
THE WHALE WATCH

Descendants of Whaling Masters, Inc.

Fall 2007

Provincetown Bound

This fall, after a ten-year hiatus, The Provincetown Inn, near the Pilgrims' first landing site, became our DWM landing site for a second time. Most arrived by car, but Wheaton braved the choppy waters while on-board the ferry from Boston!

Whale Talk

After dinner on the town we reconvened at the Inn. Dennis Minsky from the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies (PCCS) gave an informative talk and slide show on the types of whales we were most likely to see on our whale watch and some of the other wildlife that frequents these waters. He explained how commerce and research have joined forces. Naturalists from PCCS narrate each *Portuguese Princess* whale watch, increasing public knowledge and awareness while gathering even more scientific data. Since 1976, over two thousand humpbacks have been individually photographed and named as generations of these whales return to our northern waters.

Whale Watch

The next morning the sun shown brilliantly as we boarded the *Portuguese Princess II* at MacMillan wharf. Leaving the harbor, we passed the Long Point lighthouse on the tip of the Cape and headed out to sea. We never quite reached Stellwagen Bank because whales were soon sighted and the engines were cut. All eyes were trained on the mildly choppy water. We spotted and heard the blows. Slowly the whales' great backs arched out of the sea. A majestic display of the flukes followed. As the humpbacks lazily approached our vessel, we could see a greenish white glow in the water that was actually the white color of their long flippers. Our naturalist Dennis pointed out the fluke prints, patches of very smooth water that our ancestors had mistakenly believed to be pools of oil from the whales. In all, we saw five humpbacks and several minke. Four of the humpbacks were identified as Milkweed, Tear, Wisk and Draco.

Art's Dune Tour

After lunch our hearty crew was loaded up in a caravan of SUV's and headed for the dunes. It was interesting to note that the vehicles run only eleven pounds of tire pressure to prevent digging into the sand. We stopped along the strand to watch several grey seals cavorting in the surf; then we continued on. These dunes are one of only four parabolic dunes in the world. We learned about conservation efforts, which included strand by strand planting of native sea grasses over five thousand acres of sand. We saw a wild cranberry bog and patches of purple beach plums. Tidbits of history provided by our guides included stories of pirates and rescuers. "Moon cussers" were land pirates who would light donkey carts on fire. Unfortunate vessels that mistook the fire for a lighthouse would be drawn into dangerous waters and be wrecked. The pirates cursed the light of the moon because their ruse would be revealed. In the 1800s lifesaving stations were positioned every five miles along the coast and manned ten months out of the year because storms and changing sandbars offshore caused numerous shipwrecks. Surfboats and breeches-buoys were used to rescue the ill-fated mariners. Our trip through history and the dunes was quite amazing.

The Center

Tuesday morning we gathered for a tour of the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies Marine Laboratory. We enjoyed an informative visit with the Center's new director, Richard Delaney. "Good Science" has been the hallmark of this organization from its humble beginnings on the Bay to its considerably more global status today. The PCCS Disentanglement Team has been recognized by the Federal government under the Endan-



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gered Species Act and now coordinates the Atlantic Large Whale Disentanglement Network from Maine to Florida. Their research data, collected over the past thirty years, recently contributed to a permanent change in commercial shipping lanes, and they are now conducting a Cape Cod Bay monitoring program to better understand and protect the entire ecosystem.



Delaney also proudly detailed how they recycled an old school building into the modern, efficient and environmentally green structure that we were touring. Some of the green features include automatic lighting, organic carpeting and the use of vents and windows in place of air conditioning.

We stopped in one of the labs where Dr. Charles "Stormy" Mayo (pictured here) explained some of the current research surrounding Right Whale activity and concentrations of their food. There were many different colored samples from the plankton studies, varying with species and oil content. They were collected with plankton nets that mimic the filtration capability of the whales' baleen. Through a microscope we were able to see the favored copepods. So how do the whales know where to find this food? What enables them to sense/locate adequate plankton concentrations for their caloric needs? Whales can consume 125 pounds of these oil rich zooplankton per hour for 14-18 hours each day! Plankton distribution is patchy, seasonal and complex. The suspicion is that whales communicate with each other as they find their food. Calling and converging, they form tight knot patterns within dense plankton pockets. Stormy is working with a customized computer modeling program that tracks migration patterns and feeding zones through every square meter of ocean off the East Coast. Both searching and feeding algorithms have been programmed with an initial group of twenty-five whales. Variables such as the range of whales' hearing can be assigned to these cyber-whales. The computer will then readjust and recalculate the most likely activity/response resulting from the changed input. Right whale feeding areas are being encroached

upon by both commercial and pleasure boat traffic. Hopefully this research and modeling will lead to a better understanding of the dynamics of the whales and their food source that will enable more accurate risk assessments where whales and humans converge.

Greg and Brian from the Disentanglement Program gave a fascinating presentation on whale rescue. Both the Coast Guard and the use of cell phones have significantly contributed to faster response times. The cell phone allows the initial caller to stay with the moving whale, which in turn enables the rescuers to locate the animal sooner. The disentanglement team in their fifteen-foot Zodiac are not unlike our ancestors in pursuit of the whale. They have adapted the old whaling technique of "kegging" the whale to slow it down. Buoys or floats are attached to the entanglement to create drag. The whale can take the Zodiac for a "sleigh ride" too, with the grapples caught up in the entangled gear. When a telemetry buoy with a GPS/VHF tag is attached, then that whale can be tracked worldwide by satellite. Knowing the whale's changing location allows the team to make repeated attempts at removing the gear. Eighty-nine whales have been successfully disentangled since 1984. As difficult as whale rescue is, they estimate a success rate of 90% with Humpbacks and 50% with Rights.



Beyond the rescue, it is very important to recover and document all gear to try to determine where, in what and why the whales become entangled. A buoy number can lead to where the gear was set and last checked, giving an estimate of how long the whale was entangled. The entangled

gear that causes cuts, infection and necrosis can be carried on the whales for years, hindering both their feeding and mobility and often leading to death. Whales are not the only victims of entanglement. Just the day before our visit, Brian was involved in the rescue of a leatherback turtle that became tangled up in lobster/fishing gear off Sandy Neck Beach in Barnstable. The turtle was examined, treated, tagged and released. So ends our tour. We are very grateful to the folks at PCCS for sharing so much information with us and demonstrating their enthusiasm for and dedication to their work!

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DESCENDANTS OF WHALING MASTERS GIFT SHOP 2007 FALL/WINTER SALE

	<u>Retail</u>	<u>Sale</u>
DWM SCRIMSHAW PINS	\$50.00	\$45.00
NOTECARDS (cream card stock with brown lettering - 5.5"x 4.25"): DWM LOGO or WHALING LOG (specify which) 10 notecards with envelopes	8.00	5.00
WHALING POSTCARDS (package of six)		3.00
WHALE COOKIE CUTTER Sperm Whale of Quality Copper with Recipes (5" x 2")	9.00	8.00
POSTER - 1851 Whale Chart (24" x 36")	5.00	3.00
BOOKS - available while supplies last:		
<i>Whaling Letters</i> , reprint of DWM's <i>My Dear Husband</i>	16.95	15.00
<i>*Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America</i> by Eric J. Dolin (<i>Autographed</i>)	27.95	25.00
<i>Ahab's Trade ~ The Saga of South Sea Whaling</i> by Allen Mawer	24.95	10.00
<i>A Watery Grave</i> by Joan Druett (<i>a Wiki Coffin Mystery - #1</i>)	23.95	12.00
<i>*Shark Island</i> by Joan Druett (<i>a Wiki Coffin Mystery - #2</i>)	23.95	15.00
<i>In the Wake of Madness</i> by Joan Druett - <i>mutiny on the whaleship SHARON</i>	24.95	12.00
<i>Demon of the Waters</i> by Gregory Gibson - <i>mutiny on the whaleship GLOBE</i>	p-14.95 hc-24.95	8.00 12.00
<i>The Corvette</i> by Richard Woodman - <i>British whaling in the Arctic</i>	14.95	10.00
<i>*Miriam Coffin or the Whale-Fisherman</i> by Joseph Hart - <i>intro by Nat Philbrick</i>	19.95	17.95
<i>*Remarkable Observations: The Whaling Journal of Peleg Folger 1751-1754</i>	22.00	19.00
<i>*The Last Shot</i> by Lynn Schooler - <i>the Confederate Raider "Shenandoah's" efforts to destroy the New England Whaling Fleet</i>	25.95	15.00
<i>*The Widow's War</i> by Sally Gunning - <i>a New England Whaler's Wife in the 1760's</i>	24.95	15.00
<i>Whales, Dolphins & Porpoises</i> - <i>Smithsonian's comprehensive pocket guide to Cetaceans of the World</i>	20.00	15.00
*New		
<i>Whale Figurines</i> by Schleich - <i>Humpback Calf, Grey Calf, Sperm Calf</i>		7.00

All sale proceeds benefit Descendants of Whaling Masters, Inc., a Massachusetts 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation.

ORDER FORM

Mail with check made payable to DWM to Wm. H. Potter, Jr., Treasurer, 194 Main St., Fairhaven, MA 02719
Questions? - call Bud Potter at 508-994-0961

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2007 Annual Meeting Photos



Mattapoissett Harbor Days



Chris Davis & Lee Carreiro

the crossroads of pedestrian traffic!

Children and adults alike were fascinated by our table full of whales and other sea creatures. We noted that it wasn't just the kids who were collecting. Buoyed by the success of last year's educational outreach on Right



Sue Grace Taber, Dan Rodrigues & Bud Potter

Whales, we introduced the Humpback as our featured "whale of the year." Coloring pages were given to all youngsters who visited with us.



Chris, Dan, Bob & Sue

Our thanks to the crew: Bud and Cathy Potter, Sue Grace Taber, Beverly Decas, Bob Furtado, Lee and Dick Carreiro, Wheaton Wilbar, Pat Rochford, Dan Rodrigues and Chris Davis.

This summer the Descendants of Whaling Masters were thrilled to have a new location for our booth at Shipyard Park. You could still "meet us at the rock" since we just moved to the corner spot, but as they say - location is everything. There we were right in



Bob & Joanne Furtado, Bud Potter & Pat Rochford

♦ *Bud, Bob,
Sue, Chris
and
Beverly Decas*



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Homeward Bound



The National Seashore Salt Pond Visitors Center and Captain Penniman's Home, both in Eastham, were suggested stopovers on our way home. Before departing Provincetown, many took time to climb the Pilgrim Monument which was celebrating its centennial this year. Did anyone happen to notice the flagpole? It was a harpoon! Descendants, family and friends included: Sandra & Dave Ashley, Michael & Ann Cann, Larry & Chris Davis, Bruce & Melanie Demoranville, Carl & Ted Furtado, Ann Higginson & Martha Baker, Alvin & Eileen Mandley, Bud & Cathy Potter, Bill & Martha Reed, Michael Slagle, Sue & Richard Taber & Wheaton Wilbar. We all agreed we shouldn't wait another ten years to do this again!



Leviathan

Our DWM members have had several opportunities to meet Eric Jay Dolin, author of *Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America*. Dolin has been conducting a rigorous book tour, which included a featured stop at the New Bedford Whaling Museum in August. A full house turned out to hear him recount his experiences in researching and writing *Leviathan*, a process which began three years ago in New Bedford. He also gave a “visual tour” of his book through an informative Power Point presentation.



Eric Jay Dolin

A small box decorated with whaling scenes inspired Dolin to begin exploring the top of whaling. He was soon hooked, or as he said “harpooned.” Against conventional wisdom, Dolin did not choose to write about what he knew. Instead, he wrote about what excited and surprised him as his research unfolded.

He had originally thought of focusing on colonial whaling, lesser known and written about than the “Golden Age” of whaling, but his agent insisted on the need for the entire “epic” to be told. So from Captain John Smith’s unsuccessful quest for whales in the 1600s to the loss of the *Wanderer* in 1924, Dolin has delved into the complex evolution of whaling, its dangers, intrigue, politics, economics, wars and more wars. It becomes clear that the stories of the whaling trade and that of our developing nation were inextricably linked.

In the DWM many of our ancestors hail from the “Golden Age” of whaling. *Leviathan* gives us the opportunity to see the progression of whaling from drift, to shore, to offshore that led up to our ancestors’ far reaching voyages ’round the Horn and finally into the Arctic. We are also introduced to many other whaling ports whose stories were all but eclipsed by those of Nantucket and New Bedford. Dolin has provided us with a larger, more complete view of American Whaling in one concise, informative and highly readable volume.

This October Dolin returned to the area, sharing his book and stories with a gathering at Baker Books in Dartmouth. The smaller venue allowed more conversational time with Dolin. His knowledge of and enthusiasm for our whaling history continues to be impressive and inspiring.

Additional Recommended Reading

The Lost Fleet: A Yankee Whaler’s Struggle Against the Confederate Navy and Arctic Disaster by Marc Songini. (St. Martin’s Press, 2007) Embark on a voyage into the declining years of whaling as experienced by Whaling Master Thomas William Williams and the family he took to sea. Sailing from the ports of Fairhaven, New Bedford, New London and San Francisco, Captain Williams witnessed the successes of the “Golden Age” of whaling, the terror of piracy by Confederate raiders and the terrible losses in the Arctic ice. The New Bedford Whaling Museum’s portrait of Captain Williams is currently being conserved through the support of the Descendants of Whaling Masters.

Island of the Lost: Shipwrecked at the Edge of the World by Joan Druett. (Algonquin, 2007) The year is 1864. Unbeknownst to each other, two vessels, the *Grafton* and the *Invercauld*, are wrecked upon opposite ends of Auckland Island, almost three hundred miles south of New Zealand. Drawing from journals and accounts written by survivors, Druett has pieced together two fantastic and antithetical tales of endurance on a hostile and deserted island. Once again Druett has turned her meticulous research into a riveting narrative of survival and the sea.



Eric Jay Dolin, Cathy & Bud Potter,
Chris Davis and Sue Grace Taber

Slipknot by Linda Greenlaw. (Hyperion, 2007) Working as a marine investigator, Jane Bunker, an ex- “big city” detective retreats to a sleepy fishing village in Maine only to become entangled in the mysterious death of the town drunk. Could it be murder? Greenlaw’s first work of fiction is a suspense filled story, full of eccentric characters and strange politics. She keeps you guessing ’til the bitter end and looking forward to a sequel. DWM members have enjoyed meeting and talking with Greenlaw during her recent appearances at Baker Books in Dartmouth and at the Working Waterfront Festival in New Bedford.

Calendar of Events

June 14th

Annual Meeting - 12 noon

Wamsutta Club, New Bedford

Luncheon, Business Meeting and Election of Officers

Guest Speaker: Eric Jay Dolin

Author of *Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America*

Staying in Touch

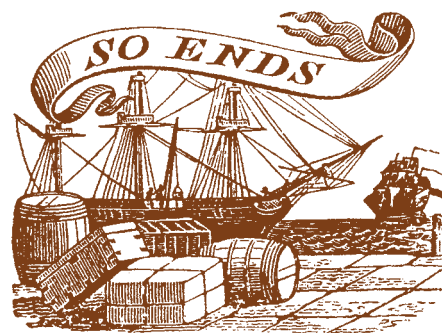
DWM members are encouraged to visit our web page (www.whalingmasters.org). Click on "Event Calendar" to see photos of our activities, trips and the past two annual dinners. We would also like to build an e-mail list of our membership. If you would like to be included, please reply to whalingmasters@yahoo.com with your e-mail address.

July 19 & 20 (tentative dates)

Mattapoisett Harbor Days

Shipyard Park, Mattapoisett

Come visit our booth or join us as we spread the word about DWM and market our vast array of gift items!



www.whalingmasters.org



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