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THE DECLINE OF THE AMERICAN WHALE FISHERY
1865-1900
by
Shirley W. Mayhew

THE WHALING BARK "MARY FRAZIER"
by
John W. Osborn

THE WHALEMAN'S CLASSIC — A VINEYARD VERSION
by
Mr. Simmons

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DCHS NEWS

Again this year our summer helpers are Deborah White and Thomas Tilghman. Deborah was graduated from North Attleboro High in June and is going to enter Wheaton College in the Fall. She is helping Miss Scoville in the Cooke house.

Thomas is showing the grounds, lighthouse and carriage shed. He was graduated from Kent School this Spring and will enter Harvard in the Fall.

Mrs. Jack Manley Rosé, who before her marriage was Grace Norton of Edgartown, has presented the Society with a sharpie built by the late Adolph Morgan. Dolph Morgan was one of Edgartown’s most famous builders of small boats, and very few of his sharpies survive. They were noted for their fine rowing qualities. That was in the days before outboard motors when the rowing qualities of a boat were important.

We are fortunate in being able to add Mrs. Rosé gift to our growing collection of boats, which now includes the Edgartown racing whaleboat, the Nomans land boat, the Eskimo kayak, the Polynesian dugout, and the St. Lawrence skiff. Next we should have a dory, a catboat and perhaps the Alice Wentworth.

Another valuable gift has been presented to the Society by Mrs. E. K. McCagg of Stonington, Conn. It is a scale model of a whaleboat — with crew — and fast to a whale and being towed through a plaster sea. We could describe this model in detail, and the detail is there, but it would be much better to come to see it.

G.H.
THE DECLINE OF THE AMERICAN WHALE FISHERY
1865-1900

by
Shirley W. Mayhew

Had Herman Melville never written his classic "Moby Dick" in 1851, perhaps only the people living along the east and west coasts of America would be aware that such an industry as the American whale fishery ever existed. But if mid-westerners think only of railroads and oilwells and wheat fields when they think of industrial American in the last century, to the descendants of the 19th century whalemen, this phase of American history is alive with memories and stories of great men and great adventures. But listen to Ishmael, in the chapter of Moby Dick called "The Advocate":

"I freely assert, that the cosmopolite philosopher cannot, for his life, point out one single peaceful influence, which within the last sixty years has operated more potentially upon the whole broad world, taken in one aggregate, than the high and mighty business of whaling. . . . For many years past the whale-ship has been the pioneer in ferreting out the remotest and least known parts of the earth. She has explored seas and archipelagoes which had no chart, where no Cook or Vancouver had ever sailed. If American and European men-at-war now peacefully ride in once savage harbors, let them fire salutes to the honor and glory of the whale-ship, which originally showed them the way, and first interpreted between them and the savages. They may celebrate as they will the heroes of Exploring Expeditions, your Cookes, your Krusensterns; but I say that scores of anonymous Captains have sailed out of Nantucket, that were as great, and greater than your Cooke and your Krusenstern. For in their succorless empty-handedness, they, in the heathenish sharked waters, and by the beaches of unrecorded, javelin islands, battled with virgin wonders and terrors that Cooke with all his marines and muskets would not willingly have dared. All that is made such a flourish of in the old South Sea Voyages, those things were but the lifetime commonplaces of our heroic Nantucketers. Often, adventures which Vancouver dedicates three chapters to, these men accounted unworthy of being set down in the ship's common log."

The history of American whaling may be roughly divided into three periods — the first, drift whaling and inshore whaling as practised first by the Indians, and then by the first settlers of Long Island and New England; later, sperm whaling; and at the last, Arctic whaling. The first recorded attempt by white men to kill a whale took place in 1620 while the Mayflower was anchored in what was to be called Provincetown Harbor.

"A number of whales 'of greate size' were feeding and disporting in the vicinity of the famous shallow. One venturesome member of the school came to the surface close to the side of the ship. A fowling piece was loaded with a super-charge, aimed and fired. But those on board the Mayflower came nearer to catastrophe than the whale, for the extra charge was too much for the weapon and it exploded. The whale sounded, and a survey of the Mayflower crew and passengers established that there were no casualties."

1 Whaling Masters — Voyages 1731-1925. Compiled and written by the Federal Writers' Project of the WPA.

In the middle of the 18th century the little island of Nantucket emerged as a port with a future in whaling, but, after 1815 New Bedford began to challenge Nantucket's supremacy in the industry. This was the beginning of a long rivalry, in which New Bedford took the lead around the middle of the 19th century. Although most coastal towns had, at one time or other, at least one whale-ship, the burden of supplying the entire country with oil and whalebone fell on the five ports of Nantucket, Sag Harbor, New London, Fairhaven, and above all, New Bedford. At the peak of American
whaling, these five ports accounted for almost five-sixths of all whale-ships.

The main products of the whale hunt were the oil and bone from the giant creatures, and of the different whales, the oil of the Sperm whale was of the best quality.

Sperm oil, as brought from the sea, was purified and then separated into two products — oil and spermaceti. Spermaceti is a fat, semi-solid substance found in the upper portion of a Sperm whale’s head. It was in great demand for the manufacture of high grade candles, sometimes used in giving a high gloss to linen in the laundry, and to some extent in medicine. Sperm oil was used as a lubricant and in softening leather in the tanneries. Homes were lighted with whale-oil lamps, and crude whale-oil, when refined, yielded both oil and a substance called whalefoots. Whale oil was used in ropewalks, and it was mixed with black lead and paraffin to make a lubricant. Whalebone, of course, was essential to women’s fashion of the period — corset stays and hoops for petticoats were made from it. Even the teeth were utilized in carving scrimshaw, which has been called the only original American art form.

Few industries have ever been such a gamble between enormous profits and financial ruin. And few occupations offered such contrasts between great hardship and satisfying adventure. Whether frozen in the ice in the Arctic seas, or lying in the embrace of a lovely South Sea island girl, or experiencing the loneliness and monotony of being becalmed for days on end, the whaling man lived a life of infinite variety and sometimes great adventure.

The typical whaling vessel of later years was the Bark, and an average crew on a five-boat whale-ship consisted usually of thirty-five to forty men, including the Captain and his officers. In the early days of whaling most of the crews were recruited from the men of the whaling ports themselves. This made for democracy in the whaling fleet and oftentimes the Captain knew personally most of his own crew, some of them being sons of his neighbors and relatives. So, too, when the ships met at sea and

visited back and forth (that unique custom known as “gamming”) it was largely a case of neighbor seeing neighbor. However, as the 19th century progressed and other opportunities opened up for the young men of New England, especially in the West, the character of the crew of a whale-ship underwent an unfortunate change. As the industry grew, it became harder to get men to fill so many vessels, and with a few experienced seamen, the rest of the crew could be made up of men of any type who could be persuaded, by fair means or foul, to sign the ship’s papers. Thus, whaling crews came to be made up of riffraff off the streets, green country boys straight off the farm, and criminals who saw the opportunity to skip town for three or four years to escape justice. Also, men were often taken on, as additions or replacements at the Azores and Cape Verde Islands, and almost all countries were represented in the steaming forecastle of an average whaler. As an example of one of these heterogeneous crews:

“There were eight Americans, four Portuguese, and two Irishmen among the occupants of the forecastle of the vessels on which Browne sailed. They included a New York sailmaker who had been on the stage, an English kleptomaniac, a down-easter, a Philadelphia hardware clerk, a New York stonemason, a Mormon, and one hard-drinking son of an old New England whaling family.”


Much has been written of the cruelty of some whaling masters and officers, but when one realizes the character of the average crew, perhaps severe methods of discipline were necessary or at least understandable.

“Most old time masters held to the theory that idleness on long voyages tender to foster the germs of mutiny. During the early part of the voyage, days of calm saw the various boat crews being drilled for hours and hours at a stretch until back and shoulder muscles were almost as supple and strong as steel bands.”

The entire crew, from Captain down to cabin boy, was paid in shares, or "lays," be it profit or loss. The Captain usually received about 1/8 to 1/15, and the greenest hand received about 1/175 of the take. It is well known that whaling captains, many of whom started whaling in their teens as cabin boys, could retire at an early age, and invest their earnings to bring them an income the rest of their lives. On the other hand, the ordinary crew members sometimes ended a four year whaling journey with a balance of $9 to $100 for the time spent at sea. It is significant

"that there were very few men in the middle of the century who ever signed a whale-ship's papers a second time... The industrial barons on shore could teach them [the whaling merchants] nothing in the exploitation of labor. They drove their employees and underpaid them with a callous disregard of human rights which has few parallels in the whole of the 19th century on either sea or land."  


No wonder men mutinied or never returned a second time to ship out on a whale-ship. They endured years away from home and loved ones, boredom, and much danger.

"If a whaleboat were upset, and it was seen that the crew had something to hold onto in order to prevent going under, it was often a long time before the other boats rendered assistance, whales being of much higher commercial value than men."


There were several famous mutinies. One took place on the ship Junior in the year 1857, and although the Captain and third mate were murdered, the ringleader wrote a story of the mutiny in the ship's log, and the account was signed by the five mutineers in order to clear the rest of the men on board. After escaping from the ship with all the plunder they could carry, they were subsequently captured and brought to Boston, where they were defended by Benjamin F. Butler.

In spite of all the drawbacks and personal hardships of whaling, the industry flourished until the middle of the 19th century.

"The apogee of American whaling was clearly marked by the decade 1850-1860. With the Civil War came a group of forces which relentlessly tore down the structure of prosperity erected after 1830. Some of these forces struck sudden blows at the fishery; others worked slowly and cumulatively. But all were destructive; and following their ravages, whaling activities entered upon a period of decline which passed gradually into irretrievable ruin and ultimately into virtual extinction."  


It was the Civil War which delivered the first and most obvious attack upon the duration of the industry's prosperity. During the space of five years the whaling fleet was cut in half. Much of this destruction was wrought by the Confederate cruisers "Alabama" and "Shenandoah". The "Alabama", under Commander Raphael Semmes, met its first whaler in September, 1862, the "Ocmulgee" from Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard. The "Ocmulgee" had a whale alongside and the crew was busy cutting-in their catch, oblivious to the cruiser which was rapidly approaching them. They were taken without a struggle and the first account that Edgartown had, came as a dispatch from a London newspaper:

The London Shipping Gazette of September 27, contains the following report made by the British ship "Cairngorm" at London from Sydney:

"Three whaleboat's crews came alongside at Flores from the steamer "Alabama", Captain Semmes, and wished to be reported as having had their ship "Ocmulgee", American whaler, hailing from Edgartown (Mass.) set on fire and totally burned by the Confederate steamer, above named. The "Ocmulgee" had on board two hundred and fifty barrels oil. There were thirty-four hands all told. Capt. Semmes (late of the Sumter) behaved hospitably to the crew. . . . Great anxiety of course prevails as to the other vessels captured, and also
in relation to the whole Atlantic fleet cruising about the Western Islands, as at the date of capture of the “Ocmulgee”, a large number of them would be touching at Fayal to land oil and to obtain recruits.”

Vineyard Gazette, October 17, 1862.

Altogether, the “Alabama” destroyed some fourteen whaleships, and the “Shenandoah”, under Captain James Waddell, wrecked even more havoc with the Pacific whaling fleet.

“. . . taking thirty-eight vessels, of which number four were bonded and permitted to return to port and thirty-four burned to the water’s edge. In all, the Pacific whaling fleet suffered losses well over $1,500,000.”


Before the war was over, the two Confederate cruisers had destroyed some forty-eight whaling vessels.

The year previous, one of the chief annoyances to the Federal cause was the Southern blockade runners that slipped past the navy with stores for the South, and exports for foreign lands. Some genius in the navy department thought up a plan for sending down a fleet of ships from the North, loaded with stone, and sinking them outside of Charlestown harbor, thus closing the channel. The scheme was readily adopted, and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Gustavus V. Fox, was to put it into execution. Bids were asked and the job of furnishing ships and stone was awarded to a New York man, who in turn, placed it with a New Haven firm. An executive of the New Haven firm was an old friend of the local New Bedford firm of I. H. Bartlett & Sons, and with the extensive shipping of that city in mind, he turned to them for assistance. Because the whaling industry was beginning to wane, there were a number of old whaleships lying at the wharves, awaiting purchase. And so it happened that New Bedford furnished twenty-four of the forty-five vessels required by the Federal Government, most of which were bought for between $3000 and $5000. About 7500 tons of stone were required to fill the ships, and a James Duddy furnished them. He went into the country and soon had all the farmers tearing down walls and loading stone on drays. When the fleet was ready, they were sparsely equipped with stores and skeleton crews, and left New Bedford on the morning of November 20, 1861. By December 20, they had congregated off the bar at Charleston, and by that night the fleet was entirely scuttled in an effort to create a blockade, which turned out to be in vain. Thus, another great blow to the famous whaling fleet.

But already, back in 1859, the real death knell had been sounded for the industry. Edwin Drake, a former conductor of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, was making some experiments near Titusville, Pennsylvania, and finally his efforts paid off when the oil well he had been laboriously drilling at the slow rate of two or three feet a day, struck oil. By 1861 the first gusher was in operation and the price of petroleum dropped from $1.00 to twenty-five cents a gallon — it was flowing like water.

“The increasing use of petroleum after the Civil War provided both illuminants and lubricants of such a nature that they rapidly undermined the markets for whale oil and spermaceti oil. Due in part to this progressively victorious competition of petroleum, and in part to the more profitable employment of labor and capital on shore, the whaling industry was drained of much of its capital at the very time when funds were sorely needed for replacements. An old and waning fishery could attract but little of the flood of new capital which was pouring into the feverish exploitation of the natural resources of the nation. New Bedford, herself, Queen of the whaling ports, devoted more and more of her savings to the construction of cotton mills rather than to the equipment of whaling vessels.”


As whaling died out, the mills were built up, and it is owing to these same mills that the city was saved from becoming a deserted fishing village. Whale oil, which immediately after the Civil War was priced at $1.28 a gallon, had dropped at the close of the century to thirty cents. Wax was invented for candles in the latter part of the 19th century which robbed the industry of
another market for its oil. Sperm candles became ornaments and whale oil lamps became relics to be looked at in museums.

Other causes contributed to the rapid decline of the whaling industry; for instance, the financial crisis of 1857, the uncertainty of the business especially since Arctic whaling was begun in 1848, the increased cost of fitting out a ship for the longer voyage, "...the increasing scarcity and shyness of the game, required longer and more uncertain voyages, thus increasing financial risk and necessitating the employment of capital throughout a greater period of time in order to reach the same goal — a full ship."19

"Ibid.

With heightened costs, a falling demand, a great business depression of 1873, the Civil War destruction of vessels — throughout the last quarter of the 19th century, it was apparent that American whaling was doomed.

In 1871 it was dealt the first of several final blows. During the post war years the whale fishery’s center of gravity was shifted slowly but surely from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. As Sperm whales became harder to find, the whalers sailed farther and farther north on the Pacific. They had to wait until the ice melted in mid-summer to go up through the Bering Straits into the Arctic Ocean, and then had to sail out again in September or early October before the sea froze over again. However, late in August of 1871, an unexpected southwest wind blew in an early icy blast, and before a week had passed, the ice had begun to form, and thirty-three ships, twenty-two of them from New Bedford, were trapped, with twelve hundred persons aboard. Their only hope of escape lay in reaching the five Barks that were still in clear water, about seventy miles to the south. This could possibly be done in the whaleboats. Following are excerpts taken from the journal of Mr. Earle, chief officer of the Emily Morgan, one of the thirty-three whalers lost, as printed in The (Martha’s) Vineyard Gazette of December 22, 1871:

"Sept. 2 — Light and variable winds mostly from the Southern

bound. The main pack is slowly but steadily advancing toward the land, pressed by the vast field to the northwest of us. This morning at 1 a.m. the Brig, Comet, was crushed by the ice and sold at auction, with all her stores, etc., for thirteen dollars. The crew of the Roman* came down to the fleet, she having been crushed by the ice, the men barely escaping with their lives. The Reindeer was hard pressed by the ice ...

"Sept. 12 — The Captain left in the starboard boat at 4 a.m. leaving orders for me to act according to circumstances; if the other ships are abandoned, to abandon ours at the same time — to do as the others do. For my part, I will not cross the Arctic Ocean in an open whale-boat laden with men and provisions in the latter part of the month of Sept. and Oct. As far as Icy Cape there is no danger, but beyond that (if all ships’ companies have to take to boats to Behring’s Strait) the sea is dangerous at this season of the year. Out of the fourteen hundred men, not a hundred will survive. I will return from Icy Cape if ships cannot be found.

"Sept. 13 ... Early this morning at a meeting of the shipmasters it was decided to abandon the ships at 10 a.m. tomorrow. I was not informed of the decision till afternoon; this took me by surprise, as I did not anticipate leaving before the 20th or 25th, as communications have been established with the vessels to the SW. However, I have raised on the gunnels of the three remaining boats, made my boat cover and am now ready, if not willing, to make a start.

"Sept. 14 ... Took our last dinner on board, then struck everything below, spiked down the lower and upper deck hatches, nailed the booby hatch and locked the companionway doors, ordered the men into the boats between half-past one and two p.m.; stood on the rail for a moment taking a last survey, and said, ‘Goodbye old Emily Morgan’. ..."11

11 Vineyard Gazette, December 22, 1871.
Although all twelve hundred or so persons escaped without the loss of one life, the thirty-three vessels, worth almost $2,000,000, were a complete loss, and a deadly blow was dealt the industry just at the time it was struggling to recover from the Civil War and other numerous adverse forces. The diminishing Arctic fleet continued to lose ships and also men. Five years after the initial Arctic disaster, twelve more vessels were frozen in and abandoned, this time with a loss of fifty lives, and $660,000 worth of property. In 1879 and 1888, two and five ships were lost, respectively, this time with a loss of all hands. In 1897 and 1898 several more were caught in the ice, and the crews survived only with help from the whaling stations which had by this time been established on the Alaskan coast.

Together with the destruction of the old whalers, went a decided change in the fortunes of the ports from which they had sailed. One after another of the smaller whaling ports of New England and Long Island were forced out of the fishery. New Bedford still possessed one hundred and twenty-three vessels in 1880, but this was only half the fleet she had owned thirty years before. By 1880, only nine ports, including of course, New Bedford, were still sending out whaling ships. And New Bedford, with her one hundred and twenty-three ships boasted three-fourths of the total number. By 1892 there were only thirty-two vessels still pursuing whales in the Atlantic, and when the turn of the century loomed in 1898, the great Atlantic whaling fleet had been further reduced to fourteen craft.

"In 1906, just sixty years after New World whaling had reached its zenith with a fleet of seven hundred and thirty-five vessels, and 233,000 tons, only a beggarly flotilla of forty-two whalers remained afloat. . . . But even this was not the end. Disintegration and decay continued to work their will upon the industry for something more than another decade, until only the Bark Wanderer and the ship Charles W. Morgan remained. And when the Wanderer, tired of dragging out her days in the uncongenial atmosphere of the twentieth century, at length piled up on the rocks at Cuttyhunk in 1924, the Morgan was left as the sole (and inactive) survivor of a fleet which once whitened every sea."


The Charles W. Morgan is now preserved at Mystic, Connecticut as a monument to one of America’s lost industries.

But now, as Ishmael says so poetically, Foster Rhea Dulles, in his chronicle of American whaling, "Lowered Boats", says also, more prosaically:

"Whaling should not be remembered primarily because of its part in our commercial development or because of the prosperity it brought to the whaling ports. It should be remembered because it led to the opening up of new seas and the discovery of new islands, because it widened our national horizons, and because in the dangerous pursuit of Leviathan, this country excelled all other nations. We had no rival in the mid-century period of whaling’s greatest development; our whale-ships won as wide a renown as our clipper ships. No phase of our national life had a flavor and color more distinctly its own or more typically American. It may be that the part it played in our history was small, but it was fraught with drama and romance. On such grounds the traditions of our whaling days should be kept alive and their value as a national heritage proudly recognized."


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The Whaling Bark “Mary Frazier”
by
John W. Osborn

The Bark “Mary Frazier” was a whaleship that sailed from Edgartown in the period from 1876 to 1887, which was near the end of Vineyard whaling.

This ship had a very interesting history, one which makes it noteworthy in Vineyard annals.

She was purchased by my grandfather Samuel Osborn Jr. and others in 1876 for $7000.00. Mr. Osborn at that time being an owner in eight different whaleships sailing from Edgartown. The “Mary Frazier” was built in Newbury, Mass. in 1882 and is described in Custom House records as follows:

“The said vessel has two decks and three masts and her length is 113.6 feet, her breadth is 25ft, her depth is 15.9 feet. She measures 301.4 Gross tons and net 286.38 tons and that she is a Bark, has a figure head and a square stern.”

She made four voyages in all, the last being a fatal one as she became a total loss in Fayal in the Azores, after being seized by the Portuguese Government, while cruising for whales outside the jurisdictional limits.

On her first voyage she sailed from Edgartown at 7 A.M. on October 25, 1876, with Captain Henry G. Dexter, Master, and officers and crew totaling 31 men, headed for the middle and South Atlantic Ocean. She reached whaling ground February 5th 1877 and spoke the Bark “Sea Queen” of Westport, 15 months out, with 240 bbls of oil.

Struck their first whale, called a long whale, March 21st, from which they got 115 bbls of oil. April 25th, exactly six months from Edgartown, sighted the West Coast of Africa and the next day came to an anchor in “Little Fish Bay.” She cruised up and down the Coast for more than three years, in and out of ports. Kabenda, Little Fish Bay, Islands of St. Helena and Tristan seemed to be the places most visited.

On June 23rd 1880, three years and nine months out, the log states: “Left Elephant Bay with light airs at daylight, bound home.” August 20th, “Sighted South Shoal Lightship at 6 A.M. Raised No Mans Land next morning, took pilot aboard, came to an anchor in the Port of Edgartown at 9 P.M.” August 21st 1880.

On this voyage she raised 27 Sperm whales from which she got 13,341 gals of oil, 31,687 gals of Humpback oil, and 2,213 lbs of Humpback whale bone. Total receipts being $26,794.16.

On her second voyage she left Edgartown on November 3rd 1880, with Captain Joshua C. Lapham of New Bedford, Master and returned in September 1883. This seemed to be a more successful voyage, as the total take was 43,319 gals of Sperm oil, worth $38,580.00.

The third voyage was a three-year voyage from December 12th 1883 to December 1886, with Captain C. S. Downs, Master. This voyage had gross receipts of $36,400.00.

On her final and disastrous voyage she left Edgartown June 7th 1887 with Joshua G. Lapham again sailing as Master. Whilst cruising off the Azores, the Bark “Mary Frazier” was seized by the Portuguese gunboat “Acor” and towed into Fayal, on the 3rd of October 1888. The charge against the Captain and ship was that he was running tobacco, which was never proven in the Courts.
The ship was fined $510.00 (American money) and the Captain had to give security for $400.00 which he did not have at the time. He was kept a prisoner for three days and was only allowed liberty then by giving bonds not to leave Fayal. The ship had 500 bbls of Sperm oil at the time.

After the lower Courts found him guilty, he appealed, and the Lisbon Tribunals reversed the judgment of the lower Court and the Captain was allowed to take possession of his vessel. All this court action took nearly seven months and the crew had nearly all taken berths aboard other ships, so the Captain was faced with the task of re-fitting the ship and finding a new crew, which made it doubly hard because he was not allowed to hire any men from Fayal. After two months of fitting out, and with only a few of his former crew, he went to the Island of Flores to try to get more men. It was while the vessel was here, anchored off the port, that a hurricane blew up and she was destroyed in the storm, a total loss to the owners. There was an official protest made to the Portuguese Government for damages to no avail.

So ends the story of the Bark "Mary Frazier."

The Whalemans Classic — A Vineyard Version
by
Mr. Simmons

We was cruisin' down the Mozambique channel under reefed tops'l's and blowin' fitten to have the sticks out of her. Two years out of New Bedford and not much ile. And the man at the masthead shouts, "Thar she blows."

Bein' as I was first mate I goes aft. "Captain Simmons," I says — his name bein' the same as mine, but no kith nor kin, thank God — "the man at the masthead says, 'Thar she blows.' Shall I lower?"

"Mr Simmons," says the captain, "I think as how it's blowin' a little might nigh too pert. And I don't see fitten for to lower." And I goes for'ard.

And the man at the masthead sings out, "Thar she blows and breaches." And I goes aft.

"Captain Simmons," I says, "the man at the masthead says 'Thar she blows and breaches.' Shall I lower?" And the captain he says what he says before. And I goes for'ard.

And the man at the masthead sings out, "Thar she blows and breaches, and sparm, too. She'll go ninety bar'l's if she'll go a quart."

And I goes aft. "Captain Simmons," I says, "the man at the masthead says 'Thar she blows and breaches, and sparm, too.' Shall I lower?"

"Mr. Simmons," says the captain, "I recollect as how I told you onc't or twic't afore as how its blowin' a might nigh too pert. And I don't see fitten for to lower. But Mr. Simmons, if you sees fitten for to lower, get your boat's crew together and overside and to hell with you."

So I gets my boat's crew together and overside and to hell with us. So we goes on the whale, and when we gets close to her I says to my boatsteerer, "I'll put you three seas closer." He was smart with the long harpoon and he darted and the iron it took. And when the whale was dead we towed her alongside to cut in.

I comes on deck on deck and the captain says, "Mr. Simmons, I call'ate as how you're the best first mate as ever sailed in a ship of mine. Go below and in the port locker you'll find a box of fine Havana seegars, and a bottle of fine Barbados rum."

"Captain Simmons," I says, "to hell with your fine Havana ceegars, and to hell with your fine Barbados rum, and to hell with you. All I want on this ship is a leettle of the commonest kind of common ceevility." And I goes for'ard.
The following books are currently on sale at the Society's Museum Building.

The Guide Book—Martha's Vineyard, A Short History by various hands together with a Guide to various points of interest. 1963 edition. Paper cover. $2.00


Records of the Town of Tisbury, Massachusetts, 1669-1864. 841 pages of Island history. $5.00

The Wampanoag Indian Tribute Tribes of Martha's Vineyard by Milton A. Travers. 74 pages. Beautifully illustrated. $2.00

A few back issues of the Intelligencer are available at fifty cents each at the Dukes County Historical Society in Edgartown.

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