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Some more old items and entries from the "Whalemens' Shipping List and Merchants' Transcript". The Provincetown whaler **Agate**, Captain **Atkins**, owned by **W. A. Atkins**, sailed March 25, 1875 for a voyage in the Atlantic Ocean. She was reported in October with no cargo "at sea in Lat. 35 N, Lon. 51 west". The schooner **Alyone**, captain not reported, owned by **E. & E. K. Cook & Co.**, arrived in port on October 4, 1875, with 200 barrels of sperm oil. The schooner **Antartic**, Captain **Bell**, owned by **William A. Atkins**, sailed March 25, 1875, voyaging in the Atlantic and was reported September 25th at sea in lat. 33 12, lon. 73 20, with 50 barrels of sperm oil on board. The schooner **Arizona**, captain not reported, arrived in port September 22nd with 160 barrels of sperm oil. (The "arrived in port" is at Provincetown unless otherwise designated as in the following item.) The schooner **B. F. Sparks**, captain not reported, owned by **Stephen Cook**, arrived at **New Bedford, Mass.**, September 21st with 100 barrels of sperm oil.

The whaling schooner **Ellen Rizpah**, owned by **Stephen Cook** arrived in the port of Provincetown on September 21, 1875, with 220 bbls. of whale oil. Another Stephen Cook vessel, the schooner **Gage H. Phillips** arrived in port on September 7, 1875, with 450 bbls. of sperm oil. The schooner **Gracie M. Parker**, owned by **Alfred Cook**, beat the rival whaler in by two days arriving at **New Bedford, Mass.**, but with only 200 bbls. of whale oil and 190 bbls of sperm oil. The schooner **Lottie E. Cook**, owned by **William A. Atkins**, arrived September 21 with 20 bbls of sperm and 190 bbls of whale oil. The schooner **Rising Sun**, owned and captained by **Thomas S. Taylor**, arrived at **New Bedford**, with 150 bbls of sperm and 60 bbls of whale oil after a short voyage in the Atlantic Ocean.

Whale of a Voyage

Richard Mather, traveling from England to America in 1635, saw so many whales as his ship neared Cape Cod that in his journal he noted seeing "mighty whales spewing up water in the air like smoke of a chimney, and making the sea about them white and hoary, as it is said of Job, of such incredible bigness that I will never wonder that the body of Jonah could be in the belly of a whale."

By Irving S. Rogers

Whaling Vessels and Owners: When Provincetown reached its peak in the whaling industry and up until the decline of whaling out of this port the entire town was dependent on its vessels for support. The cooper, who made and got the oil barrels ready for the long voyages, did a good job on the casks because he often owned a share in various vessels. The sailmaker also had a personal interest in putting out good canvas and doing everything possible to assure each whaling vessel a safe return to port because he, too, owned shares. The shipfitters, caulkers and riggers, also put extra effort into their work and good materials into the vessels to protect their financial interest in the fleet. The ship's chandler supply house often had big bills against an outward bound whaler and was duly concerned about each voyage. In fact, the captains, crew and the families, along with all the merchants and other townspeople, watched each sailing, listened attentively to rumors about the vessels and anxiously waited for their return to port. The industry was practically a community project with each person having a financial, personal or gainful, interest in the success or failure of each voyage.

The whaling schooner **B. F. Sparks**, of Provincetown, was built in Essex in the year 1853. In the year 1863 the schooner was still making voyages out of Provincetown captained by **John J. Cook**. She was 92 tons, 78 feet in length, 21 feet wide (or on the beam) and had an 8 foot depth. (A small craft for the whaling trade and in comparison to the rest of the fleet.) Her owners were **Stephen Cook**, with 14-16ths, **George O. Knowles** with 1-16th and **I. S. Robinson** 1-16th. Mr. Cook built vessels and maintained a marine railway. Mr. Knowles was an outfitter and speculator. Mr. Robinson, of Boston, was a ship's broker, an investment speculator in all kinds of ships.

The bark, **Buchina**, of Provincetown had a tonnage of 206 gross tons, her length overall was 96.5 feet (18.5 feet longer than the **B. F. Sparks**) a beam of 25 feet and depth 9 feet 11 inches. Owners: **Enoch Nickerson 1-8th**, **Francis B. Tuck 1-8th**, **Jonathan Nickerson 1-8th**, **Stephen Nickerson 1-8th**, **Enos Nickerson 1-8th**, **Charles Nickerson 1-16th**, **Benjamin Small 1-16th**, **Joseph W. Tuck 1-32nd**, **Thomas F. Lucas 1-32nd**, **Charles A. Hannum 1-32nd**, **William W. Smith 1-32nd**, **Benjamin Freeman 1-32nd**, **Atkin Ballard 1-32nd**, of Provincetown, and **Simon Willard** of Boston. The Master was **Francis B. Tuck**. The bark was a three master, one deck, square stern and billet head, and was previously registered at **New London, Conn.**, in 1850 until registry was changed to Provincetown in 1852.

Cape Welcomed All Drift Whales

Whaling Industry Developed From Long-Ago Use Of Whales Washed Ashore

Whales were abundant in the waters of Massachusetts Bay and Cape Cod at the time the **Mayflower** dropped anchor in Provincetown Harbor. Early settlers on the Cape lost no time in securing the dead whales that were cast up upon the shores and beaches. Oil for the lamps of these early settlers was scarce and every drop that could be tried out from the blubber of a drift whale was that much less that had had to be purchased from England or shipped in from other parts of the colony.

In the early days of the Cape settlement when a whale would drift onto the beach, all hands would turn to in helping cut off the blubber. Once off it was cut up into small hunks, carried to a location where it could be tried out in large iron kettles over a fire. The oil was placed in hogsheds or casks and divided among those who helped with the "cutting-in" and trying out.

Central Try-Works

Later on central "try-works" were set up at selected locations along the shore in the several Cape towns and when a whale drifted in, if possible it was floated and towed to a spot near the "try-works". If it could not be moved it was cut up where it rested and the blubber strips carted to the try-works by oxen.

In 1711 a number of these try-works were located on **Sandy Neck** in **Barnstable** and in 1715, when the neck was divided, great care was taken to see that provision was made for the continuance of the try-works with their necessary buildings and living quarters for the whalers to use during the whaling season.

Drift whales became so numerous during the 1600s and early 1700s that it became necessary for the **Plymouth Colony** to pass laws relative to the legal possession of drift whales and the division of the oil tried from the blubber. At various times the "Crown" attempted without much success to claim part of the oil. Finally, the **General Court** settled most of the disputes and the oil was divided as nearly fairly as possible.

Important Business

The Cape towns were required to appoint inspectors to supervise the "cutting-in" and division of the oil. Records show that in 1652 the Town

of **Sandwich** appointed a committee of six men to secure all drift whales and to supervise the trying out and division of the oil. A few years later the Town of **Eastham** passed a town law that required the profit from certain drift whales to be given to the support of the ministry.

Most of the whales were of the "Right" and "Finback" variety. The former yield the most and by far better quality of oil.

As whales became more and more scarce it became necessary to go farther away from shore in search of them and it was at this time that **New England** really went into the whaling business, first in small schooners and later in larger barks and full ships. These vessels went to southern waters, the far Pacific Islands and eventually into the Arctic waters of the Pacific side.

The year 1768 saw many vessels on the high seas from many Cape towns, **Nantucket** and other **New England** communities.

Oil For Cape Lamps

Soon whale oil taken by these vessels was being brought back to **Cape Cod** for sale. The vessels in the sperm oil trade were bringing back far better quality oil than could be obtained from the right whales and fine candles were being made from the spermaceti of this whale.

The drift whale industry soon died, with only an occasional one being taken that could be easily secured and tried out. Drift whales were taken at times even through the early and middle 1800s, but the discovery of petroleum in 1859 and the use of kerosene for a lamp fuel put an end to the need of whale oil from the drift whales.

In recent years drift whales have been looked upon as a nuisance by the Cape towns and as soon as one would appear on a beach the **Town Fathers** would lose no time in requesting the **U. S. Coast Guard** to tow it far out to sea for destruction.

With the recent epidemic of drift whales on the Cape, **Dr. Floyd Rowland**, a scientist living at **Chathamport** and operating a cod liver oil plant there foresaw an opportunity of obtaining these drift whales which would otherwise be towed to sea and destroyed, and trying out the oil from the blubber, he decided he could materially assist in replenishing a much depleted post-war oil and fat market. He obtained permission to take the first whale coming in at Provincetown and after towing it to his property in **Chatham**, upon which is located his try-works, he lost no time in hauling it up on the beach and cutting off the blubber which ran from 1 to 10

inches in thickness on the various parts of the body. Small lots of blubber were tried out into oil and test samples of oil submitted to **Boston** buyers. A ready market was found and soon **Dr. Rowland** had an offer for the entire oil from the whale. It was to be used in the tanning of leather. Soon **Dr. Rowland** obtained another whale and followed the same process. He plans to continue processing any drift whales that come in and later on to equip his own boat so that he can go out after live ones which were quite plentiful around the Cape last summer.

It is interesting and gratifying to **Cape Codders** that, after all these years, the **Cape Cod drift whale** has once again come into its own and is this time playing an important part in relieving a shortage of fats in a post-war era.—By **Lieut. Col. Eugene S. Clark Jr.**, in the **Cape Codder**.

From Sandwich

420 Whalers At Wellfleet

Revolutionary Blockade of Cape Ports Started Decline of Industry

Wellfleet, at one time one of the busiest whaling ports in the world, witnessing a halting of ports in the world, with the outbreak of the Revolution and subsequent complete collapse in the lean years that followed the war.

Prior to 1775, nearly every man in the town could rightfully call himself a whaler. Statistics show that **Wellfleet** boasted close to 30 whaling ships that were manned by a total of 420 of the town's male population.

With the outbreak of the war, an immediate blockade of all Cape ports put an iron clamp on the activities of the whalers. Incomes were thus cancelled and relative investments became worthless. In desperation, **Wellfleet** citizens appealed to the **General Court** for exemption from the provincial tax.

In the years that followed the war, a feeble attempt was made to launch a new fleet from the town. The attempt failed, however, for lack of capital on the part of the citizens and because of the ravages that seven years of disuse had brought to the ships of the early owners.