
THE WHALE WATCH

Descendants of Whaling Masters, Inc.

Fall 2008

Brave Man Braver Woman

The New Bedford Whaling Museum and the Descendants of Whaling Masters are pleased to co-sponsor a Samuel D. Rusitzky Lecture by *Lost Fleet* author Marc Songini and guests on Thursday, October 23, 2008 at the Whaling Museum Theatre.

Marc and his crew will deliver a dramatic audio-visual narrative and song presentation entitled "A Brave Man and a Braver Woman: The Adventures of Whaling Master Thomas William Williams and his wife Eliza." The story begins in September 1858 when Eliza, pregnant with her third child, sailed from New Bedford on a three year voyage on the Ship *Florida*. This began a lifelong habit. Thomas and Eliza remained at sea together for the next 20 years. They faced shipwreck, the confederate Navy, rogue whales, sharks and Arctic disaster in the great 1872 Freeze-in. This is a romantic story that captures the romance of the sea and whaling itself. The presentation will have extensive color slides, sea shanties, and dramatic presentations to re-enact the exciting events of 150 years ago. The event is dedicated the fishermen of New Bedford.

Please join us for refreshments and book signing after the presentation.

Restoration Voyage

On Saturday, the 27th of September, Mystic Seaport hosted a day of celebration to launch the *Charles W. Morgan* on her voyage of restoration. A wet and windy day may have forced the ceremonies indoors at the Henry B. duPont Preservation Shipyard but spirits were not dampened. A large crowd of people, including descendants of the *Morgan's* officers and

crew, assembled amongst stacks of wooden boards and the many specialized tools of the Seaport's shipwrights. The *L.A. Dunton* loomed outside the building on the ways soon to be occupied by the *Charles W. Morgan*.

Museum President and Director Douglas Teeson welcomed guests and dignitaries, a proclamation from the Governor was read and the keynote address was given by Dr. Raymond E. Ashley, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Maritime Museum of San Diego. Guests were treated to a dramatic reading by Actor Brian Dennehy as he told of the *Morgan's* encounter with and narrow escape from less than friendly natives.



The *Morgan* was always considered a "lucky" vessel as she whaled on the high seas for 80 years. She made 37 successful voyages and was mastered by 20 captains. In 1941, one hundred years after she was first launched, the *Morgan* arrived at Mystic Seaport where over 20 million people have walked her decks.

The world's last surviving wooden whaleship, a maritime treasure and national historic landmark, is embarking on a new voyage - a three year preservation project that will restore her from the waterline on down. Massive live oak trees salvaged from Hurricane Katrina will be used to replace the live oak timbers still in place from the *Morgan's* original construction. An array of rare historic tools will be used by shipwrights to meticulously craft her period restoration.

On Sunday, October 19th, the *Morgan* will move from her berth at Chubb Wharf to the Preservation Shipyard and on Saturday, November 1st, she will be hauled out on the Seaport's new shiplift and rail transfer system. These events will be weather and tide dependant so please consult www.mysticseaport.org for updates on her progress. The *Charles W. Morgan* will remain on public view during her restoration giving visitors a unique opportunity to see how these massive whaling vessels were constructed.

Remembering Our Ancestors



Frank Kramer, Bruce Demoranville and David Kramer

DWM member Frank Kramer of Limerick, Maine, was kind enough to share the following memories of his New Bedford Whaling Captains Jonathan and Charles Chace.

“Captain Charles Chace was, to the best of my knowledge, the last Whaling Master out of New Bedford, Massachusetts. My wife and I looked forward to his stories of whaling. Great Uncle Charlie found ambergris three times, the profit from which was divided amongst the captain and the crew. He said that whaling was not dangerous if the entire crew did their jobs correctly. He considered whaling the best sport of all time; baseball came up second best. Capt. Charles Chace was the son of Captain Jonathan Chace, also a Whaling Master. Capt. Jonathan Chace sailed the seas for forty years hunting whales out of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Captain Charles Chace started whaling as a cabin boy with his father Capt. Jonathan Chace on the bark *President*. Capt. Charles Chace sailed the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans hunting the great whales. Two of the vessels Uncle Charlie commanded were the *A.M. Nicholson* and the *Andrew Hicks*, the later for 8 years. Capt. Charles Chace was the top notch Master of the J. & W.R. Wing Fleet. Since women were considered to have no function on a whaling vessel, Uncle Charlie had his wife Rachel listed as the Assistant Navigator. His son and daughter were also listed as part of the crew on many voyages.”

We were able to find both Captains, Jonathan and Charles Chace, in Judith Navas Lund’s *Whaling Masters and Whaling Voyages Sailing from American Ports; A Compilation of Sources*. Despite the family spelling of Chace with a “c”, references still appear as Chase with an “s”. From 1870 to 1884, Lund lists Capt. Jonathan Chace as Master of the New Bedford vessels *Osceola II*, *Mattapoissett*, *George and Mary*, *President II* and *Pioneer*

(twice). Interesting to note, his first and last vessels are recorded as condemned but he was still able to send their valuable cargo back home to New Bedford. From 1902 to 1918 Capt. Charles Albert Chace is listed as master of the New Bedford vessels *Sunbeam*, *Platina*, *Andrew Hicks* (three times) and *A.M. Nicholson*.

It turns out that Frank is not the only descendant of the Chaces in our organization. DWM Board Member Bruce Demoranville shares that honor through a different line of descent. Frank and David Kramer both attended this year’s Annual Meeting and met with Bruce to swap stories about their common ancestors.

Recommended Reading

Fisherman’s Bend by Linda Greenlaw (Hyperion, 2008) What do vandalized instrumentation, an unmanned vessel, a drug overdose and, of course, the obligatory dead body have in common? It is left up to Jane Bunker, marine insurance investigator and assistant deputy sheriff, to piece together all this and more along the rocky coast of Maine. Greenlaw’s knack for building suspense carries the reader straight through the final chapter of this perplexing tale before all is revealed.

Man and the Sea: The Portuguese Participation (Azorean and Cape Verdean) in American Whaling by João A. Gomes Vieira (Medialand, Lda, 2007). This beautiful and informative large format book is printed in both English and Portuguese and profusely illustrated with historic photographs and paintings. There are accounts of voyages and biographies that tell the personal stories and experiences of individual Portuguese whalers; many with ties to New Bedford. Our readers will enjoy the opportunity to explore yet another facet of our whaling heritage. This volume is the latest in the O Homen e o Mar / Man and the Sea series. Previous volumes have covered topics such as Portuguese scrimshaw artisans, boats of the Azores and 500 years of Azorean fishing.

Trying Leviathan: The Nineteenth-Century New York Court Case that Put the Whale on Trial and Challenged the Order of Nature by D. Graham Burnett (Princeton University Press, 2007). A strange mix of science, religion, politics and economics drive this peculiar story. Is a whale a fish? It is if you are James Maurice trying to collect an inspection fee on fish oil. But Samuel Judd reasoned that his barrels of oil were from whales, not fish. His simple attempt to avoid a \$75 fee turned into one of New York’s most sensational trials, pitting modern taxonomy against the biblical belief that birds fly in the air, beasts crawl upon the earth and fish swim in the sea. Burnett’s thorough research has brought this intriguing trial to life, thankfully rescuing it from obscurity.

Annual Meeting 2008



Annual Meeting 2008



Mattapoissett Harbor Days

Record breaking heat and sales marked DWM's 8th appearance at the July Mattapoissett Harbor Days celebration. Rumor had it that Saturday's temperature reached 108°. Sunday was thankfully more temperate.

Saturday morning Marc Songini, author of *The Lost Fleet: A Yankee Whaler's Struggle Against the Confederate Navy and Arctic Disaster*, met with our customers. We enjoyed his company as he discussed whaling and signed books despite the sweltering heat. Sunday, Pirate Captain Jack Sparrow made a surprise appearance, testing our young customers' knowledge of sea creatures. We believe he was "right pleased with the little lubbers".

Bud Potter reports that our Saturday sales were better than any year since 2004 and Sunday sales were the best ever. Hot sellers were once again our sailors' rope bracelets and our increasing variety of whale and shark figurines. Our featured whale this year was the Sperm Whale, an icon of American Whaling. Coloring pages were given to all visiting children.

Our raffle for the hand-knit child's whale sweater continued through the weekend. The winning ticket was drawn Sunday afternoon and the sweater is headed out to DWM member Marianne Hale of California. Thanks to Board Member Laura Kohring for her beautiful handwork.

Our thanks to the crew: Bud and Cathy Potter, Bob and Carl Furtado, Lee and Dick Carreiro, Bruce Demoranville, Pat Rochford, Sue Grace Taber, Dan Rodrigues and Chris Davis.



Bud Potter, Chris Davis, Sue Grace Taber



Capt. Jack the Pirate



Sunday Crew: Bruce Demoranville, Bud Potter, Carl Furtado, Richard Carreiro, Lee Carreiro



Raffle Prize won by DWM member Marianne Hale;
Sweater knit by Board Member Laura Kohring



Bob Furtado, Chris Davis, Bud Potter



"Lost Fleet" author Marc Songini signing books



Capt. Jack the Pirate



Bruce Demoranville explaining whales

Calendar of Events

October 23rd, 2008

New Bedford Whaling Museum

Theatre

A Samuel D. Rusitzky Lecture, "A Brave Man and a Braver Woman: The Adventures of Whaling Master Thomas William Williams and his wife Eliza" by *Lost Fleet* author Marc Songini and guests.

6:00 pm Book Signing, 7:00 pm Lecture

Co-sponsored with the Descendants of Whaling Masters

Save the Dates

June 13, 2009

Annual Meeting, 12 noon

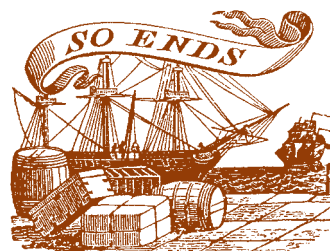
Wamsutta Club, New Bedford

Program: TBA

July 18 & 19, 2009

Mattapoisett Harbor Days

Shipyard Park, Mattapoisett



www.whalingmasters.org



Descendants of Whaling Masters, Inc.
P. O. Box 3026
New Bedford, MA 02741