APPENDIX B

New Bedford National Park: Major Interpretive Themes

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1 New Bedford's geographic location influenced its development into the world's foremost whaling port in the nineteenth century.

2 Whales provided important and valuable products, and the hunt for them fostered the development of highly specialized technologies, and supported the economic base of New Bedford and the nation.

3 The nature of a whaling voyage, with long separation from home and family, contributed to the development of unique cultures on shipboard and ashore.

4 In pursuit of whales, New Bedford's fleet traveled the world's oceans and brought large numbers of Americans into contact with other cultures; in the process they introduced materials, technology, plants, animals, and diseases which led to profound changes in the cultures and environments they visited.

5 In the critical century following independence, when scientific institutions were being founded and U.S. policy was being formed, information collected by whalemen greatly expanded America's knowledge of the world.

6 Whale hunting led to a decline in whale populations worldwide and some species were endangered as a result of the hunt.

7 Whaling had an impact on the American imagination and influenced American literature, painting, fashion, and folk art.

8 New Bedford today reflects its heritage as the nineteenth-century whaling capital of the world.

1 New Bedford's geographic location influenced its development into the world's foremost whaling port in the nineteenth century.

The prevailing southwest winds of Buzzards Bay make it one of the best sailing destinations on the Atlantic seaboard. In 1602 Bartholomew Gosnold planted the first British settlement in New England on Cuttyhunk Island at the mouth of Buzzards Bay. The mainland across the Bay was pronounced to be beautiful, made up of "stately groves, flowering meadows, and running brooks." The Wampanoag people who lived at "Acushnet" were "all courteous kindness" and quickly offered trade and friendship.

Though the original settlement was abandoned, the advantages of Buzzards Bay for navigation were well known early in the colonial period. New Bedford would eventually grow on the Bay, built on the west shore of the Acushnet River where a large source of fresh water, a deep and commodious anchorage, and easy access out to the Atlantic Ocean combined all the elements of a successful port.

Though the land on which New Bedford sits today was purchased from Wampanoag people in 1652, there was no real settlement of English people on the site until after 1699, when Quakers built a meetinghouse there. The primary property owner was Joseph Russell, and by 1750 he had set up a tryworks on the Acushnet's west bank for rendering oil from whale blubber. In April 1761 Russell sent the ship Manufacture on a whaling cruise from the port, then called Acushnet. In 1767 Joseph Rotch, an experienced whaleman from Nantucket purchased land from Russell and joined him in the fledgling business; he launched the Dartmouth that same year. With Rotch's assistance, Joseph Russell and Isaac

Howland built a spermaceti candle factory in 1768.

It was Rotch who suggested that the name of the place be changed from Acushnet to Bedford, to honor Russell (who shared his surname with the Duke of Bedford). As they were the second city in Massachusetts to choose that name they were obliged to change it again, to New Bedford, in 1787. Despite the vicissitudes of the Revolution and the War of 1812, New Bedford steadily ascended as an important whaling center.

In the eighteenth century, when whales were caught in near-shore waters,the island of Nantucket proved to have the greater advantage, in being nearer to the migratory routes. As voyages moved further and further off shore in the nineteenth century, however, the disadvantages of Nantucket's more shallow harbor with its obstructing sandbar, and difficult access to the island through dangerous shoals led to a decline of that port. As voyages increasingly went beyond Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope in search of prey, the greater convenience of New Bedford led to a rapid escalation in the city's involvement in the industry.

In 1800, 17 ships left from Nantucket compared to seven from New Bedford; in 1815 Nantucket could boast 50 ships to New Bedford's ten,and in 1820 the island outnumbered the port on Buzzards Bay by 45 to 36, but the gap closed quickly thereafter. In 1823 New Bedford passed Nantucket in the number of ships departing annually on whaling voyages, and never gave up its lead. In 1840 with the arrival of the railroad and easier access to markets in New York and Boston,the domination of the port was decisive. Even the sentimental Herman Melville was forced to admit in Moby-Dick that "New Bedford has of late been gradually monopolizing the business of whaling, and in this matter poor old Nantucket is now much behind her." And, while Ishmael made his voyage from Nantucket, Melville made his voyage in 1840 from Fairhaven, on a vessel named Acushnet for the river on which New Bedford and Fairhaven were built.

The port is still an important one today, with fishing having replaced whaling as the primary industry. Certain modifications have been made, including the construction of a hurricane barrier, completed in 1965, to protect the fishing fleet from the occasional surges that come when the wind turns to come from the south south-east. Ferries from New Bedford bring tourists to Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands. Yachtsmen consider the nearby ports of Mattapoisett and Marion among the most desirable in the country.

Melville called New Bedford "a queer place." Without whaling, he said, it would have been "in as howling condition as the coast of Labrador." But he could not have failed to see the natural advantages that made it the most logical site for a port to develop on Buzzards Bay. And he could not help but admit he found it "perhaps the dearest place to live in, in all New England."

2 Whales provided important and valuable products, and the hunt for them fostered the development of highly specialized technologies, and supported the economic base of New Bedford and the nation.

2A: Whale Products
2B: The Whale Hunt
2C: The Whaling Business

2A: ***Whale Products***

"New Bedford... is a land of oil, true enough."
Moby-Dick

Occasionally whales come out of the sea and die onshore. In ancient times people discovered that the stranded carcasses of such animals had valuable oil, bone, meat, blubber and baleen. These products proved lucrative enough to inspire people on several continents to begin to hunt whales near their own shores. By the seventeenth century there were active whale hunts being prosecuted by people from Northern Europe, Asia, the Arctic, and the Pacific Coast of North America.

In the Massachusetts colony, settlers quickly began to include fishing and whaling among other seasonal activities. Having brought the technology with them from Europe, the settlers of Cape Cod, Nantucket, and Long Island began to watch for whales alongshore and to send boats out to chase them when the opportunity arose. As whales moved farther offshore, New Englanders followed, eventually developing an industry with a remarkably well-adapted technology.

Americans depended on candles and oil-filled lamps to light their homes in the years before electricity. Whales provided both the best oil and the best candle wax for home illumination. In addition, whale oil was used to lubricate fine machinery. Two kinds of oil came from whales, oil rendered from the blubber, and the higher-grade spermaceti oil. All whales have a thick layer of blubber that keeps their body temperature regulated as they travel through cold water; at a high enough temperature this blubber can be rendered into oil—a process whalemen referred to as "trying out." Sperm whales have an additional source of oil in a cavity in their head. This waxy oil, called spermaceti, can be separated by pressing into the highest grade of oil and a superior candle wax.

Some whales have a substance in their mouths called "baleen" which was also extremely valuable, especially in the nineteenth century. Baleen hangs in plates from the upper jaw of whales in the group known as Mysticeti and is used by them to strain their food out of seawater. Strong and flexible, these plates of baleen also proved useful to people. Many of the fashions of the last century would have been impossible without baleen. Sometimes called "whalebone" in the fashion industry, baleen was used to stiffen corsets and collars and to make the hooped frame on which skirts rode. Other products that utilized the flexible strength of baleen included umbrella ribs, riding crops, buggy whips, and hat brims.

The third important product obtained from whales was "ambergris," a substance produced occasionally in the stomachs of sperm whales. Ambergris was used in fine perfumes to keep the scent from changing and was occasionally added to wine as an aphrodisiac.

2B: ***The Whale Hunt***

"The Spermaceti Whale... is an active, fierce animal, and requires vast address and boldness in the fishermen." —Thomas Jefferson

From the mastheads of their vessels (ships, barks, and schooners, not usually exceeding 400 tons), whalemen watched for whales to come to the surface to breathe. If it was determined that the whale or whales in view was one of the species they hunted— animals which were not too fast to be pursued under sail or oar power, and which could be expected to float long enough to be towed and

processed—then one or more whaleboats was lowered from the side of the vessel for the chase. In each whaleboat were six men: an officer, a harpooner (called a "boatsteerer"), and four oarsman. For the trip out to the whale the boatsteerer rowed at the bow oar and the officer steered with a steering oar; if conditions allowed, a mast and sail could be raised. When the boat reached the whale it was the job of the boatsteerer to thrust the harpoon. If the harpoon stuck, then the boat would be towed behind the whale by the line that was attached to it. When the whale tired from towing the boat and loss of blood, the men would pull themselves up to the whale's back, the officer and boatsteerer would exchange places, and the officer would kill the whale by puncturing it's lung with a long iron lance. The whale would then be towed back to the ship for processing.

Americans developed the shipboard tryworks and cutting stage as voyages moved further offshore into the Atlantic. These allowed for whales to be processed while laying alongside a ship at sea. The cutting stage was lowered over the back of the whale to allow two or three officers or boatsteerers to stand over the whale outboard of the ship's rail. The blubber was loosened with sharp long-handled spades and was hoisted with a winch and tackle onto the deck of the ship in a long strip called a "blanket piece." That piece was subsequently cut into smaller pieces on deck or in a protected area just below the main deck,and the small pieces were conveyed to the two "trypots"—cast-iron kettles bricked into a furnace on deck called the "tryworks." The blubber was reduced to oil which was conveyed, when cooled, into barrels assembled for the purpose by the ship's cooper.

In the 1840's Lewis Temple, an African-American blacksmith working in New Bedford, developed a harpoon with a toggling head which pulled out of the whale much less frequently than other kinds of harpoons and dramatically improved the success of the hunt as a consequence. Though steam power and explosive devices were introduced to increase efficiency, the technology of the whale hunt remained virtually unchanged during the whole period that New Bedforders were involved in it.

2C: *The Whaling Business*

Lucem Diffundo: "We light the world"
(New Bedford City motto)

When a ship departed from a New England port to begin a whaling voyage,the work of the owners and agent was already well advanced. It took a tremendous amount of planning to prepare a vessel for a long voyage. The officers and crew must be hired, their provisions purchased, and the vessel readied for hunting and processing whales with suitable gear and equipment. In the course of preparing a vessel,it was not unusual for an agent to be in contact with more than a hundred vendors of tools, boats, sails, rigging, navigating instruments, food, gear, medical supplies, and trade goods.

Most ships had a number of investors or owners and they generally employed an agent to oversee all of the details.(Often the agent held a share in the vessel as well.) During the course of the cruise the agent corresponded as well as he could with the captain, forwarding mail for the crew and making arrangements for them to ship barrels of oil back home, and to purchase supplies en route. At the end of the voyage, the agent's job continued until the oil

and baleen were sold and the investors, officers, and crew paid off.

In the earliest years of New Bedford whaling there was a strong market for whale products in England, with whale oil and spermaceti candles making up half of the exports from New England to Old England in the five years before the Boston Tea Party. But whalemen were not always so lucky. The products brought back to New Bedford entered into a marketplace that was constantly fluctuating with competition from new technology, changes in fashion, the health of whale stocks, and the vagaries caused by the large number of vessels active at different times from numerous ports. By the second half of the nineteenth century, it took a long time for investors to see a return on their investment.

As whaling declined, textiles were on the rise, and many investors moved their money from one industry into the other. Ports closer to the Pacific whale stocks rose to pick up much of the New Bedford's slack—Lahaina and Honolulu in the Hawaiian Islands, and San Francisco took over the registry of many of New Bedford's ships in the declining years.

3 The nature of a whaling voyage, with long separation from home and family, contributed to the development of unique cultures on shipboard and ashore.

The economy, society, and culture of New Bedford in the nineteenth century were influenced by the patterns of whaling voyages. Families were separated when men went to sea; women were relied upon to manage shops, farms, and families ashore; and the local population was personally connected to the native people who lived on the shores of the Pacific, Arctic,and Indian Oceans. The world of the ship was isolated, highly structured, racially integrated, and, by the middle of the century, increasingly populated by both genders, as wives and children joined captains on longer voyages.

Whaling was not a romantic business and whalemen were not footloose adventurers. In the earliest years of the industry they were men from seafaring communities who were brought up to view the ship as their workplace. As New Bedford grew to become the world's largest whaling port, the workforce was increasingly made up of men from farming and laboring backgrounds who sought to escape their fate by going to sea, men whose options on shore were limited because of their race or background, and immigrants who were often brought back to New Bedford on the very vessels on which they had served as crew. The community found aboard Yankee whaleships was not replicated anywhere else in America in the nineteenth century. Men of African ancestry and Native Americans served side-by-side with men whose families had originated in Europe. Pay was based on shipboard position, and opportunities for advancement based on merit and experience were greater than any that existed on shore.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, New Bedford whaling vessels did most of their hunting in the Pacific and Arctic Oceans. The length of time necessary to travel such vast distances, and the declining number of whales, meant that voyages became longer and longer. In 1851 the average length of a voyage was 46 months. Most of the men on shipboard were young and single, but for captains,

almost all of whom were married, the separation from wives and children became a great hardship. Eventually, the vessel owners allowed captains to bring their families with them on long voyages, and by 1853 the Whaleman's Shipping List could report that there was a captain's wife on one of every five whaleships sailing from New England ports.

The women who travelled with their captain-husbands were not, for the most part, extraordinary women. They were ordinary women who found themselves in extraordinary circumstances. Each tried to create a home for her family in the cabin of a ship, surrounded by men with whom she would never have associated on shore. Beyond the walls of the ship, they sought company from the wives of other captains in chance meetings at sea, when they could exchange information, books, and presents during "gams" between ships. On shore at exotic locales they encountered people, cultural practices, natural phenomena, animals and plants that most Americans could only read about. In some far-flung ports-of-call, like Lahaina on the island of Maui in the Hawaiian archipelago, and at Fremantle on the southwest coast of Australia, they attempted to recreate their New England world with Protestant churches, missionary activities, and shore communities where women mariners who were pregnant, ill, or yearning for female companionship, could live among others like themselves while the ships went into the high latitudes of the Arctic and Antarctic.

Women who stayed home while their husbands went to sea were also thrust into situations unusual for American women of the day. In a letter written in November 1864 to the captain of the Erie, his young bride confessed that she did not think she understood much "about outdoor affairs," though she was then responsible for all the business of the family farm. "I do not know how now," she wrote, "but I think I shall learn,and I try very hard to do as I ought." In fact, her husband and the community depended on her rapid adjustment and self-education in business and agricultural matters. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, a late-eighteenth century French observer of American ways observed of Nantucket whaling captains and their wives: "What would the men do without the agency of faithful mates?" The same question could have been asked of New Bedford in the next century. Women provided the necessary continuity that kept the community functioning as the business of whaling ebbed and flowed.

4 In pursuit of whales, New Bedford's fleet traveled the world's oceans and brought large numbers of Americans into contact with other cultures; in the process they introduced materials, technology, plants, animals, and diseases which led to profound changes in the cultures and environments they visited.

Herman Melville claimed that there was no "single peaceful influence," which had "operated more potentially upon the whole broad world" of the nineteenth century as "the high and mighty business of whaling." Melville was referring especially to the rapidly expanding knowledge of the Pacific and Arctic Oceans, and to the impact that American whalemen had on the people who lived in those regions. In 1851, the year Moby-Dick was published, more than 20,000 Americans were engaged in the

whalefishery. On New Years Day of that year 474 New Bedford-registered ships were engaged in long voyages; 135 ships departed from the port that year.

The impact of such a large influx of men on the indigenous people of the Pacific and on the native ecology of the islands was profound. Animals and organisms were dragged from one place to another by the ships, and diseases were inadvertently introduced through casual and sexual contact. American and European technology, materials, alcohol, and weapons were introduced through trade. When zealous missionary activity was added to the other factors, the changes that resulted were dramatic. In the Arctic, where the native population depended on the whales,walruses,and seals that were the target of the American hunt, the depletion of animal stocks was devastating in many communities.

New Bedforders first entered the Pacific in 1793, when the Rebecca rounded Cape Horn. By 1820 they were on the "Japan Grounds" of the western Pacific, and were beginning to make Hawaii the preeminent Pacific port-of-call. In 1852 more than 150 whaleships made a stop at Honolulu. Contact between Yankee whalemen and native people was intense, sometimes violent, though usually productive for the trade of both parties. Several thousand Polynesian men signed aboard New Bedford ships, with some of them returning to New Bedford. According to Melville, "Feegeeans, Togatabooans," and other Pacific Islanders could be seen around the port with their "wild specimens of the whaling-craft." In 1874 the King of Hawaii visited New Bedford, the place where so many of his own visitors had originated.

In their search for whales, American sailors eventually covered the entire globe, in the process charting seas which had previously been unknown to all but the indigenous navigators. In the course of these voyages they stopped at almost every island, looking to restock their supplies of food and fresh water, and even hiring new crew from the native population. They brought along goods to trade for provisions and occasionally bartered as well for souvenirs that would document their experiences when they returned home. Today the artifacts that were collected by sailors, and the descriptions and drawings that they entered into their journals, are valued as representations of cultural practices that,in many cases, are altered or extinct. Yankee whalemen were thus both documenting cultural changes and, unwittingly, contributing to them.

New Bedford's nineteenth-century whaling technology survived where it was transplanted by foreign crewmen in the Azores the Caribbean island of Bequia long after it died out at home.

5 In the critical century following independence, when scientific institutions were being founded and U.S. policy was being formed, information collected by whalemen greatly expanded America's knowledge of the world.

The notions of an independent America preached by Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were not based only on a system of government. Like other influential men of their day, both Jefferson and Franklin were committed to the development of a scientific tradition in their emerging nation. Science could provide both theoretical and practical knowledge, and could help Americans understand the landscape in which they lived and the wider

world beyond.A number of institutions were founded in the half century following independence to organize and disseminate scientific information. Franklin was one of the founders of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia in 1785, and a number of similar institutions sprang up soon after in Massachusetts.

"Natural History," the most prominent field of scientific study in the nineteenth century, depended on the observation and comparison of specimens from nature, a practice which required the accumulation of large collections of prepared plants, animals, rocks and minerals,and representations in two or three dimensions of geological formations and phenomena. Sailors had a long tradition of collecting souvenirs of their voyages, and a number of "cabinets of curiosities" with roots in the maritime trades had already become the nuclei of scientific collections. In the "Cabinet," ethnological artifacts were exhibited side-by-side with rock and shell collections, mounted birds, butterflies, and small animals, and even items produced on shipboard by whalemen."Natural Curiosities," were distinguished from "Artificial Curiosities," the latter being those things that were made by humans.

Because whalemen traveled to distant and exotic locations in the course of a voyage, it was logical that interested individuals and institutions turned to them to help develop their collections. The American Museum of Natural History in New York City, for instance, actually published a broadside guide to making collections especially aimed at mariners. Captain Phillip Howland collected for the Boston Museum of Natural History, and Captain George Comer had a relationship with the Smithsonian and with the Anthropologist Franz Boas at Columbia University.

Information on distant locations was also brought back to a curious government, poised to make diplomatic connections to nations in the newly expanding world, and curious about the potential of expanding national borders across the continent. The American annexation of Hawaii, Alaska, and the Pacific coast states can be traced in large part to the whalemen and traders who were an active American presence in those places and in the adjacent waters long before an overland route to the west was feasible.

6 Whale hunting led to a decline in whale populations worldwide and some species were endangered as a result of the hunt.

At the height of New Bedford's participation in the industry, yankee whalemen hunted four primary species: right whales and sperm whales in all the oceans, grey whales on the west coast of America, and bowheads in the Arctic. Little was known about the size of whale stocks or the migratory patterns of the different species of whales that was not learned directly through the process of hunting them.

Hand-held tools, sail and oar power, and the small-boat approach to the prey insured that many whales got away, but Yankee whalemen killed every whale they could, even if it meant killing a calf to take its mother. A four-year voyage could be counted a success that had taken and processed only fifty-some whales. Nonetheless, the large number of vessels active at mid-century, and the concentration of effort on specific species located in well-identified

locations known as whaling "grounds," meant that those grounds would inevitably see a dramatic decrease in population.

In 1851 the hydrographer Matthew Fontaine Maury published a chart of whale populations derived from the logbooks of American whaling voyages, and by that time the North Atlantic Ocean was already stripped of sperm and right whales. The location of the breeding and calving grounds of grey whales in the shallow bays of Baja California in 1846 led to a hunt that very nearly decimated the species in just a few decades. By 1900 bowhead whales were almost extinct in the Arctic.

To make a profit in the twentieth century, new technologies were required that would allow whale hunters to chase the faster, more sinkable species. Such a hunt, pioneered by the Norwegians, became popular in Antarctic waters beginning around 1920. New Bedforders were still involved in the hunt then, to a limited extent, and using the old technology, now an anachronism. The crewman of New Bedford's final whaling vessels, many from the Azores and Cape Verde, found themselves facing competition from steam-powered vessels with harpoon cannons at the bow. These "catcher boats" were as large as or larger than the New Bedford ships and schooners. They worked in company with factory ships large enough to drag a blue whale up onto the deck for processing. By 1930 right whales were facing extinction and their hunt was banned worldwide.

The new technology wreaked havoc on the species that New Bedforders had never successfully hunted commercially. By 1982 in the Southern Hemisphere, humpback whales were reduced to 2% of their original population; blue whales to 5%; and finbacks to 21%. In 1972 the United States congress passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act which banned the hunting of marine mammals or the trade in products made from them. The native people of Alaska, who had hunted bowhead whales for generations before New Englanders arrived, were granted an exception to the law.

7 Whaling had an impact on the American imagination and influenced American literature, painting, fashion, and folk art.

It is accepted among literary scholars today that Herman Melville's great whaling novel, Moby-Dick, is one of the most important and influential works of literature ever written by an American. Even after almost one hundred and fifty years, scholars and readers debate the "whiteness of the whale," and the monomania of Captain Ahab as defining characteristics of American Literature.

While it is easy to point to Moby-Dick as an influential literary by-product of the American whalefishery, it is by no means the only one. The poet Ralph Waldo Emerson was, for a time, a preacher in New Bedford and wrote of the whaling industry. Less well known,though sometimes as literate, are the private shipboard journals kept by many thousand young New Bedforders, some of which have been published. Several painters made their careers depicting the industry and all its hazards, most notably William Bradford, Robert Swain Gifford, Charles Raleigh, and Benjamin Russell.

The lives of whalemen were filled with creative outlets on shipboard. Not all of the time on a whaling voyage was spent killing and processing whales.

In fact, most of the time was spent looking for whales, and it was possible to go for weeks or months without successfully catching one. After taking care of the required maintenance on their vessel, most whalemen had a number of leisure hours left in each day. Over the course of a voyage they developed activities to help them pass these often tedious and lonely hours between whales.

Many whalemen kept a journal of their voyage in which they documented their life at sea. They sang songs and presented theatricals which are often described in shipboard journals. Sailors also practised a surprising number of handicrafts given the very limited range of materials that were available on shipboard. With the bones and teeth of whales, spare pieces of rope, and objects found on their occasional visits ashore (including coconut shells), seamen fashioned working tools, souvenirs of the voyage, and gifts for loved ones back home. The unique circumstances of a whaling voyage led to the development of unique artforms, the most important of which was scrimshaw, the decorative etching of pictures on whale bone and sperm whale teeth. Whalemen could see a heroism in their battle with the largest creature on the planet. Their own descriptions of their lives and the artifacts they left behind document both their discomforts and their attempts to overcome them and make a home and a community for themselves at sea.

In direct contrast to the grease and grime of the whaling voyage, is the other industry which depended on the business in the nineteenth century. Some of the most fashionable of women's dresses, with their tight waists and hooped skirts, would never have been possible had not baleen been available for the strong but flexible stays that held women in and skirts out.

8 New Bedford today reflects its heritage as the nineteenth-century whaling capital of the world.

The preeminence of the whaling industry in the nineteenth century is still visible in the landscape of the town today, and in the diversity of its population. "Nowhere in America," said Melville, "will you find more patrician-like houses, parks and gardens more opulent, than in New Bedford."

> Whence came they? ... all these brave houses and flowery gardens came from the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. One and all, they were harpooned and dragged up hither from the bottom of the sea. ... In summer time the town is sweet to see.

The success of the whaling business is reflected in the homes along County Street and the parks designed by Frederick Olmstead. But the business is also reflected in the homes of immigrants and working people who not only populated the ships but worked ashore in the support industries. Whaling was a business that employed large numbers of African-Americans, Azoreans, and Cape Verdeans, and those communities still flourish in New Bedford today.

Fortunately, whaling families were interested in preserving the history of the industry while it was still flourishing. Traces of New Bedford's maritime heritage can be found in the shipboard documents

of local captains and their wives, and the ethnological artifacts brought back by them as souvenirs of their voyages. The whaling museum, founded by whaling merchant Jonathan Bourne, preserves not only documents and artifacts of the voyages, but of the places visited. A National Park Service link between New Bedford and Barrow, Alaska, once again ties these two whaling places together.

Even as attitudes about whales, and the relationship humans have with them, have been profoundly changing in recent years, the landscape and institutions of New Bedford allow us to preserve a historical perspective. In its time, whaling was the heart and soul of the city. Not just for wealthy owners, but for workers at every level of society, every rank on shipboard, and every neighborhood in town. As the whaling industry was replaced in local importance,first by cotton manufacturing, and then by fishing and a growing tourist economy, the knowledge of whaling in the city's past was always preserved.