outfitting for voyages; departures and arrivals; discharging fish; the passing of the fishing schooner; the emerging steam trawler fleet;



and the Italian boat fishermen. Published here for the first time, these photographs are now in the collection of Mystic Seaport Museum.

Henry D. Fisher (1882-1961), a 1904 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, was a mechanical engineer working in Boston between 1908 and 1920. Photography was his hobby. Wandering the wharves and shipyards, and sailing Boston Harbor and Massachusetts Bay with camera in hand, he snapped these views of a vanished age.

Andrew W. German received a Bachelor's degree in History from Yale University in 1972. He has worked at Mystic Seaport Museum since 1976, currently as Associate Editor of the publications program. He is Henry Fisher's grandson.

Down on T Wharf contains 117 photographs with lengthy commentaries on the activities and circumstances depicted. Appendices list specifications of illustrated fishing vessels and brief biographies of the Boston fish dealerships in 1915. A glossary and sketch maps of Boston Harbor and the principal fishing grounds are included. The 168-page book is available bound in cloth for $24.00.

. . .

All Mystic Seaport Museum Publications, and other books, are available at 10% discount for members only at the Mystic Seaport Museum Bookstore. (Add $2.00 for shipping and handling. For Connecticut delivery, add 7½% sales tax.)

HISTORIC SHIPS

The *Ticonderoga*

The popular image of nineteenth-century steam vessels is one of churning paddle wheels and Victorian opulence. In the years following Robert Fulton's success with the *North River Steam Boat* of 1807 (*Clermont*), side-wheel steamers proliferated on America's navigable waters. Being unwieldy in high seas, they bowed to propellor steamers on the open ocean shortly after the Civil War. But on sheltered or shallow waters, their shallow draft allowed even large side wheelers to go where propellors could not. Many remained in service until automobiles and good roads began to make them obsolete in the 1930s.



Ticonderoga (Courtesy of Shelburne Museum)

Several systems were devised to convert the linear force of a steam piston to the rotary motion of a paddle wheel. The most popular solution in America was the vertical beam engine, which used a pivoting quadrilateral "walking beam" lever atop the vessel's superstructure to transmit the vertical motion of the piston rod to a vertical rod that turned the crankshaft of the paddle wheels. The *Ticonderoga* is the last known survivor of hundreds of vertical beam side wheelers built in this country.

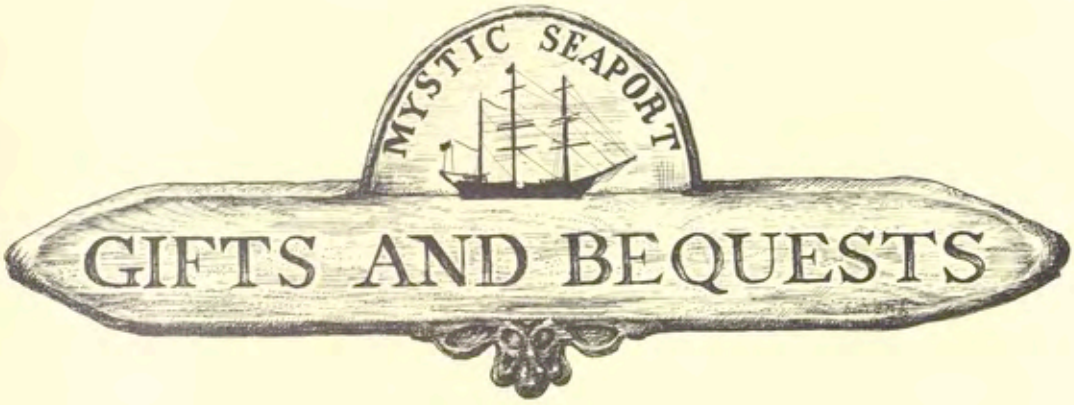
The *Ticonderoga* was assembled at the Shelburne (Vermont) Shipyard on the shores of Lake Champlain in the spring of 1906. Her steel hull, built by T. S. Marvel Company of Newburgh, New York, and her single-cylinder engine, produced by Andrew Fletcher and Sons of Hoboken, New Jersey, were delivered to Shelburne via the Champlain Canal. In the tradition of elegant passenger steamboats of the era, she had fine butternut, mahogany, and cherry paneling, gold stenciling, etched glass, lush carpets, and comfortable overnight accommodations.

The Champlain Transportation Company, a subsidiary of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad, operated the *Ticonderoga* in the luxury tourist trade, carrying passengers to and from the summer colonies that dotted the shores of Lake Champlain. She also served as a link in the first-class passenger service between New York and Montreal, connecting with railroads at either end of the 107-mile-long lake. Though 220 feet long, she drew less than 10 feet of water, and could navigate nearly anywhere on the lake.

When her scheduled service ended in the 1930s she began to carry excursion groups and local freight, and even ferried automobiles and commuters. In 1950, on the verge of being scrapped, she was saved for another year of service by the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Burlington, Vermont. Shelburne Museum operated her through 1953 and then, because of the poor condition of her boilers, decided to exhibit her on land at the museum. Her two-mile trip overland to the museum in the winter of 1954-55 received national publicity. She was declared a Registered National Landmark in 1963.

By the late 1970s it was apparent that major restoration work was necessary. The U.S. Department of the Interior and the National Trust for Historic Preservation helped underwrite the successful effort to restore her to her 1906 appearance.

Today the *Ticonderoga* sits proudly high and dry in the center of the Shelburne Museum. Founded in 1947 at Shelburne, Vermont, south of Burlington, the Museum houses a major collection of New England buildings, Americana, and art.



GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

The development of the museum–the buildings, ships and wharves, the exhibits, books and manuscripts–give eloquent testimony to the generosity of members and other friends of Mystic Seaport Museum. There are continuing opportunities for gifts and bequests which will help assure its future strength and development.

Members of the Seaport who have not already done so are urged to perpetuate their interest in the work of the museum through a bequest. Some members will want to make a specific bequest while others may want to designate Mystic Seaport Museum as a residuary or contingent beneficiary of all or a portion of their estate.

Mystic Seaport Museum is a nonprofit institution publicly supported by gifts and grants. Contributions are deductible within legal limits for Federal income tax purposes. Inquiries regarding gifts and bequests are encouraged and may be directed to the Director of Resource Development.

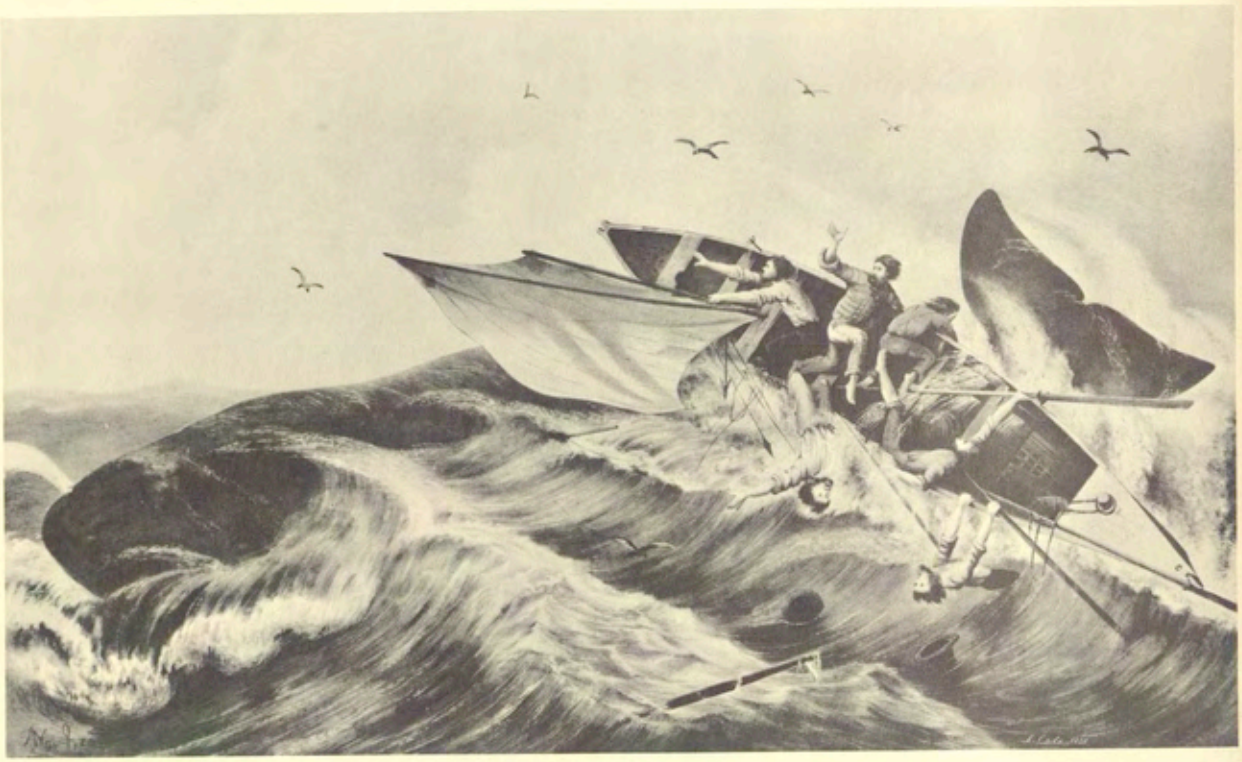
SUGGESTED FORMS FOR BEQUESTS

General

I give and bequeath to Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc., a corporation existing under and by virtue of a charter granted by the State of Connecticut, and located in Mystic (Town of Stonington) in said State, $ . . . . . , to be used (or the net income to be used) at the discretion of the Trustees of said Corporation.

Residuary

All the rest, residue, and remainder of my real and personal estate I devise and bequeath to Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc., a corporation existing under and by virtue of a charter granted by the State of Connecticut, and located in Mystic (Town of Stonington) in said State, said estate to be used (or the net income to be used) at the discretion of the Trustees of said Corporation.



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