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People And The Sea

The Relationship Between People And The Sea,
A Unit For 9th 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 28



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**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.

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Preface

This unit was written by an English teacher to be used by English teachers in English classes. It therefore emphasizes the basic language arts skills of reading, writing and speaking as well as specific skills such as using figurative language or writing a descriptive essay. These skills can be taught using almost any theme as a focus for reading and a springboard for discussion and writing. The theme of "The Relationship Between People and the Sea" seems particularly relevant to us as Rhode Islanders, since the sea has played such a vital role in our past and present, and, if we care enough to preserve it, it will in our future. It is hoped that by encouraging our students' interest and involvement with the sea and coast, they, when decision making adults, will choose to protect its beauty and resources.

The poetry selections chosen for this theme are often used in the ninth grade. Other readings, such as the Snow story, the historical selections, and the O'Neill play, were chosen because of their regional and topical interest. And others, such as the Teal and Carson selections, are ones that we would not usually find in the English class because of the scientific subject matter. It was, however, a delight to include them since the writing is vivid, sensitive, and often poetic, and the content is very basic and clearly presented. It seems important to help our students to become generally literate in the world today, and this means being comfortable reading all kinds of well-written material.

All of the material has been found to be readily available in local or school libraries or in paperback form in bookstores. Reprints of the two journal articles are included, and it is hoped that teachers can duplicate copies for students. The unit is written so that the teacher may read and use it as a teaching aid or change and adapt it to suit the needs of the class. The wording of the ideas and questions is meant only as a suggestion. It may take approximately six weeks to complete the unit, depending on the judgement of the teacher.

The culminating activity is a long essay, related to the theme of the unit, which may be considered for entry in the annual Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council Essay Contest if desired. However, the unit may also be used without entering the contest.

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, drama and non-fiction.
2. To gain skill in writing by writing answers to questions and several essays relating to the reading.
3. To gain skill in presenting ideas orally by participating in class discussions, presentations, panels, and small group discussions.
4. By using the theme of "The Relationship between People and the Sea" as a focus for these activities, it is hoped that students' appreciation of the role of the sea in their lives will be expanded and deepened. Further, is hoped that students will gain a heightened awareness of their responsibility to preserve and protect the sea and its coast.

Specific

1. To gain a better understanding of how a poem works; why and how a poet uses poetic devices.
2. To draw conclusions and make judgements based on reading.
3. To make analogies from reading to other situations.
4. To express feelings through a creative activity.
5. To understand how a playwright can present and develop his characters, as well as use setting to achieve his purpose.
6. To increase vocabulary.
7. To understand and use the difference between figurative and literal language.
8. To write effective description.
9. To paraphrase instead of copy, when paraphrasing is appropriate.

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I. Introduction

To The Teacher

This unit deals with the relationship between people and the sea. This means what people think and feel about the sea, how they use it, why they use it that way, what the sea means to them. The sea, in a broad sense, includes not just the ocean itself, but the marine environment including the coast, beaches, and salt marshes.

It may be effective to introduce the unit by first finding out what the students think of the sea. The teacher could ask the students to write down three words or phrases describing the sea that they think of immediately. After hearing responses, the teacher could list some of them on the board. It would be interesting for the students to identify the categories their words fall into such as:

- 1. Words that paint a picture of the sea, such as open, vast, huge, blue, waves, spray, foam, dunes.*
- 2. Words that describe a feeling about the sea, such as lonely, indifferent, cruel, powerful, raging, peaceful, beautiful, exciting.*
- 3. Words that name creatures of the sea, such as sharks, whales, fish, seagulls, etc.*
- 4. Words that describe how people use the sea, such as fishing, sunbathing, swimming, surfing.*

The discussion could then turn to why we have the responses we do toward the sea. The teacher can lead the students to understand that our attitudes toward the sea are formed by our experiences. Thus a fisherman values the sea as his source of livelihood. A person who finds peace and renewal in a quiet walk beside the sea will love it for that. Or someone who enjoys observing the animal and plant life along the coast may value it for that. Some experiences in regard to the sea seem common to many people. For example most of us are fascinated by waves breaking. It might be interesting for the class to speculate about why.

Next the discussion might turn to how people's attitudes toward the sea have been formed in the past. The teacher could ask the students to imagine how a person must have felt aboard a small sailing vessel such as the Mayflower, when it took months to cross a strange ocean, completely at the mercy of the elements, totally cut off from all communication with land and loved ones. It is easy to understand why the sea seemed a lonely and alien place. And when we think of the number of ships lost in storms at sea or wrecked upon strange coasts, it helps to explain why people saw the sea as an enemy that was frightening, cruel, overwhelming, or coldly indifferent.

The teacher may want to ask the students to consider next whether a person aboard a luxury liner crossing the Atlantic has some of the same feelings today. Modern technology and communication have changed the situation greatly, but if one does not still feel some awe of the sea we would probably think that person either insensitive or foolish. This is because no matter what powers human beings acquire, they cannot have mastery over the sea. And many writers, from romantic poets to twentieth century environmentalists, have been telling us, that we not only cannot be the masters of nature, but that we should not. This is the basic idea tying together the unit, and various aspects of this idea will be examined and developed in the sections that follow.

Immediately following are four writers' thoughts dealing with the relationship between people and the sea. The teacher may want to read and discuss them with the class, or post them around the classroom for students to ponder during the unit.

Quotations

Jacques Cousteau:

"Why do we think of the ocean as a mere storehouse of food, oil, and minerals? The sea is not a bargain basement. We are blinded by our gloating over the wealth below. The greatest resource of the ocean is not material but the boundless spring of inspiration and well-being we gain from her. Yet we risk poisoning the sea forever just when we are learning her science, art, and philosophy and how to live in her embrace." (From The Living Sea, p.226)

Peter Freuchen:

"Little by little it dawned upon me that there is a logical connection between everything that happens in that vast connected body of salty water that covers 71 per cent of the surface of the earth. The fact is that the ripples from a pebble thrown by a little child could be traced all over the Seven Seas if only we had instruments delicate enough to record them. There is, indeed, a grand pattern in all the wonderful phenomena of the ocean-its storms and calms, deeps and shallows, the animals and plants that live in it, the birds flying over it, its islands and volcanoes and caves, even the men and the ships moving about upon it." (From Peter Freuchen's Book of the Seven Seas, forward, p. 16)

Rachel Carson:

"One stormy autumn night when my nephew Roger was about twenty months old I wrapped him in a blanket and carried him down to the beach in the rainy darkness. Out there, just at the edge of where-we-couldn't-see, big waves were thundering in, dimly seen white shapes that boomed and shouted and threw great handfuls of froth at us. Together we laughed for pure joy-he a baby meeting for the first time the wild tumult of Oceanus, I with the salt of half a lifetime of sea love in me. But I think we felt the same spine-tingling response to the vast, roaring ocean and the wild night around us." (From The Sense of Wonder)

John F. Kennedy:

"I really don't know why it is that all of us are so committed to the sea, except I think it's because in addition to the fact that the sea changes, and the light changes, and ships change, it's because we all came from the sea. And it is an interesting biological fact, that all of us have in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean, and therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean and when we go back to the sea-whether it is to sail or to watch it-we are going back from whence we came. (From The Sea: A Photographic Voyage)

II. Lyric Poems

To The Teacher

The poems in this section express the attitudes of several poets toward the sea. If possible, leave the words on the board which show some of the students' views of the sea for comparison. The poems can be read and discussed in class. If students read a poem silently before they hear it read, it often aids understanding. But sometimes it works better the other way around, as the teacher will know. The study guides are designed for class discussion, to increase understanding and to help students see how a poet makes a poem "work," by examining some of the poetic devices used.

Lyric Poems

A Wanderer's Song

by John Masefield

A wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels
I am tired of brick and stone and rumbling wagon-wheels;
I hunger for the sea's edge, the limits of the land,
Where the wild old Atlantic is shouting on the sand.

Oh I'll be going, leaving the noises of the street
To where a lifting foresail foot is yanking at the sheet;
To a windy, tossing anchorage where yawls and ketches ride,
Oh I'll be going, going, until I meet the tide.

And first I'll hear the sea-wind, the mewling of
the gulls,
The clucking, sucking of the sea about the rusty hulls.
The songs at the capstan in the hooker warping out,
And then the heart of me'll know I'm there or there-about.

Oh I am tired of brick and stone, the heart of me is sick
For windy green, unquiet sea, the realm of Moby Dick;
And I'll be going, going, from the roaring of the wheels,
For a wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels.

The Tuft of Kelp

by Herman Melville

All dripping in tangles green,
Cast up by a lonely sea,
If purer for that, O Weed,
Bitterer, too, are Ye?

The Harbor

by Carl Sandburg

Passing through huddled and ugly walls,
By doorways when women haggard
Looked from their hunger-deep eyes,
Haunted with shadows of hunger-hands,
Out from the huddled and ugly walls,
I came sudden, at the city's edge,
On a blue bust of lake-
Long lake waves breaking under the sun
On a spray-flung curve of shore;
And a fluttering storm of gulls,
Masses of great gray wings
And flying white bellies
Veering and wheeling free in the open.

The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The tide rises, the tide falls,
The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;
Along the sea-sands damp and brown
The traveler hastens toward the town,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,
But the sea in the darkness calls and calls;
The little waves, with their soft, white hands,
Efface the footprints in the sands,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls
Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;
The day returns, but never more
Returns the traveler to the shore,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Sea Fever

by John Masefield

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely
 sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer
 her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the
 white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn
 breaking.

I must go down to the sea again, for the call of
 the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be
 denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds
 flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the
 sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again to the vagrant
 gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the
 wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing
 fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long
 trick's over.

Study Guides For The Lyric Poems

● "A WANDERER'S SONG"

1. The turn of the century English poet, John Masefield was a sailor in his youth. He went to sea when he was 15, aboard a sailing ship which rounded Cape Horn, so he uses sailing terminology and we can expect his attitude to reflect his experience.

Student sailors or the teacher can explain:

1. 1.6 "lifting foresail-foot is yanking at the sheet"
The bottom of the lowest sail is tugging at the rope which controls the angle at which the sail is set.
 2. 1.11 "hooker warping out"
Movement of the ship (hooker) by ropes fastened to something fixed
2. What person is the poem written in?
What is his attitude toward the sea?
Point out specific lines (13, 4, 7).
Where does he tell us what his experience was?
 3. Masefield contrasts the sea with brick and stone. What qualities does the sea have that they do not?
 4. Masefield uses words which sound like what they express, such as clucking, sucking (onomatopoeia). Can you find other examples?

● "SEA FEVER"

1. Many sailors saw life at sea as an escape from the boredom, social demands or poverty of their lives in Europe. Many settlers too, who sailed to America, looked at the sea as a way of escaping to a new life here. What is it that the poet longs for about life at sea on a sailing ship? Point out specific things he mentions, like "the wind's song." What do all these things represent to Masfield? (Freedom, "vagrant gypsy life").
2. What words does Masfield use that we listed? He calls the sea lonely. What images does he mention that paint a lonely picture? Why might he seek this loneliness?
3. How does this poem differ from "A Wanderer's Song"? Do they express the same feelings? Do you like one more than the other? Why?
4. Point out the many repetitions in the poem. What is the effect?

● "THE TUFT OF KELP"

1. If someone could bring in a piece of kelp or a picture of it, it might help students to recognize a seaweed they have often seen without knowing its name.
2. Melville uses the image (or picture) of kelp washed up on the beach as a symbol, which means what it is and something more too. Students can figure out what the kelp could symbolize by asking.
 - a. Why might something be purer because of being "cast up by a lonely sea"?
 - b. Why might something be bitterer because of being "cast up by a lonely sea"?
 - c. How can you apply this to a person's experience? (Melville himself was a sailor in his youth).

● "THE HARBOR"

Sandburg wrote this poem about an inland sea, Lake Michigan, and Chicago on its shore.

1. What is described in the first five lines? The last seven lines? Contrast the images (crowded, prison-like walls vs. openness, freedom)
2. This poem is in free verse (without meter) and does not rhyme, but Sandburg does choose and arrange sounds carefully. Re-read the poem aloud to listen to the sounds of the words.
 - a. Find examples of assonance (repeated vowel sounds) in the first six lines. (Students could circle all the u sounds). How does the pattern of assonance change in the last seven lines? (Students could circle the a sounds). Why did Sandburg do this?
 - b. Find examples of repeated consonant sounds (alliteration) in the first five lines? Is there a change in the last seven? Why? Contrast the effect of the repeated h sounds with the repeated s sounds.
3. Do you see some similarity between this poem and "A Wanderer's Song"? What are some of the differences?

● "THE TIDE RISES, THE TIDE FALLS"

Longfellow (1807-1882) was born in Portland, Maine, which he recalled fondly as "...the beautiful town that is seated by the sea." As a boy he knew and loved the sea, which became a favorite subject in his later poetry.

1. Describe the picture painted in the first stanza. What happens in the second stanza? The third?
2. What does the traveler represent? The tide? So what is the theme of the poem?
3. Did any of you mention the sea as eternal? Have you ever had the experience of sensing the fleeting quality of our lives as compared with the seemingly everlasting quality of the sea? When?
4. What do people mean when they say the sea is indifferent? How does that apply here?

Activities Related To The Lyric Poems

1. An interesting activity related to lyric poems would be to listen as a class to a recording of Debussy's "La Mer." While listening, the students can jot down a list of mental images and feelings the music evokes in them. Then students can compare lists. What are some of the most common impressions of Debussy's view of the sea as expressed in this work? Why are there differences? Can you relate the differences to the varying experiences of the listeners?
2. Another interesting related activity would be to pass around a book of paintings by Winslow Homer (or show some prints of his paintings). What were some of his attitudes toward the sea as revealed by these paintings? Try to base your conclusions on specific aspects of the paintings.
3. Many students would enjoy doing a creative activity to express their feelings about the sea. Some could write an original poem. (Encourage free verse to lessen students' reluctance to try). Other students could do a drawing, charcoal sketch, or water color; others might take photographs. Students could suggest other possible activities to do if the teacher agrees.

III. A Long Narrative Poem

To The Teacher

● "THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER," by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is one of the most famous and strangest of all sea stories. Its cadences, rhyme, and fantastic plot make a deep impression on most readers. Coleridge, a 19th century Romantic, believed that human beings should live in harmony with nature; to take from it wantonly, or misuse and destroy even the least of the creatures of the sea would be a sin to Coleridge. When the Mariner shot the albatross, he was guilty of a carelessness and lack of respect for nature that we see over and over again today. The growing environmental movement now is based on some ideas common to the Romantics of the 19th century; i.e., people are part of nature, we must respect it; all nature is valuable and interconnected.

For introducing "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" to the students, it would be appropriate to point out that it deals with a problem they are all particularly aware of today—that of living in harmony with nature. There is growing concern over the ways that we have threatened and even destroyed our environment through misuse and neglect. The teacher could elicit discussion of the threats to our marine environment such as oil spills, filling in marshland, dumping industrial and sewage wastes, and over-fishing. The attitudes that allow this misuse of the environment are worth considering; the attitudes that nature is here to serve humankind, that people should dominate nature and use it any way they can for their needs, that lack of awareness of the consequences and carelessness that damages nature is somehow excuseable. These are some of the very attitudes that Coleridge and other romantics deplored.

The "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" should be read aloud in class to capture the beauty of the language and lessen its difficulty for some readers. Students can follow along in their texts as fluent oral readers among them (and the teacher too if necessary) read aloud. Discussion and writing suggestions are provided in a study guide to follow each section.

After the class has gotten well along in the poem, the teacher may want to give a little background on the albatross. An albatross is a large, web-footed bird with long narrow wings and a large hooked beak. Albatrosses are found chiefly in the Southern Ocean, between 40° and 50° South.

According to an ancient superstition that seamen commonly believed, if a sailor drowned at sea, his spirit would pass into the body of a seagull. Coleridge knew this and went further than the superstition by showing that ill fate would follow if one then killed an albatross, since it is somewhat like a seagull. It is actually due to the imaginative power of Coleridge's poem that the albatross taboo is so widespread. For Coleridge, the taboo against killing an albatross was symbolic of a belief that all nature is worthy of respect and that humanity needs to be in harmony with it.

Edward Rowe Snow, in Astounding Tales of the Sea, adds to the lore surrounding the albatross. Snow tells of three incidents in which an albatross tried to help sailors. In one, 13 marooned French sailors sent an albatross wearing a metal collar to tell where they were stranded. Unfortunately, help came too late.

In another incident, a captain believed the appearance of an albatross to indicate that he should change course. He did so, thereby discovering a sinking ship, and was then able to save the 49 passengers on it from drowning.

In a third, a drowning sailor held on to the feet of an albatross until help came and so was saved.

For more detail see the book Astounding Tales of the Sea, by Edward Rowe Snow, 1965, Dodd, Mead-Co., New York.

For a detailed description of albatrosses and other birds of the high seas, see "Birds of the High Seas," by Robert Cushman Murphy, National Geographic, Vol. 74, Aug. 1938. pp. 226-51.

Study Guide For The "Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

1. Part The First

It was very strange for the Mariner to stop a stranger on the street; it reveals his burning need to tell this extraordinary tale.

Notice the "Gloss" or prose summary which Coleridge added to aid the reader.

- (1) What is the Wedding Guest's reaction at first? How does it change?
- (2) What effect did the sailors believe that the albatross had?
- (3) Coleridge doesn't tell us why the Mariner shot the albatross. Why do you think he did? Think of a similar incident you have observed or heard of and describe it. (After discussing it, #3 would make a thought-provoking writing assignment).

2. Part the Second

- (1) The sailors at first thought the Mariner had done a "hellish thing", but they soon changed their minds. Why? Have you ever observed a similar situation? What?
- (2) The Mariner's punishment begins. Describe it.
- (3) Notice the powerful figurative language Coleridge chose in "all in a hot and copper sky... upon a painted ocean" (l. 111-118). What is the effect?

3. Part the Third

- (1) Why does the Mariner bite his arm?
- (2) How do they first realize that the ship coming towards them is no ordinary one?
- (3) Try to picture in your mind how the ship looked silhouetted against the setting sun.
- (4) What is the effect of the similes in lines 191-192?

- (5) As each sailor dropped down dead, how was the Mariner made to feel his guilt more sharply?

4. Part the Fourth

- (1) Why do you think Coleridge includes the Wedding Guest?
- (2) The Mariner suffers in utter aloneness. There are no people for comfort and even nature is alien. How does he describe the creatures of the sea in line 238?
- (3) Describe his seven days of agony? What is penance? What ends it?

5. Part the Fifth

- (1) The Mariner is saved and can sleep and drink. This journey on the ship is like a strangely pleasant dream. Describe it.
- (2) Is the Mariner's penance over?
- (3) Some stanzas are four lines, some five, and some six. Show how the rhyme scheme varies for each. How does the rhythm unify the poem?

6. Part the Sixth

- (1) What do the two voices explain?
- (2) How does the Mariner still suffer?
- (3) How does the Mariner feel about returning home?
- (4) "He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away the albatross's blood," means that the Hermit will hear the Mariner's confession and will impose a penance. When this penance is carried out the Mariner will find peace and forgiveness.

7. Part the Seventh

- (1) Why does the Pilot's boy think the Mariner is the devil?
- (2) How does the Mariner choose the people to whom he tells his tale?
- (3) Contrast the Mariner's loneliness with the friendliness of walking together with people to church, which he longs for. But he is the aware loner, and will remain so.

- (4) Lines 610-617 sum up what the Mariner learned.
"He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast."
To Coleridge "praying well" meant being at peace
spiritually; one has to be aware of the beauty
and interconnectedness of all living creatures
and the world they inhabit.
- (5) Why was the Wedding Guest a "sadder and a wiser
man" after hearing the Mariner's tale?

Activities For The "Ancient Mariner"

Each student can choose one of the following activities which relate to the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner". They can work on the activities in class and at home and then hand them in or present them in class when complete.

1. Write an original story on the theme of a person's misuse or destruction of some part of the marine environment and his or her eventual recognition of that misuse.
2. Prepare a series of drawings to illustrate "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."
3. Prepare a dramatic tape recording of your reading of the Second, Third and Fourth parts of the poem, accompanied by suitable musical selections you choose.
4. If you enjoy memorizing poetry, memorize several passages (check with teacher on length) to present to the class. In addition, choose one section and paraphrase it in modern day expository English, using the 3rd person. Hand this in with a paragraph explaining what the differences in effect are.

IV. Short Stories

To The Teacher

"The Flying Dutchman" and "Howard Blackburn" are two stories dealing with the relationship between people and the sea. Both show men challenged by the sea, but the captain of the Flying Dutchman faced the challenge with haughty pride and failed, while Blackburn faced it with courage and intelligence and survived.

Study Guides For The Short Stories

● "THE FLYING DUTCHMAN", a folk tale.

One version of "The Flying Dutchman," written by Auguste Jal and translated by Michael Brown, is found in a Cavalcade of Sea Legends, edited by Michael Brown. The legend is also related briefly in Peter Freuchen's Book of the Seven Seas, pp. 475-477.

According to the legend, the captain of the Flying Dutchman was a proud and wicked blasphemer. Once when he was driving his vessel through a storm with angry curses at the weather, God reprimanded him. The captain came back with mocking insults, so God put a curse upon him and all his crew. Henceforth they were condemned to wander the seas forever, never reaching their destiny or finding any comfort. It was such a dreaded curse, that merely to see the ship was thought to bring bad luck.

The legend provides an interesting comparison with "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." The captain was like the mariner in that he was proud and had not learned to respect the power of nature. The mariner, however, learned eventually to love nature and so was saved. But the captain persisted in his attitude of scorn and so was cursed.

Discussion Questions:

1. How was the captain like the mariner in the beginning?
2. How were the mariner and the captain different?
3. How were the fates of the mariner and the captain similar? How different?

"AN EPIC OF THE SEA-HOWARD BLACKBURN," in Strange Tales from Nova Scotia to Cape Hatteras, by Edward Rowe Snow

Howard Blackburn was a Gloucester halibut fisherman who, in January 1883, became separated from his schooner in a storm while he was fishing from a dory. For 104 hours he rowed, bailed and endured bitter cold, heavy seas and painful frostbite before he finally reached the coast of Newfoundland.

Questions for Discussion and Writing:

To encourage students to draw conclusions and make judgements based on their reading, they could discuss the first question as a class and choose the second or third question for writing.

1. Describe the hardships Blackburn endured. How do you think Welch's death affected Blackburn's experience in the dory? Do you think being alone was terrifying for him? Why or why not?
2. It is fascinating to imagine the scenes between Blackburn and Welch in the dory. Choose one period during their ordeal and write the dialogue between the two men. Describe the accompanying action. Start by briefly giving the setting. Before you begin writing, decide what kind of man each was and the quality of their relationship. Your dialogue should reflect this. It is not necessary to use Gloucester dialect; informal language will be fine. Scenes you could choose from (or a part of one of these, depending on how much dialogue takes place):
 - a. From the time Blackburn and Welch notice the first snow, continue to fish, begin to row back to where they think the schooner is and can't find it, and decide to anchor until the storm was over.
 - b. During the first night after the snowstorm ends, when they see the lights of the schooner, their attempt to reach it, decision to anchor, drifting, freezing and throwing the trawls and fish overboard.
 - c. When the men decide to anchor again after a futile attempt to row for shore against high wind and waves, Blackburn constructs a sea-anchor, his mittens are lost, Welch realizes Blackburn's hands are freezing.
 - d. The end of the second day while the men are bailing and breaking ice, Blackburn loses the sock on his hands, the sea breaks over the dory, Welch loses heart, becomes delirious and dies.

These scenes could be acted out instead of being written, if students wish.

3. Write a character sketch of Howard Blackburn, based on his actions as described by Snow. Think about these questions before you start. (Support your opinions with evidence from the story.) What kind of a man do you think he was? Daring, courageous, foolhardy, generous, loyal? Why? Why didn't he give up? What do you think kept him going? How was he practical? How impractical? What was important to him? How do you know? What were some of his feelings about the sea? What was his attitude toward being alone? Toward pain?

V. One Act Play

To The Teacher

- "ILE" from the Long Voyage Home, by Eugene O'Neill.

The setting for "Ile " is aboard a steam whaling ship seeking whale oil ("ile") in the Arctic Ocean in the year 1895. O'Neill wrote from experience, since he worked on several ships as a merchant seaman during his adventurous youth.

This play provides an opportunity to examine more sides of the many-sided relationship between people and the sea. Captain Keeney has spent his life at sea on whaling ships and thrives on the demands, the danger, and the excitement. His wife, who at first wanted to share in all of that, finds the loneliness and brutality of shipboard life unbearable.

In order to help students understand the play better the teacher can show them some of the elements of O'Neill's craft as a playwright, particularly in character presentation and the use of setting.

The teacher can choose a cast of volunteers to read the play in class. Include a student to read the stage directions, since these are vital to the play.

Study Guide For "Ile"

Suggestions for discussion (and/or writing):

1. Why is the setting so important? Be specific about the effect of the walls, the light, the color, the ice, the silence.
2. What do we know about Keeney before he utters a word? (from the men and stage directions) How does he think of himself? What kind of man does the mate think he is? Explain how you know.
3. What did Mrs. Keeney think of her husband before this trip? What did the incident with the mutineers show her about her husband and his profession?
4. How did she feel about the sea before this trip? Why do you think she felt that way? How did she feel about the sea by the time of the play? Why?
5. What were Captain Keeney's views of the proper roles of men and women in the family? How did Mrs. Keeney feel about her role? Would her situation have been different today? Why or why not? How do you feel about the roles Captain Keeney sees as proper?
6. Explain why it is so important to the Captain to get whale oil. Whichever way he decides, he will destroy something important to him. Explain why turning back will destroy something he values; explain why going ahead will.
7. In what way does O'Neill show Keeney's decision to be heroic? In what way deplorable? Why both?
8. Why does O'Neill end the play with an indication of action rather than a dramatic speech?
9. In Keeney's inner conflict about what he should do, O'Neill illustrates a conflict between two aspects of people's relationship to the sea: the sea as a challenge, demanding heroism, daring, and courage, or the sea as a cruel, indifferent, and brutalizing force, bringing out people's inhumanity. Discuss these two aspects.

VI. Language From The Sea

To The Teacher

We English speaking people reflect our relationship with the sea in the many terms and phrases we use that are borrowed from the language of seamen. These terms add a richness and vividness to our speech, though we are often unaware of their origins.

This section can be used to build vocabulary and awareness of the origins of many common expressions, as well as to emphasize the difference between literal and figurative use of language. Some of these terms we use literally, adhering to the nautical definition (bait, bail, aboard, astern). Some we use figuratively, as a way of describing a completely non-nautical situation (above-board, backwater, come down upon, derelict, hard up).

Examples of Language From The Sea

Examples selected from Sea Language Comes Ashore, by Joanne Carver Colcord, Cornell Maritime Press, New York, 1945:

1. Aback: Referred to a vessel, unmanageable due to a sudden shift of wind striking the sails from the side opposite that to which they are trimmed. We use it figuratively "to be takenaback," meaning to be surprised and disconcerted.
2. Aboveboard: Above the water line. In shore speech it means frank, open, fair dealing.
3. Aloof: (From Dutch *te toef*, to windward). Nearer to the wind-- now obsolete at sea. Figurative use ashore means indifferent or distant in manner.
4. Backwater: To row a boat backwards. In shore speech we mean retract or hedge.
5. Batten down: To protect from the sea with fitted strips of wood or iron called battens. Used ashore in a similar sense, to protect from the weather.
6. Bear down: To approach another vessel from the windward; a term used in naval combat from the days of sail. In shore speech, to bear down upon someone is to be severe or persist in argument.
7. Bearing, Bearings: Navigational position with relation to another known point or points. We use bearing figuratively to mean influence, relationship. Also, to get one's bearings means to become oriented, to lose one's bearings means to become disoriented.
8. Cast about: To try different courses when in doubt as to the ship's position. We use it meaning to grope, to try to find a way out of a dilemma.
9. Happy as a clam: Actually the whole phrase is "happy as a clam at high water," when no enemy can reach him.

10. To make a clean sweep: Refers to the sea breaking over the rail, washing overboard all movable objects on deck. The phrase in shore speech means to get rid of everything; to start fresh.
11. Come down upon: An old term of the sailing Navy means to attack from the windward. We use it figuratively, meaning to censure, rebuke.
12. Derelict: A ship abandoned but still afloat and a menace to navigation. In colloquial shore use, a person who is broken down by a vicious life.
13. Doldrums: A belt of calm, rainy weather at the equator, separating the trades. Used on land to mean low spirits, boredom, "the dumps."
14. Dungarees: Word of Hindustani origin, first applied to sailor's working clothes.
15. Graveyard shift: Garbled from gravey-eye watch, the middle watch, from 12 to 4 at night, when the eyes felt sticky.
16. Hard up: With the rudder over as far as it will go, so that nothing further can be done. We use it figuratively to mean poor.
17. Haven: A sea term for harbor. We use it to mean a safe and sheltered place.
18. Knock off: To go off duty, cease working; the nautical opposite of turn to.
19. Loanshark: Originally landshark, a dealer or boardinghouse-keeper who swindled sailors. We use it to mean an illegally operating money lender.
20. To pour oil on troubled waters: In extremely heavy weather, a bag of oil was sometimes hung outboard and allowed to drip so as to form a film on the water, in the hope of preventing the waves from breaking over the vessel. We use the phrase to mean soothe, tranquilize.
21. To go to pieces: Said of a ship completely demolished by the sea. Used figuratively meaning to become emotionally upset.

22. Sails: Several expressions originate in the process of handling sails. To trim one's sails according to the wind is to be guided by expediency. To take the wind out of one's sails is to sail windward of another vessel and thereby cut off the wind; figuratively to frustrate or forestall.
23. Salted down: A fisherman's phrase taken into shore speech to mean saved or hoarded.
24. Scuttle: To sink a ship intentionally, by those on board, either criminally or legitimately, as when necessary to put out a fire when in port. In its shore use, meaning to destroy wantonly and from self-interest something that should have been preserved, only the negative aspect has been retained.
25. Scuttle butt: A cask of drinking water covered with a scuttle or hatch which stood on the deck of old-time vessels for the convenience of the crew. It was a good place to exchange views, as men waited their turn; hence scuttlebutt, meaning rumor or gossip.
26. Shanty: A worksong used to aid labor at sea and sung for pleasure alongshore. The name is probably derived from the Maine woodsmen's shanty or bunkhouse, not from the French *chantez*.
27. So-long: A seaman's farewell, probably from a misunderstood version of the East Indian word *salaam*.
28. Staunch: From the Old French *estanche*, watertight. Referring to a vessel it means seaworthy, not leaking. We use it to mean sound, dependable.
29. Tack: The irregular zigzags by which a ship advances when beating against a head wind. We use it figuratively; to take the wrong tack means to be undiplomatic; to be on the wrong tack is to err or misapprehend; to try another tack is to try a new approach or expedient; to take opposite tacks is said of two people who have different opinions.
30. To spin a yarn: In making spun yarn from untwisted yarns of rope, it took two sailors to operate the small winch. They worked in a sheltered spot, enlivening their task with conversation. Hence, to spin a yarn is to tell a story, usually a "tall" one.

Activities For Language From The Sea

1. Each student choose ten words or expressions from the preceding list which we use figuratively. For each one, write a sentence using it appropriately.

Example:

It really took the wind out of Tommy's sails when he stood up to sing the new song he had learned in school and Sally said, "I hate to hear that dumb song."

2. Many of these expressions are picturesque and would thus lend themselves to pantomime. Divide the class into five or six groups. Each group choose 1 or 2 expressions to act out as a group charade or impromptu pantomime. Both the literal and figurative meanings could be shown if desired. When everybody is ready, other groups can watch and guess which expression is being shown, as each group performs.

VII. Nonfiction Reading Selections

To The Teacher

The short chapter from Rachel Carson's book, The Sea Around Us and the long section from the Teal's book Life and Death of Salt Marsh were chosen for two reasons. First, both are excellent examples of beautifully written English that many students might not read otherwise, just because they might be intimidated by the scientific subject matter. But certainly neither of these selections is as difficult as some of the works we expect them to read in English class. It is hoped that reading these selections will break down some of the stereotypes some students may have about scientists and scientific writing, and encourage them to enjoy reading and wondering more about science. For each of us needs to keep alive that part of ourselves that asks why and how - the scientist. Also, both selections reveal aspects of people's relationship to the sea. The Carson selection shows the naturalist's view of the sea, whereas the Teal section makes clear the problem of preserving a valuable part of the marine environment that we have all too often destroyed.

Both books are available in paperback as well as in school and local libraries. Since the Carson selection is short, the teacher could run off copies if desired.

Study Guides For The Nonfiction Reading Selections

- THE SEA AROUND US, Chapter 2, "The Pattern of the Surface," pp. 16-27, by Rachel Carson.

Students can read the chapter individually in preparation for a class discussion. In the chapter, Carson describes the rich and interdependent life near the surface of the sea.

Points for class discussion

1. Notice the poetic quality of Rachel Carson's writing about the sea; scientists often show a "sense of wonder." (The scientist as unfeeling is an ill-fitting stereotype) Example p. 17 par. 1. This would be a good time to pass around Carson's book, A Sense of Wonder.
2. What does Carson mean by "the fierce uncompromisingness of sea life"?
3. Point out that students can read all about Heyerdahl's adventure in Kon-Tiki.
4. On the board, trace the food chain Carson describes on p. 19.
5. What determines which sea animals live in each area of the sea? Why?
6. Have you ever heard of the danger of the ship being trapped in the Sargasso Sea? How is the Sargasso Sea formed? Students can read more about it in An Ocean Desert: The Sargasso Sea, by Francine Jacobs, and The Sargasso Sea, by John and Mildred Teal.

LIFE AND DEATH OF THE SALT MARSH, "Introduction and Part I," by John and Mildred Teal.

The teacher could introduce the book by asking the students to tell what salt marshes they are familiar with and to describe them a little. Some students may think of salt marshes as useless or even distasteful. Reading Part I of the Teals' book will reveal some views and facts about salt marshes that may change their minds.

In the first chapter, "Birth" the authors explain how a salt marsh on the New England Coast was probably formed. The next chapter, "Invasion," shows the effect of human life (Indians and early settlers) on the marsh. "Civilization," the third chapter, deals with the increasing impact people had on the marsh as the years went on. The last chapter, "Death," shows how people finally destroyed the marsh and its wildlife through misuse.

It is a good time to point out that here again is a well and sensitively written book by scientists, a book which conveys beautifully a sense of wonder about the world we live in.

Introduction

Students can read the introduction in class (pp. 3-5).

Discuss: What is the smell of a "sick" marsh? What makes it "sick?" What will we find out in this book?

Chapter 1 Birth

This one section may be difficult for some students. Perhaps the teacher could summarize it before they read it, to aid understanding. It gives a general picture of how a salt marsh on the New England coast was formed over thousands of years.

Another way to aid understanding would be for the teacher or a fluent and expressive reader among the students to read the chapter while the rest follow along in the text.

Discussion questions:

1. What are moraines?
2. The marsh we will follow probably started to form about 10,000 years ago, after the Laurentide Glacier retreated (8000 BC).
Some dates to help students get oriented in time:
Cro-Magnon man evolved about 35,000 years ago.
Human culture began to develop during the Ice Age which ended 10,000 years ago. Cave drawings by hunters of Southern Europe about 15,000 years ago show early people surviving the Ice Ages by using fire and by hunting on the edge of the ice as it retreated. This was, roughly, the same period during which the marsh developed.
3. What caused grass to start to grow in this marsh?
4. How did the marsh grow higher and bigger?
5. Why weren't the fish and small animal populations depleted by the large number of birds which fed upon them?

Chapter 2. Invasion

(This and the following chapter could be read one at a time as homework assignments in preparation for class discussions).

1. How did the Indians use the marsh? Why was their effect on the marsh so slight, even though they used it for thousands of years?
2. What kinds of contacts did the Indians and the early European visitors have? Why did they end?
3. What was it about the background of the English settlers that caused them to see the salt marshes as hayfields? Briefly describe the process of haying on the marsh.
4. How did the settlers catch and use alewives?
5. What was the major function of the village which began to grow midway along the edge of the marsh.

Chapter 3. Civilization

1. The passage describing the young bitterns is vividly descriptive (p. 31). Why? (a. use of specific action verbs such as pointing, edged, swayed, b. showing how the children would perceive their behavior as "pretending," an action the children could identify with, c. attention to small detail).
2. Why did the marsh grow and expand faster than the sea level rose?
3. What foods and other products were gathered from the marsh?
4. How did the Norway rat get here? Why was it attracted to the marsh?
5. How did continuous hay cutting cause erosion?
6. What was the effect of the hurricane?

Chapter 4. Death

This is a very powerful chapter, which will leave many students shaken. It would be good to plan your discussion to follow the reading immediately to catch this impact.

1. Why were shorebirds "harvested like a crop with no element of sportsmanship"?
2. Why were drainage ditches cut in the marsh?
3. Why did the area lose population so rapidly during the 19th century? How might the history of the marsh have been different if the farmers had stayed?
4. Why did the carnage of the shorebirds begin again? How were the sicklebills killed? Why was this stopped? How?
5. How is the courtship flight of the male marsh hawk described? (Notice how using a simile like this paints a vivid picture.)
6. What was the effect of dumping the wastes from the summer colony on the marsh?
7. What was the effect of spraying the marsh with DDT after World War II.
8. How did the marina that was built at the head of the creek running through the marsh affect it? How did sewage from a nearby city pollute the marsh?
9. Explain both sides of the argument over whether the marsh should be filled for an industrial park.
10. How did life in the marsh finally end?
After discussing questions #11 and #12, students could choose one or the other to write about:
11. Have any marshes that you know of been "killed"? How? Do you know of any "sick" marshes? Why are they "sick"?
12. What situations have you read or heard about which show the conflict between protecting salt marshes and allowing "progress"? Why are these conflicts so hard to solve.

Other helpful materials available:

1. An excellent, free leaflet is "The Nature of a Tidal Marsh" by Carl N. Shuster, Jr., The New York State Conservationist, August-September, 1966.
It shows clearly why marshes are so valuable, explains the food chains, and contains pictures of the different forms of life and the topography of a typical salt marsh. Single copies are available from the Department of Environmental Conservation, 500 Wolf Road, Colonia, NY 12205.
2. The Teals made a beautiful film about the salt marsh. It was filmed in marshes up and down the East Coast and shows why we should preserve them. Originally made for television, it lasts about 25 minutes. To rent or buy it contact Harper and Row Publishing Co., Film Division, New York, N.Y.

Activities For The Nonfiction Reading Selections

For an activity related to the non-fiction reading selections, a field trip on your own or with a guide to a marsh/pond/beach area such as Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge and Moonstone Waterfowl Refuge, South Kingstown, or Norman Bird Sanctuary, Middletown would be exciting and informative. (For excellent help in planning a field trip, send for the "Environmental Education Field Guide" available from the Rhode Island Marine Advisory Service, Narragansett Bay Campus, URI, Narragansett, RI 02882.

After the trip, while the sights are still fresh in the students' minds it would be an ideal time for writing descriptive essays. Each student can choose a part of the scene that interests him, such as the marsh, the pond, the dunes, or the beach, and describe it in as much vivid detail as possible.

Following are some guidelines for descriptive essays:

1. For describing several different kinds of scenes such as beach, dunes, and marsh, or pond and marsh, divide your description into areas. Start a new paragraph when you move to a new area.
2. Choose a vantage point for each area, a place you are standing from which to study the area. (In some cases it works to use another point of view such as that of a child (see Teal, p. 31) or a "bird's eye view." Decide your direction, such as near to far, far to near, small to large, middle of pond to shore, etc.

3. To make your description lively, use specific action verbs.
Not: There was a swan in the water.
But: A swan glided across the water.
4. Use adverbs to make verbs more specific.
A swan glided serenely across the water.
5. Pay attention to small details.
Not: There were minnows in the water.
But: Where the sunbeams entered the water, schools of minnows flashed by in a seemingly endless stream.
6. Use prepositional phrases and clauses to add details to your description, rather than adding short choppy sentences.
Not: Two redwing blackbirds called back and forth. They were sitting on telephone wires on opposite sides of the road. They seemed to be warning each other that we were there.
But: From telephone wires on opposite sides of the road, two redwing blackbirds called warnings of our approach back and forth.
7. Don't overload with adjectives. A few well chosen adjectives will be more effective. Use verbs and adverbs to describe whenever possible.
Not: The vast open windswept lonely beach stretches to the ocean.
But: The wind sweeps the vast openness where beach and ocean join.
8. Where it seems natural to you, use similes or metaphors to describe your subject by comparing it with something similar. Don't force this though, or it will seem silly to you.
Examples: Teal p. 46 "...the exuberant courtship flights of the male marsh hawk, bouncing up and down in the sky, as if he were a Yo-Yo on the end of a rubber tether attached to the clouds."
or
Elegantly, like a newly coiffeured matron, the swan sailed up to the others.

For the following activities related to the non-fiction reading selections, students can divide into several groups:

1. For one week a group of students can collect current newspaper and magazine articles relating to the use of the sea and coastal areas by Rhode Islanders. The group can post the articles on a bulletin board, and at the end of the week, divide them into two categories, such as:

- a. articles showing uses of our coastal resources that both benefit people and preserve the resources for the future.
- b. articles reporting activities that are or may be harmful to our coastal resources.

The group can then prepare and present a panel discussion about their articles for the class.

2. The rest of the class can divide into groups to read other non-fiction books relating to the need for preserving our marine resources for the benefit of all. Group members could divide up the reading of a book and then come together to prepare a panel discussion to share their reading with the class.
Suggested books:

John Hay, In Defense of Nature; Wesley Marx, the Frail Ocean; John Bardach, Harvest of the Sea; Rachel Carson, By the Edge of the Sea, or more in The Sea Around Us or Life and Death of the Salt Marsh.

VIII. Historical Selections

To The Teacher

Reading some historical selections about life on the Rhode Island coast will give students more experience in reading journal articles and deepen their understanding of the vital role the sea has played in the history of our state. Reprints of both articles follow the study guides in this section. To introduce this section of the unit, the teacher could ask the students to imagine how different our history would have been if Rhode Island were inland.

It would be interesting to locate the places mentioned in the reading selections as well as to study a historical map generally. An excellent map entitled "Cruising Guide to Historic Rhode Island" can be obtained for \$1.00 by writing:

*Marine Advisory Service
Narragansett Bay Campus
URI
Narragansett, RI 02882*

Study Guides For The Historical Selections

- "RHODE ISLAND'S ANCIENT LINK WITH THE SEA," by Richard Alan Dow, Oceans, Number 2, 1972, pp. 32-39.

Questions for class discussion or to be answered by the students in writing. (Students should refer directly back to the text to support their answers. Writing some of the answers would provide a good opportunity to work on how to paraphrase instead of copy):

1. What are two possible explanations of the origin of the name Rhode Island?
2. What is one theory explaining the existence of the Newport Tower?
3. Who built Fort Ninigret? Explain one of the theories and the evidence for it.
4. Vocabulary:
A privateer is a privately owned and manned armed ship commissioned by a belligerent government to attack and capture enemy ships, especially merchant ships (Webster). The owners and crew divided the goods they captured (the plunder) among themselves.
5. Privateering, trade, and whaling were important activities for the Narragansett Bay ports of Newport, Providence, Bristol and East Greenwich in the 18th century. Therefore there was great resistance to British attempts to regulate and control these activities more closely. Why and how did Rhode Islanders burn the British ship Gaspee? What makes this incident especially strange?
6. What else was Abraham Whipple known for during the Revolutionary War?
7. What was the effect of the British occupation of Newport from 1776 to 1779?
8. Why do Block Islanders remember the Palatine?
9. What is Rhode Island's connection with piracy?

10. Explain how Oliver Hazard Perry and his brother Matthew Calbraith Perry represent the change from the past to the present in maritime tradition.
11. Who was Ida Lewis?
12. What maritime activities are important in present-day Rhode Island? How has the position of the navy changed since the article was written? What coastal activities were left out of the article?

● "SOME TALL AND SHORT FISH STORIES OF OLD SOUTH COUNTY" from the Jonny Cake Papers of Shepherd Tom by Thomas Robinson Hazard adapted in Maritimes, May 1977, pp. 5-8, (Maritimes is the quarterly publication of the Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island).

Students might enjoy reading this aloud. Some questions for the students follow:

1. What old fish stories do you know?
2. Were fish really so much more plentiful then (18th and 19th century) than now? Why? (overfishing, pollution of ponds, rivers and salt marshes, changing salinity in ponds by opening or closing breachways). What has happened to fish such as shad, which used to abound in the Providence River? (Pollution has severely limited the number of species that can live there).
3. What expressions do you recognize as different? (the quarter of a mile, horse mackerel, warm as a half-heated baker's oven, East Grinnage, disremember). Notice reference to haying, common in old South County.

RHODE ISLAND'S ANCIENT LINK WITH THE SEA

BY RICHARD ALAN DOW

THE SEA WASHES upon some four hundred miles of Rhode Island shoreline. It penetrates thirty miles inland to the capital city, Providence. For more than three centuries Rhode Islanders have responded to its lure; their character has been molded by its presence. The sea has brought them tragedy and greatness, but, more than anything, it has given them a world outlook that is a continuing paradox to the state's tiny geographic dimensions of 48 by 27 miles.

Some say the name "Rhode Island" was given by the Italian navigator Verazano who sailed to the New World under a French flag in 1524. His journals describe explorations around the mouth of Narragansett Bay, and he notes an island which reminded him of the Mediterranean isle of Rhodes. This was possibly either the one later called Block Island, off the south coast, or Aquidneck, where Newport was eventually settled. Others attribute the state's name to Adriaen Block, the Dutch explorer-trader who established the colony at Manhattan Island and who sailed northeastern coastal waters in 1614. The name may have come from the Dutch word for red, *rood*, used on his charts to describe the reddish hue of the cliffs at one side of Aquidneck Island.

There is a greater mystery than the origin of the name, however, for tangible evidence exists that Rhode Island's history of European exploration may dramatically predate written accounts.

In a grassy park off Newport's famed Bellevue Avenue, overlooking the harbor from which some of the world's finest racing yachts sail today, stands a

squat stone tower which may be the oldest European building in the Western Hemisphere. It is, for many, the symbol of Rhode Island's beginnings and her continuing seagoing tradition. Popular legend has it (and popular legend can be surprisingly truthful) that the tower was built by Norse sailors early in the eleventh century. Some architectural historians claim that if the Newport tower could be lifted bodily from its present location and planted in the Scandinavian countryside, the origin of the structure would never be questioned.

Supposing this legend were based on fact, why would Vikings have built a tower in Newport? One theory is that a party of explorers was shipwrecked here and that the tower was a beacon to guide a possible rescuer. The arches which support the tower certainly seem to be the result of a navigator's plan since each faces a cardinal point of the compass. Cut into the upper portion of the tower are windows; one faces the harbor and another the open ocean to the south. A signal fire burning in the fireplace alcove within the tower would provide a guiding light for a helmsman steering into the harbor.

A variation on this theory is more firmly rooted in history. In 1355 the King of Norway and Sweden was concerned about a faction from the Greenland colonies which had headed westward to seek new lands. Fearing they might have strayed from the teachings of Christianity, he sent a ship to find them and included priests to ensure their spiritual well-being. Quite possibly this party landed in the vicinity of Newport and built the tower from which to base their searches inland. Perhaps it was raised as a church and the compass-point arches had some mystical significance. The tower could have done additional service as a beacon to guide their ship on her return from coastal exploration up the Bay.

In 1841 Longfellow attributed this same tower to the Vikings, referring to it in his poem, *The Skeleton in Armor*:

Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady's bower

Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
Stands looking seaward.

The earliest written records of the seventeenth century refer to the tower as the "windmill" on the property of Governor Benedict Arnold (grandfather of the Revolutionary War traitor), even though the structure appears little suited for such a purpose. The records give no indication that Governor Arnold built the tower, merely that it existed on his property. However, those who object to the Viking theories usually accept the windmill idea without question.

Over the years relic hunters have dug around the base of the tower to the extent that serious archeological investigation is no longer possible. So there is little likelihood that the mystery of the Newport tower will ever be solved.

A few miles away, along Rhode Island's south shore, is another mysterious site, also closely linked with seafaring and the early exploration of the area. Still to be seen are the earthworks outlining a large rectangular fort, constructed on a point of land extending into a sheltered arm of the Atlantic. The name given to the site is Fort Ninigret and it is located in the town of Charlestown. When the Rhode Island colonies were first settled, a stockade fort was already on this site, occupied by Ninigret, sachem of the Niantic Indians. A shrewd businessman who exploited both the English and Dutch settlers in New England and New York, his dealings were referred to as "Ninicraft" by the colonists.

While it was not unusual for Indians to build and inhabit forts, the one in Charlestown has some curious features. There are outlines of pentagonal defenses at three of the four corners. (The fourth corner is protected by the slope of the land to the sea, but there may also have been a watchtower within the walls of the fort itself at this spot.) The use of such bastions is definitely European. They permitted those within the fort to rake attackers with a crossfire of muskets or cannon. Indian weapons of the time could not possibly have used this style of military architecture to advantage. The fort must certainly have been built by Europeans originally.

But what Europeans? Speculation over the years, coupled with minor discoveries in the region, has given rise to two major theories. One is that the fort was a trading post for the Dutch, possibly built by Adriaen Block himself during his travels in 1614. Fragments of Dutch "Delft" china have been found around the site, and at one time it was reported that a peculiar style of trade knife used by the Dutch could be found fairly littering the embankment leading to the anchorage after a heavy rain had washed off the topsoil. There are no written records to substantiate the existence of a Dutch trading post here, but this is not unusual. Few secrets were more closely guarded during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than the locations of profitable trade sites.

A more daring theory holds that Portuguese explorers built the fort at a considerably earlier date. Miguel Corte-Real and his son Juan both made voyages to North American waters within a decade or two of Columbus' discovery of the West Indies. Again, no written evidence exists of their landing in Rhode Island, but inscriptions on a rock in Dighton, Massachusetts, only a few miles away, have been translated by some who claim they are in the Portuguese language, and several Portuguese words are supposed to have come into the speech of the Indians around Narragansett Bay. Unfortunately time and the great amount of tampering with the Dighton site have obscured what evidence may have originally existed there. But Fort Ninigret is another story. One bit of evidence possibly supporting the Portuguese theory is that of the five-sided bastions there. Military architects refer to this design as almost exclusively Portuguese. But, even here, there is cause for argument, since some Dutch civil buildings were built in a pentagonal shape, and it could be argued that early traders would have been as easily influenced by civil as by military design.

A third notion is that the site was used during different periods by several groups of traders. Evidence of sites located on earlier sites is certainly common in Europe. The advantages of this particular location—its easily defended position and the sheltered anchorage which is virtually invisible from the sea

—would have been as appealing to traders in the sixteenth century as in the seventeenth. An answer may be soon forthcoming, since the newly-formed Rhode Island Foundation for Historic Archaeology has named the Fort Ninigret site as its first project for investigation.

While early exploration and trade in Rhode Island remains a mystery, there is no question of maritime importance once the colony became settled. In 1638 a group of settlers led by William Coddington pushed south from Roger Williams' Providence Plantation to establish the settlements of Portsmouth and Newport at the north and south ends of Aquidneck Island. From the very start these settlers planned for ocean commerce. An early location for Newport was abandoned when the roadstead was found to be unsuitable for shipping. A more favorable site, in the harbor just inside Narragansett Bay, proved to have an extremely marshy shoreline; but the settlers hired the local Indians to fill the land, paying them with wampum and coats with shiny buttons. Wharves were soon built into the harbor and a profitable trade established with Europe and the West Indies.

During the long wars waged by England against France and Spain, privateers from Newport and other ports in the Bay proved to be among the most successful in the American colonies. Many a Rhode Island merchant founded his worldwide shipping empire upon profits gained by buying a share in a privateer.

Among the numerous intrepid Rhode Island privateers was the *ST. ANDREW* out of Newport, a 90-ton sloop carrying 80 men, which sailed against the Spaniards in 1740-41 under the command of Captain Charles Davidson. In one encounter, the *ST. ANDREW* met the Spanish privateer sloop *AMIALE THERESA* near Puerto Rico and ordered her to surrender. The Spaniard opened fire on the Newporter in reply and the ships engaged until the *THERESA* struck her colors. When her commander, a Frenchman named Captain Langoiran, boarded the *ST. ANDREW* and saw her young crew—"boys" as he called them—"this brisk French blade stamped and swore like an emperor and offered 1,000 pistoles for liberty to go on board of his

sloop and fight the battle over again."

On another occasion the *ST. ANDREW* was lying at anchor off Cuba for the night with all the crew asleep below and only Captain Davidson and his lieutenant on deck. Suddenly out of the darkness came a small boat manned by eighteen Spaniards who surprised and boarded the Newport sloop. The Spanish lieutenant snapped his pistol at Davidson, who took his musket and blew the Spaniard's brains out, then began stamping on the hatch cover to awaken the crew. As the crew came on deck wielding cutlasses, a bitter hand-to-hand combat began during which the Spaniards were literally cut to pieces—with only one taken alive. As the sun rose, Captain Davidson was able to make out the privateer from which the boarding party had come. He set sail and gave chase, and in the ensuing battle the enemy lost all but sixteen of her crew and had "the Blood of the wounded and killed running over the Deck by Gallons, so hot was the Action." Only one man on the *ST. ANDREW* was killed and none were wounded.

Seldom is sufficient recognition given to Rhode Island's privateering activity during the first half of the eighteenth century as a key reason for the strong resistance the little colony displayed toward British trade embargoes. Rhode Island seamen developed a tradition of free enterprise (some called it downright piracy) on the oceans, and a threat to this freedom was an inevitable step in the direction of rebellion.

In addition to the profitable trade of legalized plunder, Newport and Providence were important ports in the infamous "triangle trade" of molasses, rum, and slaves. By mid-eighteenth century, Newport was ranked as a port equal to Boston and was a center for the manufacture of spermaceti candles. While nearby New Bedford and Nantucket were considered the heart of the whaling industry, several whalers sailed out of the Narragansett Bay ports of Bristol, East Greenwich, Newport, and Providence. The activity and vitality of prosperous Newport made her a center for arts and fine craftsmanship (Rhode Island furniture by the Goddards and the Townsends is highly prized by antique collectors today), and her attractive climate made her a fa-

vored vacation spot as early as the seventeenth century when Carolina and West Indies planters started the custom of summering in the town.

It is small wonder that so much violence erupted from British attempts to enforce regulations more stringently in the 1760's. In 1769 a British revenue sloop, H.M.S. LIBERTY, was assigned to patrol Narragansett Bay in an attempt to halt smuggling. The revenue patrol became a hated symbol to Rhode Islanders of repression of their freedom on the seas. When the LIBERTY apprehended an American merchantman suspected of carrying contraband cargo and escorted her to the customs landing at Newport, feelings were running high. The watching Newporters decided that the American captain was being too roughly handled. An angry mob seized the British commander and ordered the LIBERTY's crew ashore. They cut the ship adrift and, when she grounded on some rocks, scuttled and burned her. Not content with this display, they dragged her longboats to the Common and burned them as well. Joseph Wanton, the colonial Governor and a Newporter himself, managed to play down the incident and no reprisals were made by the Crown.

But in 1772 an encounter took place which had far graver consequences. On June 9th, Captain Benjamin Lindsey in the sloop HANNAH cleared customs at Newport and began the thirty-mile trip up the Bay to Providence. On patrol at that time was the revenue brig GASPEE under the command of Lieutenant William Duddingston, Royal Navy, who had earned the thorough hatred of Rhode Islanders by his zealous (and probably justified) searching of "all vessels, including small market boats" plying the waters of Narragansett Bay. Duddingston spied HANNAH and fired a gun, signaling her to heave to. Captain Lindsey, in no mood to be searched, ignored the signal and cracked on sail for Providence. The chase continued for twenty-five miles; until, by design or chance, Lindsey tacked to westward upon clearing Namquit Point off Warwick. The GASPEE, trying to cut across the shallow water to intercept her, grounded hard and fast on the shoals while HANNAH sailed on to port.

The story of the Britisher's plight was

soon circulated, and over cups of ale in the Sabin Tavern a plan was hatched to destroy the hated vessel. A drummer sounded the call through the town streets, and at midnight eight boats with muffled oars put off from Fenner's Wharf and rowed down to the GASPEE under the command of Abraham Whipple, a young Providence blood. Coming upon the stranded ship under cover of the moonless night, the boats were almost alongside before they were challenged. Shots were exchanged and Lieutenant Duddingston was wounded. The crew was put ashore and the GASPEE set afire. By dawn she had burned to the waterline and then exploded when the flames reached her powder magazines.

The next day the town was in an uproar. Governor Wanton offered 100 pounds reward for the names of any participants. England followed with a 500-pound reward for the name of the leader and sent a special commission to investigate the attack. Both sums were princely and would have enabled the informer to live out his life in ease. But one of the most remarkable aspects of the entire incident is that not a single man was ever taken—and this despite the fact that the participants were assembled by a drum beaten in the streets, that they plotted in a public tavern, that they used no disguise, and that they returned from the attack well after daybreak.

Not long after, the Battles of Concord and Lexington took place and war was inevitable. On May 4, 1776, two full months before her neighbor colonies, Rhode Island declared her independence, becoming the first sovereign state in America.

When the Navy of the new nation was formed a few months later, it was a Rhode Islander, Esek Hopkins of Providence, who became its first Commander in Chief, while Abraham Whipple, of GASPEE burning fame, was named Captain of one of the first three ships in the infant Navy, the frigate PROVIDENCE.

Hopkins served as Commander in Chief from 1775 to 1778 and those three years were not easy ones. His tiny force completed fitting out in Philadelphia and then made a shakedown cruise to New Providence in the West Indies, where they successfully cap-

tured a British fort and a large quantity of arms and gunpowder desperately needed by the colonists. Hopkins commandeered the sloop ENDEAVOR lying in the harbor to help carry the captured cargo, and the four ships sailed in company for Providence. En route they overhauled and captured two British warships, H.M.S. HAWK and H.M.S. BOLTON, which they added to their fleet.

Nearing Block Island Sound on the night of April 6, 1776, the Americans encountered the British man-of-war H.M.S. GLASGOW, 20 guns and 250 men, standing out to station from Newport Harbor under cover of darkness. Hopkins was in a serious position. His fighting ships were undermanned because of the prize crews he had placed on the captured vessels. It seems also that many of the sailors had been sampling the rum stores on the prizes during the return voyage. To add to his troubles, the British ship got off a couple of good broadsides, seriously weakening spars on the American ships which had been strained already in the earlier encounters. As dawn began to brighten the scene, the GLASGOW ran for port, signaling for assistance from the British fleet there. Fearful of losing his entire force as well as the prizes, and a naturally cautious commander, Hopkins broke off the chase and sailed for New London.

The townspeople there welcomed the new Navy with honors and enthusiasm because of the successful Bahamas raid. Later, when news of the abortive encounter and the escape of the GLASGOW was circulated, their attitude changed abruptly. Whispers of "cowardice" were heard and the insinuations were directed particularly toward Abraham Whipple who had been the last to leave the battle and who, it was rumored, had run away when he had been in a position to capture the British ship.

Whipple was enraged at the implied stain upon his honor and begged for a court-martial to decide the case once and for all. A court was convened and both Whipple and Hopkins were exonerated—not, however, without a cloud remaining permanently over the career of Esek Hopkins. And future events provided a cruel sequel.

Hopkins was ordered to Providence where his fellow townspeople wanted

to entertain the new Navy, and his three ships successfully ran the British blockade of ships and forts which covered the mouth of Narragansett Bay. But when he got to Providence, Hopkins found he couldn't get out again. The Navy was trapped, and while he waited for an opportunity to leave, he found it impossible to keep his ships manned. It was considered as patriotic to serve on a privateer as on a naval ship and, since the food, the work, and the chances for a share of plunder were all in favor of privateer service, there was little hope for Hopkins. He complained bitterly to the Navy Board in Philadelphia but found no sympathy. He finally terminated his service under the most questionable of circumstances. His fellow townspeople showed no lack of confidence in his character, however, for they immediately elected him to the Rhode Island General Assembly.

The whole idea of an American Navy, largely based on Esek Hopkins' inspiration, might have died then if it hadn't been for the heroic and redeeming action of Abraham Whipple. On a dark, stormy night in 1778 he ran the West Passage in the PROVIDENCE "pouring broadsides into the British ships and sinking one of their tenders." He was carrying documents to France concerning a treaty of alliance, and his successful voyage brought French assistance to the beleaguered colonists and an earlier end to the war.

But while the Revolutionary War saw some Rhode Islanders winning glories at sea, the occupation of Newport by British troops from 1776 to 1779 effectively destroyed that town's ability to continue as an important and prosperous port.

No one knows exactly why the occupation force was sent to Newport and kept so remote from the more active campaigns of the war. Most likely it was the result of an inaccurate idea of the town's position in relation to the rest of the colonies, and perhaps the misconception was fostered by the reputation Rhode Island had as a hotbed for resistance. The fact remains that during the three years of occupation hundreds of buildings were torn down, the town was completely denuded of trees, and all the wharves were burned. It took years for Newport to rebuild,

and, when she finally did, Providence, long a mere village, had become a center for the newly opened East India trade. It wasn't until the late nineteenth century that Newport again became a cultural center and her port the destination of pleasure yachts.

The prosperity which Newport had enjoyed during her early eighteenth century trading days came to Providence after the Revolutionary War. At India Point the masts of East Indiamen were as thick as a forest. Wagonloads of iron, textiles, coal, tea, coffee, Chinese porcelain, and South American hardwoods rumbled through town continuously. Great import-export houses were founded, including the renowned firm of Brown & Ives, formed by John Brown who had participated in the GASPEE affair.

Fortunes were made in the East India trade, but fortunes were lost as well. In 1798 the pride of Providence's merchant fleet was the newly built ANN & HOPE, named after the owners' wives. For seven years she sailed to such ports as Canton, London, Batavia, Amsterdam, Kronstadt, and Lisbon, and was considered the fastest ship out of Providence. Returning from her sixth cruise, the ANN & HOPE encountered a snowstorm, ran aground off Block Island, and was soon pounding on the rocks under Mohegan Bluffs. Her \$300,000 cargo was lost and the wreck of the proud ship that had cost \$50,000 to build was sold for \$393.

There were some who suspected that the mishap was the result of wreckers showing false lights on the island in order to salvage the rich cargo although to this day Block Islanders hotly dispute such charges. Even so, the accident which had befallen the ANN & HOPE was not without precedent.

In 1732 the PALATINE had sailed from Rotterdam crowded with wealthy Dutch families migrating to Philadelphia. The voyage was ill-fated from the start, for her drinking water was polluted and 300 were poisoned, including the captain and several of the crew. Only 114 survived and these encountered another of the fierce blizzards which blow up in Block Island Sound during the winter. The stories at this point vary. Some say that Block Island wreckers lured the ship on the rocks; others that the crew

mutinied and abandoned the passengers to the storm. Block Islanders say their men worked heroically to rescue the passengers, but when it appeared the hulk was being driven back into the ocean by the high winds, they set her afire to keep her from becoming a floating navigation hazard. The trapped passengers panicked and jumped into the freezing surf where all but sixteen drowned. One woman refused to leave the ship. As fire engulfed the PALATINE, she was driven back into the sea and the woman's screams were lost in the storm.

In 1947 a memorial stone was erected atop the bluffs, but islanders scarcely need this reminder. They say that when a storm is brewing you can see the blazing ship in the distance and hear the screams of the lone woman who still sails with the PALATINE.

Block Island, because of its location twelve miles off Rhode Island's southern shore, had been a favorite rendezvous for mariners from Indian times onward. Before European settlement, the Niantics used the island as a staging area for raids on the tribes inhabiting Long Island, just across the Sound. Pirates and privateersmen used the island as a base of operations. Captain Kidd's treasure is supposed to have been buried here, but annual parties of treasure hunters have failed to find it so far.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the entire state of Rhode Island had a reputation for being a pirate's haven. One early source refers to her citizenry as a "set of lawless and piratical people." Freebooters could bring their prizes into the state for sale with impunity. The Admiralty Court in Newport was so lax that when one pirate, not aware of the situation, pleaded guilty to charges of piracy, the astonished court decided they had not heard the plea correctly and acquitted the man for lack of evidence.

In 1723, twenty-five men from the ship RANGER were hanged for piracy near Long Wharf, but detractors say that this was because the Governor of Massachusetts was presiding over that particular court. The RANGER had been harassing shipping all along the eastern seaboard and was finally captured by H.M.S. GREYHOUND off Block Island and brought into Newport harbor. The bodies of the executed pirates were taken

to Goat Island and buried between the high and low water marks.

The nineteenth century produced two Rhode Island naval heroes—brothers, who between them signify the transition from the past to the present in maritime tradition. During the War of 1812, Oliver Hazard Perry, born in South Kingstown, led an expedition to Lake Erie where he built ships and defeated the English fleet there in what was probably the last major battle of wooden ships and iron men. In 1854 Oliver's younger brother, Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, achieved a victory which had even farther-reaching consequences. He sailed an American fleet to Japan where he concluded a treaty which opened Japanese ports to world trade. A pioneer in modern propulsion for warships, Matthew Calbraith Perry has been called the "Father of the Steam Navy."

Not all Rhode Island maritime heroes were military men, however—or

even men. The first woman ever to receive a Congressional medal was Idawalley Zorada Lewis of Newport. In 1879, Ida Lewis was appointed Keeper of the Lime Rock Light which stood at the entrance to Newport Harbor, a post her father and mother had held before her. She was already famous for daring rescues in Narragansett Bay (her first had been made at the age of sixteen) and had received visitors from around the world, including President Ulysses S. Grant. In 1924, thirteen years after her death, the name of the light was changed to the Ida Lewis Light and today it still stands as the Ida Lewis Yacht Club.

During the Civil War, the small naval facility at Newport was expanded to become the temporary home of the United States Naval Academy. When the midshipmen returned to Annapolis following the war, the Navy continued as an increasingly important part of Rhode Island life. Today the headquar-

ters for the Atlantic Fleet's Cruiser-Destroyer Force, the Naval War College, the Officer Candidate School, a Naval Air Station, and a Construction Battalion Center are all located in the state.

The twentieth century has seen Rhode Island develop as a highly industrialized state, but one which still bases much of her enterprise upon her heritage and history of seafaring. The Port of Providence, yachting activities at Newport, sports and commercial fishing out of Galilee and Jerusalem in South County, boatbuilding, and the recent expansion of oceanographic research facilities have maintained the link with the seas which has been so vital to the character of the state. It is appropriate that the golden anchor is the seal of Rhode Island, for the sea holds the secret of her beginnings and, to a great degree, the promise of her future.

Some Tall and Short Fish Stories of Old South County

In the first half of the nineteenth century the coastal waters and estuaries of South County were an unbelievably rich source of fish of many species; catching, eating and selling fish were a significant part of the good life in early Rhode Island. Thomas Robinson Hazard, the seventh generation of the Hazard family in South County, was not only a raiser of sheep and a woolen mill owner, but also a prolific writer and talented story teller. Shepherd Tom, as he was nicknamed, was born in Narragansett in 1797, and died in 1886 at the age of 89. His reminiscences of the South County he grew up in were first printed as articles in the Providence Journal and were republished in book form in 1915 by his grandnephew as The Jonny-Cake Papers of "Shepherd Tom." The book paints a lively and readable picture of life in pre-Civil War days. We have excerpted and edited some of the fishing and fish stories from that book. Some are from his own era, but others go back to the time of uncles, father and grandfather.

The Editor

To tell the truth, I am almost afraid to tell all about the fish of old Narragansett, lest I should raise a doubt in some of my more skeptical readers' minds about my entire veracity. So I think I will just copy from a letter I received more'n six months ago from my brother Joseph. Says he: "As late as 1845, I reco'lect that Stephen A. Chase and myself caught 101 black-fish (tautog) on my shore ... on one afternoon. I used to see striped bass by the hundred in the breakers in the autumn, some of them very large. I have seen people at the north pier wading in the dock and pitching out flounders by the hundreds with a pitchfork, as they would hay in the field at mowing time. Menhaden (bony fish) were sold at twelve cents and less, a barrel, for manuring land, and thousands of barrels were sometimes landed at a haul on the beach, north of the Pier. Farmers used to come to the Pier from towns bordering on the Connecticut line, in the autumn, to catch codfish for their winter's

supply, and go back with as many as they would need for many months to come, all caught in one day with hook and line. I have known two farmers to take a boat at the south pier and go about the quarter of a mile from shore, and come back before night with over a ton of codfish to salt for their winter's use. Some seasons in October, I have seen the shore lined with fishing boats and smacks, some coming long distances. I remember seeing Captain Williams, that most original, honest, interesting old fisherman (a regular Norseman, one might readily imagine), come ashore one Sunday morning at about 11 o'clock, at the Pier, with three halibut in his boat, aggregating from six to seven hundred pounds weight. I remember seeing our nephew Rowland, when he was a boy, land at the Pier with one hundred and twenty-two horse mackerel he had just caught along the shore between the Pier and Point Judith."

I will here remark that there was never a real good horse mackerel (called bluefish by some) eaten in New York or Philadelphia, for the reason that to be eaten in perfection this fish must be put on the gridiron within five minutes at the farthest, from its flipping.

"You remember," continues my brother Joe, "Old Christopher Robinson's account of the great hauls of striped bass they used to make late in autumn and the winter in the Salt pond, when he was young, weighing all the way from three pounds to forty and fifty pounds and even more; one hundred and seventy-eight thousand at one haul on his father's shore near the old corn-mill (now Wakefield), and ninety-five thousand at another. These bass they used to pile up on the adjoining meadow, and people came with carts from far and near (even from Puritan Massachusetts and Presbyterian Connecticut). Christopher used to tell us how, in his early manhood, he used to pitch these bass just as they came into the wagons at a copper apiece," or about two for a cent of our present currency. Now they sometimes sell striped bass, the king fish of the world, in Newport market, as high as thirty cents a pound!

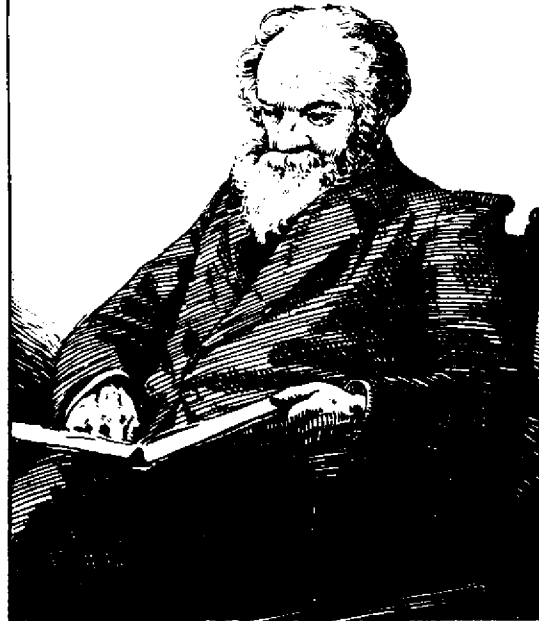
I may here say that the day preceding the

great fire in New York in 1835 (that consumed more than half the business portion of the city) was as warm as a half-heated baker's oven, while the night of the fire that followed was the coldest that had been known for years, in fact, so cold that the water froze solid in the hose of the fire engines. On that warm day the bass had entered the breach that leads to the sea at the southern extremity of the Salt pond, in countless myriads, and the wind being southerly and both weather and water unusually warm, the immense school of fish stopped overnight near the surface of the water, doubtless meaning to settle down into their deep winter quarters the next day. But early in the night the wind suddenly chopped round to the north-west and brought with it such an unheard-of low temperature that the lake was converted almost in an instant into a sheet of ice some foot and more in thickness, holding in its embrace nearly all of the striped bass that had entered the pond on the day before. A day or two after this I went down upon the pond and saw scores upon scores of men cutting out the bass with chopping axes. They had already piled up hundreds of thousands to all appearance in heaps as big as small hay-stacks. The whole surface of the lake looked like a huge piece of Mosaic thickly inlaid with frozen bass weighing two or three to twenty or more pounds each. New York and other markets were bountifully supplied with the finest fish from this source for weeks afterwards.

Potter's pond, which lies on the south-western side of the Salt pond, on what was formerly the old Governor John Potter estate, is connected with the great Salt pond by a narrow strait. In the old Governor's day, he used to surround with nets millions of bass in the early winter before severe frost set in and haul them up to this narrow strait, when what with the force of the nets and the whooping and hurraing of his host of negroes, the bass would be forced into the Potter pond heaping high. The Governor used then to stake up the narrow strait and so have the fish fast in a comparatively narrow compass, from whence he took them out with small nets through the winter just so fast as a market could be found for them.

"There are," continues, after a while, my brother Joe, "millions of fine sea perch (one of the best of fish) in the Salt pond at all seasons, and myriads of herrings in the spring. I remember when hauls were made in the Salt pond, not many years ago, in which common hands engaged sometimes made one hundred dollars

Thomas Robinson Hazard



each in a single night for their individual share, and the seine itself took one-half of all the fish caught, and there were other parties engaged in the hauling who took far more each than a mere hand share. Then there was the smelt ware at the upper end of the Salt pond below Wakefield. What quantities of delicious smelts were formerly taken there, although the yield is now light. As late as 1840, we used to get these smelts fresh every morning, in their season, for two shillings (33 2/3 cents) a peck. Then the flounders, and flatfish, and eels, and great snapping-turtles that used to be so common in that beautiful lake!"

I think it not improbable but that there may be some ignoramuses in Providence and Kent counties where there is but little or nothing known about salt-water fish, who may feel disposed to question the accuracy of some of the fish stories I have related. However this may be, I can honestly assure all the readers of the Journal and the rest of the world that if what I have heard be true, all that I have stated about the abundance of fish that used to abound in Narragansett less than a century ago, is but as cakes and gingerbread in comparison with the quantities that used to abound there in a preceding century. I have heard that prince of

traditionists, Daniel E. Updike, of East Grinnage, say that in his father's or grandfather's day, that such countless shoals of striped bass used to come up the Pettaquamscutt (or Narrow) river to winter in the beautiful ponds at the head of tide-water, that people were said to pass over the river on the backs of the solid mass without wetting their feet. I disremember the time when Capt. Bill Wilson told me that his father worked for Col. Gardiner on Boston Neck, when he gave a great ball that was attended by many distinguished persons from Boston, Newport, and New York (Providence being nowhere in those days), on which occasion two of the Misses Brown, of Tower Hill, set out on horseback to attend the ball, but when they came to the fording-place in Narrow river, a little above Carter's gibbet (who killed Jackson), it was packed so full of striped bass that (their horses being smooth shod), they were forced to dismount and pass over afoot on the backs of the fishes that were jammed in such a solid mass as to be unable to move individually in any direction except as the entire mass was carried along by the tide.

...There was [a vast difference] in the old-fashioned way of frying fish, especially smelts, from that now in vogue Phillis used always to keep a kettle of pure leaf lard, from corn-fed hogs, thoroughly boiled, set apart for the especial purpose of frying smelts during their season. These were always obtained each morning from the Saucatucket smelt weir, and delivered to her alive and flipping, the kettle of lard being on the fire boiling all the time. Each delicate little fish was, after being washed, rolled carefully in the meal until every hair breadth of it from the tip of its head to the end of its tail was coated in the flour of ambrosia; then taking the caudal extremity of each smelt between her thumb and finger, she dropped it head foremost into the boiling kettle, and there left it until it was thoroughly done and crisp. No epicure who has never tasted smelts cooked by that method knows anything of what a smelt is. It is said by some that the Narragansett smelt, cooked in the only proper way, was in pagan times one of the

two relishes or condiments that the gods alone indulged in whilst reveling in jonny-cake made of Narragansett white corn meal, the other being Pettaquamscutt eels caught in the months of January and February with spears thrust into the mud beneath the ice, where they lie.

The method was as follows: A basket of fat, yellow-breasted eels being brought fresh from the frozen river, were first saturated with a handful of live wood ashes. This loosened the coating of slime so that they were readily cleansed. Next the head was taken off, and the eel split down the entire length of the back. They were then washed in clean sea water and hung up the kitchen chimney, with its wide, open fireplace, for one night only. Next morning the eels were cut in short pieces and placed on a gridiron, flesh side next to sweet-smelling, glowing coals, made from green oak, walnut, or maple wood. When sufficiently broiled on that side, they were turned on the gridiron and a small slice of fragrant butter, ... put on each piece of eel. Every guest or member of the family helps himself from the hot gridiron, which is then returned to the glowing coals, and again and again replenished until the appetite is surfeited or the supply of eels exhausted; probably the latter, as I never heard of but one instance wherein a fatal surfeit was produced by the dainty dish, which was the case of one of the kings of England, who died from eating too enormously of broiled eels, speared under the ice at the mouth of the river Humber.

There used to be an old man in Narragansett by the name of Scribbins, who was a great favorite of my grandfather because of his simplicity and honesty. When a small boy, I remember Scribbins's breakfasting at our house, one winter morning, when we had broiled eels. The old man helped himself from the gridiron seventeen times, a steady smile playing over his features every moment that passed between the first and last mouthful. He then looked my grandfather — Uncle Toby like — blandly and steadily in the face, and significantly nodding his head sideways in the direction of the kitchen door, remarked: "Them's eels, them is."

IX. Culminating Activity

To The Teacher

For a culminating activity, the students could write an essay on a specific problem or idea within the general theme of the relationship between people and the sea. They can draw on reading and activities from the entire unit. The teacher can use the essays to emphasize and evaluate writing skills and concepts worked on in the unit.

These essays may be entered in the annual Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council Essay Contest. Essays should be from 800 - 1200 words long. Information about dates and procedure for entering the contest is being sent to English department heads, or is available from the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center, Narragansett, RI 02882 (792-6224).

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

Suggestions For Essay Topics

1. Our changing attitudes toward the sea and its coast.
Discuss how our attitudes toward the sea are formed.

Explain how our attitudes toward the sea and coastal environment affect how we treat them. How have people attitudes changed during the period from the early settlers to the present? Why the changes? What do you think our view of the sea and its coast should be? Be specific and use examples and ideas we read about and discussed in the unit (Coleridge and the other poets, the Teals, Carson, historical selections) as well as your own reasoning.

2. The uses of the sea and its coast.
Discuss the many ways we use the sea and its coast, showing the possible conflicts of these uses. How have these conflicts been solved in the past? How do you think they should be solved? Use examples from reading and discussions in this unit as well as your own reading and thinking.

3. Discuss one aspect of our marine environment that means a great deal to you personally (i.e., the beauty of the beach and waves, exploring a salt marsh, sailing, surfing, fishing, the study of marine creatures, deep sea diving). Describe it in detail and explain why you are interested in it. Is there anything that threatens it? What and why? What should be done to protect it?