

CAPE COD COLONIAL

OCTOBER 10, 1936

Whale Attack Periled Boat

Bark Parker Cook Nearly Sunk in 1850 When Hit by Quarry

Attacked by an enraged whale, the bark Parker Cook, under command of Captain Cook of Provincetown, barely escaped being stove and sunk on the whaling grounds of the North Atlantic in the year 1850.

While maneuvering for the whale in a dory, the crew of the bark successfully hurled two irons into the quarry's side. The impact of the irons aroused the whale, which rose clear of the water and capsized the smaller craft.

The monster then turned on the Parker Cook itself and made a head-on rush for the bow. It crashed the ship with such force that the cutwater was driven deep into the whale's head. Men on the bark's deck were hurled flat by the impact and the entire ship quivered violently from bow to stern.

Backing off, the creature attempted a second charge. It was so weakened by the first collision however, that its actions were slow and Captain Cook was able to finish the monster with three shots from the ship's bomb-lance.

After picking up all hands who were tossed from the overturned dory, the Parker Cook put in to Fayal for repairs.

The cutting-up process brought 103 barrels of oil from the body of the whale.

'Importer' in 1893 Offered Sperm Oil

PROVINCETOWN, May 14 — A Provincetown merchant who dubbed himself an "importer" in an 1893 guidebook advertisement, apparently did most of his importing from the seas adjacent to Cape Cod. He offered sperm, whale and cod oils, "put up expressly for use on bicycles, lawn mowers or any fine machinery."

Provincetown Had Whalers

Industry Scored Comeback to Send Out 175 Ships

In direct contrast to the neighboring town of Wellfleet, the whaling industry in Provincetown scored a lucrative comeback in the lean years that followed the Revolution.

The cream of the town's male population had left the tip of the Cape in the middle 1700's, when 12 whalers, fully equipped and fully manned, simultaneously set sail from Provincetown Harbor on long voyages. With such a background, the industry paused but never completely stopped while the industry paused but never completely stopped while the years of the Revolution came and went.

Whaling flourished again immediately after the close of the war, when determined and co-operative work succeeded in launching the fleet that had been marking time during the struggle with the British.

Financial returns were large and the whalers prospered until the Civil War struck a severe blow at the heart of the business. Many of the whaling ships that claimed Provincetown as their home port were seized and burned by Confederate cruisers and for a time it appeared that the industry was doomed to extinction.

With the ending of the war between the states, however, Provincetown seamen once again took out their oilskins and tested their ropes. Whaling began anew and by 1876 the town had 17 fast ships on the high seas.

During the last century, Provincetown has sent 175 ships to the whaling grounds. The last Cape flag was flown from a whaler in 1916, when Captain John Cook retired from the sea to spend his last years ashore.

Stranded Whale Towed Off Beach

Gives Guard a Tussle; 54-footer Twice Freed

By JOSEPH D. SCHWENDEMAN
Standard-Times Staff Writer

PROVINCETOWN, Nov. 16— Three members of the Coast Guard in a 36-foot surfboat freed a 54-foot whale from its "beach-head" at the foot of Johnson Street here today, and then "guided" the mammal to sea, where it sounded in approximately 40 feet of water.

Before the whale was removed from the beach shortly before 4 p. m., with this reporter watching from The Standard-Times airplane, hundreds of townspeople thronged the docks and beach front to watch a tug-of-war between the whale and the 90-horsepower motor boat.

The whale first was discovered early today, but could not be removed until this afternoon's high tide.

Larger Than Tow Craft

When the plane circled over the whale shortly after 3 p. m., the mammal had surfaced and was moving its flukes slowly. Longer than the towing boat, the whale was dark in color and was marked with a long cut that was meat-red. Section of its belly under the mouth was almost white.

As the airplane circled only 100 feet above the scene, the whale headed for the dry beach, hauling the boat with it.

A second effort to tow the whale to sea was successful. With a hawser fast to the whale's body just forward of its flukes, the boat headed to sea for a half-mile.

.... Aunt Jennie (Cook)
Woodworth's Uncle

Whaling in Days Gone

PROVINCETOWN, May 15—One of the most important industries of this village in days gone by was whaling. At one time, Provincetown had 56 barks, brigs and schooners in this business. The captains almost of the officers were from Provincetown while the crews were mostly natives of the West Indies or the Cape Verde Islands.



November 16, 1946. -- Inside of Higgin's Wharf.

Under the direction of John C. Corea, acting chief boatswains mate of the Wood End Coast Guard Station, the whale was turned around and the 3-inch hawser cut, 12 feet from the flukes.

Eye Thought Hurt

"I believe the whale's right eye was injured," Corea said, in relating the story of getting the mammal to sea. "Apparently it could see out of the left eye and headed in that direction, which was inshore toward Provincetown.

"We swung our boat around to the inshore side of the whale and guided it out of the harbor. It stayed about four feet away from our boat, swimming along the surface. Our boat had to make six knots to keep up with it. We continued for nearly another mile, when suddenly it sounded and went out of sight."

Declaring that it was the first time in his 12 years of duty in the Coast Guard that he had to assist a whale, Corea said:

"I've heard of cowboys guiding ponies, and pilots steering ships, but this is the first time the Coast Guard here ever piloted a whale."

Townspeople Had 'Box Seats'

Earlier, townspeople got a close look at the mammal when the tide left it high and dry on the flat sands a short distance from State Pier. Believed to be dead, the whale spouted and flipped its flukes, which brought cheers from the spectators.

Boys, playing "whaler," picked barnacles from its side, and some splashed water in the whale's eyes. A few fired air rifles at the creature, until police stopped them. A section of skin, estimated by the Coast Guard to be 25 feet long, had been ripped from the side of the mammal.

"It seems strange," Corea said, "but the whale's skin seemed to be very tender."

When Clifford B. Taylor, boatswains mate 1st class, and James Deardoff, apprentice seaman, made the hawser fast forward of the whale's flukes, it "snorted and squirmed."

Tide Awoke It

With the incoming tide, the mammal seemed to be revitalized by the salt water. When freed from the sand by the towing boat, it swung its flukes and headed for the beach again, dragging the boat inshore. Hauled off again by the second attempt, the whale finally made his exit after the shoving episode.

Apropos of the stranding, theories as to how the whale was grounded at this artist's mecca were as many as spectators. Favored by many was a belief the whale was a victim of Wednesday's experimental sinking of a German sub by an American torpedo off the tip of the Cape.

It was theorized the skin wound and possibly other injuries may have so disturbed the mammal that it ran ashore. An equal number of supporters, however, held the whale was struck by a passing ship, a not uncommon occurrence, and stranded itself in its distress.

Whale a Finback, Authorities Say Here

The whale was thought to be a finback, genus Balaenoptera, which is a rorqual, a whalebone whale, so-called because of its prominent dorsal fin. William H. Tripp, curator of the old Dartmouth Historical Society, also expressed belief it was a finback, although furnished only a verbal description of the stranded mam-

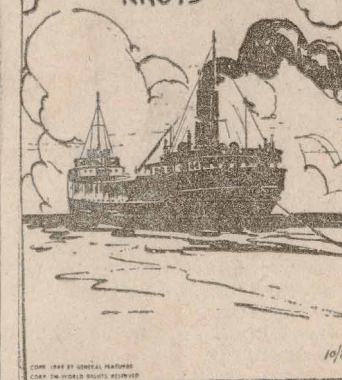
mal.

Finbacks, for years the commonest large whale species in the Atlantic, are not unknown the length of this coast. Also known on the West Coast as the "Oregon finner" during whaling days, they were taken from the Arctic seas to California. They attain a length of approximately 60 feet.

Mr. Tripp pointed out this species is a "playful" whale, and that they not infrequently are seen near shore.

Why We Say

"KNOTS"



The speed of a ship is reckoned in knots instead of miles an hour because originally a float attached to a knotted line was cast over the stern. The line was allowed to run free and the knots, each 51 feet apart, passing over the stern in a given time determined the speed of the ship.