

# WHALING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

## Itinerary for a Teacher-Led Tour

Whaling was an important maritime industry in the nineteenth century. Learn about life on a whaling ship and why it was particularly harsh. How were whales caught and processed? What were the whale products? Have fun discovering answers to the questions posed in our guide by exploring the suggested exhibits and other activities.

### Chandlery

- What is a Chandlery?
- Find out what is needed to “outfit” a ship like the *Charles W. Morgan* for a voyage that might last several years.
- Do you see a seachest? Your personal belongings would have to fit inside.
- What would you pack for three years?
- Why are the lanterns different in color? You will see them later in place on the ship.

### Shipsmith Shop

- Why is the craftsman in this shop not called a Blacksmith?
- Look up at the bellows and figure out how it effects the heat on the forge.
- Find three different tools that were essentials for nineteenth century whalers.
- How many harpoons might be needed to equip a whaling ship for a voyage?

### Instrument Shop

- How did officers on a ship figure out where they were in that huge ocean and find their way to their destination?
- Locate three different navigational instruments.
- One instrument is mounted on the ceiling. Why?
- Find a bottle of whale oil. Why is it there?

### Whaleboat Exhibit

- Visit the Whaleboat Exhibit before going to the shipyard to board the *Charles W. Morgan*. Photographs and artifacts will tell you much about the process of nineteenth century whaling.
- Were the whales ever brought on board?

### *Charles W. Morgan*

- How old is the *Charles W. Morgan*?
- Look around carefully. What are some of the things that distinguish a whaling ship from other vessels?
- The number of bunks ‘fore and aft give you a clue as to the number of men in the crew. How many were there?

- Are whales still hunted? Why or why not?
- Do you think there were ever women on a ship like this?

## Cooperage

- Why was the cooper so important to seafaring?
- You will find barrels, hogsheads and casks in the shop. What might these terms mean?
- Do you think empty casks had to be taken on board for the whale oil?
- Would a cooper have been part of the crew on a whaling ship?
- We do not see any cooperages in our towns any more. What do you think is the reason for that?

## Stillman Gallery/ *Voyages* Exhibit

- What is scrimshaw?
- Do you think the items you see were made to be sold?
- What tools were used to carve and decorate the art work?
- Can we still buy original whalebone or ivory scrimshaw?

## Questions to Consider

- What products replaced whale oil?
- Was the meat of the whale ever used?
- Do you think that whaling methods and technology changed much over the years?
- Who were some of the people who made up the crews on ships like the *Charles W. Morgan*?

## Related Demonstrations

See "Today's Activities" sheet for times and locations of demonstrations related to Whaling in the Nineteenth Century.

## Vocabulary

<b>baleen</b>	flexible substance found in upper jaw of certain whales.
<b>blubber</b>	a thick layer of fatty tissue between skin and muscle of whales.
<b>cutting in</b>	removing blubber from a whale.
<b>trying out</b>	to heat the whale blubber resulting in oil.
<b>try works</b>	large brick structure on deck used to render whale oil.
<b>fo'c's'le</b>	the crews living quarter in the forward part of the ship.

## Further Reading

Holling, Holling Clancy. *Seabird. Whales.*

Eyewitness Books. *The Whalers.*

Time Life Series. *The Seafarers.*

Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick.*

Lawrence, Mary Chipman. *The Captain's Best Mate.*

*On Board the Morgan.* Mystic Seaport Video Presentation

*Charles W. Morgan Buzz Card CD-Rom*