

# People And The Sea

Adventure At Sea, A Unit For 8th Grade English Classes

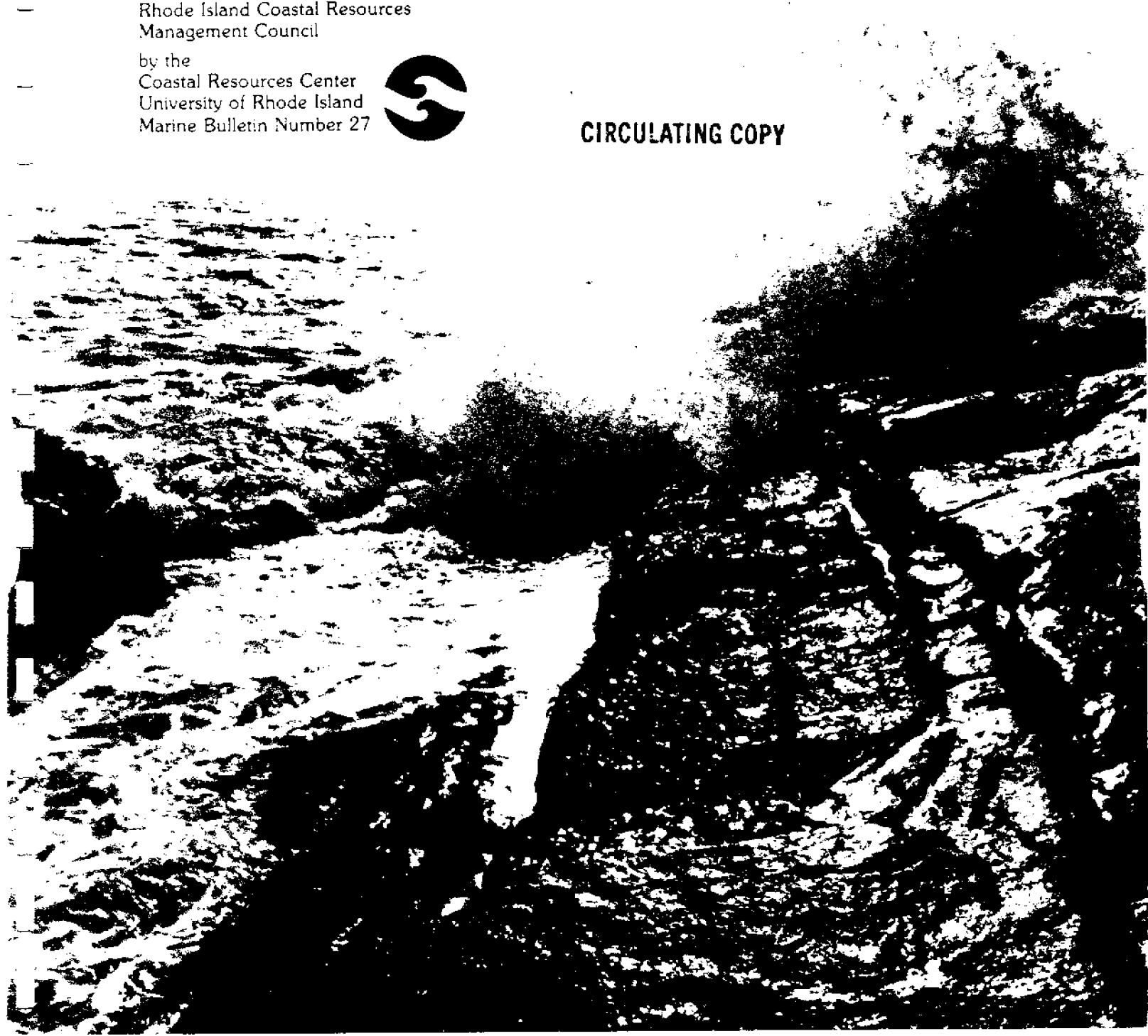
Pendleton H. Nixon

Produced for the  
Rhode Island Coastal Resources  
Management Council

by the  
Coastal Resources Center  
University of Rhode Island  
Marine Bulletin Number 27



CIRCULATING COPY





**Rhode Island  
Coastal Resources Management Council**

This unit was prepared as part of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council's public education program. The Council, in existences since 1971, has a mandate to preserve, protect, develop, and, where possible, restore the coastal resources of the state for this and succeeding generations through comprehensive and coordinated long-range planning and management. The Council has broad powers to regulate activities that affect its management plan and the coastal environment.

"People and the Sea," three teaching units (one each for 7th, 8th, and 9th grade English classes), was written to increase the interest and involvement of young Rhode Islanders in the sea and in the state's marine resources. Each unit teaches language arts skills through the theme of people and the sea.

The units are based on well-written literature about the sea appropriate to the students' reading levels. Short stories, novels, poems, plays, and nonfiction books and articles make up the suggested reading. Introductory and background material, summaries, discussion questions, and suggestions for writing are included in the units, along with suggestions for creative activities, vocabulary building, films, trips, and speakers.

The themes of the three units are:

7th grade - Coastal Life

8th grade - Adventure at Sea

9th grade - The Relationship Between People and the Sea

The "People and the Sea" units may be obtained from the University of Rhode Island, Marine Publications Unit, Narragansett Bay Campus, Narragansett, RI 02882. Tel. (401) 792-6211.

The preparation of this booklet was financed in part by a planning grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, under the provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-583), through the Integrated Grant Administration program administered as part of Federal Regional Council grant FRC-JF-01-11.

Pendleton H. Nixon, who prepared the units, has taught in North Carolina and Rhode Island and has an M.A. in German and English Literature from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Second Printing - June 1978**

# People And The Sea

Adventure At Sea, A Unit For 8th Grade English Classes

Pendleton H. Nixon

Produced for the  
Rhode Island Coastal Resources  
Management Council

by the  
Coastal Resources Center  
University of Rhode Island  
Marine Bulletin Number 27



# Acknowledgements

Many persons contributed their time and resources in the design and preparation of the three "People and the Sea" units for English classes. I am grateful to Sara Callaghan and Prentice Stout of the University of Rhode Island Marine Advisory Service who were instrumental in initiating the writing of the units and who provided many helpful suggestions and criticisms throughout their development. I also appreciate the assistance of Madge Mitchell and Deborah Prefontaine in the preparation of the typed manuscripts and the editorial and design services of Martin Hanft, Larry Pearce, and Ilse Silvermann of the URI Publication Office.

Special appreciation is extended to the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council for their continuing support of marine-related education programs in the state.

# Preface

This is an English unit using the theme of "Adventure at Sea" as a focus for language arts activities in reading, writing, and speaking. Because eighth graders are often fascinated and excited by adventure stories of any kind, this theme seems well suited for them. While the purpose of the unit is to develop basic language skills, it is hoped that using "Adventures at Sea" as a focus will also broaden and deepen the students' awareness of the sea. Further, it is hoped that, by examining conflicts between people and the sea, students will decide that people survive such conflicts only when they cease trying to conquer and subdue the sea; they endure by learning to know, respect, and live with the sea. With such an understanding, these students, when adults, may help to preserve the sea and its coast rather than let them go by default.

The unit is based on each student reading short stories, historical selections, narrative poems, science articles for laymen, and two books. To allow time for the students to read their books at home, much of the other work can be done in class. Suggestions for discussion questions, writing activities, panels, films, visits and interviews are included. The culminating activity is a long essay, which may be considered for entry in the Coastal Resources Management Council Essay Contest if desired. However, the unit may also be used without entering the contest.

The discussion sections are written as the teacher might use them. The wording of the ideas and questions is meant only as a suggestion. The teacher, of course, will adapt these and any parts of the unit to fit the needs of the students.

Although many of the materials and activities contained in this unit have been used successfully with this age group before, the unit as a whole has not yet been used with a class. Therefore, we would greatly appreciate feedback from teachers on what they like and dislike about the unit, what worked with their students and what didn't work, so that we can change the unit to make it more useful in the future. Please send your comments and suggestions to Pendleton H. Nixon, Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island, Narragansett Bay Campus, Narragansett, Rhode Island 02882.

# Objectives

## General

1. To gain skill in reading, analyzing, and understanding selected works in poetry, fiction, and non-fiction.
2. To practice and gain skill in writing by answering questions; by writing essays, narratives, and summaries; and by completing other writing activities.
3. To gain skill in presenting ideas orally by participating in class discussions, presentations, panels, and small group discussions.
4. By using the theme, "Adventures at Sea" as a focus for these activities, it is hoped that students' appreciation of the sea will be expanded. Further, it is hoped that, by examining conflicts between people and the sea, the students will learn that people survive the sea only when they learn to know and live with the sea, enduring by respecting its power.

## Specific

1. To be able to identify and analyze conflicts in literature. To use this skill to gain greater understanding of the material.
2. To draw conclusions from experience gained through reading, visits, hearing speakers, seeing films, and interviewing. To make analogies and practice putting oneself in the place of another to understand and make judgments about his experience.
3. To gain skill in summarizing reading.
4. To see how and why poets use poetic devices. To compare an old melodramatic ballad with some modern ones.
5. To gain familiarity with some scientific writing for laymen.
6. To learn to write a narrative effectively.

# Table Of Contents

- I. Introduction
  - A. To the Teacher
  - B. Excerpts from Peter Freuchen's Book of the Seven Seas
  - C. Ideas for Class Discussion
- II. Short Stories
  - A. To the Teacher
  - B. Guides for the Short Stories  
Summaries and Discussion Questions for:  
    "Demetrios Contos," Jack London  
    "P.T. 109," Richard Tregaskis
- III. Historical Selections
  - A. To the Teacher
  - B. Guides for the Selections from Blow Ye Winds Westerly,  
Elizabeth Gemming  
Discussion Ideas and Activities for:  
    "Schooners and Storms," from Blow Ye Winds Westerly  
    "Greasy Whalers" and "The Chase," from Blow Ye Winds Westerly
  - C. Chapters from Blow Ye Winds Westerly
- IV. Narrative Poetry
  - A. To the Teacher
  - B. Narrative Poem  
    "The Palatine," John Greenleaf Whittier
  - C. Guides for the Narrative Poems  
    "The Palatine," John Greenleaf Whittier  
    "The Wreck of the Hesperus," Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- V. Articles about Scientific Adventures at Sea
  - A. To the Teacher
  - B. Summaries of the Articles  
    "Window on Earth's Interior," Robert Ballard  
    "New Tools for Undersea Archaeology," George F. Bass  
    "The Voyage of the Ra II," Thor Heyerdahl  
    "Deepstar Explores the Ocean Floor," Ron Church  
    "Exploring the Lives of Whales," Victor B. Scheffer  
    "Diary of a Whaling Voyage," Ron Vontobel  
    "The Imperiled Giants," Willaim Graves
- VI. Four Books about Lone Sailing Voyages
  - A. To the Teacher
  - B. Summaries of the Four Books  
    Sailing Alone Around the World, Captain Joshua Slocum  
    Gipsy Moth Circles the World, Sir Frances Chichester  
    Tinkerbell, Robert Manry  
    The Boy Who Sailed Around the World Alone, Robin Lee Graham
  - C. Questions for Writing and Discussion

- VII. Writing a Narrative
  - A. To the Teacher
  - B. Suggestions for Writing Narratives
- VIII. Project About Adventures at Sea
  - A. Activities
- IX. More Books About Adventures at Sea
  - A. To the Teacher
  - B. Guides and Activities for Adventure Books
    - Summaries, Quizzes, Discussion Questions, and Writing Activities for:
      - The Raft, Robert Trumbull
      - Shackleton's Valiant Voyage, Alfred Lansing
      - Captain's Courageous, Rudyard Kipling
      - Kon-Tiki, Thor Heyerdahl
    - Summaries of:
      - The Living Sea, Jacques Cousteau
      - Twenty-thousand Leagues Under the Sea, Jules Verne
      - Logbook for Grace, Robert Cushman Murphy
- X. Culminating Activity
  - A. To the Teacher
  - B. Suggestions for Essay Topics



# I. Introduction

## To The Teacher

*This is a unit about adventures at sea. One way to introduce it would be to ask the students what they think it is that draws people to seek adventures at sea. After sharing some ideas, it might be interesting to hear what a seasoned seaman has to say about the question. Let's turn to the following excerpt from Peter Freuchen's Book of the Seven Seas.*

# Excerpt From *Peter Freuchen's Book Of The Seven Seas*

"Immense in their extent, irresistible in their power, unconquerable in their precision, the seas have inspired men through all ages with feelings of awe and mysticism and fear. Everyone feels himself weak and impotent when he faces their might. No one can halt the tides or fight the currents or control the waves. But everywhere men feel a compulsion to pit their strength against the sea, to explore it and wander about on it, to use it for their own ends and wrest its wealth from it.

Primitive people worshipped the sea out of fear of what it might do to them, and gratitude for the treasures which it washed up for them on its beaches. We know a great deal more about it than they did, but we still stand on the shore, humble in our insignificance as we face the waves rolling in from a turbulent ocean.

When gales whip the trees and rattle our windows or snow piles up outside so that no one wants to go for a walk, landlubbers snug in warm rooms are likely to tell each other how sorry they feel for all the poor sailors on a night like this. But they feel, too, a little wistful envy of the men who brave cold and storms upon the restless water. Then on a fine day the sight of foreign seamen or tall ships from far away or of an exotic bit of merchandise from halfway around the world or even of an oddly shaped scrap of driftwood cast up on the beach gives any of us a pang of jealousy of the men who move about over the sea viewing the wonders of the deep. And it must be confessed that these wonders lose nothing in the seamen's telling of them.

The stories which these fellows bring to us are the stuff our dreams are made of. We may not believe the tellers of the salty tales for a minute, but in our secret minds we live them. We all are great heroes in our dreams. We drift endlessly in hot, dead calms while all on board but we are in despair. We baffle the most violent storms, conquer the bravest fighters, foil the most blood-thirsty pirates, bring home the richest cargoes from the most amazing voyages, wrestle with monsters, dive for sunken gold, see the strangest sights. Then, in the end, science takes over from imagination and behold, there are even greater wonders than we dreamed."

# Ideas For Class Discussion

Freuchen says people feel weak when faced with the might and power of the sea. But they have another feeling, just as strong. What is that? They are drawn to it. Why? Do you feel that way? Why are you fascinated by it? Do you ever feel the urge to "pit (your) strength against the sea," as he says?

In this unit we will read about some people who did seek the challenge of the sea, and we will share in their adventures. Some went to sail around the world alone, some to explore or do scientific research or test a theory. And some of the people we will read about were thrown into a contest with the sea without a choice. One of the questions you can be thinking about throughout the unit, is how did these people survive? What attitudes and factors were common to all these survivors? Are they why they survived?

Freuchen says stories of adventures at sea "are the stuff our dreams are made of." What does he mean? Perhaps this unit will give you some new material for your dreams.

Do you think people are more likely to seek adventure at sea in this mechanized age than earlier? Does going to sea now demand as much courage as in the 18th century? In what ways doesn't it? In what ways does it?

All the heroes in this unit are men. Why is that? In the past, with roles firmly defined, it was indisputably men who went to sea. What do you suppose it was like for the wives and children of those men? Were there good sides to it as well as bad? Work such as fishing and shipping is still done mainly by men. But now as options open up, more women are seeking adventure at sea, becoming expert sailors, or doing oceanographic research, diving, travelling and working at sea.

In Moby Dick, Ishmael talks about why he goes to sea.

"Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul...whenever...it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off-- then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can."

What does he mean? Why would going to sea relieve him of those feelings? Do you ever feel that way? Maybe going to sea vicariously in this unit will be some help.

## II. Short Stories

### To The Teacher

*The following two short stories can be read and discussed in class. They are exciting and fast moving, effective for getting students quickly involved.*

*This is a good time to help students identify and analyze the conflicts in a story as a basic way of understanding it. They will need to use this ability to analyze conflicts for their work in the books to follow.*

# Guides For The Short Stories

- "DEMETRIOS CONTOS," from Tales of the Fish Patrol, by Jack London. Also found in Small Boat Adventures, edited by Michael Brown.

## Summary:

When Jack London was 16 he became a deputy member of the Fish Patrol in San Francisco Bay. It was exciting and dangerous work, for it was the job of the fish patrol to enforce the laws that prohibit overfishing by many people who earn their living from their catch. Demetrios Contos was a daring and flamboyant Greek fisherman who flouted the law by fishing on Sunday. Young Jack and his mentor Charley tried in vain to catch him, sailing after him in a valiant chase. Then they devised a scheme by which Jack would sail after Demetrios Contos, chasing him to a spot where Charley would meet and arrest him. All went well until Jack, at the peak of the exhilarating race through the wild seas, crashed into a sunken pile and was thrown into the sea as the boat sank. Beaten by huge waves, he was about to drown when Demetrios Contos saved him. But when they reached shore Charley arrested Contos anyway. Jack was distressed at the injustice of this. After the trial, however, Charley paid Demetrios Contos's fine, and they were thereafter good friends. This story contains both adventure and the kind of moral dilemma many students of this age find fascinating to discuss.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Demetrios Contos want to flout the fish patrol?
2. Explain the tacit agreement between the patrolmen and the fishermen.
3. Describe Jack's feelings just before he struck the sunken pile. (The exhilaration of "mastering the elemental strife, flying through it and over it, triumphant and victorious," p. 200). Have you ever had that feeling? When? Why was he so exhilarated?
4. Why did Demetrios Contos come back to save Jack?
5. What did Jack think Charley should have done?

6. What did Charley do? Why? Do you think he did the right thing? Why? Do you think Jack agreed in the end?
7. What is the major conflict of the story? What other conflicts are there? Explain.

● "P.T. 109," from John F. Kennedy and P.T. 109 by Richard Tregaskis. Also found in Small Boat Adventures, a David White Collection, edited by Michael Brown.

#### Summary:

Tregaskis tells the exciting story of how Lieutenant Kennedy's P.T. boat was sunk and how Kennedy eventually got his men to safety. The P.T. 109 was rammed by a Japanese destroyer, The Amagiri, which cut the P.T. boat in two. The stern sank immediately, throwing the crew into the sea and leaving quantities of gasoline burning on the water. Kennedy and nine crewmen returned to the hull still afloat; two were lost. They stayed with the hull for several hours and then Kennedy decided they must swim to a tiny coral island to the southeast. Kennedy towed one crewman who was badly burned and, after five hours, they all made it. For the next five days Kennedy and crewman Ross risked everything to attempt a rescue. They swam out in the shark-infested waters to try to hail other P.T. boats, but failed. Eventually they met some natives who carried a message that finally brought about their rescue.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Kennedy suggest they talk over the situation to decide what to do? Why did he then decide they needed a clear leader? Why is a leader needed in a crisis situation?
2. What were all the dangers they faced? What did they have to combat these dangers? Show how these are the main conflicts of the story. What other conflicts are there?
3. What do you think was the most difficult part of their experience? Why?
4. What was Kennedy's decision in regard to McMahon? What would have been the probable outcome for McMahon and himself if he had decided differently?
5. Why do you think they survived?

# III. Historical Selections

## To The Teacher

*As New Englanders, our past is closely tied to the traditionally dangerous, exciting, and arduous pursuit of fish and whales. Reading about the New England whaling and fishing industry of the past heightens our awareness of our ties to the sea and gives depth and background to learning about the contemporary local fishing industry.*

*The reading selections in this section have been reprinted here with permission of the publisher from Blow Ye Winds Westerly: The Seaports and Sailing Ships of Old New England, by Elizabeth Gemming, published by Thomas Y. Crowell of New York. It is a lively and readable history book, full of human interest and vivid details, especially recommended for this age group. One or more of these chapters can be duplicated for the students' use, or if that is impossible, the teacher could read a chapter or two aloud. Copies of Blow Ye Winds Westerly can be found in most public and some school libraries. Loan copies are also available from the Roger Williams Park Museum Resource Center in Providence and from the University of Rhode Island Marine Advisory Service (792-6211).*

*The writing activities in this section are aimed at developing skill in drawing conclusions from experience gained through reading, seeing films, visiting, hearing speakers, and interviewing. This material also provides a good opportunity to encourage students to make analogies and put themselves in the place of another to understand his experience or make judgements.*

# Guides For The Selections From *Blow Ye Winds Westerly*

- "SCHOONERS AND STORMS," from Blow Ye Winds Westerly: The Seaports and Sailing Ships of Old New England, by Elizabeth Gemming, pp. 90-100.

This chapter presents a brief but vivid description of the dangerous and adventurous life of 19th century fishermen of the New England coast. The author describes the dangers of fishing the Grand Banks, some sailors' superstitions, several remarkable stories of sailors and storms, and cod fishing.

## Ideas for Discussion:

1. Why was the coast of Cape Cod so dangerous?
2. Make sure that the students realize the fishermen had to leave the schooner in dories to catch the fish. They returned to the mother ship afterwards, unless prevented by bad weather or misfortune. This is fully explained later in the chapter, but referred to earlier.
3. Why did men choose to be fishermen, considering the dangers? Is it still dangerous to be a fisherman at sea?

## Activities:

1. If you or anyone in the class knows a local fisherman who goes to sea (perhaps from the fleet at Galilee or Newport), invite him in for an informal talk with the class. Ask him about his experiences and those of other fishermen he knows.
2. Arrange a visit to Galilee or Newport to see the fishing boats, or a trip to a large fish market, and talk to some of the people who work there.
3. Mystic Seaport has films for rent. One particularly appropriate to this unit and age level is "The Stowaway." Here is an excerpt from their listing:



"The Stowaway"

Color, 1970

Time: 14:00

Control Number 8-404-C

Produced by: National Film Board, Canada

A story of a boy, a fishing schooner, and an adventure at sea. A thirteen year old boy stows away on his father's schooner and learns all about the famous Grand Banks. Youngsters will readily appreciate Danny's urge to set sail in the graceful Jean Frances, one of the few remaining Bluenose vessels.

Levels: All Levels

Rental: \$14.00

To order this film or obtain the complete list of films available, call (203)536-2631, ext 229, or write:  
Photography/Audio Visual Services Division  
Mystic Seaport Inc.  
Mystic, Connecticut 06355

4. A writing activity - choose one:
  - a. After doing any of the three activities above, students might write an essay describing the life of a fisherman as they understand it. What does he do? How did he learn? What are the difficulties and dangers of fishing? What do they like about it? Would you like to be a fisherman? Be part of a fisherman's family? Explain.
  - b. Collect five current newspaper or popular magazine articles (such as the following one on the Two Brothers) which describe the life, problems, dangers or work of contemporary fishermen or shellfishermen. Write a brief summary of each article and a final paragraph with your conclusions from reading the articles, (i.e., Is fishing a good life? What are the major difficulties? Rewards?).

# Two Brothers sink, entire crew rescued

By MARCEL DUFRESNE

As William Dykstra lay trapped in the afterhold of his sinking fishing boat 15 miles off Point Judith last Friday afternoon, he did something he seldom does — he talked out loud to his Maker.

"I asked the Lord if it was all over for me," he remembers saying as salt water poured into the hold of the 61-foot trawler, *Two Brothers*.

Suddenly, with the compartment completely filled with water, he was able to swim out of the would-be grave.

"I interpreted that to be a very good answer to my question," he said Wednesday, sounding in good spirits considering he'd just lost his boat, his catch of fish and very nearly his life.

Later, resting in his home after what he called a "long recovery," from the near-fatal nightmare, the 31-year-old Perryville resident and nine-year fishing veteran described the series of events which nearly brought him to a permanent resting place in Davy Jones's locker.

He and his crew, Joseph Zukowski, David Morse and Donald Speight, were cruising the waters aboard the fishing

boat owned by he and his brother Thomas. They were carrying a load of industrial fish, "no bigger than usual."

As often happens, fish scales and parts had clogged the pump drains in the afterhold (a fish storage area in the rear of the boat) and Mr. Dykstra went below to clear them.

He slipped on the slimy floor trying to climb out. Just as his crewmen reached in to help, the first in a "sequence of waves larger than usual" hit the boat.

As the craft rocked sideways, the men lost their grips and Mr. Dykstra plummeted backwards.

A second wave, "a little worse than the first," struck. The hold began to fill with water, making it even harder for him to maneuver inside.

A third, even larger wave, washed the crewmen overboard, leaving Mr. Dykstra alone and helpless.

"They all stayed there, pulling on me until the third wave pushed them over the side," he said.

A solid stream of water was pouring in now and the ship's stern began to go under. As he tried in vain to pull himself out, he had a sinking feeling as the ship's stern began to go under.

But with the back end of the

boat full submerged, the hold filled with water and he was able to swim out, just six feet from the surface.

But the danger wasn't quite over. Once on the surface, he and his three crewmen stroked a hasty retreat from the sinking ship.

"We knew we only had about a minute or so before she sank completely, so we swam as fast as we could so we weren't sucked down with her," he said.

Clinging to floating boards and debris, the men waited just 30 minutes when they were picked up by a nearby fishing vessel, the *Alliance*, which luckily had seen the boat begin its downward plunge.

The waterlogged survivors were immediately taken to shore at Galilee. Incredibly, none of the four, needed any sort of medical attention.

Although there were a number of Coast Guard boats in the vicinity, none of the men had been able to reach the radio because everything happened so fast, Mr. Dykstra said. They also had been unable to reach any of the several flotation devices aboard.

The ordeal hasn't dampened his enthusiasm for fishing, Mr. Dykstra said. He and his brother already have another boat under construction in North Carolina and should have it in the water here by the end of the year.

"I just feel grateful to be alive," he added, "very grateful."

Narragansett Times Thursday September 22 1977

● "GREASY WHALERS" and "THE CHASE," pp. 114-135, from Blow Ye Winds Westerly: The Seaports and Sailing Ships of Old New England, by Elizabeth Gemming.

"Greasy Whalers" will give the student a vivid picture of what it was like to sign on aboard a whaling boat as a "greenhorn." It describes how a whaling ship was organized, how the voyage was executed, and how the whalers lived and worked.

"The Chase" is an exciting step-by-step account of how the whale was pursued, caught, killed, cut-up, and "tried out" to get oil.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Why are whales so valuable and sought after?
2. What has happened to the whales? (They are endangered species because of having been overfished.) What is being done about that? (The U.S. is no longer involved in whaling, and is trying to get Japan and Russia to cooperate.) Students who are interested in this problem may study it further in the writing exercise suggested below (activity 4a.)
3. What reasons might a sailor have for signing aboard a whaler? How would you have found life aboard a whaler?

#### Related Activities:

1. If students have not visited the whaling ship Morgan at Mystic Seaport, the trip there would be worthwhile. To be sure to see the movie and hear the talk about whaling by the guide, make an appointment ahead of time by calling or writing Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Connecticut.
2. Tell the students the story of Melville's Moby Dick, which they will probably read as juniors in high school. (Most eighth graders become bogged down in the book, but would be excited by hearing the story.)
3. Mystic Seaport has several films for rent about whaling. One of the most complete is "A Whaling Voyage."

Here is an excerpt from their listing:

"A Whaling Voyage"

B & W, 1973

Time 26 minutes

Control number 12-511-C

Produced by Education Development Center, Inc.

The film has been carefully edited from a full length silent feature of the 20's. A music track has been added and in the edited form the film moves with authenticity from the preparation for sea to the sailing, and on to the actual whale hunt. Produced in 1922, the film stands as a valid document of New Bedford and the Atlantic whaling grounds. The film contains lengthy scenes of the hunt, "cutting in" and boiling of the blubber.

Levels: Junior, Senior, College, Adult

Rental: \$15.00

For information on ordering see page 9.

#### 4. Writing Activity:

Students could choose one of the following, or suggest an idea of their own for the teacher's approval.

- a. Read about and write a report on the problem of whales being endangered species. Good sources for information are "Whales, Imperiled Giants," by W. Graves, National Geographic, Volume 150, Number 6, December, 1976; and "Vanishing Giants," by David O. Hill, Audubon, January, 1975.
- b. Based on the chapters in Blow Ye Winds Westerly, the film, Chapter LXI ("Stubb Kills a Whale") from Moby Dick, or some other source of information on whaling, put yourself in the place of a sailor aboard a whaling ship and write a first person account of the chase as you might experience it. Decide who you are, such as the harpooner or the helmsman, and include what you see, hear, and feel during the chase. Decide what the outcome is and describe it too. (Is the whale killed or does he get away?) Is the boat capsized? Is anyone injured? How many tries are made before the whale is harpooned? Describe them.)

## *Schooners and Storms*

EVERY FISHING VILLAGE counted many widows and orphans among its inhabitants. The coast of Cape Cod, though not rocky, was extremely dangerous, with a double line of hidden sand bars off the "elbow" and not a single harbor before Provincetown out at the very tip. Seafarers depended on steeples, windmills, and beach bonfires to find their way. Lighthouses were few, and the tides, bars, and currents were ever changing. On this wild and hazardous coast the burying grounds were filled with graves that held no bodies, marked by stones that read simply "Lost at Sea."

Just after the Revolution a small private organization first built huts for shipwrecked men on the lonely beaches of Cape Cod, "charity houses" equipped with firewood, tinder, and flints to serve as shelters from the fierce blizzards and sandstorms. (This organization was the ancestor of the United States Coast Guard.)

Fishermen were no less superstitious than any other mariners. They were dead set against sailing on a Friday. Marblehead "Bankers" tossed copper pennies on Half-Way Rock for luck as they went past. Fishermen were disconcerted by ominous dreams, and some were so upset by birds that alighted on vessels far from land that they put back to port immediately. And they took "Jonahs" very seriously. Jonahs were anything or anyone that spoiled their luck: a man, a dory, a splitting knife.

The Grand Banks was an eerie place of gales, drift ice, and the dread "summer berg," an icy whiteness plunging within the dingy whiteness of the fog. The Banks sea was cold and gray. It "oiled over" sometimes, and grew glassy and slimy. When the fog dropped without warning, smoking and curling, the fishermen stopped whatever they were doing and heaved up their anchors as the rigging dripped over their heads.

Shuddering, the men spoke of sand walkers and dune haunters and the "yo-hoes" on Monomoy Beach that terrorized lonely clam diggers. The fog bell guided dorymen back to the mother schooners, or perhaps a blast on a conch shell told them where safe refuge waited. Sometimes dories drifted away, unable to find their schooner, and the men lived in dread of bringing up unrecognizable bodies entangled in their lines.

Great gales frequently screamed in off the sea to ravage the coast. The October gale of 1841 destroyed the Sandy Bay breakwater and smashed fourteen schooners in one cove. In that one gale three Cape Cod towns lost eighty-seven heads of families. Five years later the September gale sank eleven Marblehead vessels and killed sixty-five men and boys. The fishing villages had to endure the shock of terrible catastrophes that took the lives of fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons, often within sight of the folk on the shore. Dreadful nightmares haunted the women and children at home. On stormy nights they hardly slept at all, terrified by visions of ships that never returned, as the endless tides rolled over the bones of lost fishermen on the bottom of the sea.

One violent December storm followed a Saturday that had been unusually mild and clear for that time of year. Suddenly the wind veered toward the southeast, and sixty-five coasting schooners and sloops took refuge in Gloucester harbor. The sea was one of the roughest ever seen. People crowded onto the beach and watched helplessly as some

vessels sank at anchor and others broke loose and smashed on the lee shore. There were twenty wrecks by nightfall, but most of the crewmen of the vessels that went on the rocks were rescued by the hardy fishermen of the village. When the gale died down, thirty damaged vessels were found riding at anchor, and their crews were taken off by a crew of volunteers in the customhouse boat. One vessel, its crew just rescued in the nick of time, drifted out to sea and was never seen again.

On another dark night, a coastal steamer ran down a schooner off Cape Ann. As the schooner went down, a twelve-year-old boy managed to crawl to the end of the bowsprit and cling to a fish-splitting table that went floating by. After crying out frantically, he was finally picked up by the steamer, and then the steamer continued on its way. Soon afterward, when sails from the schooner washed ashore, the townsfolk gave up all hope. Meanwhile the steamer, by then on its return trip, landed the boy at Eastern Point, about two o'clock in the morning. The lad walked into town and reached his father's house two hours later. He tapped on the window of the ground-floor bedroom.

"Who is there?"

"It's your boy, Winthrop."

The grieving father, half asleep, gasped in horror. But Winthrop, who did not wish to be taken for a ghost, persisted, and soon at the snug cottage there was a great celebration.

One bold young lad, who had heard of the adventures and perils of Georges Bank, was determined to go on a voyage there. The weather was peculiarly mild for February, but none of the superstitious old fishermen could talk him out of the idea. He sailed on schedule, and once on Georges, the cold was intense and the work exhilarating. Some seventy schooners of the fleet lay at anchor, very close to one another.

When the boy hooked his first halibut, the Portuguese steward brought him a mug of hot coffee and a "joe-flogger"—a pancake with plums in it—to celebrate. The fish were so plentiful that the skipper remarked that if their luck held, they would head back in another week. "Georges isn't so bad after all," thought the young fellow.

At sundown, the weather changed abruptly. Clouds massed on the horizon; the wind rose; and the sea grew rough. By eight o'clock the skipper was uneasy.

"Depend on it," said one of the crew. "We're going to have a tough one out of this, and I shouldn't wonder if you had a chance to see more o' Georges than you'll ever want to see ag'in. I've been with the old man half-a-dozen years, and when I see him walkin' and lookin' that way, I make up my mind that somethin's goin' to happen."

The sky was inky black and it was snowing. The lights in each vessel's rigging twinkled as the weary men watched nervously.

"Nap now!"

All but the watch went below. The watch kept a lookout for drifting vessels and paid out ten more fathoms of the anchor cable. By eleven, every plunge of the schooner seemed to be its last, and each man was back on deck, trying to appear calm and cool. The dawn brought a feeling of comfort, but the storm blew on, and the men ate silently while continuing their watch.

Suddenly the skipper cried out, "There's a vessel adrift right ahead of us! Stand by with your hatchet to cut the anchor cable!" The vessel sped toward them and passed so close that the men could see the terror-stricken faces of the crew as they approached certain death. It struck another, and the waters closed over both schooners in an instant.

Two more drifters sped by like phantoms, barely missing the schooner where the young man stood. Yet the gale moderated, and just as if there had been no storm, and no vessels and men had been lost, the crew got their lines ready again, smoking and talking as they worked. They fished through the week, and then the schooner turned homeward. As each vessel limped around Eastern Point the people on shore strained to read her name. All told, fifteen schooners and 120 men were lost in that gale on Georges, leaving seventy widows and one hundred fatherless children in Gloucester alone. The adventurous young man hurried back to his family. "When I got home, they told me I had grown older," he wrote. "I have no wish to try it again."

Cod fishing on the Grand Banks continued through the years in schooners that carried nests of dories on deck, lashed to ringbolts. The sixty-foot main boom divided the deck lengthwise. A tiny galley held pots and pans. Banks skippers took along handbooks of navigation, charts, almanacs, and the sounding line with a lead weight at the end. They suarered the lead with tallow and lowered it to measure the depth of the sea and bring up samples of the ocean bottom. Good skippers got to "think like a cod" as they pondered the nature of the sand, mud, and shells that made up the ocean floor.

The men went out to fish in dories equipped with eight-foot sea oars, small anchors, jugs of water, a horn for signaling, sticks and mauls to stun the fish, lines with leads and hooks, and bait. When they anchored, they signaled with an upended oar, and a man on the schooner waved back to let them know the depth at that spot. Handlining from the dories, the men pulled the cod inboard and wrenched out the hooks. Squid made excellent bait, so at the cry "Squid oh!" the men lowered a piece of lead armed with a circle of pins, and when the squid had wrapped itself around the pins, the men pulled it up. The squid squirted water and ink, and they ended up as black as chimney sweeps.

When the dories returned, the sleepy dorymen bent back and forth to get the kinks out of their bones and ate their supper: a tin pan of cod's tongues with scraps of pork and potato, a chunk of bread, and boiled black coffee cleared with a piece of fish skin.

Then the weary men dressed the cod on deck, by moonlight. Two men stood knee-deep in fish in the cod pen. With a "Hi!" they bent to bring up a fat, three-foot-long cod,

laid it on the edge of the pen, and slit it open from throat to vent. Another man, his hands protected by mittens, scooped out the liver and dropped it into a basket at his feet. With a second scoop he sent the innards flying and slid the empty fish down the rough table to another man, who split the fish with his curved knife, removed the backbone, and splashed the cod into a tub of water.

"Knife oh!" cried the men from time to time, calling for freshly sharpened knives from the boy. The cook, a strong black man, collected the heads, scraps, and backbones, promising "blood-ends for breakfast, an' head chowder!"

The cleaned fish were pitchforked down the hatch to the hold, where two more men rubbed coarse salt on the ragged flesh. The men on deck stopped to drink from the dipper at the scuttle butt forward, and dumped the livers into the "gurry-butt," a cask with a hinged top that was lashed by the forecastle. When the job was done, some of the men rolled straight into their bunks. The others sluiced the cod pen, set up the table to dry, ran the knife blades through a wad of oakum to clean them, and sharpened them on a tiny grindstone.

The cod catch was measured in quintals, or hundred-weights. The first schooner off the Banks full of cod had the right to hoist the "Banks flag." Dories from other vessels came alongside with letters for home, and the fishermen pitched the mail on the deck wrapped around pieces of coal.

Hi! Yi! Yoho! Send your letters round!  
All our salt is wetted, an' the anchor's off the ground!  
Bend, oh bend your mains'l, we're back to Yankeeland  
With fifteen hundred quintal,  
An' fifteen hundred quintal,  
"Teen hundred toppin' quintal,  
"Twixt old 'Quereau an' Grand!

Homeward bound to Gloucester, one fisherman announced his plan to hire a boy to come by his cottage every night and throw water on his bedroom window so that he would be able to drop off to sleep as usual. Restless and impatient, at last the men spied Ten Pound Island and "the Harbor" within its circle of low hills. Through the bayberry bushes they could make out the big red boulders and the fish sheds and the blackened wharves with edges crusted with spilled salt. The first boat in could demand high prices, so all hands waited until their prices were accepted. The catch was swung ashore in baskets, and the tally was taken as one of the men stood beside the clerk and his scales to check the weights.

Then each fisherman trudged home for a bath and a quiet meal, safely home after another voyage—but never knowing whether his next trip would be his last. It was no wonder that the aged fishermen often spoke reverently of "the port ahead" where, as voyagers to heaven, they would be reunited with the lost friends of a lifetime.

## Greasy Whalers

WHALING was never a safe and easy way to make a living, but in the early days many bright young men were attracted by the chance of tremendous profits. Whaling crews were then made up mostly of native-born New Englanders—Yankees, blacks, and Gay Head Indians from Martha's Vineyard. Masters and officers "came in through the hawse hole." They usually knew one another before they went to sea together, and they called the young foremast hands by their first names.

By the 1840s, however, when the American whaling industry reached its peak, there were more than seven hundred vessels and fifteen to twenty thousand men at sea. Whales had become scarcer, and whalers had to chase their prey in the vast Pacific on voyages of three to four years or even longer. Since the pay for a whaling cruise consisted of shares in the profits, there was no guaranteed wage at all. The pay was higher on merchant and navy vessels, and shoreworkers and factory hands got better pay too. The makeup of the whaling crews changed drastically.

There were only a few experienced seamen in a typical crew of waterfront riffraff and ignorant young farmboys. Drifters, runaways, and stranded foreigners were rounded up and heaved on board the whaleships, often so drunk that they only discovered where they were hours later, their heads pounding and their stomachs churning as the creaking ships pitched and rolled on the sea. Criminals signed on board whaleships, intending to escape the seaport jailers once and for all by jumping ship on some remote South Sea island. No whaleship ever returned with the same crew it had when it started out.

It became so hard to get enough men that the shipping agents asked no questions and put their crews together as fast as they could. Agents traveled from town to town inland, passing out handbills to poor town boys and gullible "hayseeds." These fellows were strong and hardy and used to rising early and working hard, but they dreamed of seeing the world and longed to make quick fortunes. Sick of the dusty streets of Buffalo or the stony hills of Vermont, they were easy marks for the fast-talking agents. And in the seaports, there was little choice of trades, for everything had to do with ships. Many poor town lads were tempted by the promise of a bunk to sleep in every night, with free meals besides.

The agents advertised for "enterprising and industrious young Americans of good moral character"—what boy could resist such a compliment! They promised the boys quick promotions and outfits valued at up to seventy-five dollars. They told of the thrills and sport of whaling and the money to be made—but neglected to mention that if anyone made fortunes whaling, it was the shipmasters and owners.

Oh, the joy of sailing balmy tropic seas for three or four glorious years, the excitement of taking the giant whale, and the barrels of money to bring home! One of the more "trustworthy" agents quickly won the confidence of a Maine farm lad with a sensible-sounding word of caution:

"Now, Hiram," he said, "I'll be honest with you. When you're out in the boats chasin' whales, you git your mince pie cold!"

Hiram nodded and gazed absentmindedly out over the pasture. The sweet hay waved gently, and suddenly the old gray barn seemed to arch upward, awesome and mysterious. A white cloud scudded past overhead—or was it a bushy spout? "Bloooows!" moored the cows from somewhere down by the brook. . . .

*The trade winds were blowing softly, and the ship Mermaid of New Bedford rode easily on the broad Pacific swells. Tall Hiram Smith, just sixteen, was the most famous whaler on the ocean. Pausing at the rail, Hiram graciously accepted a slab of cold but spicy pie from his friend, the ship's cook. Then, pie in one hand and harpoon in the other, he sprang nimbly into the boat.*

"Hurrah!" sang the boat's crew and pulled smoothly away from the ship. . . .

"I'll sign!" cried Hiram.

The agent cleared his throat and shuffled his papers. He promptly arranged for Hiram to be consigned to a large firm in New Bedford, and in a day or two Hiram and a few other boys from his village packed up their belongings and set off for the Pacific.

Hundreds of boys converged on New Bedford and Nantucket, where they were soon pleased to find that generous new friends were on hand to greet them. These "friends" overcharged the bewildered fellows in the boardinghouses, the grogshops, and the outfitters. Occasionally a few of the "greenhands" broke away, and at least one angry farmer rode to New Bedford and took his terrified son straight back to New Hampshire. But most of the boys were too confused to realize what a trap they were in. They loitered in the rundown streets trying to look dashing, but cringing at the sight of a tattooed South Sea Islander in a beaver hat, peddling shrunken heads along the waterfront.

A greenhand got his clothes and bedding free, or at least he paid nothing for them at the time. But the high price was charged against his future earnings, at high interest. He was also charged his share of the ship's insurance, the value of the empty casks, eight or ten dollars for fitting out the ship, a "leakage" charge, and even a dollar or so for the captain's medicine chest.

The captain, who was sometimes part owner of the ship, got a share, or "lay," of about 1/16, the officers 1/25 to 1/35, and the harpooners perhaps as much as 1/20 of the total profits from the sale of the oil. The cooper rated as much as the officers. Ordinary seamen were put down for only 1/150 or 1/165, greenhands for perhaps 1/200, and the cabin boy for as little as 1/250 or 1/300.

At the end of four years of backbreaking labor alternating with terrible boredom, the luckiest greenhand could count on only a few dollars, once all the hidden charges were subtracted from his lay. One harpooner, who signed on at the age of seventeen, cleared only two hundred dollars for four years' work, and wrote in his journal, "Such is fortune." Many a ragged greenhand came home in debt to the owners of the ship. No honest lad ever wanted to ship twice on a whaleship, but a poor boy with no friends or family often had no choice but to ship again and hope to get out of debt the second time around.

Still, there was always the hope of "greasy luck," and whalemen, like all fishermen, traditionally shared bad luck and good. After a bowl of chowder at a waterfront tavern, the greenhands sauntered down to the wharf to have a look at the ship—spotless and shipshape, though a bit broad. The ship's riggers were still hard at work, and would be until the last moment. Picking their teeth with halibut bones, the "greenies" ducked low and entered the forward hatch that led to the crew's quarters. Sixteen to twenty men would share this triangular room in the bow, twelve to sixteen feet across, along with their sea chests and the foremast. No man of average height could stand up straight. A double tier of bunks ran along each side like so many shelves. The only air and light came in through the hatch, which would have to be closed in bad weather. A few oily garments hung from pegs, and in the dimness the boys made out the shapes of several snoring shipmates-to-be.

The fore'sle was hot and stuffy, greasy and smoky, and before the vessel even left the lower harbor, the drunks and the greenies would be miserably seasick. In every crew there were a few tough old sea dogs who delighted in teasing the greenhands with horrible tales of vicious whales and cannibals. There were schoolboys, rich men's sons sent to sea to toughen up, gamblers, factory hands, crooks, Kanakas from the South Seas, and one or two mystery men nobody knew anything about at all. There were few married men, and most of the foremast hands were under twenty-one.

In the steerage, below decks amidships, bunked the harpooners or "boatsteerers," some in their late teens or early twenties, perhaps Polynesians or Gay Head Indians from Martha's Vineyard. They were professionals, superior to the foremast hands but socially on good terms with them. They were supposed not to take sides in any dispute between officers and crew. Unlike the foremast hands, they had the run of the ship. The cook, steward, cooper, carpenter, smith, and the cabin boys also bunked in the steerage.

The skippers and officers of Yankee whaleships were on their own more than those of merchant vessels, which sailed from port to port on a schedule. Whaleships "bound to any ocean" simply followed the whales with no fixed course, and stopped at few civilized ports. The captains could discharge men and recruit new ones, ship their oil home and keep right on whaling, and even sell the ship for a good reason.

Many captains arrived to take command only after the ship was all ready and the entire crew was on board. They were usually capable and proud men, but once on the high seas quite a few of them turned out to be "shore saints and sea devils"—respectable and churchgoing at home but brutal on board ship. They employed strict discipline and harsh punishments to whip their crews into shape, tying disobedient sailors up in the rigging and flogging them publicly as a bitter example to the rest of the men.

Some captains, particularly the Quakers, were deeply religious. They never swore, and on the Sabbath they gathered the men together on deck and read from a large leather-bound Bible, their hands placed on it palms down to keep the pages from fluttering in the wind. Some of these

fair-minded captains even gave the men Sundays off, once the essential shipboard duties were done. There were skippers who never took a whale on the Sabbath, although their officers were likely to say privately that when "the old man" sighted a whale on the Sabbath he always knew just where to find it on Monday morning. A shrewd New Bedford shipowner told the mates, "Don't whale it too much a' Lord's days, men, but don't miss a fair chance either—that's rejecting Heaven's good gifts."

Over the years the best whaling captains developed a sort of sixth sense as to where to find the whales. Most of them were seasoned skippers by the time they were thirty years old. Whalemen literally lived on the sea. One captain, a-whaling for thirty-seven years, was at home exactly four years and eight months during that period. Another sailed more than a million miles in forty-one years, with a total of only seven years at home in Nantucket. Still another was at home only seventeen months out of fifteen years, and was never present at a family birth or death.

Most skippers and officers were career men from New England, with a thorough knowledge of navigation and a confidence based on experience. Few had any formal medical training, but they all knew something about treating accidents and illness. Crewmen sometimes fell from a hundred feet up in the rigging, from dizziness, seasickness, or carelessness. A "stove boat," one smashed to splinters by a whale, was so frequent an accident that it was entered without comment in the logbook unless a life was lost. A fall into the sea was far less serious than a fall onto the hard deck. Men suffered serious injuries while stowing heavy casks in the hold. Toothaches were common, and the cure was simple: the captain or the mate held the victim's head back against a coil of rope and yanked out the tooth with a handy "claw." The wound usually healed all right, and on board a whaleship one could not be too upset if a few splinters of jawbone came out with the tooth.

Among the crew on every whaleship there were likely to be free black men—natives of New England seaports as well as blacks from Portuguese Cape Verde off the coast of Africa. Blacks made superior whalers, and there were even a few black captains who commanded ships with all-black crews. Kanakas from the South Sea islands also made good whalers. Strong and cheerful, they were excellent swimmers besides, and were much admired by the Yankees, many of whom could not swim a stroke.

The cabin boy, youngest member of the crew, assisted the steward in setting the table for the captain's and the officers' meals and in washing the dishes, fed the pigs and chickens that were often carried to supply fresh meat, ran errands, took messages forward, and brought the captain his charts. Cabin boys were often the special pets of the crew. Some boys, ambitious and quick to learn, managed to master the essentials of seamanship—making knots, furling sails, rigging, and rowing, and taking their turn at the helm.

Foremast hands were called by their first or last names. The cooper, carpenter, steward, and smith were addressed as such, and the cook was "Doctor." The officers were



"Mr. \_\_\_\_\_," and the captain was "Sir." The cabin boy was usually just "Boy," and sometimes the crew never even knew his name.

All hands took along their own jackets, pants, shirts, shoes and stockings, underwear, bedding, needles and thread, soap, razor, jackknife, tin plate, and spoon. Whalers would do anything to get the last bit of use out of their clothes, which were often little more than holes pieced together by scraps. Merchant sailors, snappy in their bell-bottoms and checked shirts and shiny black hats, scorned whalemen, who were anything but smart in their pants of brown or gray or green, complete with suspenders and pockets—the garb of a landsman.

There was no way for a whaler to get spending money for shore leaves except by buying articles from the captain's "slop chest" and selling them in port. Whalers (and merchant sailors too) replaced their worn-out clothing and bought their tobacco from these shipboard stores. Purchases were charged against their accounts at half again their true value, and deducted from their lays, or wages, at the end of the voyage. The slop chests held plenty of printed cottons and trinkets to sell to the South Sea islanders, and the ships' account books were filled with curious entries. One foremast hand charged nine pounds of tobacco, one box of soap, ten yards of denim cloth, and two birds of paradise. A boatsteerer on the same ship bought six yards of printed cotton, a straw hat and one finger ring!

Since whaleships cruised for years, far from established sea lanes, wherever the rumor of whales led them, they carried supplies for every possible emergency. It was very expensive to equip a whaleship for such a long voyage. The ship took on food and water, barrel staves in bundles, chains, anchors, iron hoops, black iron try-pots—for boiling down whale blubber into oil—bricks, nails, fishhooks, harpoons and lances, knives, instruments, charts, almanacs, spyglasses, lumber, spare boats, oars, masts, yards, block and tackle, cordage and lines, paint and turpentine, bolts of canvas, sails, flags, tools, hardware, medicines, lamps, candlesticks, candles, washbasins, pots and pans, spoons, ladles, kags, needles, crockery, quill pens and logbooks—spare everything, almost, except a spare captain and ship.

The main hold was filled with hundreds of oil casks of various sizes. Outward bound, many in the lowest tier were filled with fresh water, and many in the upper tier held the provisions and supplies that would be used first, emptying the casks for the first batches of oil. The forehold was jammed with spare rigging, hawsers, anchors, lumber, and gear for cutting up the whales' blubber.

Tremendous quantities of foodstuffs were loaded aboard—a hundred barrels each of salt beef and pork, tons of hard bread and flour, molasses, salt fish, potatoes, rice, beans, corn, dried apples, tea, and coffee. Until the 1830s, when the temperance movement put a stop to it, all vessels took along plenty of rum for grog to warm the poor wet sailors. And naturally, there was butter, white sugar, vinegar, pickles, and a jar of homemade jam—for the cabin.

Whaleships were built for great capacity, not for speed. Since they were seldom going anywhere in particular, they

were seldom in a hurry. Their timbers soaked with oil, their sterns square, the lumbering vessels were anything but beautiful. Merchant seamen jeered that "spouters" were built by the mile and simply sawed off in lengths. They insisted that a good nose could smell a dingy old "blubber boiler" twenty miles to windward.

The whaleships were often surprisingly small—perhaps only 130 feet long—but the decks were broad and roomy, and the planking was thick enough to weather the heaviest storm and to protect the ship if it ever ran aground. These stout ships were usually square-rigged with three masts, and had a white "waistband" painted with imitation gunports to scare away pirates. American whaleships had several unique features. The most striking was the "tryworks" on the deck with its two iron pots set in a solidly built brick furnace braced and screwed down on especially stout deck timbers. The tryworks was sheltered from rain, snow, and sleet by its own scorched "house" overhead.

High on the mastheads there were tiny platforms for the lookouts, with iron hoops at about waist-height, nailed to the mast, to support the lookout's arms.

On wooden cranes or davits at the sides hung the whaleboats, three on the larboard, or port, side and one on the starboard side, leaving room for the gangway and the cutting platform that was lowered over the captured whale. Between the main and mizzen masts two or three spare boats were stored bottoms up, and cast a nice patch of shade over the captain's cabin.

The six-man whaleboats, as graceful as the ships were stubby, were so light and fragile that two men could lift one, and yet they were the most seaworthy boats ever known. They were double-ended, like their Viking ancestors and like the modern surf lifeboat. They were twenty-six to twenty-eight feet long, slender, and equally fast in either direction. The boatheader steered from the stern with an oar as long as the boat itself, and the five other oarsmen sat alternating on either side.

Each whaleboat carried a mast and small sail, oars, paddles, harpoons and lances, sealed kegs of water and of bread, a keg of survival gear (candles, tinder, flints, steel, and a lantern), and tubs of line. The line, of best quality tarred hemp, was coiled in the tub with extreme care, for one kink in a flying line attached to a harpooned whale could tear off a man's arm or leg, or whip him out of the whaleboat and into the sea.

## The Chase

There! She blows! There! There! There! She blows! BLOOOOWS!" sang the lookout, a hundred feet above the deck. In the distance a whale had just exhaled, and its warm breath created a bushy spout in the cooler air.

"There! She bloooooows!"

The skipper sprang into the rigging and scanned the horizon with his spyglass. "Where away?"

"Two points off the lee bow, sir, scarce three miles away!"

"Way down from aloft! Call all hands, Mr. Russell," bellowed the captain to the mate.

The watch below had already heard the commotion and raced alovedecks. The greenhands were tremendously excited at their first sight of whales breaching. The giant creatures leaped two thirds their own length into the air and landed on their backs with ear-splitting cracks. Some of the whales were "lobtailing"—standing on their heads and beating the sea with their "flukes," or tails—and others were sliding down from the crests of waves and spouting lazily in the hollows.

"Lower away boats!" Within minutes after the whales had been "raised," four whaleboats, six oarsmen in each, had splashed into the water. When the captain himself commanded one of the boats, the ship was left under shortened sail in charge of the cooper, carpenter, cook, steward, and boy.

"Out oars! Use great care so as not to gally them!" cried the captain, for whales were easily "gallied," or frightened.

The boats sped toward the prey as quietly as possible, because whales' tiny ears are very keen. The men put up a small sail if the whales were to leeward, and they went barefoot in warm weather—that was quieter too. They switched to paddles to approach even more silently. The mother vessel, in its own code, signaled with sails and flags to inform the men in the boats about the location and activities of the whales.

"There go flukes!" sang out the mate. Some of the whales, alerted to danger, had submerged. Whales could submerge, or "sound," up to an hour, so the men had to rest their oars and wait. The gallied whales sped away, usually to windward. They could swim all day long, never varying so much as a compass point from their course.

"Roar and pull, boys! Beach me on their black backs, boys!" coaxed one of the mates from the stern of his whaleboat. "Why don't you snap your oars, you rascals? That's it, long and strong! Pull, will you? Pull, can't you? Keep cool, keep cool—cucumbers is the word. Only pull! Do that for me and I'll give you my house, boys, and my wife and children, boys! PULL!"

The mate cursed and begged, and the men had to follow his orders without question. Only the mate, facing forward and acting as "loathreader," could actually see how close

they were coming to the whales, for the other men faced the stern. It was an unwritten rule that the oarsmen were never, never, to turn around to look at the awesome prey. Panicky greenhands had to be knocked out promptly with a blow on the head—they would be no use, but no trouble either.

Experienced whalemens could detect the seaweedy smell of the monstrous creatures without even looking over their shoulders. They were very near. Suddenly the mate whispered, "Stand up and give it to him!"

The boatsteerer in the bow, already exhausted from rowing for hours, shipped his long oar, leaped up, grabbed his harpoon with both hands, braced his thigh hard against the gunwale, turned, and hurled the iron at the whale. The barbed weapon, marked with the name of ship and master, hissed forward, with a one-in-ten chance of striking.

"He's fast! Stern all, stern all, for your lives!" The oars seemed to bend as the men frantically backwatered to get out of the way of the whale's powerful flukes. The whale, in anguish, threw itself out of the water, and the sea heaved as if the whole earth had quaked. Then the whale took off, and the men were on a "Nantucket sleigh ride" in spray and foam, when the slightest shift of balance would mean disaster. The boat skimmed and thumped on the tops of the waves, and one of the oarsmen scooped sea water up in his hat to douse the smoking-hot line that whizzed out of the boat between the men sitting on either side.

Even as the boat began its whirlwind ride, the boatsteerer, having placed his harpoon, had rushed to the stern to take the place of the mate at the steering oar and tend the line attached to the harpoon that stuck fast in the whale, all the while trying to keep the boat from capsizing.

At the same moment, the mate had run forward to take his new stand in the bow, poised to kill the whale with a lance!

The whale rushed on, perhaps for miles. He might sound so deeply that the men would have to cut the line to avoid being dragged under themselves. The furious animal rolled over and over with incredible speed, thrashed the sea with his flukes, ran his head out of the water, and snapped his jaws together. At any time, he might turn on the boat and bite it in two. But at last, if all went well, the great whale tired.

"Haul in, haul in!" The men pulled hand over hand on the wet line, coiling it loosely in the stern, until they came up close to the whale. Even then, a sly "sparm" could rear up under the boat and deliberately smash it like an eggshell.

For the kill, the mate, now in the bow, pushed the lance repeatedly into the whale's hump, trying to reach the "life," the one thin vulnerable spot in the whale's body. Each thrust opened up new wounds. The sea reddened, and hot spray from the spouthole showered the men in the boat.

Then the lance struck the "life," and the whale's lungs were flooded with his own blood. His "chimney afire," the dying beast entered his hideous "flurry." Clashing his jaws, he rushed in ever narrowing circles. Blood gushed forth as the suffocating whale rolled feebly from side to side. At

last, his huge heart burst and he turned "fin out." Every whale circled one final time and held its head toward the sun at the moment of death.

Shaken by the awful sight, and dead tired besides, the men cut a hole in the flukes and put a line around the narrowest part of the tail to tow the dead whale back to the ship. The ship could sail to the prize only if the wind blew in the direction of the whale. Many a boat's crew had to tow a whale for miles in a gale or in the blackness of night, and it was extremely dangerous to secure the carcass alongside the ship in rough seas.

Then, no matter what the hour, the "cutting in" and "trying out" began immediately. The "cutting stage," a frail plank platform, was lowered over the starboard rail. It hung fifteen or twenty feet out from the side. There the officers stood while making cuts for the blubber hook and slicing into the blubber with razor-sharp cutting spades.

"Overboard hook!"

A rope around his waist, one of the boatsteerers stood on the slippery whale and secured the hook in a cut. The blubber, the whale's insulation from the cold and pressure of the deep sea, was tough and elastic and as much as two feet thick. Gulls screamed, and sharks snapped at the men's feet. The whale rolled ponderously as the first "blanket piece" of blubber peeled away and was lifted clear and swung up over the gangway.

Each piece, weighing a ton or more, was caught by a second hook at the lower end and passed through the hatch to the blubber room below. The ship rolled sharply to one side from the weight, and the swinging blanket piece nearly sent one of the men spinning off the slanting deck into the shark-filled sea. Down in the blubber room two men, soaked with oil, cut the blubber into square "horse pieces" and passed them back on deck. These pieces were minced with two-handled cleavers into thin "books" or "Bible leaves" that were tossed into the try-pots to be boiled until the oil separated from the fibers.

The mates and boatsteerers tended the fires. A trough of seawater kept the decks from catching fire. All hands worked day and night, and only the cook was free to do his regular work or mix up a batch of doughnuts to fry in the try-pots. Some of the men dipped pieces of hardtack in the oil and chewed on them. The fires were fed with scraps of tried-out blubber, and evil-smelling smoke billowed up and blackened the sails. While the officers ladled the oil into the copper cooler and then into wooden casks, the men in the main hold worked to stow away the heavy, oily casks at the risk of being crushed with every roll of the ship.

The deck ran with "gurry," a sickening mess of blood and seawater and grease and bits of whale meat. The ship was a

vision of hell, hissing and flaring on the surface of the mysterious ocean. Although the men felt cold and clammy, their eyes burned from the smoke as they groped their way to the rail for a breath of cleaner air. Their clothes were drenched with salt water and oil. They were almost too exhausted to notice the blisters that swelled their bare feet.

The mates severed the head, fully a third of the whale's length, and hoisted it on board to cut it apart. (If the head was unusually large, it was cut apart while lashed to the side.) If the whale was a toothless right whale, the men removed the long thin slabs of tough "baleen," or whale-bone, the lengths of hornlike material in the whale's mouth. Right whales fed on tiny plankton, or "brit," scooping up great gulps of sea water and trapping their food within the baleen as they let the water drain out the sides of their mouths. The right whale's tongue, almost pure fat, was also cut out.

If the whale was a sperm whale, one of the men stood in the upper part of the head, or "case," up to his waist in colorless oil as clear as water, and bailed out the sweet liquid. The whale's lower forehead, or "junk," contained grainy, waxy, spongy spermaceti, delicate and pinkish, that was used to make fine-quality candles.

The men plunged cutting spades into the carcass of the sperm whale, hoping to find the rarest and most valuable treasure of all: ashen-colored ambergris, spongy and rubbery. Ambergris was found only in the intestines of sick sperm whales, and the great lumps contained undigested parrotlike beaks of the hideous giant squid on which the sperm whales fed in the depths of the ocean. Ambergris was not heavily scented itself, but it absorbed other scents and was used in expensive perfumes. A couple of hundred pounds of ambergris, at two to four hundred dollars a pound, was worth more than a whole shipful of oil.

Hours, even days, passed. The surface of the sea around the ship was slicked smooth by oil leaking from the body of the whale. At last all the blubber had found its way into the try-pots, so the carcass was set adrift for the sharks to tear apart. The lower jaw of the sperm whale was left to rot on deck until the ivory teeth could be pulled out.

The men mopped the decks and polished them with sharkskin until they glistened. They scrubbed the rails and polished the try-pots and put the hatches back over the try-works. Only the sails would never be white again. Finally the men washed and changed their clothes. They took out their tobacco and smoked for a moment in silence, wondering what the next few hours would bring, for more whales were all that mattered. The lookout at the masthead started, raised his head and narrowed his eyes.

"There! She blows! BLOOOOWS! BLOOOOOOWS!"

## IV. Narrative Poetry

### To The Teacher

*"The Palatine," by Whittier, will be particularly interesting to Rhode Island students because most of them have either been to Block Island or have seen it offshore on clear days at the beach. Because "The Palatine" is not normally found in anthologies and collections, a copy of the poem is included here.*

*Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus" is melodramatic, but students may find this more acceptable if they listen for that quality in some of the current ballads they know.*

*The simple form of both ballads lends itself well to a basic explanation of some poetic devices and why they are used.*

# Narrative Poem

"The Palatine," from "The Tent on the Beach"

by John Greenleaf Whittier

Leagues north, as fly the gull and auk,  
Point Judith watches with eye of hawk;  
Leagues south, thy beacon flames, Montauk!

Lonely and wind shorn, wood-forsaken,  
With never a tree for Spring to waken,  
For tryst of lovers or farewells taken,

Circled by waters that never freeze,  
Beaten by billow and swept by breeze,  
Lieth the island of Manisees,

Set at the mouth of the Sound to hold  
The coast lights up on its turret old,  
Yellow with moss and sea-fog mold.

Dreary the land when gust and sleet  
At its doors and windows howl and beat,  
And Winter laughs at its fires of peat!

But in summer time, when pool and pond,  
Held in the laps of valleys fond,  
Are blue as the glimpses of sea beyond;

When the hills are sweet with the brier-rose,  
And, hid in the warm, soft dells, uncloze  
Flowers, the mainland rarely knows;

When boats to their morning fishing go,  
And, held to the wind and slanting low,  
Whitening and darkening the small sails, show, -

Then is that lonely island fair;  
And the pale health-seeker findeth there  
The wine of life in its pleasant air.

No greener valleys the sun invite,  
On smoother beaches no sea-birds light,  
No blue waves shatter to foam more white!

There, circling ever their narrow range,  
Quaint tradition and legend strange  
Live on unchallenged, and know no change.

Old wives spinning their webs of tow,  
Or rocking weirdly to and fro  
In and out of the peat's dull glow,

And old men mending their nets of twine,  
Talk together of dream and sign,  
Talk of the lost ship Palatine,-

The ship that, a hundred years before,  
Freighted deep with its goodly store,  
In the gales of the equinox went ashore.

The eager islanders one by one  
Counted the shots of her signal gun,  
And heard the crash when she drove right on!

Into the teeth of death she sped:  
(May God forgive the hands that fed  
The false lights over the Rocky Head!)

O men and brothers! what sights were there!  
White upturned faces, hands stretched in prayer!  
Where waves had pity, could ye not spare?

Down swooped the wreckers, like birds of prey  
Tearing the heart of the ship away,  
And the dead had never a word to say.

And then, with ghastly shimmer and shine  
Over the rocks and the seething brine,  
They burned the wreck of the Palatine.

In their cruel hearts, as they homeward sped,  
"The sea and the rocks are dumb," they said:  
"There'll be no reckoning with the dead."

But the year went round, and when once more  
Along their foam-white curves of shore  
They heard the line-storm rave and roar,

Behold! again, with shimmer and shine,  
Over the rocks and the seething brine,  
The flaming wreck of the Palatine!

So, haply in fitter words than these,  
Mending their nets on their patient knees,  
They tell the legend of Manisees.

Nor looks nor tones a doubt betray;  
"It is known to us all," they quietly say;  
"We too have seen it in our day."

Is there, then, no death for a word once spoken?  
Was never a deed but left its token  
Written on tables never broken?

Do the elements subtle reflections give?  
Do pictures of all the ages live  
On Nature's infinite negative,

Which, half in sport, in malice half,  
She shows at times, with shudder or laugh,  
Phantom and shadow in photograph?

For still on many a moonless night,  
From Kingston Head and from Montauk Light  
The spectre kindles and burns in sight.

Now low and dim, now clear and higher,  
Leaps up the terrible Ghost of Fire,  
Then, slowly sinking, the flames expire.

And the wise Sound skippers, though skies be fine,  
Reef their sails when they see the sign  
Of the blazing wreck of the Palatine!

# Guides For The Narrative Poems

## ● "THE PALATINE," by John Greenleaf Whittier.

The legend of the Palatine Light is an intriguing bit of local color for Rhode Islanders. It concerns a strange light repeatedly seen over the ocean north of Block Island, and is still a subject of controversy. Many sources mention the legend including Edward Rowe Snow in Strange Tales from Nova Scotia to Cape Hatteras, and Mysterious New England by the editors of Yankee magazine; but it is Whittier's poem which has immortalized it. According to the legend, some Block Islanders, who usually lit signal fires to guide ships into safe coves and away from the dangerous shoals, were "overcome by greed" and purposely set the signal fire on a dangerous rocky point in order to capture the valuable cargo of the ship named The Palatine. Whittier's version says that all aboard were killed, but another says that one mad woman remained on board. After plundering the ship, the islanders are said to have set it afire and adrift. This, the story goes on, is the source of the strange light--the flaming ship appearing and then disappearing beneath the waves.

### Suggestions for "The Palatine"

1. Before reading:
  - a. Tell the students the legend or read a version of it from one of the sources mentioned.
  - b. How many students have been to Block Island? Students who have can describe it.
  - c. Point out that Whittier uses the Indian name for Block Island, because he liked its "soft flowing" sound, "Manisees."
2. The teacher could read the poem aloud or a fluent student could practice ahead to do so. It is hoped that individual copies can be run off so that students can follow along.
3. Explain and ask questions to aid understanding as you go along.
  - a. How does Whittier show where the island is?
  - b. What is it like in winter? In summer?



- c. What does he mean by the lines:  
 "(May God forgive the hands that fed the false  
 lights over the Rocky Head!)" and "Where waves  
 had pity, could ye not spare?"?
- d. Did the islanders "get away" with their crime?  
 Why not?
- e. Explain that a poet uses a metaphore to compare  
 his subject to something else in order to describe  
 it.

"Do pictures of all the ages live  
 On Nature's infinite negative,

Which half in sport...

She shows...

Phantom and shadow in photograph?"

In other words, are all our acts recorded in Nature  
 so that Nature can reveal them if She wants?

Comparing nature to a photographic negative gives  
 a clear and immediate idea of what the poet means.

- f. How do you suppose Block Islanders feel about this  
 legend? In their favor it must be pointed out that  
 it is well known that they helped many ships stay  
 out of danger with their signal lights and often  
 risked their lives to save people who were ship-  
 wrecked in spite of their signals. A version of  
 the legend far more favorable to Block Islanders  
 is also told in the Snow and Yankee magazine books.
- g. If appropriate, get students to see how Whittier  
 gave his poem form by casting it in a steady  
 iambic tetrameter, with a simple aaa, bbb, ccc, etc.  
 rhyme scheme. What is the effect?
- h. Read the poem again now that the meaning is clear  
 to enjoy the sound and the story together.

● "THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

The melodramatic quality of this poem may seem more natural if the teacher first points out that it is a ballad, a poem that tells a story and is often said to music or sung. (Perhaps a musical student could prepare it ahead of time to present to the class; he or she could read it and accompany him or herself on the guitar; or two students could present it, one reading and one accompanying).

After the students have heard the ballad, the teacher can help them to understand it by asking:

1. Why did the skipper take his daughter along?
2. How did the Old Sailor know to warn the skipper of the hurricane? How did the skipper feel about his warning? How did he feel about the storm when it broke?
3. What was Longfellow saying about the skipper's pride in the poem?
4. What is Longfellow's attitude toward the sea and the coast in the ballad?
5. What are some of the poetic devices Longfellow used to get the effect he wanted?  
Examples:  
"...waves looked soft as carded wool" (Simile)  
What is the effect? Comparing the waves to something soft and harmless emphasizes the contrast between how they looked and what they did.  
"But the cruel rocks they gored her side like the horns of an angry bull" (Personification and Simile)  
What is the effect? Attributing cruel action to the rocks emphasizes the role of the sea and the coast as the aggressor in the ballad.
6. Do you find the ballad overly sentimental or maudlin? Have our tastes in ballads changed? What modern ballads (often popular tunes) do you know that are maudlin? ("Ode to Billy Joe" or "Torn Between Two Lovers"--or perhaps something quite current?) Why do people sometimes like maudlin ballads? Would it seem as sentimental if it were sung? Why or why not?

# V. Articles About Scientific Adventures At Sea

## To The Teacher

*Some of the greatest sea adventures today are experienced by the scientists who study the ocean. A number of articles can be made available for the students to browse through or read during the course of the unit. This will entice them to sample some scientific writing for the layman and make them aware of the excitement of oceanographic research. Some articles especially appropriate for the unit are summarized on the following pages. Many are from National Geographic magazine, which is readily available in most school libraries.*

# Summaries Of The Articles

- "WINDOW ON EARTH'S INTERIOR," by Robert Ballard, National Geographic, Volume 150, Number 2, August, 1976.

In this excellent article, the author describes the expedition of the research submersible Alvin, three kilometers down underwater in the Caribbean's Cayman Trough. The purpose was to explore for the first time the cliff faces that reveal deep layers of oceanic crust. In addition to conveying the adventure of such a project, the author explains why they wanted to do it to begin with--what questions they were seeking to answer. This gives the students a glimpse of how scientists operate as questioners, not merely as collectors and cataloguers of information. Dr. Ballard explains simply how the earth's crust slowly moves over a "plastic" interior, causing cracks as the plates grind together. Magma from beneath the crust flows out of the cracks. By studying the heretofore inaccessible evidence of this process, scientists hope to learn more about the earth's present state, its past and future.

- "NEW TOOLS FOR UNDERSEA ARCHAEOLOGY," by George F. Bass, National Geographic, Volume 134, Number 3, September, 1968.

Archaeologists from the University of Pennsylvania Museum have been studying ancient shipwrecks on the floor of the Aegean Sea. The article describes how they explore, map, record, photograph, and excavate these priceless wrecks. It includes numerous photographs and explanations of the ingenious equipment and methods that have been devised for this type of research into the mysteries of the past.

- "THE VOYAGE OF THE RA II," by Thor Heyerdahl, National Geographic, January, 1971.

Heyerdahl describes his journey on the Ra II, a sailing ship built of papyrus reeds. He and his companions sailed across the Atlantic from Africa to the West Indies to test the theory that such boats could have crossed the ocean thousands of years ago, carrying elements of the ancient culture of the Mediterranean to the Western Hemisphere. This would explain the flowering of a culture from Mexico to Peru that contains remarkable similarities to the ancient civilization of the Mediterranean. Heyerdahl's description is vivid, and is accompanied by beautiful photographs.

- "DEEPSTAR EXPLORES THE OCEAN FLOOR," by Ron Church, National Geographic, January, 1971.

After a brief description of Deepstar, a mini-sub with excellent maneuverability for taking close-up photographs at great depth, the article illustrates the results of its dives with brilliant underwater photographs.

- "EXPLORING THE LIVES OF WHALES," by Victor B. Scheffer, Ph.D., National Geographic, Volume 150, Number 6, December, 1976.

Scheffer surveys the development of research on whales. Some studies are based on whaling records, while others use dead whales. Much modern research is being done on live whales, tracking them with sound detectors to find out diving depths, tape recording whale noises to compare "dialects," and fastening markers or recording devices to track migrations. Scheffer describes how these studies are done, and includes some of the interesting facts learned through them.

- "DIARY OF A WHALING VOYAGE," by Ron Vontobel, Audubon, January, 1975.

Vontobel describes the exciting adventure of a whaling voyage for the purpose of research, aboard the Canadian sealer Arctic Endeavor. Daily life and work photographing, tagging, and studying social behavior are colorfully described.

- "THE IMPERILED GIANTS," by William Graves, National Geographic, Volume 150, Number 6, December, 1976.

This is an excellent account of the development and practices of the whaling industry. The author explains why several species of whales are endangered and what measures are being taken and need to be taken to protect them. Both the writing and the photography are vividly effective.

# VI. Four Books About Lone Sailing Voyages

## To The Teacher

*These four books all contain true stories of high adventure. The students can divide into four groups during this part of the unit, according to the book they choose. The Slocum book has recently been republished in paperback (along with his Voyage of the Libertad). The other three are recent, available in paperback or at local and school libraries.*

*Students can choose their books in the beginning of the unit and read them at home during the preceding parts of the unit, which involve mainly class work. After the students have read their books, they can write out and hand in their answers to the written questions for each book given later. (p.33). Then they can meet with their groups to discuss their answers and help prepare a presentation of them for a panel discussion. One member from each group can explain the groups' answers in a panel discussion before the class. After the panel, the teacher can encourage students to compare the four books by asking the discussion questions .*

*The questions are designed to aid understanding of the reading and develop skills in drawing conclusions about material read, making judgments about characters, and comparing books.*

# Summaries Of The Four Books

## ● SAILING ALONE AROUND THE WORLD, by Captain Joshua Slocum.

This book, published in 1900, is probably the classic tale of a lone sea voyage. Slocum, after a career as a sea captain, made the voyage in a 36 foot sailing sloop, leaving from Fairhaven, Massachusetts, and returning there on June 27, 1898, after a cruise of more than forty-six thousand miles during three years and two months. What makes this book unique is the blend of humor, often dry understatement, and straightforward explanation of how he felt about his experiences. The experiences are interesting in their own right; vivid descriptions of the people and places where he stopped, as well as his adventures on the water. But reading his reactions and judgments about them gives the reader a chance to perceive the humanity of this daring sailor, a chance that is often missed in adventure books. One comes to know a brave yet sensitive man, impulsive, but tempered with the wisdom of experience, knowledge and respect for the sea. Slocum's writing is vivid and colorful, demanding for most eighth graders, but probably exciting enough to carry them along eagerly. This book is highly recommended.

## ● GIPSY MOTH CIRCLES THE WORLD, by Sir Francis Chichester.

In this book, Sir Francis Chichester tells how he sailed alone around the world in a 54 foot yacht. He was 65 at the time and had two main goals. One was to succeed in rounding Cape Horn in a small boat, which he felt was "one of the greatest challenges left in the world." The other was to make the fastest voyage around the world that had ever been made in a small boat. He succeeded in both, surmounting numerous obstacles by tenaciously holding to his dream.

The book is filled with rather technical explanations of the difficult sailing involved, and would probably appeal most to students with some sailing background. Chichester takes the reader almost day by day through his voyage, detailing his physical and emotional state as well as his activities on board the Gipsy Moth. When he returned in May of 1967, after an incredibly fast 226-day circumnavigation, he was hailed as a hero, a man who captured the imagination of our time because he lived his dream.

● TINKERBELL, by Robert Manry.

This is the true story of how the author, a middle-aged copy editor on the Plain Dealer of Cleveland, Ohio, sailed alone across the Atlantic in the 13½ foot sloop Tinkerbelle, thought to be the smallest boat ever to cross the Atlantic non-stop. Manry describes his 78 day voyage from Falmouth, Massachusetts to Falmouth, England in fascinating detail, so that the reader can easily imagine his experience. But he carefully avoids the over-technical. He describes how he lived and felt, the marine animals he observed, and the dangers he endured such as being knocked overboard by waves, suffering weird hallucinations, and meeting three Russian trawlers. Both the style and content seem accessible to most eight graders.

● THE BOY WHO SAILED AROUND THE WORLD ALONE, by Robin Lee Graham with Derek L.T. Gill.

This is the account of the adventures of a sixteen year old boy who sailed around the world alone, visiting a number of interesting places along the way. It is simply told in the first person by the boy himself. He explains how he decided to undertake such a voyage and how he prepared for it, as well as telling about the sailing trip. There are numerous color photographs. This book is the easiest reading of the four.



# Questions For Writing And Discussion

Written Questions for each book:

1. Who was the sailor in your book? Briefly describe what kind of person he was.
2. Why did he want to take such a journey?
3. How did the loneliness affect him?
4. What were the hardest parts of his journey? How did he react to these challenges? What kept him going? Why did he survive?
5. What were his attitudes and feelings about the sea? Did they change? How and why?
6. Did he grow as a person through this experience? How? Why?

Discussion Questions for after the panel:

1. Which sailor seems the most courageous, adventurous, or heroic to you? Why? Which one seems the least? Why?
2. Which journey seems the most difficult and demanding? Why?
3. Would you ever want to undertake such an adventure? Why?
4. Is there a common reason why all these men wanted to do this? What?
5. Do you think the three recent sailors differed from Slocum (whose journey ended in 1898) in their reasons for going and the way they felt about it afterwards? How and why?
6. Which sailor do you find out the most about as a person? Why? Do you like him?
7. All of these novels are in the first person. What is the effect? Do you find out more or less about the sailor that way? Explain.
8. Is there a common reason why all four sailors survived? Explain.

## VII. Writing A Narrative

### To The Teacher

*In this section students will have an opportunity to practice some narrative writing. The teacher will probably want to introduce the section with some basic ideas about narrative writing such as the following:*

*Narrative writing tells a story. We write narratives when we write letters or diaries, but we most often read narratives in novels and short stories. A short story or novel is probably more difficult to write than a diary or a series of letters because it usually has more form. That is, it has a clear beginning, middle, climax (or turning point), and end; also it has a setting and some character development. Narrative writing in letters or diaries can have many of these elements also, but often it does not.*

*Each student can write an original narrative about an adventure at sea. Students can decide individually whether to write their narratives in the form of short stories or as a series of diary entries or letters, relating the adventure as if telling it to a friend or recording it in a diary.*

### Suggestions For Writing Narratives

The teacher can help students get started writing their narratives by asking them to decide:

1. Shall I tell my narrative as a short story or as if I (or someone else) were writing a series of letters telling a friend what happened? Or as diary entries?
2. Who is talking?
3. Where does the action take place?
4. Who are the main people involved (characters)?
5. What are they like?
6. What is the situation in the beginning?

7. What problems arise?
8. How do the characters react?
9. How is the problem solved?
10. How does the story end?

Ask the students to write a rough draft after they answer the above questions. When they have a rough draft, they can go over it with a checklist such as the following:

Checklist for the rough draft:

1. Are all sentences complete, except in dialogue?
2. Is the order of the events clear?
3. Is there enough explanation that what happens seems logical?
4. Are there enough details about the characters to make them believable? Are their actions in character? Clearly motivated?
5. Is enough dialogue included to make it lively?
6. Is the dialogue properly punctuated?
7. Is the setting vividly portrayed?
8. Is the action described with specific, rather than general verbs? (Example: "He leapt into the water," not "He got into the water.")
9. Are words left out? misspelled? repeated too often?

Students can rework and rewrite their rough drafts to make a final copy. Ask them to hand in the rough draft with the final version so that the changes and improvements can be seen.

# VIII. Project About Adventures At Sea

## Activities

Each student can choose one activity:

1. Write an original narrative poem telling the story of an adventure at sea. Decide on a simple form that you can carry out all through the poem. You can invent the adventure or base your poem upon a story you have read or heard.
2. Make an original drawing or painting showing some adventure at sea.
3. Prepare a written or oral report on an occupation or recreation involving adventure at sea that interests you. Examples of occupations: professional scuba diver, captain of a freighter, able bodied seaman, charter boat captain, oceanographer (not fisherman, since fishing as an occupation was explored in Section III). Examples of recreation: surfing, sailing, sports fishing. For information about occupations students can interview people in them, write to the Marine Advisory Service, Narragansett Bay Campus, URI Narragansett, RI 02882, to request Marine Memorandum Number 41, Marine Career Series, check in school guidance offices for career folders, and read encyclopedias. Good sources of information about marine recreation are magazines devoted specifically to that subject, personal experiences, and interviews with people involved.
4. Prepare a written or oral report on one of the creatures of the sea that interests you. Base it on at least two sources of information, such as a National Geographic article, and no more than one encyclopedia article.
5. Interview someone you know who has had an adventure at sea and write a report of your interview. (Prepare a list of questions to ask ahead of time.)
6. Collect five newspaper or magazine articles reporting on adventures on or under the sea. Post them on the bulletin board or put them with the articles for Section IV so that other students can read them. Hand in a summary of each article.

# IX. More Books About Adventures At Sea

## To The Teacher

*These four books contain exciting stories of adventures at sea, illustrating the conflict between people and nature (the sea, in this instance). In all of these books, the people survive because they learn to live with nature, use it, and endure it; they cannot master it. These books are available in school and local libraries or as paperbacks. Three others that are also recommended but are not as much about the people vs. the sea conflict are summarized at the end of the section, in case the teacher would wish to substitute them: The Living Sea, by Cousteau; 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, by Verne, and Logbook for Grace, by Murphy.*

*As in Section VI, the students can divide into four groups, depending on which book they choose to read. The teacher can introduce the books briefly in the beginning of the unit, so that the students can choose one and begin reading. These books too can be read at home during the other sections of the unit. When finished reading, students can take the brief written quiz provided for each book. Then the teacher can meet with each group to go into the discussion questions. Meanwhile, the students in the other groups can work on the choice of activities suggested for each book.*

# Guides And Activities For Adventure Books

## ● THE RAFT, by Robert Trumbull.

### Summary:

The Raft is a true story about a navy pilot and two sailors who survived 34 days and sailed a thousand miles in a rubber raft after being lost at sea. It is written by a New York Times correspondent as it was told to him by Harold Dixon, the pilot, in an immediate and down-to-earth style that is easily read by most eighth graders. The dramatic situation, one that demands the utmost in physical and emotional stamina as the men learn to contend with the sea, is the kind of life-or-death adventure that will immediately involve most students. The teacher can use it to help students gain skill in analyzing conflicts between people and nature.

The book was originally published by Holt in 1942, but there is also a paperback edition available published by Willow Books in 1966.

### Quiz for The Raft:

(Answers to these and the other quiz questions are given in parentheses following each question. In the interest of brevity, answers are often given as sentence fragments, but the teacher will undoubtedly want students to answer in complete sentences.)

1. Why were the three men lost? (They were unable to get their plane back to their aircraft carrier because of navigational error on a reconnaissance mission.)
2. What was their most pressing problem? (Need for water, until it rained)
3. Why didn't their ship keep looking for them until they found them? (They were in Japanese waters.)
4. Why did Dixon make a chart? (So that he could attempt to navigate and thus control their direction.)
5. How did Dixon control the direction of the raft? (By devising a sea anchor)

6. How did they get water to drink? (Caught it in their clothes, then squeezed them into a container)
7. How did they eventually lose everything? (They were overturned by waves several times.)
8. Why were the natives on the island so amazed at how they reached land? (They came over a treacherous reef, thought to be impassable.)
9. What disaster struck after they landed on the island? (A tremendous hurricane, the most severe in years)

Discussion Questions for The Raft:

1. What is the central conflict in this adventure?

The teacher can help the students to see the conflict by asking questions and writing on the board as students answer. It will show the conflict most clearly if questions (a) and (b) are shown side-by-side.

- a. What did the men have on their side?  
Dixon's knowledge of navigation  
Physical stamina  
Ingenuity to catch and use rain, fish, and birds  
Encouragement of each other, mutual support  
Courage  
Determination to live
- b. What did the men have to fight?  
The changeable wind  
Physical weakness because of lack of sleep, exercise and food  
Storms, cold, sun, sharks, waves  
Getting on each other's nerves  
Fear  
Discouragement
- c. Where do all the things under question (a) come from?  
Man
- d. Where do the things under question (b) come from?  
The wind, physical weakness, storms, cold, sun, sharks, and waves are all from nature. The rest are from within man.

2. What effect did it have on the situation that Dixon was along?

What would the situation have been like without a clear leader?

How did his knowledge help?

3. What do you think kept them going?

4. What do you think was the most difficult part of their ordeal, the physical discomfort or the mental anguish? Be specific about which discomforts or what mental anguish and explain why you think as you do.

5. Who won this conflict?

Obviously the men won, but help the students to recognize that they won because they learned to live within the limits of their situation. They did not overpower the sea, they learned to use it and live with it.

How did they deal with the wind blowing them the wrong way?

How did they contend with hunger? thirst? heat? cold?

What things could they have no control over? What would have happened if the hurricane had struck before they landed?

6. How did they feel about the sea? Cite specific passages in the story that show this (Chapter 13, p. 95; Chapter 15, pp. 110-113; Chapter 18, p. 133; Chapter 19, p. 139; Chapter 21, pp. 153-154 in the 1942 edition published by Holt.)

7. Dixon said (end of Chapter 5) that he thought it was their "continual practice of deliberate idiocy (joking, 'putting on the pot,' etc.) that kept (them) from going really insane in (their) exposure, starvation, and thirst."

Why would this help?

8. Describe their condition by the end of Chapter 21?

Why do they shake hands and start over again?

### Writing Activities for The Raft:

Choose one.

1. Because Trumbull tells the story as Dixon told it to him, we find out very little of what went on inside each man. Put yourself in the place of one man and write a stream-of-consciousness monologue. That is, write what he is thinking, in the first person, after choosing a particular moment where these thoughts might occur. Show his fears, hopes, feelings about the other two men, and his memories of home, family, and friends using a loose rambling style, like your mind wandering. You will need to use your imagination as well as what you know from the story to supply details.



2. Rewrite the end of the story so that it ends differently. You could use one of these suggested changes or make up your own:

- . The hurricane strikes before they land.
- . The island is not inhabited.
- . One of the men dies.
- . One of the men becomes very ill.

Include details to make your ending seem believable and fit the rest of the story.

● SHACKLETON'S VALIENT VOYAGE, by Alfred Lansing

Summary:

Shackleton's Valient Voyage is an unbridged version of the author's Endurance, prepared as a response to many requests for a shortened edition from people working with teenagers. It is one of the great heroic adventures, the more so because it is true. It is the story of the Antarctic explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton and his party of 28 men who were forced to abandon their ship and their intention to cross the Antarctic continent overland when the ship was crushed by ice packs in the Weddell Sea. They hiked with dogs dragging their gear and three boats and camped on the huge ice floes while the drift of ice carried them closer to land. After five and a half months of surviving on the ice on short rations of seal meat when they could find it, the ice floes began to crack and break up, so they were forced to take to the boats. The three small boats managed to find openings in the ice packs and avoid being crushed to reach the open sea. By incredible skill and luck they crossed the open sea to reach Elephant Island, a small island between the Antarctic Continent and the violently dangerous Drake Passage. Since it was impossible to make the passage in two of the three boats, Shackleton decided to take a party of five men and sail the most seaworthy boat, the Caird, to the Island of South Georgia to bring relief to the rest. To reach South Georgia it was necessary to sail over 800 miles across the stormiest ocean in the world, where the Cape Horn rollers rise to perhaps 100 feet. The navigational skill alone required to hit an island only 25 miles wide under those conditions is awesome. Bitter cold, the icing over of the boat, thirst, constant drenching by huge waves, lurching, lack of sleep - all were endured on this incredible journey. And still more incredibly, they made it to South Georgia, climbed overland to the whaling station and returned to rescue the rest of their party stranded on Elephant Island.

The book is all plot, revealing little about the character of the men except that which is most dramatically revealed in their actions. It is pure adventure, appealing to many eighth graders, and lends itself well to discussion about conflict between people and nature, and what it takes for a person to seek and endure such a contest.

Quiz for Shackleton's Valient Voyage:

1. What happened to the Endurance?  
(She was crushed by ice and finally sank)
2. What was the original intention of Shackleton's party?  
(To cross the Antarctic continent overland)
3. Why did they have to retreat to the  
"Mark Time Camp" rather than continue their journey over the  
icepack? (The ice floes were starting to break up, so  
they had to find a safe one to live on).
4. What did they eat?  
(Seals, adolie penquins, rations remaining from the ship)
5. Why did they take to the boats and head for Elephant Island?  
(The floes were disintegrating and they had a chance to make  
it to open sea.)
6. Why was it difficult for the 3 boats to stay together?  
(The Caird was the only one that was seaworthy; the others  
couldn't keep up and manage the seas.)
7. Why was the 800 mile boat trip from Elephant Island to  
South Georgia so dangerous?  
(They had to cross the stormiest ocean in the world, where  
Cape Horn rollers can be as huge as 100 feet high.)
8. What made their suffering unbearable at the end?  
(Thirst--their water became polluted)
9. Who was the navigator?  
(Worsley)
10. What new challenge did Shackleton have to face when they  
landed on South Georgia?  
(He had to cross uncharted mountains and glaciers to reach  
the whaling station.)

Discussion Questions for Shackleton's Valient Voyage:

(Page numbers refer to the 1960 edition published by McGraw-Hill)

1. What is the central conflict in this adventure?

The teacher can help students to understand the basic conflict between people and nature by asking questions and writing on the board as the students answer. The conflict can be most readily seen if the teacher shows questions (a) and (b) side-by-side on the board.

- a. What did the men have on their side?
  - Shackleton's leadership ability
  - Worsley's knowledge of navigation
  - McNeish's skill as a carpenter (to remodel the Caird)
  - Physical stamina
  - Courage
  - Determination
- b. What did the men have to fight against?
  - Ice, cold, aloneness
  - The Drake Passage, wild storms, huge waves
  - Rough seas, drenching waves, icing over
  - Physical weakness, starvation, thirst, freezing, frostbite
  - Fear
  - Discouragement

These things come from nature or within the people themselves.

The conflicts between people and nature and within a person can be made clearer by asking the following questions:

- 2. What kind of man was Shackleton? Why did he seek such a challenge? (pp. 23-24, 57-58). He is described as an extraordinary leader. Why? How did he operate as a leader? Be specific.
- 3. Explain their realization of how small they were in relation to the forces they faced. (p. 55)
- 4. What kept them going? Consider the condition of the men while crossing to Elephant Island (p. 111-112, 114, 117).
- 5. The voyage of the Caird from Elephant Island to South Georgia is the climax of the book. Why?
- 6. Why was the sea a different sort of adversary than the land for Shackleton? What did he feel about the sea? (p. 148)
- 7. Describe the conditions of the Drake Passage, the "most dreaded bit of ocean on the globe," (pp. 153-155).
- 8. How did they learn to endure the passage?

Writing Activities for Shackleton's Valient Voyage:

Choose one.

1. Write a character study of Shackleton. Base it on specific information about him in the book, but add conclusions of your own drawn from his actions. Try to get inside this man and figure out why he sought such adventure, what kept him going, how he saw himself, and how others saw him. What can you tell about his relationships with others? What did he value, find important? What didn't he value that many people do?
2. Because Lansing bases his novel strictly on information gathered from diaries and talking with those involved, he includes little conversation or thoughts of the men. Based on what he gives us, choose a moment during the crossing from Elephant Island to South Georgia and write one of the following:
  - a. A conversation between two of the men on the Caird.
  - b. A conversation between two of the men left behind.
  - c. An interior monologue (thoughts, in a rambling, stream-of-consciousness style) showing the thoughts and feelings of any one of the men on the Caird. Use your imagination to put yourself in his place.

● CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS, by Rudyard Kipling.

Summary:

Captains Courageous is the fictional and entertaining account of Harvey Cheyne's experience on a fishing schooner on the Grand Banks off Newfoundland. Kipling had almost no experience on the sea himself, but based his story on that of a neighbor in Brattleboro, Vermont, so that what results is a warmly romantic view of what must have been a very laborious way of life. Kipling tries to capture the dialects of the fishermen, which may be difficult for the students at first, but the novel is otherwise quite readable for most students at this level.

Harvey Cheyne is the spoiled fifteen-year-old son of an American multi-millionaire railroad magnate. On his way to Europe on an ocean liner, he falls overboard. Rescued by a fishing schooner, he is expected by the good but practical skipper to work until they return to Gloucester. Harvey, who has never worked or taken orders from anyone, is at first haughty and demanding, but soon has to learn to conform. He undergoes an improbable but delightful transformation under the tutelage of the rough and hearty members of the crew by the time he finally returns home.

He learns to handle a dory, fish for cod, and help "dress down" the catch. He learns to stand watch even when exhausted. But most important, he learns to work hard, listen to people, finish a "mean" job, and be a contributing member of the crew. In telling the story, Kipling paints a vivid and detailed picture of dory fishing on the Grand Banks at the end of the 19th century, from the process of cod fishing to the customs and superstitions of the fishermen.

Note: It might aid immediate understanding if the teacher helps the students to figure out that "mistrust" is used to mean think or suspect in the fishermen's dialect.

Quiz for Captains Courageous:

1. What did Harvey Cheyne order Troop to do when he came to on the We're Here ?  
(He ordered Troop to take him immediately to New York and promised him he would be well paid.)
2. Who was Dan? (The son of the skipper Disko Troop, who became Harvey's good friend)
3. What was Penn's problem?  
(He lost his family in the Johnstown, Pennsylvania flood, and was thereafter "simple-minded.")
4. What did the cook fortell about Harvey and Dan?  
(Harvey would be master, Dan his man.)
5. What superstition did Dan and Harvey come to believe?  
(They found out that a dead fisherman would come back for his belongings.)
6. What did Harvey do when the schooner first landed at Gloucester?  
(He cried as though his heart would break.)
7. How did Harvey's parents come for him?  
(They crossed the country in their private railroad car.)
8. How did Harvey's father "repay" Troop?  
(He offered Dan a good job and future on the line of tea clipper ships he owned.)
9. What did Harvey choose for his future when he got back?  
(He rejected his former life of indolence and decided to go to college, work hard, then learn to take over the clipper ship lines when he finished.)
10. What member of the crew left with Harvey?  
(The cook)

### Discussion Questions for Captains Courageous:

1. What is improbable about Harvey's change?  
Why do you think Kipling told the story that way?
2. What seems likely or true about the change that Harvey underwent? How was Harvey in conflict with himself?  
With the men on the We're Here?
3. How did Kipling romanticize fishing on the Grand Banks?  
Why? What do you think are some of the things he left out? What was Kipling's view of the sea? How did it differ from the view you would expect a dory fisherman to have?
4. One of the other conflicts of the novel is between men and the sea. Explain.  
Considering the dangers and numbers of lives lost from Gloucester alone, why did so many Gloucester men become fishermen? How did Disko Troop's wife (Dan's mother) feel about the sea? How is fishing at sea different now than in the late 19th century?
5. What are some of the customs observed by the fishing fleet on the Banks?
6. How does Kipling portray Mrs. Troop and Mrs. Cheyne?  
How might their roles be different now? Do you think Kipling had a demeaning view of woman? Who do you think was the character most worthy of respect?

### Activities for Captains Courageous:

Choose one.

1. Since Kipling provides so much conversation, the novel lends itself to dramatic interpretation. With others in your book group, prepare skits of one or two scenes from the novel and present them to the class.
2. Imagine that Harvey Cheyne was picked up by a whaling ship, a merchant vessel, a naval war ship, or another ocean liner. Write a short story about his fate.  
Would he change? How and why?



● KON-TIKI, by Thor Heyerdahl.

Summary:

Kon-Tiki is the author's account of the daring voyage he and five other men made on a raft of balsa logs from Peru to the Polynesian Islands. They went to test Heyerdahl's theory that the Polynesian Islands were originally settled by a race of skilled seafarers from Peru who had white skin and worshipped the sun god, Kon-Tiki. Heyerdahl's group built the raft to be an exact replica of the early type and, except for their radio contact with the civilized world, set out like their earlier counterparts to drift with the current and sail with the wind across an almost uncharted area of the Pacific.

Heyerdahl and his companions experienced some heavy seas and storms, but mainly had good conditions, and thoroughly enjoyed the adventure. They observed the ways of the sharks, bonitos, dolphins, pilot fish and other strange marine animals and found them a continuing source of delight and interest, as well as food. The situation provides an example of conflict between people and nature that was largely resolved because the men lived with nature, respecting it. Their crash landing upon a coral reef when they reached the Polynesian Islands is related so that the reader shares in the suspenseful climax. Though not a simple book in style or vocabulary, the adventurous plot will entice many eighth graders into reading it. All editions include eighty excellent photographs of the voyage, and there is also available a special Rand McNally Color Edition for Young People, which, along with the original text, contains color illustrations, maps, and photos.

Quiz for Kon-Tiki:

1. Where did Heyerdahl and Herman Watzinger find the balsa logs? (In the jungles of Equador, high in the Andes)
2. Why did it matter whether the logs were new or not? (Dried balsa would soon become waterlogged and sink. Fresh balsa was protected by the sap still in the wood.)
3. What shelter did the men have on the raft? (A bamboo hut)
4. What was one of the strange sea creatures that impressed them so much? (The snake fish or the whale shark)
5. What was their experience with sharks? (Sharks were almost always around, but did not attack unless there was blood in the water. They were not a problem; the men even started catching them by their tails as a peculiar diversion.)
6. Why would it be so dangerous to fall overboard? (Because it was almost impossible to recover anything due to the irreversible drift of the raft).
7. What was the significance of Easter Island to them? (This was where the original inhabitants, probably the same skillful race that settled Polynesia from Peru, carved huge monolithic sculptures in stone. The Kon-tiki passed west of it.)
8. Were the huge octopi known to inhabit this area of the ocean a problem to them? Why or why not? (No, only the very small, young ones showed themselves.)
9. Why did they crash land on a coral reef? (The islands were surrounded by reefs, and only by skillful navigation in a more easily directed craft could one avoid crashing upon a reef.)

Discussion Questions for Kon-Tiki:

1. All six men actively chose to be involved in this adventure. How would that make the experience different for them than if they were in it by necessity, as for example, in Robert Trumbull's The Raft?

2. What is the major conflict in the book?

The teacher can show the conflict by a diagram on the board showing what people and nature had on their respective sides.

| people                 | vs. | nature          |
|------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| courage                |     | storms          |
| knowledge              |     | huge waves      |
| determination          |     | coral reefs     |
| skill and intelligence |     | sharks, etc.    |
| humor                  |     | winds, currents |

Much of the time the conflict is potential rather than actual. Explain. Give examples of times the conflict between the men and nature becomes actual. The teacher can help students to see that these men survive, not by defeating nature, but by living with it, using their skills, knowledge, and intelligence to live within it and use it wisely.

3. What would have been the effect if a serious conflict had developed among the men themselves? How do you think that would affect the outcome of the major conflict?

4. What were all the reasons you can think of that the men had for attempting the voyage? What kind of person do you imagine Heyerdahl to be?

5. Do you have a clear picture of the expedition members besides Heyerdahl as people? Why or why not? (Heyerdahl emerges as a person, but the others blend together) How does this affect your feeling about the book?

6. Heyerdahl does not dwell on the difficulties of the voyage, perhaps because it was such a positive personal and professional success. What do you think would be some of the hard parts of such an experience for you? What would you like most about it?

7. What was the attitude of the men toward the sea? The many marine animals they observed?

## Writing Activities for Kon-Tiki:

Choose one.

1. Heyerdahl says nothing about his inner thoughts and feelings during the voyage. Perhaps in such close quarters it worked best not to discuss potentially volatile or upsetting subjects. Put yourself in the place of Heyerdahl or one of the other men, choose a time during the voyage (such as after the parrot was lost overboard or after the whale shark) and write a stream-of-consciousness style rendition of his thoughts. Include thoughts and feelings about how he feels physically and emotionally, his attitudes towards his companions, the sea and its creatures, the voyage at that point, his home, his destination. Stream-of-consciousness style attempts to capture the loose, rambling, run-on way we think, in sentence fragments, moving from one subject to another and back again.
2. Put yourself in the place of Heyerdahl or one of the other men, choose a specific time during the voyage, and write a journal entry or entries describing his thoughts and feelings about what was happening, what he liked and why, what was difficult, his relationships with the other men, his fears and hopes. Use your imagination!

Summaries of Other Recommended Books:

● THE LIVING SEA, by Captain J.Y. Cousteau with James Dugan.

This exciting book by a figure familiar to eighth-graders from television gives a vivid picture of the adventures of undersea exploration. Cousteau tells the story of how his dream of a research vessel became the reality of the Calypso, an international exploring ship with a professional diving team, constantly improving equipment, and a crew sharing curiosity, enthusiasm, and love for the creatures and wonders of the sea. Cousteau describes many exciting missions of the ship, including exploring coral reefs in the Red Sea, recovering a three-thousand year old wine ship in the Mediterranean, studying dolphins, and prospecting for oil. Throughout he fills his narrative with information about the strange and beautiful animals they saw, and explains the ingenious equipment used by the crew, such as underwater scooters, photographic gear, and diving saucers. But Cousteau avoids getting overly technical, and includes many details about life on board the Calypso for himself and the crew, thus producing a thoroughly readable and enjoyable book.

● TWENTY-THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, by Jules Verne.

Twenty-Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, written almost a century ago, was one of the first modern science-fiction stories. It tells the strange adventures of M. Aronnax, a French professor of natural history, and his two companions, who fell overboard when their ship collided with the unknown vessel they were pursuing. That vessel turned out to be a large and luxurious electrically operated submarine, controlled by the enigmatic Captain Nemo. During the ten months that the three remained unwillingly but quite comfortably aboard the submarine, they travelled 20,000 leagues touring the undersea world. They viewed the wonders of the deep through large observation windows and explored the ocean in diving suits with elaborate breathing apparatus. Their adventures, such as hunting in the marine forest of Crispo, being trapped under the South Polar ice, and discovering the lost continent of Atlantis, are told in a way that grips the imagination. Characterization is weak, but for sheer science-fiction fantasy, the novel will delight many eighth graders. The straight forward narrative style in the first person will also be inviting to many readers.

● LOGBOOK FOR GRACE, by Robert Cushman Murphy.

Logbook for Grace was prepared by the author from the logbook he kept for his wife Grace, while sailing on a year-long whaling and sealing expedition to the edge of the Antarctic. Murphy, who became a well-known naturalist and world expert on oceanic birds, was twenty-five years old when he made this voyage in 1912, four months after he married his wife, Grace. In his log he described in detail the men and ways of a whaling vessel, one of the last of the old variety. He also carefully observed and recorded the birds and animals and their marine environment. Throughout the writing are personal reactions, humorous comments, and expressions of feelings that reveal a warm personality that truly engages the reader. The vocabulary is broad for most eighth graders, but Murphy's style is informal and lively, so the reading will not be too difficult for good readers at this level.

# X. Culminating Activity

## To The Teacher

*As the culminating activity, to pull together some of the ideas and skills practiced in the unit, students can write a long essay relating to the theme of "Adventures at Sea." This will encourage them to draw on their reading, discussions, and activities from the entire unit.*

*If desired, some of these essays may be entered in the Coastal Resources Management Council's annual essay contest. Essays should be from 800 to 1200 words long. Information about dates and procedures for entering the contest is being sent to English Department heads and is also available from the University of Rhode Island, Coastal Resources Center, 792-6224.*

*The teacher may suggest some topics and encourage students to suggest others that would be suitable.*

## Suggestions For Essay Topics

### 1. People Against the Sea

Why do people sometimes see themselves in conflict with the sea? Give examples of conflict and describe what is on each side. Can we defeat the sea? How (through actions and attitudes) can we survive in a contest with the sea? Give examples from your reading. What qualities in people enable them to endure in a conflict with the sea? Use examples from the unit.

### 2. Adventures at Sea

Why do people seek adventure at sea? Give as many reasons as you can think of, illustrating them with examples. One reason is that some people want to test themselves. Why? Why do they choose the sea as a place to test themselves? How do they do it? Why else do people seek adventure at sea? Explain. Do you think people are more likely to seek adventure at sea now than 200 years ago? Explain.