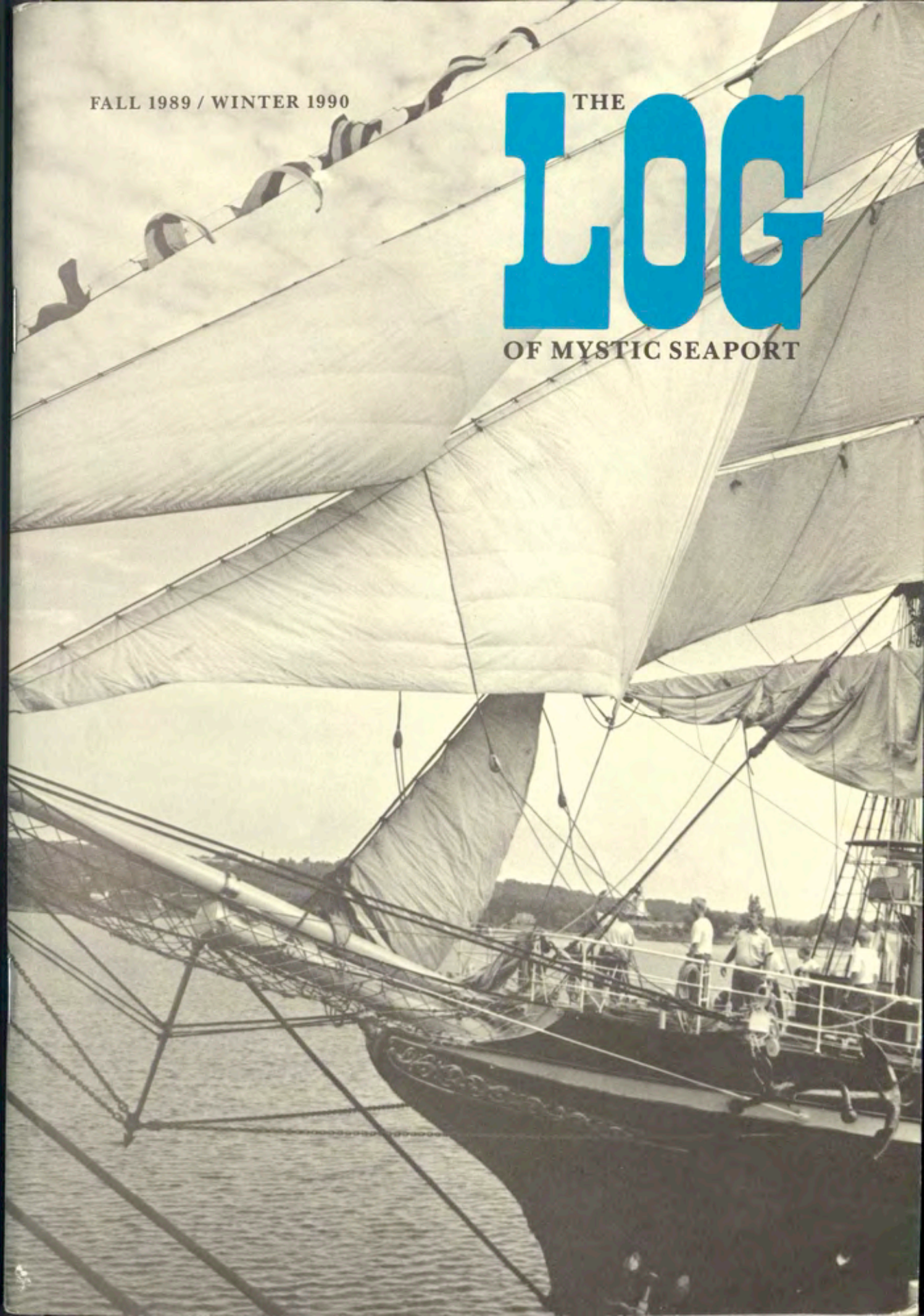
FALL 1989 / WINTER 1990

THE LOG OF MYSTIC SEAPORT



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FRONT COVER: *The second* Georg Stage *enlivened the Seaport waterfront in July 1989. (Photo by Claire White-Peterson)*

BACK COVER: *Oil painting by Captain Ellery Thompson of the western-rig Stonington dragger* Capt. Nathaniel B. Palmer. *(M.S.M. 70.378)*

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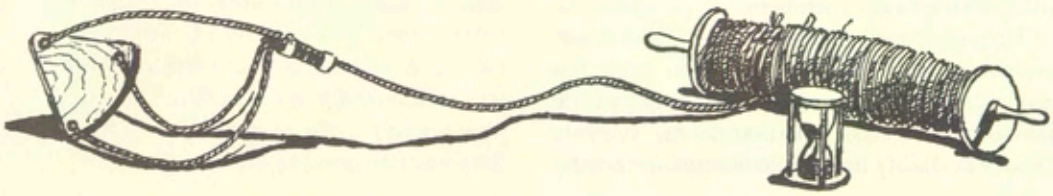
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SIGHTINGS



With this issue of *The Log*, we take the opportunity to look back at the decade of the 1980s, the sixth decade of existence for Mystic Seaport. As you will see from the chronological review of the last ten years, it has been a period of growth, refinement, and progress.

As we look forward, the new decade begins with plans to change the format and expand the content of this, the Museum's forty-two-year-old journal. In changing *The Log*, we intend to improve the publication so that it can better serve our members and all those who support the Seaport and its goals.

This will be the last issue to appear in the format that we have known for the past fifteen years. There can be no doubt that the change made back in 1975 was a quantum leap forward over the earlier, small "homespun" version of *The Log*. The design, paper, typesetting, and printing were all of the highest caliber. Certainly, this has been an elegant presentation, and one with which we have all grown comfortable.

Then why change? During the past decade *The Log*, and indeed America's taste in general, has become more visual. Realizing that the present size and design impose limitations, and that new printing technologies offer advantages, we have reviewed *The Log* carefully: its size, the type of paper it is printed on, the possibility of color illustration, the sort of page layout that would be both visually appealing and informative, and the sort of content that would be interesting and enlightening to our members.

Through the efforts of the *Log* Editorial Board and others on the staff, we have come up with a new approach. The next issue of *The Log* will be noticeably larger in all dimensions, allowing greater flexibility in page layout and improving readability. The new design will also incorporate more effective presentation of illustrations. Unfortunately, the use of full color is not yet affordable, but that may come. For now, we will use a product of modern color printing to scan our illustrations for the crispest reproduction possible.

We are also excited about the contents of the "new" *Log*. We will continue featuring the well-documented articles on the American maritime experience that you have come to expect in *The Log*. In addition, we will showcase elements from our collections and the ongoing work of the Museum. And we will present a greater variety of subject matter—from food to watercraft—tidbits as well as lengthy essays, giving you a much broader view of our maritime heritage.

In changing *The Log*, we hope to bring you a brighter and more effective publication. Let us hear from you.

J. Revell Carr

Whaling from Southeastern Connecticut 1647–1909

BARNARD L. COLBY

In 1935–36, Barnard L. Colby, a young reporter for the New London Day, *wrote a series of biographical sketches of New London County whaling captains. At the request of Charles K. Stillman and Carl C. Cutler of the Marine Historical Association (now Mystic Seaport), an abbreviated version of Colby's biographical sketches was published by the Association in 1936 as Volume 1, Number 11, of its publications series. This small work has been considered an essential source on the local whaling industry ever since.*

Barnard Colby went on, in a distinguished newspaper career of forty-three years, to become editor, publisher, and president of the New London Day. *He is now publisher emeritus. During the last few years, he and his son David reworked the original text of the whaling-master biographies into monograph form and offered them to Mystic Seaport Museum.*

Now, fifty-three years after publishing the first version, Mystic Seaport Museum is pleased and honored to publish in the coming months an updated edition of Colby's entire work, entitled For Oil and Buggy Whips: Whaling Captains of New London County, Connecticut. *This monograph contains biographical essays on twenty-three whaling masters. Compiled from family information, some of which is no longer available, these essays serve to document the personal side of the local whaling industry. Included are three of the famous Smith brothers—Robert, Parker, and Franklin; Nathaniel B. Palmer, discoverer of the Antarctic continent; John P. "Bony" Rice; Ebenezer "Rattler" Morgan; Erasmus Darwin Rogers; the Arctic experts Sidney O. Buddington and John O. Spicer, both of whom brought Inuits (Eskimos) back to Connecticut; Charles H. Allen and Horace M. Newbury, whose ships were among the thirty-two lost in the Arctic in 1871; George Comer, whose Arctic exploits included gathering anthropological data and natural history specimens for museums; and many others. Complete listings of the known whaling and sealing captains who sailed from New London, Stonington, and Mystic are appended to the work.*

The following outline history of Southeastern Connecticut whaling is condensed from the introduction to For Oil and Buggy Whips.

New London was settled in 1646 on one of the finest deep-water harbors on the East Coast, and became Connecticut's greatest whaling port. At its peak, in 1845, it ranked second only to New Bedford as the greatest in the world, and the harbor was clogged with whaling ships—departing, returning, at anchor, or moored to wharves—in far greater numbers than today's whale-shaped nuclear submarines gliding in and out between the open sea and the U.S. Navy Submarine Base a couple of miles up the Thames River.

Families throughout the county depended on this great whaling fleet for their livelihoods. The percentage of the population engaged in whaling, or in providing supporting services, and directly or indirectly deriving income from whaling, could well have exceeded the percentage of today's non-military population that makes its living constructing nuclear submarines at Electric Boat, or sub-contracting or supplying technical services to that shipyard. During the whaling boom, men from a wide area made up the crews of the whaleships; they labored in the shipyards from Old Saybrook to Pawcatuck Bridge; they kept the great fleet in repair and in service. They were the clerks of the whaling agents who provided the capital and owned and

fitted out the vessels, the shipwrights, ship brokers, carpenters, blacksmiths, riggers, coopers, caulkers, painters, ropemakers, sailmakers, boatbuilders, provisioners, draymen, stevedores, and warehousemen, in addition to the hundreds who manned the ships.

The first official reference to whaling, both Frances M. Caulkins (*History of New London*) and P. LeRoy Harwood (*History of Eastern Connecticut*) agree, is in the records of the General Court at Hartford, Connecticut, dated 25 May 1647: "If Mr. Whiting with any others shall make tryall and prosecute a designe for the takeing of Whale, within these libertyes, and if, uppen tryall within the terme of two years, they shall like to goe on, noe others shalbe suffered to interrupt them for the terme of seaven years."

Whaling was so little known that Mr. Whiting was given seven years free from competition should he perfect a method of catching whales. Sometimes, during these early days, a whale would be seen in Long Island Sound, and if one should have the misfortune to become beached in the shallow waters of a bay the nearest inhabitants would gather and attack the stranded monster with weapons ranging from pitchforks to muskets. Even as late as 1850, says Caulkins, a whale thirty feet long was captured in Peconic Bay, near Greenport, Long Island.

American whaling, in its classic form, did not begin until the middle of the eighteenth century. It is known that sloops of from thirty to fifty tons were fitted out for whaling as far back as about 1720: the New London sloop *Society*, commanded by Thomas Jacobs, reportedly fitted out for a whaling cruise in 1718. Yet, few records are available and little is known of the industry until after the Revolutionary War. Voyages were probably made as far as the Western Islands, Cape Verde, West Indies, and Gulf of Mexico before 1745, but after that time shipowners looked north and their whaling masters began to invade Davis Strait and Baffin Bay. About 1770, and until the Revolutionary War, vessels voyaged south as far as the Falkland Islands and the Brazil Banks.

The colonies' war for liberty put an end to whaling for a time. Later, when money was more available, most Connecticut businessmen invested in companies engaged in the West Indies commerce, and not until 1784 is mention of whaling again found. On 21 May of that year, the *New London Gazette* reported: "Sailed from this port, sloop *Rising Sun*, Squires, on a whaling voyage." What became of Captain Squires is not known, for that is the only record of the voyage. Two vessels that put out from Sag Harbor the same year returned with 369 barrels and 300 barrels of oil, respectively, the following year. A few other vessels sailed in search of whales during the years following, and with the return of two brigs from the Brazil Banks in 1785, the *Gazette* announced: "Now, my Horse Jockeys, beat your horses and cattle into spears, launces, harpoons and whaling geer, and let us all strike out!—many Spouts a-head,—Whales plenty, you have them for catching." But the horse jockeys—masters in the West Indies trade, who made their living ferrying livestock to the islands—were unwilling to leave the profitable West Indies trade to participate in the comparatively untried whaling industry.

Although there is evidence that the *Blackstone* of Stonington departed New London on a whaling voyage in 1790, the first well-documented voyage was made by Captain Ransom in the ship *Commerce*, owned by Samuel Philip Lord. The *Commerce* made two whaling voyages from New London to southern climes, one in 1794 and another in 1797. Returning to the Indies commerce, she was lost at Cape Henry on Christmas day of 1799.

With increased local interest in whaling, a meeting was announced in Green's *Gazette* on 5 April 1795 as follows: "All persons who wish to be interested in a Whaling Company to be established in this place, are requested to meet at Miner's tavern at 4 o'clock p.m. on Monday, the 20th inst., to consider on the most proper means to promote said establishment." Apparently the plan came to naught, although Joseph Williams's ship *Criterion* of Norwich made at least one voyage to the Brazil Banks from New London in 1797. Two years later a company was organized at Norwich for the prosecution of the whaling and sealing business. Although it attained better success than the New London

venture, and really made some headway, it eventually met a sad end.

The ship *Susannah*, which sailed from New London in October of 1799, was wrecked on the Brazil Banks. The schooner *Oneco* sailed at the same time under the harsh, vindictive Captain Howe. After several seasons of sealing, she and the ship *Mars* were seized and confiscated by the Spanish authorities at Valparaiso. Spain was at war with Britain, and American whalers who attempted to resupply their vessels on the west coast of South America were looked upon as British allies by the Spanish and risked losing their vessels if they entered Spanish colonial ports. The ship *Miantonomoh* sailed on 5 September 1800 under the command of Captain Swain, rounded Cape Horn, and hunted whales along the South American coast until April of 1802 when she also was confiscated by the Spanish. The ship *Despatch* was sent out in that year under Captain Howard and searched the South Seas for whales. She made another voyage in 1805, but the results of these voyages are not known.

Up until this time, whaling in New London had been unorganized, and it is doubtful that those who engaged in the industry met with success sufficient to warrant greater investments. In 1805, however, under the leadership of Dr. Samuel H. P. Lee, a group of the city's citizens assembled, formed a whaling company, and purchased the ship *Dauphin*. The *Dauphin* had been built at Pawcatuck Bridge by Captain Joseph Barber with the express idea that she should be used as a whaler. She was of 240 tons burden and upon completion was sent to Newport, Rhode Island. She returned to New London and was bought by Dr. Lee and his company, fitted out as a whaler, and sent off to the Brazil Banks under Captain Laban Williams on 6 September 1805.

After the return of the *Dauphin* on 14 June 1806, Lee bought and fitted out the ship *Leonidas* in New York. In August both ships sailed away, Captain Williams in the *Leonidas* and Captain Alexander Douglass in the *Dauphin*. The latter returned in April 1807 with a full cargo, and the *Leonidas* arrived two months later with 1,050 barrels of oil. Captain Douglass and associates purchased the ship *Lydia* in 1807, and Douglass took command of her on a voyage to the Patagonian coast, accompanied by Joshua Sayre in the *Dauphin* and William Barnes in the *Leonidas*. All three returned in June 1808, each with about 1,000 barrels of oil. On this voyage, the *Leonidas*'s crew having been stricken by scurvy, six men were landed on the island of Trinidad to replenish the supplies and drinking water. While they were away from the ship, a storm arose and a stiff wind blowing from the island forced the ship away and the men were left ashore. The ship *Experiment*, with Captain S. P. Fitch, was sent out in July by the government to bring them home.

The Embargo Act took effect in December 1807, cutting off foreign commerce and seriously weakening the economies of most New England seaports. In 1808, New London's whaling fleet seems to have been reduced to one vessel. Alexander Douglass took the *Leonidas* on a ten-month voyage to the Brazil Banks, but the *Dauphin* was sold to a whaling company in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, and the *Lydia* was sold in 1809.

The Embargo, Non-Intercourse Act of 1809, Macon's Bill No. 2 of 1810, and the War of 1812 followed one upon the other, limiting the usual pursuit of maritime commerce for nearly eight years. After the war, New London merchants attempted to revive the West Indies trade, the memory of more than a century of wealthy cargoes still lingering, but each year fewer vessels engaged in the traffic, and the success met by Dr. Lee and his associates in the whaling business was recalled.

New blood entered the scene in 1818 when Thomas W. Williams settled in New London. He was a thirty-year-old Stonington native who had gotten his business training in New York, Russia, and England. His father, General William Williams, had sent out the whaler *Criterion* in the 1790s. Also in 1818, Joseph Lawrence, born Guiseppe Lorenzo in Venice, arrived in New London after a seafaring and commercial career in Baltimore and Savannah.

In 1819, both T. W. Williams and New London merchant Daniel Deshon manned and equipped whaling vessels, relying on the experi-

ence gleaned by persons who had been engaged in whaling between 1805 and 1808. Williams sent Captain James Davis out in the brig *Mary*; Captain Isaac English in the brig *Mary Ann* and Captain Alexander Douglass in the ship *Carrier* sailed for Deshon. The *Mary*, out almost eleven months, brought back 744 barrels of right whale oil and 79 of sperm whale oil. The *Carrier* returned with 928 barrels of whale oil, and the *Mary Ann* came in with only 59 barrels.

About 1819, as whaling was reestablished there, New London was in the throes of a depression, and it has been said that vessels lay rotting at the wharves and grass grew in the streets. The introduction of whaling on a paying basis was a welcome stimulus. The industry grew steadily; nearly every man and every business turned to whaling for either whole or part support. Three brigs, the *Mary*, *Mary Ann*, and *Pizarro*, commanded respectively by Davis, Coffin, and Coit, sailed in 1820. Eight vessels sailed in 1821, including the brig *Thames* and the ship *Commodore Perry* for Dr. Lee's revived company. The *Commodore Perry* was the first vessel to be coppered in New London, and was the first copper-bottomed whaling vessel to clear the port. She was out about eight months on her first voyage and returned with 1,544 barrels of whale oil and 81 barrels of sperm oil.

The *Carrier*, commanded by Captain Obed Swain of Nantucket, was the first vessel to leave New London on a long voyage for sperm whale. The sperm whale is the only large species having numerous, simple, conical teeth, with which it attacks its principal food: squid. Sperm oil, and particularly the waxy spermaceti contained in a resevoir in the whale's forehead, was the most valuable type of whale oil. The other whales sought by whalemen were baleen whales, which have no teeth but, rather, plates of baleen suspended from the upper jaw with which they strain their diet of plankton from the water. The right whale, and later the Arctic bowhead, were the most important baleen whales sought by whalemen. Although baleen is keratin, like human fingernails, whalemen referred to it as whalebone.

The *Carrier* sailed for the Pacific Ocean 20 February 1821, returning 12 July 1823 with 2,074 barrels of oil stowed from the blubber of 128 whales, an average of about 17 barrels a whale. This voyage of two and one-half years was long in comparison with previous New London voyages, but it was short by the standards of two decades later, when the populations of several species of whales had been depleted.



Thomas W. Williams (1789–1874) of Stonington reintroduced the whaling industry to New London in 1819. He was a successful merchant and a Congressman as well as the founder of New London's longest-lived and most productive whaling firm. Engraving by A. H. Ritchie. (D. H. Hurd, *History of New London County, Connecticut*, 1882)

These early vessels were virtual training schools for future whaling captains. Aboard the *Pizarro* for her 1821 voyage were twenty-two men under Captain Elias Coit. Eight of the twenty-two eventually became masters: John Potter Rice, Charles Hobron, George Hobron, Alfred A. Wood, Parker Smith, Joseph Fitch, John L. Harris, and George Churchill.

In November of 1821, the ship *Stonington*, built

at that place, left New London for the Pacific whaling grounds, returning with 1,550 barrels of sperm oil. Her owners included T. W. Williams and William Williams, as well as Benjamin Brown and Joseph Lawrence who would later become successful whaling agents themselves. In 1822 the ships *Connecticut*, *Ann Maria*, and *Jones* were put into service. The *Neptune* was added to the growing fleet in 1824.

Daniel Deshon owned only two vessels, which made five voyages between 1819 and 1824, and Dr. Lee retired after his two vessels made six voyages, but Thomas W. Williams remained more than fifty years in the business as head of, successively, T. W. Williams, Williams & Haven, and Williams, Haven & Company. His ships made 167 voyages between 1819 and 1875 (a year after his death), not counting 62 voyages during the eight years, 1838–46, when he was out of the firm while serving in Congress. His firm was carried on by his son Charles as C. A. Williams & Company until 1892. Williams's right hand in the firm was Henry P. Haven of Norwichtown, who came to New London at age fifteen and talked his way into a job in Williams's countinghouse. Eight years later, in 1838, he was made a partner. He was such a capable businessman and public-spirited citizen that he would be elected mayor of New London in 1852.

The *Carrier* and the four brigs having been withdrawn from service after three or four voyages, and no others having been added to take their place until 1827, only five New London whalers were operating in 1826, two engaged in the pursuit of right whales, and the other three in quest of sperm whales. Thomas W. Williams fitted out four of the five, the *Commodore Perry* being owned by his nephews, Noyes and William Williams Billings, Stonington natives and Yale graduates who were then starting in the business in New London.

In 1827, N. & W. W. Billings purchased the former merchant ships *Superior* and *Phoenix*, Ephraim M. Frink entered the business with the ship *Friends*, and Williams & Barns began with the *Stonington*. This firm was established by T. W. Williams's brother, militia general William Williams, Jr., who had spent time as a merchant in

The Philadelphia-built ship *Phoenix* of 1811 was added to New London's whaling fleet in 1827 and made eleven whaling voyages before she was sacrificed in 1861 as part of the "stone fleet" sunk to obstruct Southern harbors during the Civil War. Like the *Phoenix*, most New London whalers were converted merchantmen. Oil painting by Francois-Joseph-Frederic Roux, Marseilles, 1827. (M.S.M. 53.4555)



New York and a manufacturer in Norwich before coming to New London, and Acors Barns of Westerly, Rhode Island, a mariner who had had previous business dealings with the Williams family of Stonington. Ten whalers left New London in 1827, compared with 12 from Sag Harbor, Long Island, 21 from Nantucket, and 44 from New Bedford, with U.S. whaling departures that year totaling 110. . . .

The year 1827 marked the beginning of the real period of expansion in New London's whaling industry. That year T. W. Williams and N. & W. W. Billings were joined by two new agents: E. M. Frink, who fitted the ship *Friends* for the Pacific Ocean, and Williams & Barns, who sent out the ship *Stonington*. The following year the *Mentor* was fitted out by A. M. Frink. In 1830 Benjamin Brown entered the business and took over the *Friends* and the *Mentor*, while E. M. and A. M. Frink joined forces to send out the *Wabash*.

Joseph Lawrence, who had financed a sealer in 1829, sent out his first whaler, the ship *Boston*, in 1832. During the next thirteen years he would control fourteen vessels that made twenty-nine voyages. When Joseph Lawrence retired in 1844, his sons Francis W. and Sebastian D. went into partnership with their father's clerk Sidney Miner. When Miner retired in 1855, Francis and Sebastian carried on as Lawrence & Company until 1892. Their last whaler, the *Charles Colgate*, would return in 1887, completing the one-hundredth voyage made by the twenty-six Lawrence vessels during fifty-five years in the whaling business. The record of the Lawrence fleet is second only to that of T. W. Williams and his successors.

In 1833 Coleby Chew fitted the ship *Commodore Perry* and in 1837 associated with Messrs. Frink, the firm becoming Frink, Chew & Company. When Chew died in 1851 the firm became Frink & Prentis, which remained in the whaling business until 1863. In 1842 Elias Perkins joined with Captain Franklin Smith to establish Perkins & Smith, which operated twenty-four vessels during sixty-seven voyages before failing in 1861. Some of the New London firms that had no wharves of their own, but fitted out from those of other companies, were: Lyman Allyn (1834–53), William Tate (1840–47), Thomas Fitch II (1843–63), Learned & Stoddard (1844–48), E. V. Stoddard (1848–63), and Weaver & Rogers and Weaver, Rogers & Company (1844–59).

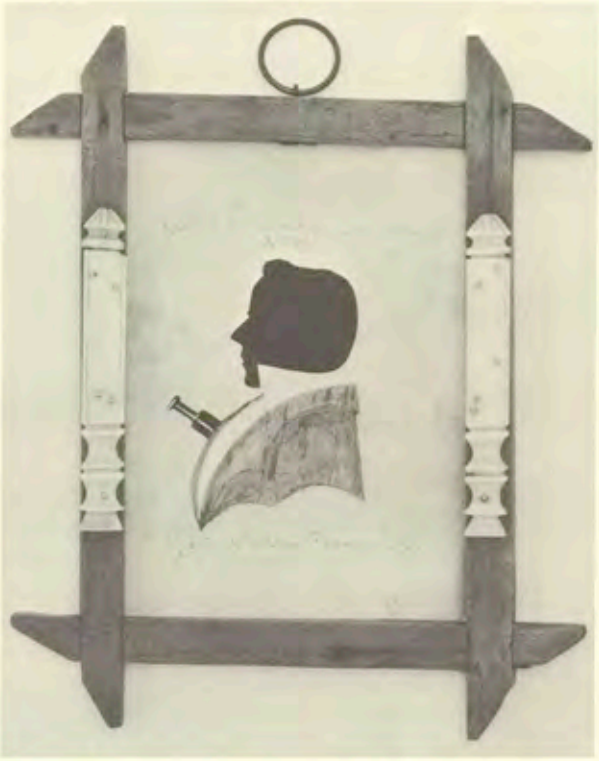
As New London's fleet grew, nearby maritime communities joined the hunt. Stonington men had been involved in sealing since the 1790s, and they began to establish a sealing fleet at Stonington in 1818. In 1821 the port sent out its first whaler. Stonington's principal whaling agents were Charles P. Williams and John F. Trumbull. In 1821, at age seventeen, Williams made a voyage to Europe as supercargo of a merchant vessel. He returned to establish himself as a merchant, and invested in the whaling fleet. His vessels made sixty-five voyages. Trumbull, the son of a Norwich newspaper editor, moved to Stonington at fifteen, entered business in New York, and then moved back to join in the whaling boom. His vessels made forty-seven voyages.

In 1832 merchant Jedediah Randall sent out Mystic's first whaler, the ship *Bingham*, under Captain George Churchill. During the following thirty years, twenty-nine vessels made at least 103 whaling voyages out of Mystic. These included many sea elephanting expeditions to the Crozet Islands and Kerguelen (Desolation) Island in the Indian Ocean. Sailmaker Charles Mallory, originally from Waterford, was Mystic's leading whaling agent. He began to invest in the Stonington whaling fleet in 1822 and in 1830 purchased the ship *Aeronaut*. In 1834 he began to send her out of Mystic. Mallory's sixteen vessels made seventy voyages between 1834 and the end of Mystic whaling in 1862. Jedediah Randall and his successors, Isaac & William J. P. Randall and Randall, Smith & Ashby, managed seven vessels, which made thirty-one voyages. It should also be noted that several "New London" whalers were actually owned and commanded by Norwich or Groton men, who listed those towns as home port in the customs documents, even though the vessel sailed from the New London waterfront.

The whaling business in New London became strongly established and grew rapidly, from ten vessels in 1827 to thirty-six vessels, totaling more

than 13,500 tons and representing capital of more than $1,000,000, in 1837. The city ate, drank, and breathed whaling; nearly every family was in some way connected with or dependent on this now thriving industry. Blacksmiths, riggers, carpenters, coopers, merchants, rope-makers, caulkers, sailmakers, boatbuilders, and almost every other tradesman in town was in some way connected with whaling, and the lives of those away at sea and the success of the voyages were prayed for by everyone in the community. As C. A. Williams, in his *Early Whaling Industry in New London*, described it,

> no more animated scene could be witnessed than where ships were being outfitted, whether when the ship was "hove down," all her length of keel exposed, her seams being caulked and her bottom coppered, busy mallets and hammers beating a constant tattoo; or when she was righted up, her "ground" tier stowed and casks, shooks and provisions hoisted over her side to be hidden away in the "hold" or "tween decks." The lading completed, the ship was painted black outside and green inside and was hauled to the stream with all flags and signals flying. There she lay for a day, the admiration of all the town, the next morning to spread white wings and sail for distant seas.



"Capt. John Potter Rice. New London, Ct. 1829 Master Whaleship Pizarro. N.L. Ct." reads the inscription on this silhouette with scrimshaw-adorned frame. John P. "Bony" Rice (1798–1873) was among New London's most renowned whaling captains. (M.S.M. 47.1474)

The New London *Peoples Advocate*, on 29 May 1844, pointed out the importance of whaling to New London when reporting the addition of eight vessels to the fleet: "The dismantling, repair, refitting and loading of these with the unloading and fitting out of the fifteen vessels that have arrived laden with the treasures of the deep, the reader may suppose, makes our city the scene of business of the most active and substantial character, and furnishes abundance of profitable employment to all classes of the community." And a year later, on 25 June 1845, the same newspaper reported:

> there are now nine ships in port fitting for sea—two of them opposite our office. . . . Great dispatch has been employed on this wharf this season, nearly a hundred men being constantly employed. Coopering on a great scale is carried on here too—casks of 10,000 barrels capacity [at 31½ gallons per barrel measure] having been manufactured and prepared for sea within a few months. . . . The racket thus created, though by no means an aid in our business, has been a constant source of gratification to us, evincing industry, and consequent prosperity. The arrival and departure of ships is now so arranged that we expect our ears to be greeted with the same cheering sounds during the greater part of the year.

At the start, the voyages had been limited to the Brazil Banks and the Patagonian coast of South America, but by now the vessels ploughed around Cape Horn and pursued the sperm whales in the Southern Pacific and sent the right whales scurrying down the Chilian coast or across the ocean to Japan. Once Nantucket captains, or Sag Harbor masters such as the Sayres, taught whaling to New Londoners. But by the 1840s there was not a sea or ocean on the map that New London sailors had not invaded and captains from this port were in constant demand in other whaling ports because of their skill in navigation and their records of successful voyages. New London vessels had invaded the Indi-

an Ocean by 1833 and the productive grounds off New Zealand by 1839. In 1842 they were among the first to visit the foggy Northwest grounds off the Pacific coast of British Columbia. They frequented that area for a decade, moving next into the Western Arctic off Alaska in 1856 and Okhotsk Sea off Siberia in 1857.

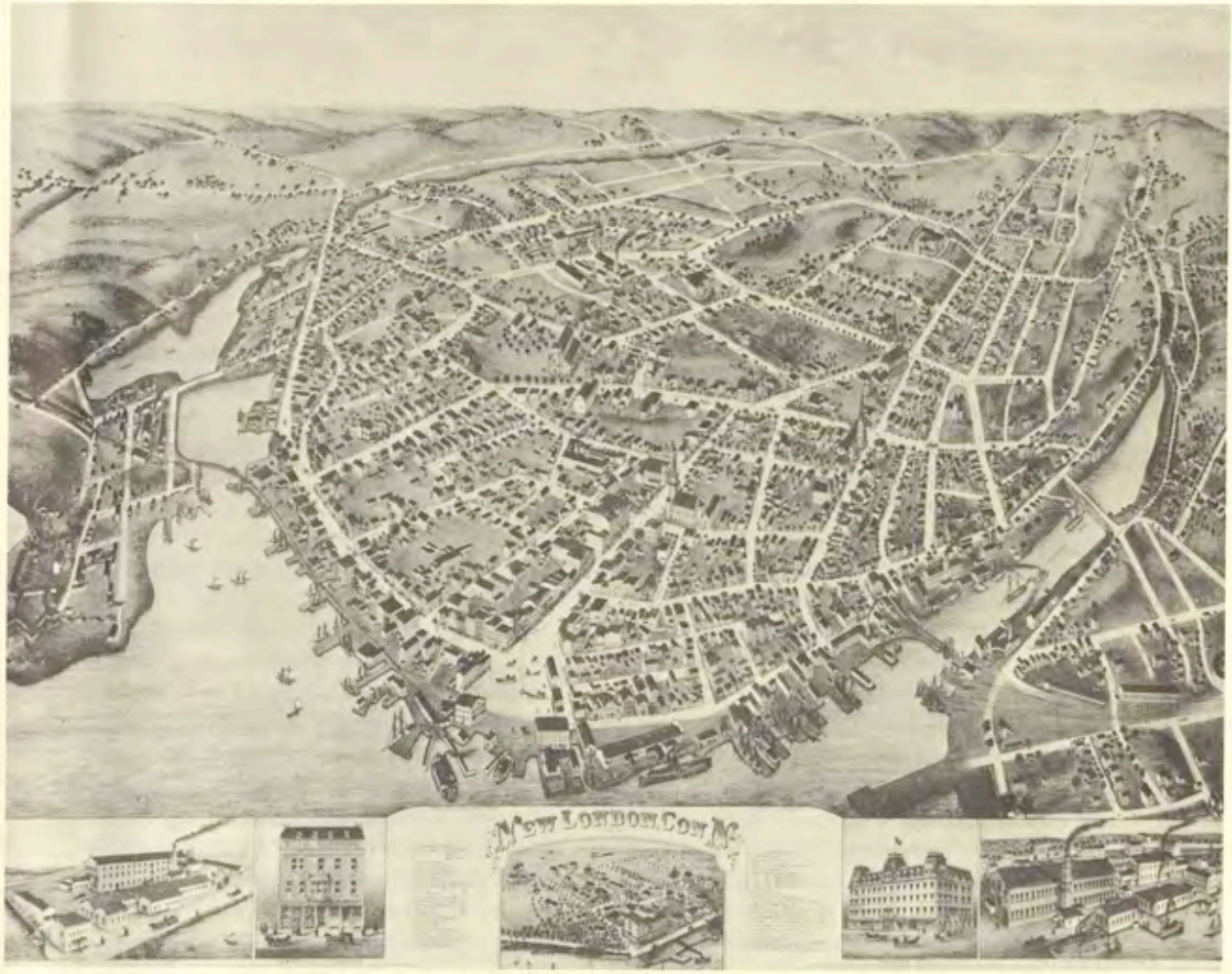
On other fronts they began to specialize in the hunt for elephant seals at Desolation Island in the far south Indian Ocean as early as 1838. In the extension of this adjunct of the whaling business, Captain Erasmus Darwin Rogers commanded the first crew to set foot on Heard Island, south of Desolation, after its discovery in 1853. Back in the North Atlantic, New Londoners were American whaling pioneers in the Davis Strait off Greenland with the ship *McLellan* in 1846. They moved inshore to Cumberland Sound in 1859 and into Hudson Bay itself in 1862. By 1860 New London had come to specialize in the Desolation Island and Eastern Arctic branches of the whaling industry.

The 996 whaling voyages made from New London would have required the services of about 25,000 mariners. Even before the height of the industry, the demand exceeded the local labor supply. New London and Groton youths were joined by boys from Montville, Salem, Colchester, and towns farther inland. Men were sent up from New York to fill out the crews. And many ships left port short-handed, making a stop at the Azores or Cape Verde Islands to pick up willing hands, who might later be joined by South Sea islanders—kanakas. In his *Nimrod of the Sea*, former whaleman William Davis recalled how, as a young greenhand, he was induced by Thomas W. Williams to sign aboard the *Chelsea* in the 1830s:

> It appeared that the major was anxious to fill up his crew, that the vessel might not be detained when her fitting was completed; and doubtless, as he regarded the tall, slender, and rather weakly youth before him, he deemed it necessary to throw in an encouraging word to strengthen good resolutions:
>
> "Ah! you're from Pennsylvania. Very good place that: a little too far from salt-water to be wholesome, I guess. Salt air will soon put color in your cheeks. You think you'll like the sea? Of course you will. Nice life—very, if you take it right. Been aboard the *Chelsea* yet? Yes; good ship the *Chelsea*, and such a sailer! A regular Baltimore clipper; easy times aboard that ship. You've trade-winds most of the way to Cape Horn; trade-winds, you know, are steady; as fixed, sir, as the needle to the pole, as the poet has it. And then there's the Pacific! Grand sea that; all about Juan Fernandez, Magellan, and the Southern Cross it's as calm and smiling as a mill-dam—so smooth that the illimitable sea seems a boundless oil-tank; where you see reflected in it the belt of Orion and the Pleiades. The thought almost tempts me to run out on a voyage, just to see that whaleman's heaven.
>
> "Do you know that you get fresh beef at sea? Yes, sir, you do. Porpoises are to be had for the catching. Porpoise has muscle in it; you'd stiffen up on porpoise. And albatross too, big as geese; a little oily, but you'll get used to that. It makes a man water-proof to eat albatross.
>
> "Ah! you've signed. That's a good Bill; there's a captain's berth ahead, if you earn it. Now run down to Mr. Strong in the basement; he'll finish your outfit in a jiffy. Take good advice: he is as sharp as he's Strong; make him take off fifteen per cent. for cash: he will get rich faster than you or I at that. Get a good outfit; spend your money for clothes, and not for tobacco, so that you may keep clear of the slop-chest. You have a week before you sail: look about you, and make the most of New London; for a three years' voyage is no trifle, and you won't see a better place the other side of the land. Good-morning."

Williams's exaggerations and his warning about "Mr. Strong" say a lot about the industry and the lengths to which owners would go to attract seamen. In principal, there is probably no other maritime business, except fishing, in which the profits were as clearly divided all down the line as in the whale fishery. Every deckhand on a ship was a partner in the endeavor just the same as the captain and agents. In this cooperative venture each one received his proportionate share of the profits, called a lay, depending on his job and degree of experience.

In practice, the owners profited far more than did the crew. Capital, represented by the owners, received two-thirds of the gain and in return furnished the vessel and the outfitting, both usually amounting to about $30,000, and provided for the captain's draft. The other third was divided proportionately among the officers and men.



Seen in this 1876 birdseye view, New London looks like a rural community. Yet, from Shaw's Cove (*left*) to Winthrop's Cove (*right*) an active waterfront lined Bank and Water Streets. The whaling wharf of Williams & Haven was along Water Street, while Lawrence & Co. had a "T" shaped wharf off Bank Street. Chromolithograph by O. H. Bailey & Co., Boston. (M.S.M. 79.23)

Seamen received their outfits from the company at the beginning of a voyage and the amount was charged against them. During the voyage, if a man needed a jacket or some other item of outfit, he could buy it from the slop chest on shipboard. The slop chest was a compartment where were stored all pieces of clothing, equipment, and tobacco that a man might need during a voyage, and the prices charged were far from reasonable. The owners shared with their captains the profits from the exhorbitantly priced slop-chest supplies, and charged interest against the sailors' accounts for items purchased or money advanced during the voyage. And so, considering the slop-chest tariff, a seaman's lay sometimes amounted to very little at the end of a two-year voyage.

The owners ran their vessels on a shoestring, keeping old vessels with dark, dirty, unheated living quarters in service for years. They spent little on the salt beef, salt pork, and hardtack that were ration staples on board, and they forbade all but the most necessary expenses for provisions or repairs during a voyage. On a three or four year voyage, many men found these conditions so intolerable that they deserted, espe-

cially when they discovered the delights of the South Pacific, thereby forfeiting their pay. Since it was easy to replace these men with native islanders or sailors seeking work, the owners actually benefitted from the turnover in crewmembers.

Others persevered and stayed aboard for the entire voyage. It sometimes happened that the members of the crew and perhaps even the captain, too, returned from a long voyage to find that little or nothing was due them, and there are a few instances on record in which a man actually owed the company. While a local sailor was away on a voyage, the members of his family remaining at home could draw money on a draw bill from the company with which he was employed, and if they had drawn out more than usual, or the cargo was scant, there would sometimes be nothing left for the pay envelope.

Although men signed for a set percentage of the returns of the voyage, the condition of the market determined the amount of a man's lay, for he was paid according to the market price at the end of the voyage, regardless of whether the owners sold the oil and bone then or stored it until the price was better. Whereas the captain's lay might be one-seventh or one-fifteenth, the first mate's one-eighteenth, and a harpooner's one-eightieth, a greenhand's proportion might come to about one-two hundredth. . . .

Some Southeastern Connecticut whalers specialized in killing seals and elephant seals for their oil, in addition to whales. The sealers, for which Stonington was particulary known, caught only seals. Fur seals were valued for their skins, which, in the 1790s and early 1800s, provided the medium for a profitable trade with China. Later they were converted into leather—tanned for most purposes but used raw to cover trunks. The elephant seal, or "sea elephant," is a member of the seal family but much larger, growing to a length of twenty or thirty feet; the adult male's proboscis, or nose, is nearly a foot long. (The sea lion, which also is a member of the seal family, larger than the hair seal or fur seal but smaller than the elephant, had little commercial value.)

The killing of seals was easier, faster, and far less hazardous than the killing of whales. Crews had only to get onto an ice floe, or go ashore at a breeding rookery, surround the herd, and advance toward the center, whacking the animals on the snout with a gaff, or club, which dispatched them instantly. Because of their size and ferocity, sea elephants were killed with a lance or shot. The sea elephant fishery is now "almost a thing of the past," said the 1895 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. "Since about 1875 it has been carried on solely from New London in Connecticut, the fleet numbering only four or five vessels," but taking of fur seals continued at breeding grounds on the South Shetland Islands and islands near Cape Horn which still were "visited by a fleet of seven to ten vessels belonging to New London and Stonington, Connecticut."

The whaling business in New London reached its peak in 1845, when seven vessels were added to the fleet, making a total of eighty-one vessels: fifty-eight ships, twelve barks, one brig, nine schooners, and one sloop with an aggregate of 27,273 tons. They were owned by fourteen firms, two fewer than the high of sixteen in 1844. The industry employed more than 2,000 men at sea and represented capital of $2,500,000. This fleet was second only to that of New Bedford, and more than 1,000 tons ahead of Nantucket, the rival for second place in the trade.

In 1845, twenty-one vessels returned to port with a total of 1,411 barrels of sperm whale oil, 52,576 barrels of right whale oil, and 469,700 pounds of whalebone (baleen). That year sperm oil averaged eighty-eight cents a gallon, whale oil thirty-three cents, and bone thirty-four cents a pound (a barrel of oil contained about thirty-one and one-half gallons). In 1847 forty vessels arrived, bearing 4,755 barrels of sperm oil, 76,340 barrels of whale oil, and 382,500 pounds of bone. That year, prices rose to a dollar a gallon for sperm oil and thirty-six cents for whale oil, but had dropped to twenty-five cents for bone.

Although the trade continued to prosper for the next few years, it had passed its peak. Because of a business depression and a scarcity of whales resulting from an extraordinary expansion of the trade, the local fleet was reduced to

fifty-nine ships and barks, six schooners and a brig: sixty-six vessels totaling 23,140 tons in 1848. Whales were hunted with no regard for sex or age, and when the great number caught by each of the hundreds of ships in the trade is considered, it seems remarkable that whales remained plentiful as long as they did.

The gold rush of 1849 lured about twenty-five local whaling captains to California—and lured the crews away from several that happened to be in California ports—leaving only about fifty vessels employed in New London's whaling trade. After 1850, the trade revived slightly, and it was during this decade that New London whalers became increasingly focused on Desolation Island in the Indian Ocean and the Davis Strait grounds west of Greenland.

Kerguelen or Desolation Island lies in the South Indian Ocean, halfway between the Cape of Good Hope and Australia and 3,000 miles from the nearest continent. Yet nearly every year from 1838 on, New London ships made the long passage to this barren and gale-swept island. For whaling and sealing in the island's narrow bays, the ships were assisted by schooner tenders barely large enough to make the passage out from New London. Three hundred miles south of Desolation lies Heard Island, announced to the world by Captain Heard in 1853. Captain Erasmus Darwin Rogers, sailing for Perkins & Smith of New London, heard an early report of the sighting and became the first to land a crew on Heard Island, where he loaded his vessel with sea elephant oil and seal furs and notified his company of the plentiful and virgin grounds. Franklin F. Smith, part owner of the company and a former whaling captain, bought a ship immediately, there being no others of the company's in port at the time, and sailed out to bring home another valuable cargo before other whalers descended to deplete the sea elephant population there.

Back in the North Atlantic, the voyages of British whalers off Greenland and the success of the *McLellan* there piqued the interest of other New London whalers. The 1850s saw the hunt spread to Cumberland Sound on Baffin Island, then into Hudson Bay, and some crews began to spend the winter in the frozen north to be ready for whaling as soon as the ice began to break in

This crude painting depicts the gruesome work of slaughtering and trying out elephant seals at desolate Heard Island in the south Indian Ocean. A crew from the New London whaleship *Corinthian* was the first to set foot on Heard Island, arriving in 1855, less than two years after the island was discovered. New London whalers and sealers continued to visit the island into the 1880s. (M.S.M. 39.1256)



the spring. Several New London whaling captains became well-known for their Arctic exploits and explorations. Some of mid-nineteenth-century New London's most fascinating visitors were Inuits (Eskimos) brought back aboard whaling vessels. Several of them lie buried in Groton's Starr Cemetery, having succumbed to tuberculosis in this temperate climate.

Several Southeastern Connecticut wives were whaling women. Nathaniel B. Palmer's wife made at least one sealing voyage with her husband, and Mary Chapel Smith accompanied her husband, Captain Franklin Smith, on several voyages. When she gave birth to a daughter on the coast of New Zealand in 1840, the Smiths named the child Chelsea in honor of their ship. In the 1840s it became increasingly common for whaling captains to take their wives to sea. Mary Brewster of Stonington made two Pacific voyages in the Stonington whaler *Tiger* in the 1840s, and in 1846 Mary Smith's sister-in-law, Nancy Smith, wife of Captain Parker Smith, bore a son aboard the *Nantasket*. Ebenezer "Rattler" Morgan took his wife to Desolation Island aboard the *Julius Caesar* for the 1851–53 voyage described by Nathaniel Taylor in his *Life on a Whaler*. Upon their arrival at the island they discovered a domestic scene aboard the New London whaler *Peruvian*. "A spacious house is erected upon the after part of the deck," Taylor wrote, "and there, for aught I can see, Captain William R. Brown, his wife, Miss Mary with her piano, and Master Johnny with his playthings pass the time as pleasantly as if at home."

Captain Silas Fish also took his wife to sea, but she had to endure more than the expected deprivation, danger, and exposure when their ship *North Star* was wrecked among the Bedout Islands off Australia in 1856. At the end of a two-year voyage, Gurdon L. Allyn's wife also survived a shipwreck, walking ashore when the *Charles Henry* stranded near Montauk in a fog in August 1847.

When Captain William Beck of the ship *Atlantic* died in 1847, en route to Hawaii with his wife aboard, she was left friendless half a world from home. She sailed for New England in a merchant ship, but the master of that ship died and Mrs. Beck, disconsolate, threw herself into the sea. Alvina Rogers, wife of Captain Benjamin N. Rogers also met her death at sea, contracting typhoid fever after giving birth during the return voyage from Desolation Island in 1875.

The whaling industry suffered another relapse toward the end of the 1850 decade. As a result of trade stagnation, followed by the Civil War,

This scrimshawed sperm whale tooth by Edward Burdett of Nantucket depicts the New London whaleship *Friends* "Chaseing Whales," probably in the 1840s. (M.S.M. 56.172)



New London's glorious whaling days were definitely on the wane. The sixty-nine vessels of this port in 1857 were reduced to twenty-three by 1863. In 1857, twenty-eight vessels sailed away on voyages; in 1861 only two departed. That year New London owners were able to sell eleven tired whalers to the government to form part of the "stone fleet" sunk to close off several important Southern harbors during the war. Twelve whalers cleared port the next year, and six in 1863. After the Civil War there was a pronounced revival in the trade, but it was more evident at New Bedford and other whaling centers than in New London.

However, a voyage made during this period in the bark *Pioneer* by Captain Ebenezer "Rattler" Morgan was called the most profitable American whaling voyage ever made. Morgan sailed from New London harbor on 4 June 1864, bound for Hudson Bay, returning 18 September 1865 with 1,391 barrels of whale oil and 22,650 pounds of whalebone. This large cargo, taken in little more than a year, and brought back when whale oil was at its highest price in history, earned this voyage a place in whaling lore. So did the twelve-year voyage of the bark *Nile*, which left New London in May 1858 and returned in May 1870. This is called the longest voyage in American whaling history, though in fact the *Nile* called annually at the Hawaiian Islands to ship her oil home, resupply, change masters, and take on a new crew.

The New London area brought some significant innovations to the American whaling industry. Oliver Allen of Norwich was perhaps the first American to perfect a whaling gun to fire a harpoon or killing lance. Patented in 1846, Allen's gun was given expanded popularity when Christopher C. Brand of Ledyard patented an explosive bomb for the gun in 1852. Thereafter it was known as the Brand gun. Captain Robert Brown of New London also patented a whaling gun, and he perfected it during the 1847–50 voyage of the ship *Electra*. His gun was extremely heavy and fired nonexplosive harpoons or lances. It was never as popular as the Brand gun and similar later models. Though it never fully replaced the hand-held lance, the bomb-lance gun was popular among Arctic whalers as it allowed them to kill a whale before it could escape under the ice.

If agent Benjamin Brown and Captain Thomas Welcome Roys had come to an agreement over the use of the bark *Hannibal* in 1855, New London might have been the port that introduced modern whaling technology. Brown agreed to sheath the *Hannibal*'s hull to prevent ice damage during a first American voyage to Spitsbergen (Svalbard), north of Norway. Roys planned to take rorquals—fast-swimming whales such as blues, which whalemen then avoided despite their prevalence—with his Brown whaling gun. He got one whale near Iceland, but he claimed that the vessel had not been prepared properly for service in the ice. When Brown learned that Roys had taken the *Hannibal* to France for the winter to have double-barreled whaling guns made, he declared Roys insane and dismissed him from the vessel. Roys went on to develop a whaling rocket and several of the principles of modern whaling.

New London did introduce the steam-powered whaler to the American fleet. Though popular in Britain for years, a whaler with auxiliary steam power was not tried in America until Williams & Haven refitted the bark *Pioneer* with a steam engine in 1866. She made a successful Arctic voyage under the command of "Rattler" Morgan, but, despite her increased ability to maneuver through the ice, she was lost on her second voyage. The New London sealing schooner *Francis Allyn* became America's second steam whaler when she was given an auxiliary engine in 1874.

New London also sent out some of the largest sailing whalers: the 505-ton *Robert Bowne*, the 560-ton *Hibernia*, the 565-ton *Morrison*, the 606-ton *Gen. Washington*, and the largest of all American sailing whalers, the 700-ton *Atlantic*. Most of them were former deep-water traders or packet ships. Because of the peculiar nature of whaling in the Eastern Arctic and at Desolation Island, where small vessels had an advantage in maneuvering in constricted waters, New London sent out some of the smallest nineteenth-century American whalers as well, including the 89-ton

schooner *Mechanic*, the 83-ton schooner *Exile*, and the 55-ton schooner *Shaw Perkins*. Even some local fishermen tried whaling. The 63-ton fishing smack *William Riley* returned from a two-month voyage off Long Island with fifty barrels of whale oil in 1858.

As the fishery declined, vessels that had not been crushed by pack ice, captured by gunboats, or destroyed in the "stone fleet" or by other methods rotted at silent wharves or were sold to be converted into barges or other craft. During the seventh and eighth decades of the nineteenth century, vessels continued to sail away on whaling voyages and still more in quest of seals, but gradually the city's once mighty fleet dwindled. In 1864, sixteen vessels cleared the port, but that was the greatest number of vessels to sail in any one year from then until the end of the industry in New London. The number of vessels to leave annually was usually about eight or nine, but sometimes only one vessel, or at most four or five, would sail away in a whole year.

The *New London Evening Telegram* of June 1883 reported, "Not a ship sails out of New London now, and but a few schooners are engaged in the sea elephant and fur seal fisheries." The story mentioned the rosy days of 1850 when "one ship came in and another went out almost every week" and "six whalers came in one day." By 1883 some of the old whaleships were still in use, but in other types of commerce, some lay idle alongside sagging wharves, and some, like the *Charles Colgate*, were towed to an inlet and beached. The *Colgate*, the last survivor of New London's whaling fleet, was grounded in Winthrop Cove shortly before the end of the century, and for several decades her deteriorating hull remained visible but unrecognized and forgotten.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century saw practically no whaling activity from the port of New London. The final voyage of the *Colgate* was made in 1887 for Lawrence & Company. The *Era* completed her last voyage from New London in 1892, ending the whaling activities of the Williams family after nearly seventy-five years in the business. Only the schooner *Margarett*, owned in Norwich, brought New London whaling into the twentieth century. When she returned with 440 barrels of sperm oil in 1909, the local industry became history.

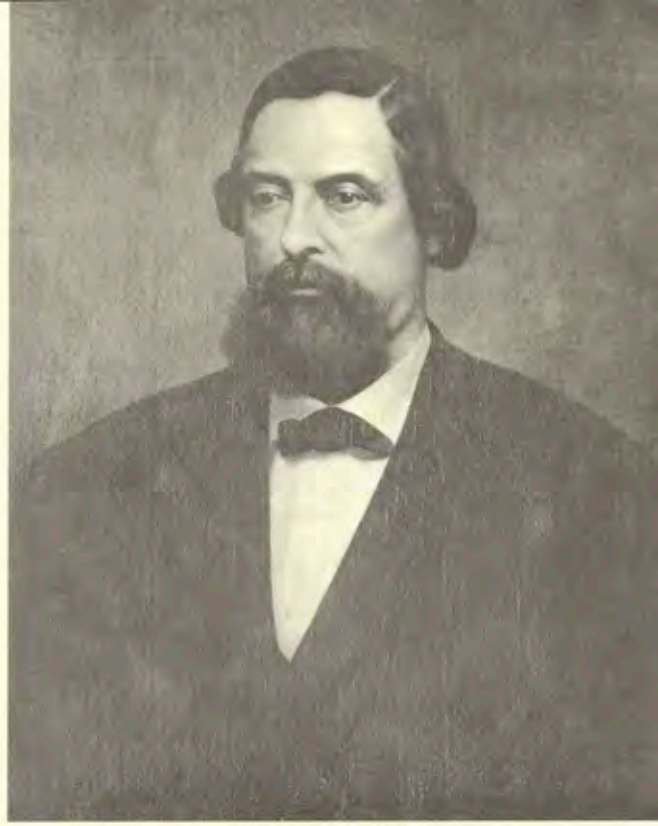
More than 200 men commanded whalers out of New London; 90 whaling masters sailed from Stonington; and nearly 60 different men commanded Mystic's whaling fleet. There was some overlap as several men commanded both New London and Stonington, New London and Mystic, or Mystic and Stonington vessels during their careers, but it is clear that close to 350 men commanded whaling vessels from Southeastern Connecticut between 1718 and 1909.

Their's was not an easy job. Managing a vessel for years away from home port, controlling crews, finding whales, and supervising the hunt and processing operations challenged the best master. Some brought their wives along for companionship, but most spent their lives at sea in formal isolation, unable or, in the interest of discipline, unwilling to establish a close bond with the men under their command.

Masters too faced dangers and disease. Many of them saw their ships crushed by grinding ice in the Eastern or Western Arctic, or wrecked on the exposed shores of far-off Desolation or Heard Island. Captains Joseph B. Mitchell, William Beck, William H. Brown, and James Rogers were but four who died of consumption or other complaints before their time. Robert B. Smith was but the first of many, including Edwin J. Ames, Isaac Allen, Jeremiah Beebe, Andrew Jackson Parsons, and Timothy Clisby, who were lost to whales or shipwreck.

There were notable men, such as Charles, Edward, and George Hobron, Nathaniel Middleton, and Samuel Norrie; there were exotic men, such as Robert H. Glass, son of the "emperor" of Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic and brother-in-law of several New London whaling captains who became enamored of his sisters during visits to the island; and there were men of humanitarian instincts, such as Samuel Jeffrey, who interrupted his voyage in the Mystic whaler *Meteor* to rescue 565 survivors of the wrecked steamer *Independence* off Baja California in 1853. On the other hand, there were men of questionable honesty, such as Fisher Kibling,

who sold his vessel in San Francisco but could not account for the money upon his return; there were unprincipled men, like the unnamed master who was said to have made a slaving voyage in the bark *Fame* in 1847; and in this tough business there were brutal men such as Jeremiah Slate, who was memorialized in the 24 December 1889 New London *Morning Telegram* as a man who "approached nearer to a cruel master than did any of the [New London] whaling captains. He ruled his ship no matter what the consequence was, and no sailor who ever shipped with him disputed his authority successfully." These were the men who went to sea for oil and buggy whips.



Captain Robert Glass (1825–1884) was the most exotic of New London's whaling masters. A native of Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic, he was the son of "Governor" William Glass and his African wife. The family established close ties with visiting New London whalers, and several of the sons became New London whalemen. Robert Glass made eleven voyages as master between 1864 and 1882. (M.S.M. 39.1247)

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D. O. Richmond

WILLIAM N. PETERSON

This chapter is excerpted from William Peterson's Mystic Built: Ships and Shipyards of the Mystic River, Connecticut, 1784–1919, *published by Mystic Seaport Museum in 1989. The book traces the shipbuilding enterprises of Mystic and Noank during the heyday of wooden ship construction. Mystic is particularly renowned for the clipper ships it launched in the 1850s and the steam vessels it built during the Civil War. But the career of D. O. Richmond reflects a further dimension to the story: the rise of recreational boating. For more than fifty years Richmond specialized in small boat and yacht construction, and a number of his sloops were champions in their day.*

Mystic Built *contains 254 pages and 201 illustrations. It is available for $45.00 bound in cloth. Members of Mystic Seaport Museum are entitled to a 10 percent discount.*

Perhaps the longest-lived shipbuilding operation in nineteenth-century Mystic was the "boatyard" of David Oscar Richmond (1825–1908). Richmond was known as a "boatbuilder," but many of his yachts and fishing vessels were of considerable size and tonnage.

Richmond began his career as a ship carpenter in Mystic and may have worked for Captain Peter Forsyth in the 1840s. Richmond and Charles Henry Mallory, who had grown up together, were friends, and both helped to reorganize Mystic's Masonic Lodge in 1850.[1] It soon became apparent to Mallory that Richmond's talents lay in building small boats and yachts, and he provided the capital for establishing Richmond in the boatbuilding business. For the first fifteen or twenty years, in fact, Richmond was essentially a superintendent or foreman for Mallory, who, in his diary through the 1860s, refers to the boatyard facility as "my shop."

After the Civil War, when Mallory's New York operations forced him to spend less time in Mystic, the boatshop became more and more associated with Richmond. Most contemporary accounts of this period refer to it as the Richmond yard.

There has been a good deal of confusion concerning the location of the Richmond yard. However, it is clear from numerous contemporary accounts that his early shop was located on Holmes Street near the Mallory Wharf on the Stonington side of the river. In 1867 the *Mystic Pioneer* ran an article on Mystic yachts and stated:

> Shipbuilding in Mystic is very dull, . . . But there is one shop which is an exception. There is one place where the busy, bustling style to which we have long been accustomed, but which has almost ceased in other quarters, still prevails. We refer to the vicinity of C. H. Mallory's boatshop on Holmes Street, where D. Oscar Richmond is building two steam yachts of the following dimensions, viz. seventy-five feet in length, eighteen feet in width and five feet in depth. These yachts were modelled by W. W. brainard, superintendent of Mallory's shipyard. One of them is for C. H. Mallory. They are both ready for the yachting season, and no pains are spared to make them model yachts. The owners are fortunate in their builder; Mr. Richmond having himself modeled and built several of the finest yachts, large and small, that have ever sailed in these waters. . . .[2]

The customs records list the sloop yacht *Sada*, built in 1849, as Richmond's first vessel. Until 1855, no other large vessels can be specifically attributed to him, although he advertised under his own name in the *Stonington Advertiser* during that period, and his shop was specifically mentioned in the diary of Asa Fish in 1853.[3]

While Richmond is listed as the master carpenter of the sloop yacht *Richmond* (1855), a number of other yachts built under his supervision had Charles Henry Mallory or Mallory's brother, David D. Mallory, as master carpenters.



David Oscar Richmond (1825–1908) "loved boats and his greatest pleasure was found in building them." Gelatin print photograph by George E. Tingley. (Courtesy Charity & Relief Lodge No. 72, A.F. & A.M.)

For example, customs records list D. D. Mallory as master carpenter for the centerboard schooner yacht *Mystic*, built in 1856. Yet, Richmond is certain to have had a hand in its construction or design. Likewise, the famous yacht *Haswell*, built in 1858, is usually listed as being built by Charles Henry Mallory, but the actual builder was Richmond. There is no uncertainty, however, about who provided the capital for most of these yachts: Charles Henry Mallory. An enthusiastic yachtsman, he joined the New York Yacht Club in the 1850s and was respected for his yacht design and racing ability.[4] In short, Mallory built yachts for pleasure as well as for business.

The relationship between Charles Henry Mallory and David O. Richmond seems best explained by Mallory himself. In 1858, he wrote, "I wish to build one [yacht] each season [for myself] and cannot afford to build unless I sell. . . . Mr. Richmond has built for me a great many boats and is now building one for me. But all [our] large boats like the Richmond, I have built by the day under Mr. Richmond's superintendence in ship yards, as he has not the room. . . ."[5] This statement clearly indicates that the larger Richmond vessels were not built at the boatshop but at more commodious locations on the river. Presumably the Mallory shipyards were most frequently used, since he probably would not

About 1868, Richmond moved his boatshop to the Eldredge Packer Shipyard site on the Groton side of the Mystic River. In this detail from a July 1875 photo, the shop and its surroundings are clearly visible. Several boats under construction can be seen through the open shop doors. Others are stored in the yard, including what looks like a small catboat under cover. A handsome sloop lies at a mooring in the river. Note the shop privy overhanging the river. Collodion negative by E. A. Scholfield. (M.S.M. 65.859.23)



have had to pay to lease a Mallory family yard.

In the late 1860s (probably 1868) Richmond moved his operation to the site of the old Eldredge Packer shipyard on the Groton side of the river. This property was also owned by Charles Henry Mallory at that time as was capable of accommodating the construction of larger vessels.

There can be no doubt that Mallory deserves a great deal of credit for the designs and for securing contracts for boats built at "his shop," but Richmond's contribution, to some degree, has been overshadowed by Mallory's high visibility in the yachting world. Nevertheless, this situation seems to have been mutually agreeable and lasted well into the 1870s. By then, Richmond appears to have earned enough to operate a yard on his own, but he never became a wealthy man and seems to have primarily lived from contract to contract. His work was highly regarded, but he did not have a good business sense. The *Mystic Pioneer*, in its 1867 article on yacht building, refers to Richmond's early career:

> Of the sailboat class we recall the name restless built for C. H. Mallory, which after winning many honors while Mr. Mallory owned her, and also when owned by Daniel F. Willets, Esq., was sold to parties in California where she is still regarded as one of the finest boats of her class in waters of the Golden Gate.
>
> The Nameaug, built for Capt. John Brown of New London and subsequently owned by Morris W. Bacon, will be remembered as a boat unsurpassed in her sailing qualities. We last heard of her at Greenport [Long Island], where she still maintained her reputation as a fast sailer.
>
> The yacht Richmond, of 26 tons burthen (old measurement) built for C. Henry Mallory, was always, we believe, the winner, both in the New York Yacht Club and other contests, her trophies of silver pitchers, still kept by her former owners, attest to her sailing qualities.
>
> Another of Richmond's unrivaled models was the yacht Haswell built for C. H. Mallory. Her advent produced a marked sensation in the New York Yacht Club. She uniformly won when she sailed. She is now owned by Mr. Butler of Pawtucket [Henry Butler of Pawtucket, Rhode Island] who accepted a challenge from the owners of the celebrated yacht Qui Vive. The Haswell won the $1,500 stakes and is today the acknowledged queen of the yacht fleet.[6]



Hector Darrach (1838–1916) was a Nova Scotian who came to work in the busy Mystic shipyards before the Civil War. In the 1870s he associated himself with D. O. Richmond, often working as a subcontractor on Richmond-built yachts, including the *Ella May* (1877), *Water Witch* (1881), *Mignon* (1885), and *Millie* (1888). Ferrotype, ca. 1870. (Mystic Seaport Museum collections)

Even after he was able to become more financially independent, Richmond continued to receive contracts from his old employer, Charles Henry Mallory. The yacht *Water Witch* (1881) was the last in a long line of yachts commissioned by Mallory and built by Richmond.

In 1897 Richmond's main shop was nearly destroyed by fire when sparks from the chimney ignited the roof.[7] One of the vessels nearly lost in the fire was the yacht *Annie*, built in 1880. The *Annie*, now preserved at Mystic Seaport Museum, was built by Richmond for Henry Harding Tift, a Mystic native who founded the town of Tifton, Georgia. An extremely fast sandbagger sloop, *Annie* raced for many years on the East Coast. *Annie* went through numerous changes,



Richmond launched the sloop-yacht *Millie* for Frank Budlong of Providence, Rhode Island, in May 1888. In this view, the boatbuilders preparing for the launch include Hector Darrach (*right*) and Charles E. Chace (*middle*, in overalls). Tom Newbury, wearing a derby hat, stands in the boat. According to the *Mystic Press*, 3 May 1888, "A few minutes sufficed for Messrs. Chace and Darrach to split out the blocking and at 11:15 the cry went out 'there she goes,' and without a hitch she slid rapidly and gracefully down the ways into the waters of the Mystic. As she started Mrs. Frank Budlong broke a bottle of wine over the yacht's bow christening her with her own name, 'Millie.' After the launching and looking over the boat Mr. Richmond threw open his house to the ladies, and they, with several of the gentlemen, partook of an excellent spread." Albumen photo by E. A. Scholfield. (M.S.M. 36.155)

almost all of which were made at the Richmond yard, including a complete rebuilding after a fire badly gutted her in 1901.[8]

Richmond did not confine his work to the design and construction of fast sailing yachts. He built boats of all sizes, including pleasure boats, workboats, and steam passenger boats. One of his specialties was the construction of sloops and seine boats for the menhaden fishery. An example was noted in the *Mystic Journal* in 1870.

> A fishing smack measuring forty tons is being built in a first class manner of the best material for John Green & Co. This vessel will be launched about the first of May. Gurdon S. Allyn & Co. have ordered two seine boats for use at their fish works. We are pleased to record the evidence of prosperity for friend Richmond. First class workmen almost invariably find plenty to do, and a ready market for the articles of their manufacture.[9]

Not only was Richmond a "first class" builder and designer, but he also had a knack for employing or subcontracting work to other excellent mechanics in the Mystic area. Asa Thomas Gifford, who with I. H. Higgins formed the well-known boatshop of Higgins & Gifford at Gloucester, Massachusetts, in the 1870s, worked for more than ten years with Richmond before moving to Provincetown and later to Gloucester. Other fine boatbuilders well known in the Mystic area were Hector Darrach (1838–1916), James McGregor (1832–1918), Charles E. Chase (1832–1909), Charles Eldredge (1850–1890), and John Cameron (1832–1897). All of these talented men were employed at one time or another by Richmond.

Not all of Richmond's vessels were sailing craft. He built two steam yachts in 1867, one for Charles Henry Mallory and the other for Mallory's friend and business associate Cornelius Delameter, owner of the Delameter Iron Works in New York City. His company furnished the engines for these yachts, which were screw propellers. In 1884 Richmond launched the passen-

ger steamer *Gypsy* for the Peoples Transportation Company of New London. During the next two decades he became particularly well known for the construction of cat-rigged vessels. Some were launched as pleasure boats and others as fishermen, but all seem to have had a reputation for quality construction. The eight-ton fishing cat *Beulah*, launched in 1883, was one of the largest vessels of this type built by him.

Work at the Richmond yard seems to have continued until shortly before his death in 1908. Much of the activity at this time, however, was involved with rebuilding and repair rather than new construction.

NOTES

[1] Charity Lodge No. 1, A.F. & A.M., was reorganized in 1850, with Charles Henry Mallory as Worshipful Master. Richmond served in that office in 1854.

[2] *Mystic Pioneer*, 4 May 1867.

[3] Asa Fish, Diary, quoted in *Stonington Mirror*, 9 September 1914.

[4] See James P. Baughman, *The Mallorys of Mystic* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press for Mystic Seaport Museum, 1972), p. 88.

[5] Ibid., p. 89.

[6] *Mystic Pioneer*, 4 May 1867. *Restless* was built in 1859; *Nameaug* was launched in 1857; *Haswell* was built in 1858.

[7] *Mystic Press*, 21 November 1897. A similar fire on the same roof had taken place in 1884. At the Holmes Street shop in 1858, a fire ignited when varnish was left to warm on the stove for too long and exploded.

[8] *Stonington Mirror*, 25 July 1902; see also the *Stonington Mirror*, 20 September 1901, which reported that the entire frame and sheathing would have to be rebuilt.

[9] *Mystic Journal*, 5 May 1870. John Green & Co. was a Mystic-based menhaden company, and the vessel mentioned was undoubtedly a menhaden sloop. Its launch was reported in the *Mystic Journal*, 9 April 1870. Captain Green was involved in litigation at the time, and was eventually forced to close his business. The name of the sloop does not appear in any records, so it may have been sold out of the customs district. Gurdon S. Allyn, a pioneer of the menhaden fishery at Mystic, located his fish works on Mason's Island. See William N. Peterson, "'Bony-Fish': The Menhaden Fishery at Mystic, Connecticut," *The Log of Mystic Seaport* 33 (1981): 23–26.

Vessels Built by David Oscar Richmond

(With the exception of the sandbagger sloop *Annie* of 1880, all of these vessels exceeded five net tons. Consequently, Richmond's numerous smaller sloops and catboats are not included in this list.)

1849	*Sada*	sloop yacht
1855	*Richmond*	sloop yacht
1856	*Ranger* (with D. D. Mallory)	schooner yacht
1857	*Nameaug*	sloop yacht
1858	*Haswell*	sloop yacht
	Plover	sloop yacht
1859	*Haddie*	sloop
	Restless	sloop yacht
1863	*Flash*	sloop smack
1864	*Kate*	sloop yacht
1867	*Kate*	steam yacht
	Mystic	steam yacht
1868	*Fanny*	steam yacht
	Julia	steam yacht
1870	*Emily*	sloop
1874	*Fanny*	sloop yacht
	Fanny A. Wilcox	sloop
	Julia	sloop yacht
1875	*Clara*	sloop yacht
1876	*Estella*	sloop
	John Green	schooner
	Lulu	sloop yacht
1877	*Electoral Commission*	sloop
	Ella May	sloop
	Seminole	sloop smack
1879	*May*	sloop yacht
	Mistral	sloop yacht
1880	*Annie*	sloop yacht
	Sylph	schooner yacht
1881	*Iola*	sloop yacht
	Water Witch	schooner yacht
1884	*Gypsy*	screw steamer
1885	*Mignon*	sloop yacht
1887	*Eleanor*	sloop yacht
1888	*Millie*	sloop yacht
1893	*Beulah*	sloop yacht
1895	*Trilby*	sloop yacht

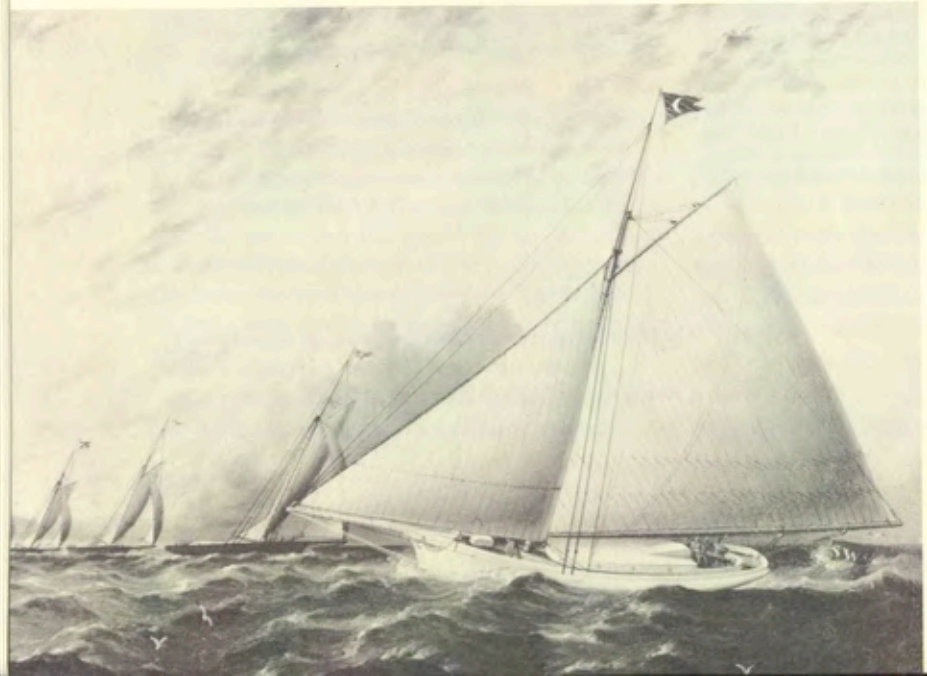
The following images from the collections of Mystic Seaport Museum and the Mystic River Historical Society offer a sample of the assorted craft built by David O. Richmond, ca. 1855–1890.



A GALLERY OF RICHMOND YACHTS

Above: The forty-three-foot sloop-yacht *Richmond* of 1855 memorialized Richmond's working relationship with owner Charles Henry Mallory. Richmond constructed her in twenty-seven days from the laying of the keel, at a cost of $3,000. As a precaution against foundering, 120 bushels of cork were placed between her frames. With a shape that foreshadowed the later "sandbaggers," she was an innovative racing yacht of her time. Her extreme beam (eighteen feet) and shallow-draft hull (four-foot depth of hold) were offset by a thirteen-foot centerboard. John Griffiths published her lines in his *U.S. Nautical Magazine and Naval Journal* in October 1856. Mallory raced her with notable success, winning his class in at least one 1856 New York Yacht Club regatta. Rebuilt in 1880, she was still afloat in 1892 when owned by F. A. Palmer of New York. Oil painting by an unidentified artist. (M.S.M. 45.334)

Below: In 1858 Richmond built the sloop-yacht *Haswell* for Charles H. Mallory, who designed her, and Mallory's brother David D. Originally named *Sylphide*, she was immediately renamed *Haswell*, probably in honor of Mallory's friend and fellow New York



Yacht Club member Charles H. Haswell. *Haswell* was an instant success, taking first in her class only a week after her launch. Mallory sold her to Henry Butler of Providence, Rhode Island, in 1859. She was rebuilt and updated at the Richmond yard in 1879, at which time she was renamed *Henry Butler.* Her name was changed to *Venitzia* by A. Colburn of Philadelphia in 1886. By 1911 she had been renamed *Dolavradora*, and in 1920 she was a passenger vessel owned in New York. In this oil painting, ca. 1859, James E. Buttersworth depicted *Haswell* rounding Southwest Spit buoy during a New York Yacht Club regatta in New York Bay. (M.S.M. 48.957)



Right: Richmond built the seventy-two-foot, centerboard sloop-yacht *Fanny* for Mallory in 1873 and commissioned her the following year. Mallory raced her until 1879. Extensively rebuilt by John Mumm of Gowanus, New York, about 1882, she was owned by a succession of yachtsmen through the 1880s. In 1891 she was lengthened by six feet at the Baylis yard in Port Jefferson, and in 1903 she became a commercial vessel. She is shown preparing to set her spinnaker during a race in the 1880s. Albumen print photo. (M.S.M. 79.138.1)

Below: The sloop *Lizzie* may have been built by Richmond, ca. 1875. Owned by Lucius Guernsey, editor of the *Mystic Press*, she was sometimes referred to as the "press yacht." She is shown in the Mystic River below the bridge, with Brown's Livery Stable on the Groton side in the background. Collodion negative by E. A. Scholfield. (M.S.M. 72.882.9)







Left: The thirty-foot sandbagger *Annie* of 1880 is the best known and only surviving example of Richmond's work. These dish-like racing sloops with movable sandbag ballast were raced widely at the time, and Richmond built this one for Henry Harding Tift of Tifton, Georgia (formerly of Mystic), who owned her until after 1900. Since overall hull length was used to calculate handicaps, without reference to sail area, sandbaggers sported long bowsprits and boomkins that might make the base of their sail plan twice the length of the hull. To reduce weight, *Annie* was rigged with a hollow bored mast. *Annie* consistently won northern races during the summer as well as winter races in Georgia and Florida. In 1886 Richmond "straightened" her sides, reducing her beam slightly. In 1888 her mast was lengthened. She was damaged by a fire in 1901 and rebuilt by Richmond the following year. She has been in Mystic Seaport Museum's collection since 1931. *Annie* is shown in profile (*top*), with the corner of Richmond's shop visible between her jib and mainsail (M.S.M. 37.69); and racing (*bottom*) with reduced rig off Execution Rock light. (Mystic Seaport Museum collections)

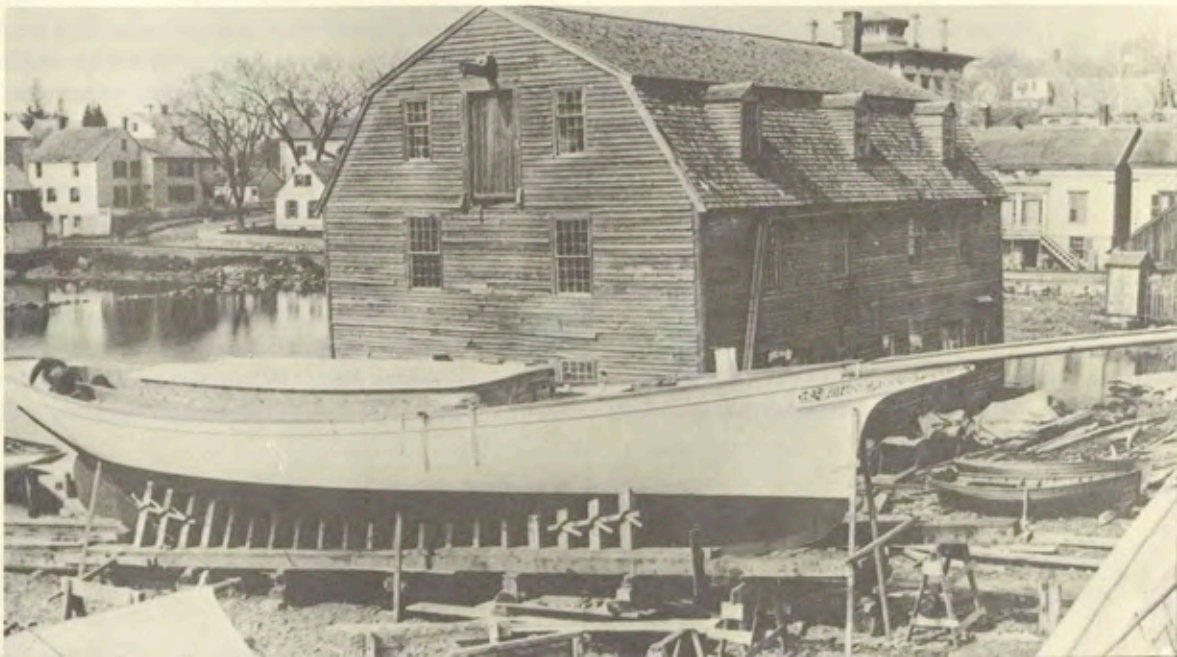
Below: Richmond built the eighty-foot schooner-yacht *Water Witch* for Mallory in 1881. She is reported to have been Mallory's favorite yacht, and he owned her until 1887. In 1920 she was a merchant vessel, owned in Miami, Florida. Oil painting by Antonio Jacobsen, 1893. (M.S.M. 46.202)





Richmond built the catboat *Mary* for Daniel B. Denison about 1886. She was a notable local racer, but she also was rented as a Block Island fishing boat at one time. In this view *Mary* ghosts along off the old Steamboat Wharf just below the Mystic River bridge, ca. 1895. Gelatin print photo by Edward H. Newbury. (Courtesy Mystic River Historical Society)

Richmond launched the fifty-foot sloop-yacht *Millie* for Frank Budlong of Providence, Rhode Island, in 1888. She is shown here on the ways in front of Richmond's shop, with a pair of handsome tenders under her bowsprit. She was built with an iron keel, which was replaced the following year. Richmond altered her further in 1890. She was still owned in the Providence area in 1920. Albumen print photo by E. A. Scholfield. (M.S.M. 36.134)



Ellery Franklin Thompson, Fisherman, Author, and Marine Painter

BERNARD LUDWIG GORDON

Stonington, Connecticut, has been home port to many notable mariners. Among the most famous in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were Captain Edmund Fanning, who with his brig *Betsey*, hunted seals, circumnavigated the globe, and discovered a South Pacific island that now bears his name. Another Stonington son, Captain Nathaniel Brown Palmer, at twenty-one skippered the fifty-foot sloop *Hero*, hunted fur seals south of Cape Horn, and is credited by some geographers with the discovery of the Antarctic continent.

The most colorful Stonington mariner-fisherman of the twentieth century was Captain Ellery Franklin Thompson, who commanded a fifty-foot fishing vessel about the size of "Nat" Palmer's *Hero*. Ellery Thompson was born on Easter Sunday, 1899, on Pequot Hill in Mystic, Connecticut. His mother's family included Chapmans, Rathbuns, and Packers, while his sea captain, fisherman father was descended from Denisons and Wilcoxes, making Ellery a descendent of many generations of nautical families.

Captain Frank E. Thompson (1873–1936), Ellery's father, commanded passenger steamers between Norwich, New London, Mystic, Stonington, and Watch Hill. For ten years he was captain of the *Governor Winthrop*, the ferryboat that crossed the Thames River from Groton to New London before the highway bridge was built. He also skippered the local passenger steamers *Gipsy*, *Summer Girl*, and *Watch Hill*. Frank Thompson also owned a small fishing boat, and he is believed to have been the first Connecticut fisherman to use the newly introduced otter trawl, which is dragged along the sea bottom to scoop up fish. While fishing with him on the *Florence*, Ellery gained the rudiments of dragging for fish from his dad. Ellery went to sea at age fourteen and for almost five years worked on the coastal steamer *City of Lowell*. He also served as crew on his father's fishing boat during his spare time.

When he was twenty-one years old, in 1920, Ellery borrowed four thousand dollars and bought his first dragger, the *Grace & Lucy*, named after his backer's daughters. While Ellery was extremely proud to be captain of his own fishing dragger at twenty-one, he soon found that his new boat was not entirely satisfactory. Constructed too flat forward, she did not respond well in heavy seas, rolling and pounding heavily. Ellery advanced to a second dragger, *Louise*, named after his older sister. This vessel also had its faults, rolling and pounding in heavy seas.

In order to have a more sea-kindly fishing dragger, Ellery decided he would design one. Purchasing drafting equipment from the local art supply store, he drew plans for his next fishing vessel. Rather than have the boat built locally, as his first two had been, he ordered his new boat from the Rancocas Construction Company in Delanco, New Jersey.

The new dragger was named after his younger sister, Eleanor. In May 1927, with some trepidation, Ellery took the *Eleanor* on her maiden voyage from the Rancocas shipyard to New London. The new vessel handled beautifully; its design proved effective. Stonington, Connecticut became the *Eleanor*'s home port for the next twenty-five years. Ruggedly constructed, the *Eleanor* was one of the few Stonington fishing draggers to

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Ellery Thompson shows off a large lobster aboard his dragger *Eleanor*, ca. 1950. (Photo by author)



Captain Thompson shows crewmember Edna Butlin how to mend twine, ca. 1950. (Photo by author)

survive the famous 1938 hurricane, and resumed fishing shortly after the storm. Ellery gained a reputation as a practical fishing dragger designer and drew up plans, at the behest of his friends, for a number of Stonington fishing vessels.

Ellery was a highly respected Stonington fisherman from the time he tied up his dragger *Eleanor* at Bindloss Dock in 1930. He became an East Coast celebrity in 1947, when the *New Yorker Magazine* ran a feature article about him in its 4 and 11 January issues. The article, written with warmth and affection, depicted Ellery as "a sad-eyed, easygoing Connecticut Yankee and the most respected fishing captain in Stonington, Connecticut." Joseph Mitchell, author of the *New Yorker* article, also devoted fifty pages of his 1959 book, *At the Bottom of the Harbor*, to Captain Thompson. Ellery himself wrote two books, *Draggerman's Haul*, first published in 1950, and *Come Aboard the Draggers* in 1959.

In June 1943, Captain Thompson developed a friendship with Daniel Merriman, Director of the Bingham Oceanographic Laboratory at Yale University. Merriman and his co-workers, Herbert E. Warfel and Jim Morrow, went out collecting fish specimens with Ellery on Long Island Sound at least one day a month during the 1940s. Thus, the *Eleanor* became a part-time research vessel. At least six significant marine survey reports on the fishery resources of Long Island Sound were based on data collected during these trips.

During the late 1940s and early '50s, I occasionally served as a crew member on board the *Eleanor*. Captain Ellery would usually head out of Stonington Harbor about 5 A.M. in quest of flounders, or "flat fish" as he would call them. He would drag his eighty-foot-long otter trawl net in Block Island Sound. Sometimes Ellery would head "down the beach" to drag off the



Thompson works on a fishing schooner painting, using his piano as an easel. (Photo by author)



Thompson painted this oil of a typical Stonington dragger in 1956. (M.S.M. 56.794)

Rhode Island shoreline at Misquamicut or Quonochontaug. Occasionally, we would go out to the "Hell Hole" or the "Mussel Bed" east of Block Island. Ellery sought out black-back flounder, yellow-tail flounder, and fluke, or summer flounder. When he unloaded his catch back at Bindloss Dock in Stonington at 4 P.M., it was packed in wooden boxes and shipped to the Fulton Fish Market in New York City.

In 1951, Ellery astonished his fellow fishermen at the Stonington dock by shipping a woman as crewmember. Nineteen-year-old Edna Butlin was one of the first female crew persons, not related to members of the crew, to be seen working on a Stonington dragger. She got the knack of sorting fish and mending nets with skillful proficiency.

In the late 1940s, Ellery decided to record on paper his forty years of adventures off the coast and along the shores of Southern New England. The result was a full-length, illustrated, autobiographical book, *Draggerman's Haul*, published by Viking Press in 1950. Full of marine adventures, humorous anecdotes, and Ellery's philosophy, it proved to be a popular book for its original publisher. (It has since been reissued by the Book & Tackle Shop of Watch Hill, Rhode Island.) Warner Brothers studios in Hollywood took an option on the story but never produced a movie of it.

Ellery's first book proved so popular that he wrote a second volume called *Come Aboard the Draggers*, which was printed in 1958 by the Stonington Publishing Company. Shortly after his second book was published, Ellery began writing a regular column in Mystic's newspaper, *The Compass*, which continued for many years.

Ellery was also a prolific marine painter. His mother painted landscapes and still lifes, so painting was not a totally foreign endeavor for Ellery. His paintings are unsophisticated in composition and detail, yet some capture the feeling of a boat at sea quite accurately. It is estimated that E. F. Thompson painted over one-thousand seascapes, including whaleships, clipper ships, lighthouses, and almost every commercial fishing boat in Southern New England. The walls of hundreds of Connecticut and Rhode Island business establishments display his oil paintings. Ellery would frequently present a painting to a friend in return for a favor, yet he sold many of his paintings in his later years at prices ranging from $50 to $400.

Ellery was a member of the Mystic Seaport staff in the late 1950s and early '60s. He served

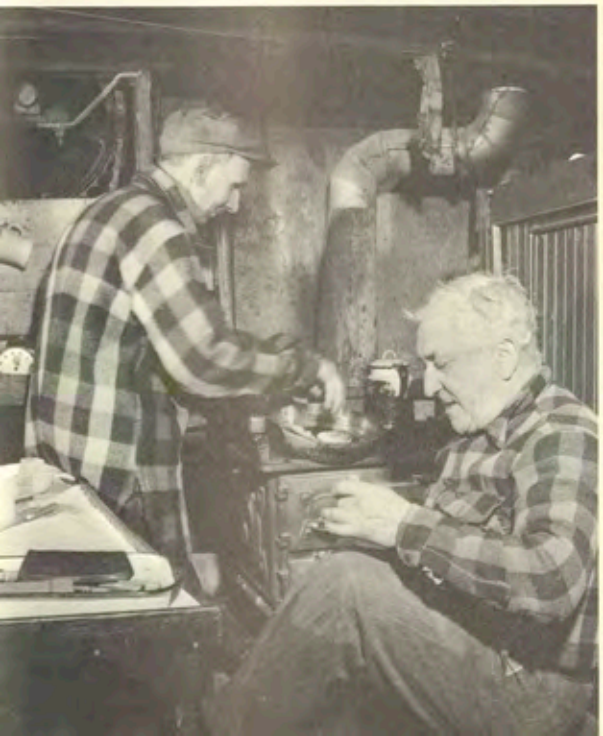
Ellery Thompson's western-rig dragger *Eleanor*, built in 1927. Photo by Gordon Sweet, 1945. (Courtesy Dr. Keith S. Thomson)

as guide and occupant of the fisherman's shack near the ropewalk. There he would relate to visitors endless anecdotes on fishing off Southern New England. During this time he lived in a small apartment on Main Street in Mystic and would frequently be seen with his paint-covered cap at a jaunty angle, bringing a newly completed painting over to Archie's Soda Shop or Maxwelton's paint store. During the winter months, Ellery would paint up a large quantity of seascapes, and at the annual Mystic Art Festival he would display his latest productions for



Below, left: Captain Thompson prepares codfish cakes on the *Eleanor*'s galley range. Note the chain drive for the trawl winch above his shoulder. The engine is beneath the table. Photo by Gordon Sweet, 1945. (Courtesy Dr. Keith S. Thomson)

Below, right: Ellery Thompson purchases art supplies at the Maxwelton Company in Mystic. Two of his paintings are displayed above the shelves. Photo by Gordon Sweet, 1945. (Courtesy Dr. Keith S. Thomson)







The crew "picks" the deck, sorting fish. Back aft, Dr. Daniel Merriman and a colleague catalog biological samples taken during the trip. Photo by Gordon Sweet, 1945. (Courtesy Dr. Keith S. Thomson)

the crowd that gathered in front of Archie's Restaurant.

During the early 1970s, Ellery moved away from Main Street to an old house at 44 Water Street on the Mystic River facing sunken barges, the railway trestle bridge, and the boatyard. Here, in an appropriate setting, he spent his final years painting, corresponding with friends, and writing and rewriting his memoirs. He gradually filled many boxes with manuscripts about his halcyon days offshore and along the coasts of Connecticut and Rhode Island. Ellery was always friendly, astute, and a keen observer of the changing maritime history of Southern New England. In the mid-1980s, Ellery developed medical problems that prevented him from living alone. He died in a nursing home in April 1986 at the age of eighty-seven, well remembered by his many friends for the nautical legacy he left behind.

The largest collection of Ellery Thompson's paintings ever placed on public view occurred from December 1988 through May 1989 at Mystic Seaport's R. J. Schaefer Building.

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A Tribute to Adrian K. Lane (1919–1988)

RICHARD KNOWLES MORRIS

Not long ago Captain Adrian K. Lane said to me, "I'm the last global sailing master ever to come down the Mystic River." Exaggeration? Conceit? Not likely. I had known Lane for more than fifty years, and he was not one to use hyperbole, not even in jest. Conceit was not in his nature. Marian, his wife of forty-four years, agreed, then hastened to add, "he was a proud man." He had reason to be proud; but the rest of us could easily be disarmed by his self-deprecating manner and underestimate both his nautical knowledge and his maritime experience.

I remember the day forty years ago when I stepped aboard the large research vessel *Atlantis*. I was awed by the towering 140-foot mainmast of the ketch and impressed by the youthfulness of the man in charge of this 460-ton vessel. What I was never to forget was the framed license that hung in Lane's stateroom:

> Master of sail vessels of any gross tons,
> and third mate of steam and motor vessels
> . . . on any ocean.

Seven years later I sailed with Lane aboard Mystic Seaport's schooner *Brilliant*, which he commanded from 1953 through 1961. I remember how he stood at the wheel in knee-high sea boots, black rubber jacket and woolen watch cap, looking more like a Portuguese fisherman bound for the Grand Banks than master of a schooner yacht setting out for a day's sail to Deering Harbor. The drizzle had turned to rain by the time we reached the anchorage below the village of Noank, the skipper's hometown. The jib and the jumbo had been sent aloft and the gaff-rigged foresail set. The previous season the gaff on the main had been removed in order to bend on a new Bermuda or Marconi triangle. "It's not to my liking," Lane remarked. He simply refused to raise the mainsail.

Once in Fishers Island Sound, the Boy Scout power from Stonington responded to instructions from Mate Ned Watson. The skipper spun the wheel to starboard and the sails filled to a southeast breeze. The diesel stopped throbbing. The schooner came alive and her bowsprit pointed for Plum Gut.

By this time, Lane's reputation in sail was already secure. His waistline betrayed only the slightest hint of an increment befitting his reputation. He was a lithe, vibrant figure tanned by the wind and the salt and the sun. His eyes would brighten at a remark too amusing to dismiss. When a question called for reflection, he would roll his tongue within his cheeks and cast his gaze aloft.

In Deering Harbor three years earlier Lane, former mate Matti Richard, and a pregnant leader with her troop of eight Girl Scout Mariners, rode out Hurricane Carol. But now there were no storm warnings. Instead, the Comet Markos hung in the clearing western sky like a golden pendant of good omen.

Lane was one of a rare company of men able to make a living in sail in an age of steam, diesel, and atomic-fueled propulsion. He understood the mysterious force of thousands of square feet of canvas above his head. Indeed, he belonged to a small and vanishing group that included his friends Irving Johnson, Alan Villiers, Bob Bartlett, and probably no more than a dozen other sailing masters.

Richard Knowles Morris, retired professor at Trinity College, Hartford, and author of *John P. Holland, 1841–1914: Inventor of the Modern Submarine* (1966), was a friend of Adrian Lane.

Lane served as third mate aboard the record breaking 185-foot schooner *Atlantic* in the Bermuda Race of 1946; he was master of the oceanographic research ketches *Atlantis* and *Caryn* sailing out of Woods Hole; he was engaged as chief mate on the three-masted *Vema* while on leave from Mystic Seaport. Three times he stood duty as deck officer on training cruises aboard the U.S. Coast Guard bark *Eagle*. In his roster of sailing ships he made good passages from Cape Farewell to Cape Horn and from the Rio Grande to the Dardanelles.

"Anybody with any romance in his blood," he commented, "would prefer sail over other transport except when it gets to be too much of a damned nuisance, on the North Atlantic in the wintertime, for instance. Then anyone who prefers sail under those conditions is crazy."

In steam and motor vessels, Lane's career was hardly less impressive. During World War II he served briefly on the lightship *Scotland* and later saw duty in the South Pacific aboard the frigate *Allentown*. He commanded the corvette *Pert* out of Charleston, South Carolina, before signing on as executive officer aboard the ice-breaking, buoy tender *Laurel* to work the waters off Newfoundland and Greenland.

After the war came sixteen years in sail before Lane returned to steam and motor vessels. Then he skippered the ill-fated *Sea Surveyor*, which sank in the North Atlantic in the mid-winter of 1969. He and his crew of twelve men survived twenty-six hours in a rubber life raft before they were plucked from the ocean in pre-dawn hours and taken aboard a Norwegian container ship bound east for Rotterdam. Lane later took over the *Sea Surveyor*'s successors: the converted New Bedford trawler *Chilmark Sword* and the Gulf utility boat *Miss Freeport*—all three vessels engaged in classified underwater sound research for submarines built by Electric Boat in Groton. Then, for a seaman's holiday, Lane would take the helm of the Casco Bay steamboat *Sabino* on daytime excursions on the Mystic River, or fill in as an officer aboard the *Advance II* in oceanographic research for the Cape Fear Technical Institute, Wilmington, North Carolina.

Lane came to his last command in 1976 as relief skipper of the 177-foot research vessel *Endeavor*, owned by the National Science Foundation and operated by the School of Oceanography of the University of Rhode Island. For eight years he sailed out of Narragansett Bay on voyages that ranged from Oslo and Reykjavik to Rio and Ascension, from Abidjan to Dakar, and from Callao to the Galapagos.



Captain Adrian K. Lane aboard the research vessel *Atlantis*, ca. 1949. (Photo courtesy author)

To this day, Lane's reputation seems to have suffered from some who contend that he led a rather ordinary life of little historical significance. But it was Lane who took Friz Fuglister north when that artist-scientist first plotted thermal eddies, which spin off the Gulf Stream to maintain an existence of their own. These findings enabled Fuglister to declare that the Stream was not a "River in the Ocean," but a

part of a complex system now called the North Atlantic gyre. Ironically, such facts are again considered news.

It was Lane who sailed the distinguished geophysicist Dr. W. Maurice Ewing west and then north of the Azores on two expeditions that enabled Ewing to give the world its first detailed description of the mid-Atlantic Ridge.

Again, as chief mate of the *Vema* in the South Atlantic and the Beagle Channel, Lane shared with his scientist friend Ewing the excitement of evidence supporting the Donn-Ewing Hypothesis: it's not the cooling of the earth's atmosphere that brings on an ice age, but the warming. The greenhouse effect and the depletion of the ozone layer can only hasten the event.

Lane was not just a partner in these expeditions, he was also a participant. He would sail the twenty four-foot Beetle whaleboat out on the Atlantic beyond sight of the mother ship to detonate explosives for seismic research. He would risk his life to hang suspended from the ship's rail, recovering a Stetson-Hvorslev corer before it slid back into the abysmal depths, its contents lost forever.

Jon Hahn, the first editor of *Oceanus*, quoted Lane as saying, "The captain [of a research vessel] has to be a diplomat and must have a darn good reason for saying No,' since he deals with the sort of people who can come back in five minutes with a good reason to make him say Yes.'" Hahn added, " . . . he has earned the respect and friendship of dozens of scientists who have sailed with him . . . a typical captain of the old school."

Lane knew when to be a disciplinarian and when to be "one of the boys," when to entertain the crew and the scientists, and when to put the ship and her safety foremost in mind. He was no ordinary sailor. He was a captain extraordinary.

When Adrian Lane retired, he was looked upon by many of his friends and neighbors as just another local boy who had returned home to stay. He was a loveable character, to be sure, and one worth knowing—an image I rather think he relished. He probably enjoyed the regional press photographing him under his great straw hat as he scrapped the bottom of his beloved Crosby cat *Dolphin*, in the rites of spring called "outfitting," or the reporters who followed him to the local pubs, where he delighted patrons with much the same repertoire he used to bolster his crews at sea. But few of this group really understood that Lane was indeed the last of the global sailing masters to come down the Mystic River; few appreciated the fact that this member of the Explorer's Club had served the great oceanographers of his time, sailing literally hundreds of thousands of miles on five of the world's seven seas.

"I have taken up a new sport in my retirement," Lane said to me. "I spend my weekends aboard the *Dolphin* with a can of beer in hand and watch the local yachtsmen make fools of themselves. And when the madness is over, I slip my mooring and go for a sail."

Kipling correctly rendered the gospel of Matthew for many of Adrian's friends and neighbors, "Prophets have honour all over the world, except in the village where they were born."

Adrian Kingsbury Lane now rests in the soil of his native Noank on the side of a hill overlooking the Mystic River, out of which he sailed the world, and back to which he came.

Mystic Seaport Museum: Years of Promise, 1980–1989

1980 June—first annual Sea Music Festival.
Seaport bulkheading project begins.
Education Department begins role playing (first-person interpretation) in the Museum.
Lobstering exhibit opens.
First Mystic Seaport Photo Day.
Fellows of the G. W. Blunt White Library formed to support library programs.
Museum begins $7.5 million capital campaign.
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awards $350,000 grant to increase public access to collections through cataloging and publication.
December—third annual Lantern Light Tour season.
325 volunteers give 22,179 hours this year.
Attendance: 438,196.
Membership: 15,915.

1981 *Morgan* topsides rebuilt.
November—first annual symposium on Southern New England Maritime History.
344 volunteers give 23,798 hours this year.
Attendance: 450,880.
Membership: 16,199.

1982 March—centennial of *Joseph Conrad* ex-*Georg Stage*.
Nautical Instrument Shop exhibit opens in former Weave Shop exhibit building.
Dorothy Brewington's *Marine Paintings and Drawings in Mystic Seaport Museum* published under Mellon Foundation grant.
Mystic-built fishing dragger *Florence* of 1926 acquired.
312 volunteers give 26,193 hours this year.
Attendance: 417,885.
Membership: 17,165.

1983 March—first annual "Victorian Yankee" symposium.
1 October—Rudolph J. Schaefer III elected President of the Board of Trustees.
282 volunteers give 24,430 hours this year.
Attendance: 410,734.
Membership: 17,426.

1984 Capt. George Moffett replaces Capt. Bowker as skipper of the *Brilliant*.
July—Thomas Thomas Oyster House exhibit completed.
Charles W. Morgan Preservation Fund raises $1 million for the ship.
September—work begins on redecking *Conrad*.
Capital campaign reaches $7.7 million, surpassing goal.
December—Rosenfeld Collection of maritime photographs purchased.
315 volunteers give 29,625 hours this year.
Attendance: 414,916.
Membership: 15,816.

1985 18 April—Mystic Maritime Gallery of contemporary maritime art opens at Seaport Stores.
Yachting Committee established to guide the Seaport's efforts in collecting and interpreting recreational boating.
Archives of American Yachting and Boating established.
July—Dana Hewson replaces Don Robinson as Director for Ships Preservation and Curator of Ships.
Seaport begins to plan for improved visitor facilities at the South Entrance.
27 September—Seaport escapes serious damage from Hurricane Gloria.
American Seamen's Friend Society Sailor's Reading Room exhibit opens.
320 volunteers give 26,754 hours this year.
Attendance: 424,313.
Membership: 15,688.

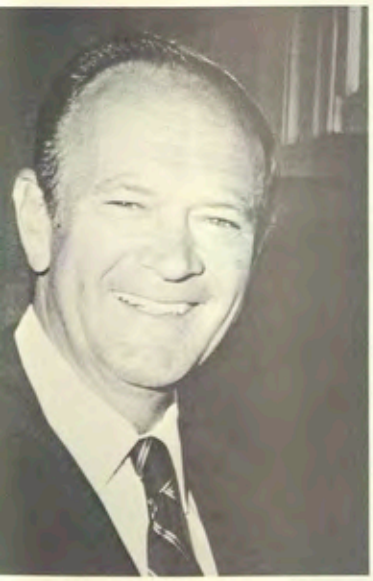
1986 Oral history begun under supervision of the Yachting Committee.
Fall—restoration begun on *Emma C. Berry.*
351 volunteers give 32,706 hours this year.
Attendance: 459,455.
Membership: 16,666.

1987 28 August—Peter D. Sanger Memorial Visitor Reception Center opens.
368 volunteers give 34,564 hours this year.
Attendance: 449,049.
Membership: 17,496.

1988 February—Seaport whaleboat team defeats Australian team in Warrnambool, Australia.
February—first Yachting History Symposium.
Olin J. Stephens II receives first William P. Stephens Award for contributions to yachting history.
May—Boathouse boat livery program introduced.
September—Seaport Director J. Revell Carr also named President of the Board of Trustees.
469 volunteers give 39,499 hours this year.
Attendance: 436,417.
Membership: 22,075.

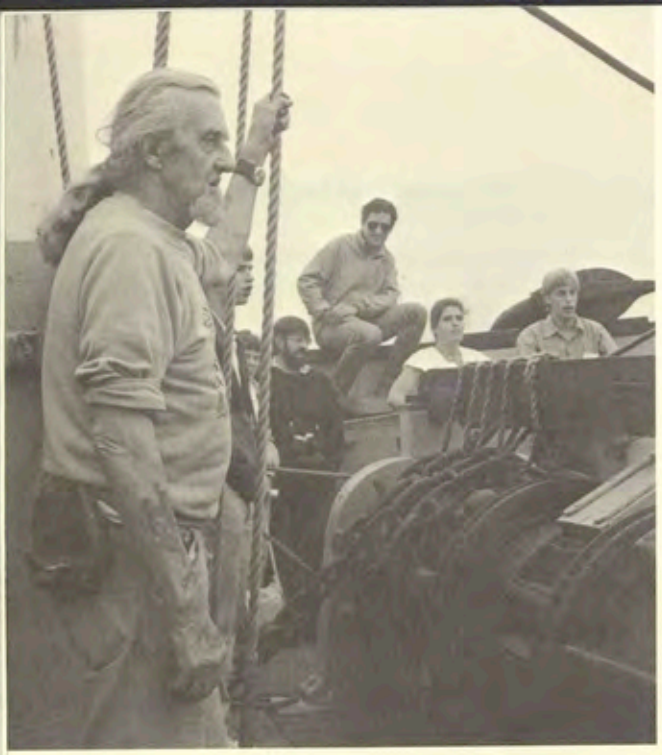
1989 January—Seaport Stores seriously damaged by fire.
July—Seaport Stores reopens.
July—Danish training ship *Georg Stage* visits Seaport.
17 September—Seaport whaleboat team defeats Australian team at Mystic.
24 September—Robert G. Stone, Jr., elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
Museum now has 412 watercraft.
Library now contains 50,000 books and 500,000 manuscript pieces.
Museum now employs 188 full-time and 112 part-time staff members.
Attendance: 419,793.
Membership: 19,546.

Left: Rudolph J. Schaefer III, business executive, joined the Marine Historical Association in 1965 and became a Trustee in 1975. Named Vice President in 1979, he was elected President in 1983 and became Chairman of the Board in 1988. (Photo: Elizabeth French) *Center*: J. Revell Carr, the Museum's Director since 1978, was also named President of the Board of Trustees in 1988. (Photo: Mary Anne Stets) *Right*: Robert G. Stone, business executive, joined the Marine Historical Association in 1963 and became a Trustee in 1975. He was elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees in 1989.









Left: Sea music is the most popular participatory demonstration at Mystic Seaport. To promote the study and performance of sea music, the Museum's Education Department established an annual sea music festival in June 1980. Dozens of performers and hundreds of enthusiasts come to participate in a seminar on the history of sea music and in numerous performing workshops. Among the repeat performers has been Stan Hugill, shown here leading a capstan chantey at the *Morgan*'s windlass. Hugill was perhaps the last chanteyman to sing aboard working deepwater sailing vessels, and he has since written several books on sea music. (Photo: Mary Anne Stets)

Facing page, top: The construction of a strong and appropriate granite bulkhead along the Museum's waterfront continued through the 1980s. With the completion of the bulkhead along the south side of the Seaport grounds in 1984, the Thomas Thomas Oyster House was moved onto a wharf to represent its original location on a New Haven wharf. (Photo: Claire White-Peterson)

Facing page, bottom: The Museum increased its photographic holdings more than ten times with the purchase of the one-million-image Rosenfeld Collection in 1984. This massive archive, with its wealth of yachting images from the 1880s to the 1970s, has been housed in a climate-controlled section of the Museum's Rossie Mill. An administrative staff within the Curatorial Department supervises the preservation and use of the Rosenfeld Collection. (Photo: Mary Anne Stets)

Below: Costumed role players, who create a nineteenth-century maritime persona, research the lives and thoughts of such people, and then converse with Seaport visitors as a person from the 1870s, were introduced by the Museum's Education Department in 1980. The most popular form of role-playing at the Seaport takes place during the Christmas Lantern Light Tours, a program initiated in 1978. In the American Seamen's Friend Society Sailor's Reading Room exhibit, created in 1985 with funds from the Society, two role players admire a pair of socks, a fitting gift for a needy sailor at Christmas. (Photo: Mary Anne Stets)







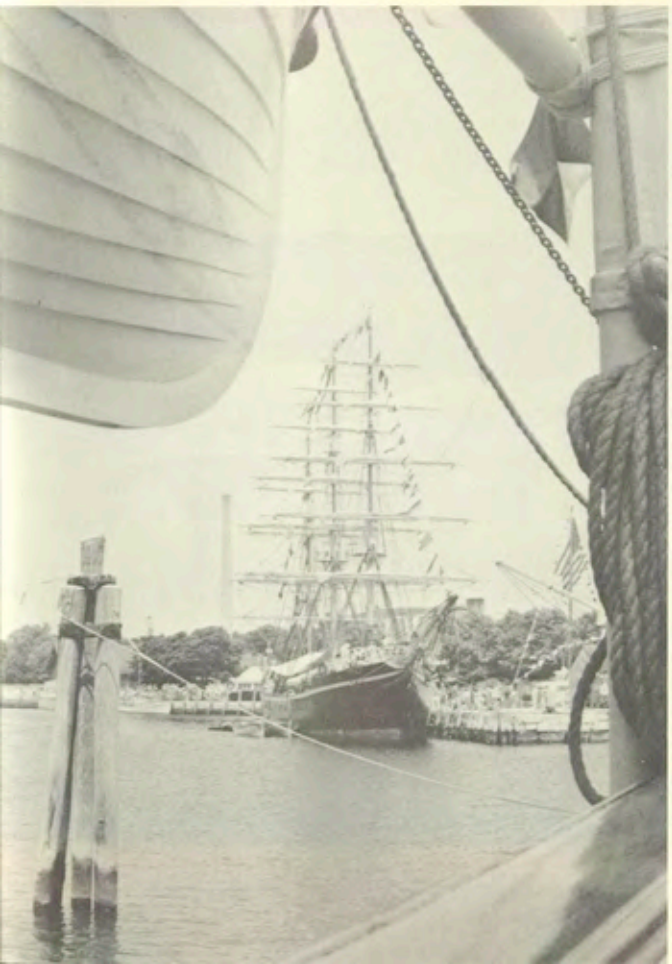




Above: The Museum's "front door" was given a much more professional and inviting aspect with the opening of the new Visitor Reception Center at the south entrance in 1987. This facility was proposed in the 1984 Long-Range Plan and was dedicated to honor the late Seaport Trustee Peter D. Sanger. (Photo: Claire White-Peterson; rendering: Sasaki Associates, Inc.)

Facing page: Following the 1982 centennial of her construction, the *Joseph Conrad*, ex-*Georg Stage*, underwent extensive restoration, including replacement of her deck and deck structures, to return her to her 1934 appearance. The effort was highlighted by the visit of the second *Georg Stage*, which had replaced the *Conrad* as a Danish sail-training vessel in 1935. On this her first trip to America, the *Georg Stage* became the focus of an international maritime spirit at the Seaport during a July weekend in 1989. (Photos: Mary Anne Stets, top, Judy Beisler, bottom left, Claire White-Peterson, bottom right)











Facing page: Mystic Seaport Museum entered international maritime competition in February 1988 when a crew of staff members traveled to Warrnambool, Australia, to compete in a whaleboat race during a local festival. Victorious, the crew returned to Mystic with the Captain Mills Cup. In September 1989 an Australian team came to Mystic to win back the cup, but again a Seaport staff crew rowed to victory. (Photos: Claire White-Peterson, top, Elizabeth French, bottom)

Right: The Museum's efforts in small craft documentation and preservation continued in the 1980s with, for example, the construction of a replica of a ca. 1900, Crosby-type Cape Cod catboat in the Boatshop exhibit. This project, supported by the Catboat Association, preserved unwritten knowledge of regional boatbuilding techniques even as it produced a working catboat that can be used to offer a Mystic River sailing experience to Seaport visitors. (Photos: Mary Anne Stets)





BOOK REVIEWS

Robert G. Bachand. *Northeast Lights: Lighthouses and Lightships, Rhode Island to Cape May, New Jersey.* Norwalk, Connecticut: Sea Sports Publications, 1989. 444 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. $19.95.

Harlan Hamilton. *Lights & Legends: A Historical Guide to Lighthouses of Long Island Sound, Fishers Island Sound and Block Island Sound.* Stamford, Connecticut: Wescott Cove Publishing Company, 1987. 286 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. $12.95, paper.

During the last ten or fifteen years a renewed interest in our nation's lighthouses has spawned numerous publications on the topic. Probably the single most important book on lighthouse history to come out in the last two decades is Ross Holland, Jr's., *America's Lighthouses* (Stephen Greene Press, 1972), which gives a thorough historical overview of the U.S. lighthouse system. More recently, two events have received wide publicity and have intensified public focus on lighthouses: first, the bicentennial of the Lighthouse Service, which was observed in August of this year, and, second, the anticipated completion of the automation of every active lighthouse in the country by 1990. The removal of a "human presence" at the lights has raised concerns among lighthouse historians and historic preservationists as to how adequately the Coast Guard will maintain the lighthouses and related structures after the keepers are gone. In response to this, at least three national lighthouse preservation groups, and numerous local ones, have been formed to help preserve those lights that are endangered.

Several recent publications have focused on lights in specific areas of the country. Two of these, *Northeast Lights* and *Lights & Legends*, are essentially guidebooks to those along the Northeast Coast. Both books share a similar format: each contains a discussion of the history of the lighthouse system and lighthouse construction, a chapter on each light in the area covered (along with a photograph), and ends with a bibliography of references for each individual light. Each chapter of *Northeast Lights* begins with a list of key facts such as appropriation and establishment dates, date of construction, name of first keeper, and date the light was discontinued if it is no longer active. With both publications, it is the chapters on the individual lights that are the most interesting and well-researched. These contain a physical description and historical account of the light being discussed, information on the keepers, and often historical anecdotes. Both publications bring the reader up to date as to the light's present status. One particularly useful feature of *Northeast Lights* is that directions to each light, as well as a listing of the nautical chart on which the light is included, are given at the end of each chapter.

While there are many similarities between the two books, there are some differences as well. *Lights & Legends* covers Long Island, Fishers Island, and Block Island Sounds, while *Northeast Lights* includes the coast from Rhode Island to New Jersey. It is not clear why this particular area was chosen for *Northeast Lights*. It appears to be a rather arbitrary selection, with no explanation offered in the text. As the title suggests, *Lights & Legends* contains more material on legends surrounding a particular light, while *Northeast Lights* tends to concentrate more on factual information, some of which has been drawn from official records in the National Archives. However, the discussion on the lighthouse technology in *Lights & Legends* is far more comprehensive.

One subject missing from *Lights & Legends* is local lightships, a number of which were once stationed in the region. Although there are no longer any active lightships in service, their role in U.S. lighthouse history is an important one, and one that still interests maritime historians. *Northeast Lights* is one of the few current sources in which this topic is covered.

On the whole, *Northeast Lights* appears to be the better researched and written of the two. Some of the writing in *Lights & Legends* is more awkward and repetitive than one would expect from a book whose author is an associate professor of English. There are also factual errors in *Lights & Legends*. In the chapter on Eatons Neck Light on Long Island, for instance, it is stated that the lifesaving station built there in 1849 was the first one established in the U.S., when in fact, the first one was constructed the previous year at Spermaceti Cove in New Jersey. While *Northeast Lights* contains a useful listing of lighthouse agencies, museums, societies, and publications, this list is incomplete and poorly organized, with some obvious omissions. On the other hand, the bibliographical references given for each light have been well researched and include numerous primary sources.

Both publications rely on an overabundance of lighthouse lore as a means to capture the reader's attention, which, unfortunately, tends to obscure the importance of some of the more scholarly research that is included. Another criticism involves the photo-

graphs in both books. Most are unattributed, many are poorly cropped and of only snapshot quality. Only *Northeast Lights* uses any historic photos. Finally, both books would have been helped by the inclusion of a more extensive general bibliography on the U.S. Lighthouse Service.

Neither publication is meant to be an in-depth study of the U.S. Lighthouse Service, nor a thorough study of each light. Instead, both are popular (and relatively inexpensive) guides on the subject. As such, they would be useful to have on board while cruising in the Northeast. Nevertheless, with the large number of similar works on U.S. lighthouses recently having been published and now being planned, one might ask when this topic will have received enough attention.

Wick York
Architectual Restoration Specialist, M.S.M.

William A. Hagelund. *Whalers No More: A History of Whaling on the West Coast*. Madeira Park, British Columbia: Harbour Publishing Company, 1987. 211 pp., index, bibliography, illustrations. Canadian $24.95.
Peter Murray. *The Vagabond Fleet: A Chronicle of the North Pacific Sealing Schooner Trade*. Victoria, British Columbia: Sono Nis Press, 1988. 260 pp., index, bibliography, illustrations. Canadian $29.95.

Captain Bill Hagelund's first book on whaling, *Flying the Chase Flag*, published in 1961, remains to this day a readable and evocative memoir of a young man's early days on the British Columbia coast; above all his adventures in one of Consolidated Whaling Company's ninety-foot whale catchers, given the fictional name of *Carmel*. *Whalers No More* is not the same story retold, nor is it exactly a sequel. It does, however, lean on that earlier work, particulary in its first fifty pages, recalling the same experiences from the perspective of another quarter century (revealing, among other points, that the *Carmel* was really the *Brown* from among Consolidated's color-coded fleet of *Black*, *Blue*, *Brown*, *Green*, *Grey*, and *White*). This book, too, is readable and interesting, but its main goal is to chronicle the history of the half-dozen firms, working some forty vessels, that sailed for whales out of British Columbia harbors from the first years of the twentieth century to the late 1960s.

Like most maritime industries, British Columbia whalers had their boom and bust cycles, their intriguing characters—whether owner, master, or crewmen—and their dangers and losses. All of this Hagelund chronicles well, often from his own or others' recollections, gathered and preserved over the years. In the second book, Hagelund recognizes that modern readers will look for some justification for whaling—a justification for which there seemed to be no need in 1961. "I try to explain that whaling, like mining, logging, and fishing, was necessary as the only means at hand to produce . . . the material needed to develop our country into a self-reliant nation . . . Whaling has never been the pursuit of the well-found, wealthy, or complacent. Quite the contrary, it has always been the pursuit of the very poor, the very hungry, and mostly, the very desperate of men."

As such, it is a story well worth recording, by a man who knew the industry and its practitioners well, and who can write in the bargain. As an added bonus, the book offers a considerable collection of contemporary photographs, as well as an appendix with data on companies and their vessels.

Peter Murray, long-time newspaperman with the *Victoria Times*, is concerned with another important Victoria endeavour, the schooner fleet that hunted the fur seals of the Pribilof Islands from the 1870s until the enterprise was halted by international convention in 1911. The problem was that these American islands were under lease to a monopoly enterprise, and the schooners had therefore to catch their prey at sea. This was a difficult and costly method, above all in the waste of seals killed but then lost at sea. Because of their life cycle, these were usually females, and often pregnant. It was easier, in fact, to sneak onto the islands to kill seals when possible, but these islands were fog-shrouded and carefully guarded. All in all, it was the type of endeavour that called for tough ships with tough crews, of the sort portrayed by Jack London in his novel *The Sea Wolf*, an epic modeled on the career of one of the most notorious masters, Alex McLean.

Murray chronicles the history of this fleet in great detail, based essentially upon the newspaper files of the time along with other pertinent documents. Unfortunately, the author has deliberately dispensed with most footnotes, and the few included are of such sweeping nature ("U.S. Department of State Files, 1906–1910. Microfilm No. 33") as to be of very little help. In a general account relying mainly upon memory or first-person interviews—Bill Hagelund's, for example—this point would be less important. Murray has written what is, in fact, a very detailed work of history, whose value would be considerably enhanced, for the reader who wishes to use it as such, were it a bit more forthcoming on sources. Nevertheless, the book is a useful contribution, providing a wealth of

detail on many of the vessels (there were at least 150 of them over the whole era), and the intricate negotiations involving the United States, Britain, and Canada in the control of the trade, as well as the vexing issue of compensation to be paid to the sealers involved. The latter question in particular dragged on for many years before the last claim was settled. If in chronicling the process, Murray's work takes on something of the style of a classic well known to students of the area—Lewis and Dryden's *Marine History of the Pacific Northwest*, a work that only began to touch the history of sealing—in offering yearly annals rather than longer-range interpretation, that should not detract from the value of the chronology as such. Particularly, this is the case when, as in this book, the text is supplemented by a fairly substantial bibliography, numerous relevant and interesting photographs, and ten handsome color reproductions of the sealing paintings of Maurice Chadwick.

Although differing in format and principal content, these two books have much in common. Both are written by authors possessing intimate local knowledge, and both convey their love of their subject quite well, though in different ways. Many of the individuals involved participated in both trades, often shifting to whaling when the sealing days were over, such as the Balcom family. Captain Sprott Balcom, his brothers Reuben and Sam, his son Harry, and nephew Berton, were all Victoria sealing masters, and are featured in Murray's work. Sprott Balcom, who in 1892 brought his schooner around the Horn from Nova Scotia (point of origin for many pioneers who subsequently rose to prominence in British Columbia's maritime world), was indeed a founder and leader of that province's whaling industry, as demonstrated by the family recollections quoted by Hagelund. There is an important overlap in these topics that one day will be made apparent in the comprehensive maritime history of the Northwest, which has yet to be written. In the meantime, it is to the credit of these two regional presses that they have chosen to recognize and promote this important heritage (and Harbour Publishing should be forgiven for failing to indicate in the subtitle that Bill Hagelund writes only of Canada's west coast, and not of whaling out of San Francisco, or California's shore stations). Respectively, these valuable works belong in any comprehensive whaling or sealing collection—but students of British Columbia's important maritime annals should acquire both forthwith.

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John C. Dann, ed. *The Nagle Journal: A Diary of the Life of Jacob Nagle, Sailor, from the Year 1775 to 1841*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988. 402 pp. illustrations, notes, appendices, index. $27.50.

Jacob Nagle (1761–1841), born in Reading, Pennsylvania, served in the Revolutionary army under his father, George, a major in the Fifth Pennsylvania Regiment, from September 1777 to spring 1778, a period that included the winter at Valley Forge. Although he eventually secured a pension as an "Old Revolutioner," it is his recounting of his life at sea that makes this journal notable. A seaman during the Revolution on the American privateer *Trojan* on a cruise to the West Indies, Nagle started a career in the British Navy against his will when his vessel, off the Carolinas in November 1781, was taken by HMS *Royal Oak* and HMS *La Nymphe*. He was to spend nineteen years on British naval vessels, including a voyage on the flagship HMS *Sirius* in 1787 with the first fleet to Australia.

Since Captain Cook's exploratory voyage of 1770, the British had considered Botany Bay a habitable site for settlement. The American Revolution had closed the colonies as a dumping ground for Britain's felons, so with Australia becoming a substitute, the fleet carried 759 convicts. Nagle was present at the founding of Sydney, and at the first settlement of Norfolk Island, where he was shipwrecked.

He saw service under Nelson in the Napoleonic Wars, being prize master of HMS *Netley* off the coast of Spain, 1798–1801, probably the high point of his career. From 1802 on, following the Peace of Amiens, he was a merchant seaman and went to China in 1806 with the East India Company vessel *Neptune*. By 1811, he was back in the United States, and shipped aboard a Baltimore sloop, *Griffin*, for Bahia and Rio de Janeiro. He spent the years 1811 to 1821 in Brazil, stranded due to the outbreak of the War of 1812. After his return to the United States, he sailed on a few more merchant vessels, but in 1824 increasing health problems forced him to leave the sea.

He wandered from place to place, staying for a time with a sister in Hagerstown, Maryland, and with another sister in Canton, Ohio. He was, as the editor states, almost a "walking time capsule," in that he left the United States before George Washington became president and returned only four years before the presidency of Andrew Jackson confirmed the rising power of the frontier and of frontier democracy.

The editor of this journal, Dr. John C. Dann, is director of the Clements Library at the University of Michigan, which specializes in material relating to the American Revolution, particularly letters, diaries,

and maps. Nagle's journal, which was sold at auction in 1982, was thought, at first sight, almost too good to be true, but meticulous research in Washington, D.C., in London at the Public Record Office, in Greenwich at the National Maritime Museum, and in local records in Pennsylvania and Ohio has confirmed the sequence of events and names of vessels and captains that Nagle describes. A prime example of "history from the bottom up," the journal is at its best in characterizing the captains, crimps, shipmates, and tavernkeepers with whom Nagle was familiar.

Although Nagle, in 1795, married the "lively handsome" Miss Pitman, daughter of a boatbuilder from the Isle of Wight, he never mentions her first name or the names of "children." Both wife and children died of yellow fever in Lisbon in 1802 as he was preparing to bring them to the United States, and this apparently launched him on his career as a merchant seaman. During this twenty years abroad, he never wrote to his parents, yet he was amazed, upon his return, to find that they had both died. It is clear from his journal that his was the world of action, not introspection. Although opportunities for advancement were offered to him, he had very little ambition, preferring the camaraderie of the seaman's world to the responsibilities of command. He retained an eighteenth-century outlook (as well as handwriting) even in the individualistic, grasping environment of the early nineteenth-century frontier. Dr. Dann speculates that Jacob Nagle wrote his journal during the late 1820s or 1830s, possibly while employed in Canton and Perrysburg, Ohio, in the office of recorder of deeds. The amazing thing, given his level of education, is that he wrote it at all, and that it has survived to give us this view of a seaman's life.

Although the endleaves show a map of the world on which Nagle's voyages are traced, the resulting spider web of lines is difficult to read. Additional, smaller maps in each section would have been very helpful in enabling the reader to follow the action. Otherwise, the book is well illustrated and handsomely designed.

Anne M. Preuss
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Hank and Jan Taft. *A Cruising Guide to the Maine Coast.* Camden, Maine: International Marine Publishing Company, 1988. 382 pp., illustrations. $39.50.

We won't see the likes of *A Cruising Guide to the Maine Coast* again soon. According to their preface, it took Hank and Jan Taft four years, visits to more than five hundred anchorages, and assistance from 127 experts of one sort or another to put this *Guide* together. Not many authors (or publishers) will want to make a similar effort for some years to come.

Let's look first at the peripherals. The introductory material is particularly good, with sensible warnings about private property, environmental protection, weather, and tidal conditions. Scattered throughout the text and clearly separated from the harbor information are inserts on the history and natural life of the Maine coast—everything from shipbuilding and the granite industry to loons and seals. And the publishers seemingly spared no expense to include hundreds of illustrations—both historic and modern photographs, attractive line drawings of wildlife, and numerous charts overprinted with the authors' symbols for anchorages, passages, and significant landmarks.

The heart of the work is composed of individual entries for perhaps three hundred anchorages, from the Isles of Shoals to Oak Bay, and nearly an equal number of additional paragraphs for small islands, significant passages, and other places. Entries for anchorages (but not the shorter paragraphs) are accompanied by symbols denoting the Tafts' ratings as to scenic value, degree of protection, and available facilities, a sort of sea-going Michelin. The text includes detailed information subdivided into some or all of the following headings: Approaches, Anchorages and Moorings, Getting Ashore, For the Boat, For the Crew, and Things to Do.

In my view, the strength of this guide lies first in the wealth of factual information it offers, secondly in the clear and concise way it is organized, and thirdly in the usefulness of its illustrative material. While many readers will not always agree with the Tafts' qualitative judgments, they must surely commend them for sharing their opinions as well as their knowledge of the Maine coast. Neophyte and veteran explorers of the coast alike should welcome this addition to their libraries both at home and afloat. Perhaps one of the book's most enduring, if unintentional, values might lie in the sheer number of harbors covered. For by offering so many alternative anchorages to an increasing number of cruising people, the Tafts may have helped to reduce the number of boats you will find in your favorite anchorage!

Benjamin W. Labaree
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Mystic Seaport Museum Publications

We are pleased to announce our most recent book:

Building the Crosby Catboat
By Barry Thomas

Building the Crosby Catboat preserves a unique form of traditional boatbuilding even as it serves as an instruction manual for a popular boat type, the Cape Cod catboat. In its pages, the twenty-foot catboat *Breck Marshall* takes shape as she is constructed in the Seaport's Boatshop in 1986–87.

The author, Barry Thomas, is the principal boatbuilder in the Museum's Boatshop. It is his conviction that traditional construction methods are essential to the replication of traditional boat types. In his 1977 book, *Building the Herreshoff Dinghy: The Manufacturer's Method*, he demonstrated the lessons learned from a former Herreshoff employee.

In *Building the Crosby Catboat* Thomas presents nearly vanished knowledge of the methods used by the Crosby family to build catboats at Osterville, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, between 1880 and 1935. With support from the Catboat Association, Thomas and the Seaport's other boatbuilders studied existing boats and spoke with Crosby employees. But not until they interviewed Horace Manley Crosby, Jr., did they learn the secrets of Crosby construction methods. With Crosby's guidance, they were able to build a nearly exact replica of a classic Crosby catboat, ca. 1900.



(Photo by Claire White-Peterson)

(Photo by Mary Anne Stets)



Building the Crosby Catboat is not just a boatbuilding manual—though it is certainly that, offering the guidance that a knowledgeable amateur boatbuilder can use to produce an authentic Cape Cod catboat. Of equal importance is the book's function in maritime preservation as a documentary record of previously unwritten knowledge of a classic American boat type.

This sixty-page book is illustrated with fifty-four photographs and includes seven foldout plans. Bound in paper, *Building the Crosby Catboat* is available for $8.00.

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All Mystic Seaport Museum publications, and other books, are available at a 10 percent discount for members only at the Mystic Seaport Museum Bookstore. (Add $2.00 for shipping and handling. For Connecticut delivery, add 8 percent sales tax.)



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