

Atlantic Culture In The Pacific World: Maritime Whaling Voyages, 1827-1848

by

Hillary MacKinlay

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To my mother, for reading everything first

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Abstract

Between 1827 and 1850, whale ships from Halifax (Nova Scotia) and Saint John (New Brunswick) joined the hunt for whales in the Pacific Ocean. Using the extant records from these ships, this thesis explores the boundaries of the Atlantic and Pacific world paradigms. While cruising the oceans of the world, Maritime whalers continued to be a part of, and to be influenced by, relationships and social structures at home. The terminology and experiences of these men indicate a complex understanding of the world's ocean and their place within it. These records also indicate that both experience and societal preconceptions influenced how Maritime whalers interacted with new peoples and places. This thesis asserts the utility of oceanic frameworks while suggesting that only a global oceanic system can fully elucidate the realities of the nineteenth century world.

List of Abbreviations Used

NBM	New Brunswick Museum Archives and Research Library, History Department Records, Research File F548 and F548(A), re: whaling.
NSA	Nova Scotia Archives
Caleb Miller on the <i>Pacific</i> , 1837-40	Logbook of the <i>Pacific</i> from Saint John, 1837-40. Old Dartmouth Historical Society Collection, 1107A, New Bedford Whaling Museum.
Charles Pease on the <i>Margaret Rait</i> , 1834-46	Logbook of the <i>Margaret Rait</i> from Saint John, 1834-36. Kendall Whaling Museum Collection, 0971, reel BJ010, New Bedford Whaling Museum.
Creighton Correspondence	“Letter to Thomas Colton Creighton from his aunts, Lucy and Charlotte Creighton, Jan. 16, 1843 – March 5, 1845.” Transcribed by Isabelle Creighton. Accession No. 87-71, DAL MS 2 102, Dalhousie University Archives.
James Davis McNab on the <i>Pacific</i> , 1827-30	James David McNab on the <i>Pacific</i> , 1827-1830. MG 7, vol. 118, no. 1, Nova Scotia Archives.
James Doane Coffin on the <i>Margaret Rait</i> , 1836-38	James Doane Coffin on the <i>Margaret Rait</i> , 1836-1844. MG 7, vol. 11, no. 1, Nova Scotia Archives.
James Doane Coffin on the <i>Margaret Rait</i> , 1838-40	James Doane Coffin on the <i>Margaret Rait</i> , 1836-1844. MG 7, vol. 11, no. 2, Nova Scotia Archives
James Doane Coffin on the <i>Athol</i> , 1845-48	James Doane Coffin on the <i>Athol</i> , 1845-1848. MG 7, vol. 11, no. 4, Nova Scotia Archives.
Jethro B. Brooks on the <i>Peruvian</i> , 1841-45	Logbook of the <i>Peruvian</i> from Saint John, 1841-45. Kendall Whaling Museum Collection, 1022-1, New Bedford Whaling Museum.
Thomas Colton Creighton on the <i>Rose</i> , 1843-46	Journal of a Whaling Voyage made by the Barque Rose of Halifax. Thomas Colton Creighton fonds, Nova Scotia Archives.

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CHAPTER 1 Introduction

Well, I have commenced another, long voyage. One that I hope may prove, at least, as satisfactory as my former ones. This is my 5th voyage. I began in 1834, when I was about 20 years of age. I was then fired with love and ambition, a good reputation was my aim. To make my fair one happy, and to know that she thought much of me was my delight.

This is now –45. Eleven years, eventful years have flown. I cannot say but I have attained and enjoyed as much as I could reasonably expect. And I have now embarked on another voyage, which has for its only novelty, my having my wife and child with me, and my having rather a superior ship. We have, I think, good officers, but an inferior crew; however, we must make the best of them.

- James Coffin, ship *Athol*, 22 July 1845

James Doane Coffin opened his journal aboard the newly constructed ship *Athol* with these words in 1845. Coffin was embarking on his fifth—and final—whaling voyage. He had previously enjoyed good fortune and success in the Pacific and Indian Ocean whaling trade, but his final voyage was to end in disaster: the death of his daughter, followed soon after by the loss of his first mate, and the sale of the *Athol* in a foreign port. It was a strange end to Coffin’s decade-long whaling career and foreshadowed the end of the whaling industry in his homeport of Saint John, which ended abruptly soon after.

The Pacific whaling trade from Halifax and Saint John was short lived. The first vessel of the fleet departed Halifax on 4 February 1827, the last returned to Saint John in 1850.¹ A total of twenty-one vessels from these ports are known to have plied the

¹ Rodrigue Levesque, “Canadian Whalers in Micronesia (1840-1850),” *The Journal of Pacific History* 24.2 (1989): 229. The trade carried on by Nantucketers at Dartmouth between 1785 and 1792 was limited to Atlantic waters. See Frederick William Wallace, *In the Wake of the Wind-Ships: notes, records and biographies pertaining to the square-rigged merchant marine of British North America* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1927), 3. American whale ships were just beginning to enter the Pacific Ocean in the 1790s. See Briton Cooper Busch, “*Whaling Will Never Do for Me*”: *The*

whaling grounds of the Indian and Pacific Oceans during this period. Of the dozens of voyages they made, only fourteen journals and logbooks, kept by ten individuals, are known to exist. These documents will be the primary focus of this thesis and they will be examined in the context of both oceanic and maritime history. Chapter One will discuss the nature of these journals and logbooks as well as the men who wrote them. It will also examine the size and scope of the whaling industry in Halifax and Saint John as well as its relationship to the Pacific trade as a whole. The boundaries of the Atlantic and Pacific world paradigms, as they apply to this study, will also be explored.

Chapter Two surveys the conflicted loyalties of men engaged in the Maritime whaling industry.² Did going to sea remove the influences of life on land, such as family

American Whaleman in the Nineteenth Century (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994), 2.

² “Maritime” is used here and after to denote the Maritime region of what would become Canada, specifically Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. These two provinces had similar trajectories in the whaling trade, with brief periods of Atlantic whaling in the years following the American Revolution and prolonged, parallel episodes of activity in the Pacific Ocean, which are the focus of this thesis. From 1964-72, Nova Scotia was also the base of operations for a Norwegian whaling company, known locally as the Blandford Whaling Station, which began as a shore station but expanded its range over time as the stock of whales readily available near shore became depleted. The station closed abruptly in 1972 when the Canadian government imposed a ban on all Canadian-based whaling activities. See John T. Jenkins, *Twentieth-Century Whaling in Nova Scotia: the Blandford Whaling Station, 1964-1972* (Halifax: Oceans Institute of Canada, 1990).

In Newfoundland the whaling narrative followed a different arc. Foreign whalemen plied the waters around Newfoundland beginning with the Basques in the sixteenth century. The next great era of whaling in that province, based out of shore stations and making use of new technologies—particularly steam engines and mechanization—that opened new whale populations to exploitation, lasted roughly from 1896 until the First World War, and was revived again in the 1920s and 1940s. The earliest of these incarnations, the Cabot Steam Whaling Co., had ties to the Pacific Whaling Company operating in British Columbia. For additional information about whaling in Newfoundland, see Julian de Zulueta, “The Basque Whalers: The Source of their Success,” *The Mariner’s Mirror* 86.3 (2000): 261-271; C.W. Sanger and A.B. Dickinson, “Newfoundland Involvement in Twentieth-century Shore-station Whaling in British Columbia,” *Newfoundland Studies* 7.2 (1991): 97-122; C.W. Sanger and A.B.

and religion? How did the hierarchy of shipboard society affect social relations and reactions to events while at sea? What commonalities existed among these men despite their fraught relationship at sea? The surviving journals indicate that life at sea and life on land were inextricably intertwined for most men. James Coffin, for instance, worked toward professional success not only to obtain a higher rank but also in order to marry his sweetheart, Mary. His whaling career dictated the timeline of their relationship, but thoughts about Mary preoccupied him while he was at sea. In contrast, the experiences of Thomas Creighton and James McNab, respectively, demonstrate that despite connections made at home, events at sea dictated a man's loyalties. Finally, while all of the men engaged in the Maritime whaling trade were influenced by personal factors, they all shared common origins and cultural assumptions, an idea that is explored through the lens of religion and the experiences of Jethro Brooks.

Chapter Three explores the limits of oceanic paradigms. While the Atlantic and Pacific world ideas are useful tools for examining themes such as connections between whalers and the homes they left behind, they fall short of explaining how whalers understood their environment. Chapter Three will ask how Maritime whalers perceived the oceans they toiled in. What boundaries did they recognize between oceans? How did their experience of seafaring change—or not—as they passed from the Atlantic to the Indian and Pacific Oceans? It is clear, through examining the terminology used in this set of journals and logbooks, that the divisions imposed on the ocean by

Dickinson, "Renewal of Newfoundland and Labrador Shore-Station Whaling, 1918-1936," *International Journal of Maritime History* 7 (1995): 83-103; and A.B. Dickinson and C.W. Sanger, "Newfoundland and Labrador Shore-Station Whaling: The Third Major Phase, 1937-1951," *International Journal of Maritime History* 11 (1999): 101-116.

oceanic historians differ from those used by nineteenth-century mariners to describe their geographic experience. While these men did recognize differences between ocean regions, these distinctions had little effect on the lives of mariners. The activity of seafaring—explored here through the lens of danger, perceived and real—remained constant for Maritime whalers everywhere they travelled.

Chapter Four continues this theme of perception by asking how Maritime whalers viewed the environment and peoples of the Pacific Ocean. How did they react to foreign places and peoples? Was there a structure that governed their interactions with indigenous peoples? How did they interact with the physical environment of Pacific islands? The accounts of Maritime whalers reveal a diversity of experience and perspective. There is evidence of prevalent EuroAmerican beliefs about the Pacific Ocean in their writing, but these ideas did not dictate individual reactions. Individual men reacted differently to the people and places they encountered. Nonetheless, whalers viewed the Pacific as a resource to be exploited. All of the journal keepers surveyed in this study exhibited this attitude, which was an inherent feature of the whaling industry. This outlook was never made explicit, but it is unsurprising that men who made their living hunting whales would extend their view of whales—as a resource free for the taking—to the world in general.

Maritime Whaling

James Coffin's journals survive from all but his first voyage, offering a prolonged glimpse into the Pacific whaling industry in Maritime ports. This far-flung trade, which sprang up in Halifax and Saint John in the 1820s, was the second of three forays into

whaling in the region. The first of the Maritime whalers settled in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia following the American Revolution. In 1784, Nova Scotia's Governor Parr induced a group of Nantucket Quakers to resettle in the province to rebuild, much of the Nantucket fleet having been destroyed during the war.³ The Dartmouth fleet launched its first voyage in 1787 and the enterprise grew quickly, but a decade later British authorities relocated the community to Milford Haven in Wales.⁴

Thirty years later, Samuel Cunard, the prominent Halifax businessman, revived the industry, encouraged by the economic success of Nantucket and New Bedford, and outfitted the ship *Pacific* for a whaling voyage to the Pacific Ocean. Charles Stewart was the promoter of the new industry in Saint John, New Brunswick. Around the same time that Cunard sent the ship *Pacific* to the ocean of the same name, Stewart funded the voyage of the *James Stewart* to the Indian Ocean.

³ The primary inducement was a hefty tax on whale oil imported to Britain from the new American republic and government subsidies for British operations. See Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts: 1783-1860* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1961).

⁴ Quaker House, Dartmouth Heritage Museum, "The Quaker House Story," www.dartmouthheritagemuseum.ns.ca/quaker-house/ (accessed 20 June 2016). Wallace, *In the Wake of the Wind-Ships*, 3.

Table 1.1 Halifax Whaling Fleet

Vessel	Owner	Voyages (Ocean) ⁵
<i>Pacific</i>	Samuel Cunard	1827-30 (Pacific) 1833-1834+ (Pacific)
<i>Rose</i>	“	1829-31 (Pacific) 1831-33 (Pacific) 1833-1835+ (Pacific) 1839-40 (Indian) 1843-46 (Pacific)
<i>Susan & Sarah</i>	“	1828-1829 (Atlantic) 1829-1832 (--) 1834+ (--) 1836+ (--)
<i>Samuel Cunard</i>	“	1837+ (Pacific)
<i>Beaver</i>	Messrs. Lawton	1835+ (--)
<i>Susan & Mary</i> ⁶	--	1832-34+ (--)
<i>Trusty</i>	--	1829+ (Pacific)

⁵ No clear record of departures and arrivals exists for most of these voyages. Dates listed here taken from reports printed in Halifax and Saint John newspapers and various published sources. See NBM and the *Acadian Recorder*, 1 May 1926; Thane Ehler, *The Captain's Style of Command: Life and Labour Aboard Nova Scotia Whaling Vessels, 1827-1846* (MA Thesis: Dalhousie University, 2008); Levesque, “Canadian Whalers in Micronesia.”

⁶ This may have been a misprint in the Saint John newspapers and may have referred to the *Susan & Sarah*, but it was also not uncommon for whale ships to have similar names.

Table 1.2 Saint John Whaling Fleet

Vessel	Owners	Voyages (Ocean)
<i>James Stewart</i> ⁷	Charles Stewart, Esq.	1834-35 (Indian) 1835+ (Pacific) 1839-1843 (Pacific) 1844-45 (Pacific) 1845-48+ (Pacific)
<i>Margaret</i>	“	1832-33 (Atlantic) 1833-1835 (Atlantic) 1835-38 (Indian) 1832-33 (Indian)
<i>Margaret Rait</i>	“	1832+ (Atlantic) 1834-36 (Indian) 1836-38 (Pacific) 1838-40 (Pacific) 1840-44 (Pacific)
<i>Mary (ship)</i>	“	1833-35 (Atlantic) 1835-36 (Indian)
<i>Canmore</i>	“	1845-48 (Pacific)
<i>Athol</i>	“	1845-48 (Pacific)
<i>Peruvian (b. 1837)</i>	Saint John Mechanics’ Whale Fishing Company	1837+ (Pacific) 1841-45 (Pacific) 1845-48 (Pacific)
<i>Pacific</i>	“	1837-40 (Pacific) 1841-46 (Pacific)
<i>Mechanic</i>	“	1836-38 (Pacific) 1839-1841 (Pacific) 1842-46 (Pacific)
<i>Java</i>	“	1839-43 (Pacific) 1843-47 (Pacific)
<i>Royal William</i>	“	1835+ (--) 1839-40+ (Pacific)
<i>Peruvian (b.1834)</i>	James Kirk and W&T Leavitt	1834-35 (Pacific) 1835- (Pacific)
<i>Mozambique</i>	James Kirk and W&T Leavitt (or James Millidge)	1834-35+ (Indian) 1833-34 (--)
<i>Thomas Millidge</i>	Messrs. George D Robinson & Co. and N.S. DeMill (or James Millidge)	1834-36 (Indian)
<i>Mary (barque)</i>	C. Curry, Esq.	1832-33 (--)

⁷ When she arrived in port in 1845 she was hailed as “one of the fortunate ones”, having made five whaling voyages in twelve years. NBM, *The Loyalist*, Fredericton, 15 May 1845.

The twenty-one vessels listed above represented a new economic hope in Halifax and Saint John. In 1833, on the occasion of the launch of the newly constructed whale ship *Mozambique*, the *New Brunswick Courier* described whaling as a “lucrative trade.”⁸ They subsequently referred to it in the years that followed as “productive and encouraging”, “highly conducive to the advancement of Nova Scotia”, and a “valuable branch of Trade.”⁹ When the barque *Beaver* departed Halifax for the “South Seas” in 1835, the *New Brunswick Courier* praised the endeavour, as the “first occasion where native enterprise has wholly depended on native resources, in this branch of speculation” her crew being all “native Novascotians (sic).”¹⁰ They went on to wish the *Beaver*’s enterprising owners good fortune in their efforts:

We hope the good ship *Beaver* will meet with the success her spirited owners deserve, and that sufficient inducement may thereby be afforded for the further continuance of the fishery. As regards facilities, Halifax is as desirable a port of outfit for such a voyage as can be wished, and it is only a matter of astonishment that the prosecution of the trade, which has enriched many ports of the neighbouring Republic and of the mother country, has not been more extensively engaged in.¹¹

In the early years of the industry in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, ship owners relied on the expertise of British and American masters—and sometimes officers and boatsteerers—to carry out their trade. As the industry developed, natives of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick gained the knowledge and skills to execute the whaling trade

⁸ NBM, *New Brunswick Courier*, 31 August 1833.

⁹ *Ibid.*, *New Brunswick Courier*, 11 April 1835; *New Brunswick Courier*, 17 June 1829, taken from the Halifax “Free Press”, 10 June 1829; 25 November 1829, *Saint John Gazette*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, *New Brunswick Courier*, 20 June 1835, taken from the Halifax *Times* of Tuesday last.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

without external guidance.¹² Nova Scotians and New Brunswickers saw the profits produced by the New England whaling industry and were eager to create their own self-sustaining industry.

Accounts of the lucrative cargoes returned to American ports by whale ships occasionally appeared in the Saint John newspapers as well. In 1833, the *Courier* assessed the production of the American whaling industry at “not far from \$4,000,000” returned “every 40 months” by a fleet of 800 vessels and 10,000 men.¹³ In 1842, the *Herald* (Saint John) reported,

A Great Cargo. A whaler arrived a few days since at New Bedford with forty seven hundred barrels of Oil...She had been absent twenty six months. This is, perhaps, the most valuable cargo ever drawn from the ‘vasty deep’, and has been productive of more clear profit than all the timber shipped from this port this season...The Whale Fishing is with us as yet in its infancy, but promises to be eventually more lucrative than any other trade in which we could embark.¹⁴

Despite frequent testimonials to the profits produced by the whaling industry, Halifax and Saint John never achieved the same success as their American counterparts. It is unclear what precipitated the end of the industry in these ports, but by 1850 Halifax and Saint John ceased to operate as whaling ports.¹⁵

¹² Despite the increased expertise among Nova Scotians and New Brunswickers there were likely still Americans among the officers and crew of ships sailing from these ports.

¹³ NBM, *New Brunswick Courier*, 19 October 1833. Briton Cooper Busch claims there was an average of 600 vessels participating in the American trade each year in the decades before the American Civil War, the industry having rebounded after the losses of the American Revolution and the War of 1812. The industry peaked in 1846, with 736 vessels in service. Nantucket, and later New Bedford, dominated the industry, but many ports participated in a smaller capacity, sending out only one or two vessels. See Busch, “*Whaling Will Never Do for Me*”, 2-4.

¹⁴ NBM, *Saint John Herald*, 3 October 1846.

¹⁵ In 1854, conditions for trade among Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the New England states improved drastically and into the 1860s exchange between New England and British North America became more profitable on both sides of the border. This may have facilitated the end of Pacific whaling from Halifax and Saint John as profit margins increased closer to home. See Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of*

Sources

Among the extant sources of the Maritime whaling trade, there are two main types of records: logbooks and journals. Logbooks were an official record of the voyage for the ship's owners and were typically kept by the first mate. Journals were personal accounts kept on the whim of the author, who may also have been simultaneously maintaining the ship's logbook. The former tend to remark on the wind, weather, course, and tack of the ship as well as whales fought and caught while offering little detail about other aspects of the voyage—such as social dynamics aboard ship—until these incidents infringed on the operation of the vessel. Floggings and confinement of a crew member, for example, are often recorded though the events leading to them frequently are not. Journals, on the other hand, while often recording many of the same bits of practical information, also include more effusive passages about the voyage, opinions about events, and sometimes material unrelated to the voyage itself. There is also a third category of records, which do not fall neatly into the patterns described here. These consist of journals kept like logbooks and logbooks kept like journals: they go into a small amount of detail on a semi-regular basis and on rare occasion go into immense detail about a particular incident.

Massachusetts: 1783-1860 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1961). The whaling industry as a whole was in decline by mid-century, an over abundance of oil decreased market value, the Civil War led to the destruction of dozens of American whaling vessels, the increased length of voyages, paired with rising costs to outfit a vessel, infused more risk into the industry. By 1880 the price of kerosene had dropped significantly and even the drastically reduced cost whale oil (less than half what it had been twenty years earlier) could not compete with the new, cleaner, fuel source. See Busch, “*Whaling Will Never Do For Me*”, 4-5.

There are thirteen documents that fall into one of these three categories that survive from the Halifax and Saint John whaling trade to the Pacific and Indian Oceans.¹⁶ These records span three decades—1827 to 1848—and include a record of eight ships, nine authors, and twelve voyages. This is only a fraction—of an unknown whole—of the ships, men, and voyages made to distant oceans from Maritime ports in search of whales.

The men who left these records were a heterogeneous group. They included native Maritimers: Thomas Creighton, James Doane Coffin, and James McNab; New Englanders: Caleb Miller, Jethro B. Brooks, and possibly Charles H. Pease; they were ship's captains, first officers, and sailors before the mast; they were single young men, husbands, and fathers. Though the voyages described here may have been the first for some of them, all of them—with the exception of James McNab—made their lives at sea.

¹⁶ Two additional journals exist, that of John Hulbert aboard the *Rose*, from Halifax, 1839-40 and that of Benjamin Doane aboard the *Athol* from Saint John, 1845-48. Hulbert's journal, described in detail by Thane Ehler in his 2008 MA dissertation, is part of Ehler's personal collection and was not available for analysis here. It should also be noted that these fifteen total documents are only those that have surfaced to date. For instance, when Ehler wrote his dissertation in 2008 only three journals were available (those of McNab, Creighton, and Hulbert). Since that time, more documents have been cross-referenced and catalogued in such a way as to make them retrievable to researchers. Notably, at the Nova Scotia Archives, the original journals of Thomas Creighton were discovered and catalogued (in 2008 Ehler worked from a transcription held at the Dalhousie University Archives) and the journals of James Doane Coffin—*twelve years worth*—have since been cross-referenced with that holding, despite having been donated to the archives in 1961, they were only recently retrievable. See Ehler, *The Captain's Style of Command*.

Benjamin Doane's journal, kept aboard the *Athol*, 1845-48, long thought to be lost by both his family and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, which published his memoirs in 1987, was donated to the New Bedford Whaling Museum in 2013. The journal's donor purchased it at a yard sale in New York in the 1960s. Unfortunately, the New Bedford Whaling Museum Research Library has been in the process of relocating, with its holdings unavailable for loan, since I discovered that it was in their possession.

Table 1.3: Logbooks

Keeper	Rank	Vessel	Home Port	Voyage
Charles H. Pease	mate	<i>Margaret Rait</i>	Saint John, NB	1834-36 to the East Cape (Cape of Good Hope)
Unknown	mate	<i>Margaret</i>	“	1835-38 to the Mozambique Channel (via the Cape of Good Hope)
Unknown	mate	<i>James Stewart</i>	“	1834-35 to the Mozambique Channel (via the Cape of Good Hope)

Table 1.4: Journals

Keeper	Rank	Vessel	Home Port	Voyage
Joseph Cook	--	<i>Margaret</i>	Saint John, NB	1832-33 to the Cape of Good Hope
James Doane Coffin	second mate	<i>Margaret Rait</i>	“	1836-38 to the East Cape (Cape of Good Hope)
James Doane Coffin	master	“	“	1838-40 to the South Seas (via the Cape of Good Hope)
“	“	“	“	1840-44 to the Pacific Ocean (via Cape Horn)
Thomas Colton Creighton	before the mast	<i>Rose</i>	Halifax, NS	1843-46 to the Pacific (circumnavigation)
James Doane Coffin	master	<i>Athol</i>	Saint John, NB	1845-48 to the Pacific Oceans (via Cape Horn)

Table 1.5: Hybrid Journals

Keeper	Rank	Vessel	Home Port	Voyage
James McNab	before the mast	<i>Pacific</i>	Halifax, NS	1827-30 to the coast of Japan (via Cape Horn)
Charles H. Pease	master	<i>Margaret Rait</i>	“	1836-38 to the East Cape (Cape of Good Hope)
Jethro B. Brooks	master	<i>Peruvian</i>	“	1841-45 to the Pacific (via Cape Horn)
Caleb Miller	master	<i>Pacific</i>	“	1837-40 to the Pacific Oceans (via Cape Horn)

The sources available, while textually rich and forming a coherent whole among themselves, do not lend themselves to large-scale analysis. Too many data pertaining to the Maritime whaling industry have been lost and the extant material is too sparse to allow for systematic, statistical analysis.¹⁷ As a result, this project will adopt the methodology of prosopography, or the study of “individuals in aggregate.”¹⁸ When English historian Lawrence Stone reviewed the literature of prosopography several decades ago, he concluded that “prosopography does not have all the answers, but it is ideally fitted to reveal the web of sociopsychological ties that bind a group together.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Studies of this kind have been performed using the archives of American whaling, notably by Margaret S. Creighton, which offers a much larger source base. See Margaret Creighton, *Rites & Passages: The Experience of American Whaling, 1830-1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁸ K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, “Biography, Identity and Names: Understanding the Pursuit of the Individual in Prosopography,” in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook* (Ghent: Linacre College (Unit for Prosopographical Research), 2007), 141.

¹⁹ Lawrence Stone, “Prosopography,” *Daedalus* 100.1 (1971): 66.

Prosopography will be used here to expose the connections among Maritime whalers, between whalers and mariners at large, and between whalers and their communities on land.

The most prolific journal keepers—James Doane Coffin, James McNab, Thomas Creighton, and Jethro Brooks—will be explored in the greatest detail. The extant sources are skewed towards career mariners and officers; nonetheless, the activities of these men while at sea were not extraordinary.²⁰ The perspectives of individual men were unique; their experiences at sea were not. Each journal keeper chose to emphasize different aspects of his time at sea, but the range of events that took place on whaling voyages to the Pacific and Indian Oceans did not differ significantly between voyages. The accounts of these four men are typical of their compatriots and will be used to exemplify the Maritime whaling experience.

Oceanic ‘Worlds’

The current trend in oceanic paradigms is generally traced back to Fernand Braudel, who was the first to use the ocean as a major tool of historical analysis in his 1972 work *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Despite its Mediterranean beginnings, oceanic history has been dominated by the Atlantic. Numerous programs (the Harvard International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World), monographs (*Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*, Bernard Bailyn), edited collections (*Atlantic History: A Critical Reappraisal*, Greene and Morgan; *The*

²⁰ The range of events recorded by the primary subjects of this study—James Doane Coffin, James McNab, Thomas Creighton, and Jethro Brooks—are within the boundaries of the experiences recorded by their peers in the Maritime whaling trade as well as the more substantially documented American industry.

British Atlantic World, 1500-1800, Armitage and Braddick), and careers (Jack P. Greene, Bernard Bailyn) have been built on the back of the Atlantic world schema.

The Atlantic world paradigm enables historians to look at events in their trans-national context, but there are limits to its usefulness. In oceanic history, the historical gaze has begun to shift to include the Pacific as well as the Atlantic, and from individual oceans to the world as a whole.²¹ While David Armitage once asserted “we are all Atlanticists now” he has newly proclaimed, “we are all international now.”²² During an interview in 2012, he predicted that “one of the futures of Atlantic history is precisely joining it to other oceanic and trans-regional histories” and that he was “convinced the next frontier for oceanic history is Pacific History.”²³ The study of specific places within the Pacific is not new, but the Pacific as a geographic body, as well as an academic framework, is still taking shape.²⁴ This scholarship suggests that a full understanding of

²¹ See, *inter alia*, David Armitage, “The International Turn in Intellectual History,” in *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, ed. Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Jerry Bentley, “Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis,” in “Oceans Connect,” ed. Karen Wigen and Jessica Harland-Jacobs, Special Issue, *Geographical Review* 89.2 (1999); Allison Games, “AHR Forum: Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities,” *American Historical Review* 3.3 (2006); Peter A. Coclanis, “*Drang Nach Osten*: Bernard Bailyn, the World-Island, and the Idea of Atlantic History,” *Journal of World History* 13.1 (2002); *AHR* Forum: Oceans of History (2006); *WMQ* Forum: Beyond the Atlantic (2006); and *The Geographic Review*, Special Issue: Oceans Connect (1999).

²² David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History” in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 11; David Armitage, “The “International Turn”: A Reply to My Critics” in Academia.edu, http://www.academia.edu/3115611/The_International_Turn_A_Reply_to_My_Critics1 (accessed 5 April 2014), 2.

²³ Martine van Ittersum and Jaap Jacobs, “Are We All Global Historians Now? An Interview with David Armitage,” *Itinerario* 36.2 (2012): 25.

²⁴ Matt K. Matsuda, “AHR Forum: The Pacific,” *The American Historical Review* 3.3 (2006): 758-9.

the Atlantic—and those who populated its perimeter—can only be achieved through a broadening of the Atlantic world model.

The first links between Atlantic and Pacific world studies were made more than a decade ago, in forums focused on oceanic history as a whole rather than that of a particular ocean. In 1999, the *Geographical Review*'s special issue "Oceans Connect" explored oceanic history as a tool for global historians.²⁵ In 2005, the *American Historical Review Forum* "Oceans of History" reflected individually on the history and current state of Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Pacific history.²⁶ The *William and Mary Quarterly*'s 2006 Forum, "Beyond the Atlantic", as its name suggests, advocated for a shift away from the partitioned view of world history and a move towards global history.²⁷ David Armitage, editor of the influential *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* collection (2001), has been at the forefront of the new Pacific world paradigm. His latest collaborative volume is entitled *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People* (2014) and draws together various perspectives on Pacific history.

Pacific World historiography has developed rapidly in the last five years. There have always been histories of the Pacific, such as Spate's early contribution, *The Pacific Since Magellan* (three volumes, 1979-88), but interest in a Pacific unified across national boundaries and academic disciplines is a new concept. Spate is generally acknowledged in the historiography of the Pacific world to be the first to study the topic as such, and it

²⁵ Wigen, Karen and Jessica Harland-Jacobs, ed. "Oceans Connect." Special issue, *The Geographical Review* 89.2 (1999).

²⁶ Wigen, Karen, Peregrine Horden, Nicholas Purcell, Alison Games, Matt K. Matsuda. "AHR Forum: Oceans of History." *American Historical Review* 3.3 (2006): 717-780.

²⁷ Games, Allison, Philip J. Stern, Paul W. Mapp, and Peter A. Coclanis. "Forum: Beyond the Atlantic." *William and Mary Quarterly* 63.4 (2006): 675-742.

seems impossible to address the subject without mentioning his work.²⁸ In his Preface, and throughout much of his first chapter, Spate asserts that “there was not, and could not be, any concept ‘Pacific’ until the limits and lineaments of the Ocean were set: and this was undeniably the work of Europeans...that until our own day the Pacific was basically a Euro-American creation, though built on an indigenous substructure.”²⁹ Spate acknowledges that his approach may be deemed “Eurocentric”, but seems unbothered by the implications of such an approach.³⁰

As Arif Dirlik’s critique of the ‘Pacific Rim’ idea, in his edited collection *What is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea* (1998), suggests, interest in the ‘Pacific World’ may have more to do with current political trends than it does with the region’s history. Dirlik’s contribution is a push back against the Eurocentrism of Spate’s assessment and at the heart of the idea of a Pacific region. He asserts that the problem with definitions of the Pacific region is that they have “a geographical bias” and assume that regions exist first as physical spaces, which define ideas, rather than as ideas that come to delineate regions.³¹ He writes, “the Pacific region *is* an idea, if not *just* an idea,” meaning that it is an idea, but one created by activity rather than a physical

²⁸ Donald B. Freeman, *The Pacific* (New York: Routledge, 2010): 4-5; David Armitage and Alison Bashford, “Introduction: The Pacific and its Histories,” in *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People*, ed. David Armitage and Alison Bashford (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 12; Salesa, “The Pacific in Indigenous Time,” 44; Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds*, 2-3; David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 9; Arif Dirlik, “The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure,” in *What is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea, Second Edition*, ed. Arif Dirlik (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 23-24.

²⁹ O.H.K. Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), ix & Chapter 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, ix.

³¹ Dirlik, “The Asia-Pacific Idea,” 17.

reality.³² The development of that idea, at once both EuroAmerican and Asian, has led to an “ideological hegemony” in the Pacific that holds the inhabitants of the rim above those of the basin.³³ Dirlik claims that “what the Pacific is” is closely related to “*whose Pacific*” it is.³⁴ He writes that “the idea of Pacific unity implicit in the Pacific community idea appears to the less powerful within the region as a barely disguised effort on the part of the powerful to control it.”³⁵ The concept of a Pacific region, or rim, is politically expedient for nations—America, Australia, China, Japan—that dominate the region economically. Dirlik concludes that two conflicting ideas are born out of Pacific Rim rhetoric: “the Pacific as a frontier of capitalist development, and the Pacific as an escape from the ravages of capitalism.”³⁶ He laments that both prevailing ideas omit the people who actually live in the Pacific.³⁷

In *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (2012) Matt K.

Matsuda demonstrates that the history of indigenous peoples can be recovered and integrated with traditional Pacific histories. Rather than construct a linear narrative of the

³² *Ibid.*, 21. Emphasis in original.

³³ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁶ Arif Dirlik, “There is More in the Rim Than Meets the Eye: Thoughts on the “Pacific Idea”,” in *What is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea, Second Edition*, ed. Arif Dirlik (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 352.

³⁷ *Ibid.* Elsewhere, Dirlik has gone so far as to suggest that Eurocentrism is so firmly imbedded in academic history that only a radical restructuring of the discipline would make its practice worthwhile. This assertion has been criticized for its failure to offer viable solutions to the present state of affairs. But Dirlik’s assertion, that ‘First World’ academics understand issues and set priorities differently than indigenous groups, is a more reasonable claim. It is also an issue relevant to many recent works of Pacific World history. See Dirlik, “Performing the World.” Particularly page 410. See Jerry Bentley, “Myths, Wagers, and Some Moral Implications of World History.” *Journal of World History* 16.1 (2005): 71-72).

Pacific, Matsuda includes a series of histories that traverse the region and show that Pacific peoples were historically present in many of the Pacific narratives, even if Eurocentric authors, at the time and since, have obscured their participation. The stories Matsuda recounts are familiar ones, but they are told from new perspectives.

Matsuda uses the examples of Lee Boo and Chief Ka'iana. Lee Boo was a Micronesian prince who joined the crew of an East India Company ship after they were shipwrecked near his home. When the traders succeeded in building themselves a schooner and sailing to Canton, Lee Boo went with them. In 1784 he arrived in England, where he died of smallpox.³⁸ Chief Ka'iana was the younger brother of the King of Kauai in the Hawaiian Islands; he travelled to Canton on a fur trading ship before returning home.³⁹ Matsuda emphasizes that the circulation of indigenous islanders was not limited to a small number of elites. He claims that by the nineteenth century, these men were “but single faces in an increasing population of largely anonymous islanders, not guests under patronage of captains, but common labor *kanakas*” who crewed vessels making voyages of all purposes.⁴⁰ Whaling ships were especially well known for sailing with a mix of white and indigenous crews, sometimes with the latter predominating.⁴¹ Matsuda demonstrates that even in the trade between Europe and China, and in European industries such as whaling and the sandalwood trade, Pacific peoples were present and often active participants. A complete history of the Pacific requires that the contributions of indigenous islanders be read alongside the activities of conquerors and colonizers.

³⁸ Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds*, 183-184.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 185.

David Igler's study of the American West in its Pacific context, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (2013), suggests that Pacific World history has the potential to mirror developments in the Atlantic World. He takes as his subject the integration of the Pacific into an interconnected economic and information system that he dates from James Cook's voyages, beginning in 1768, to the California gold rush in 1848.⁴² Igler's overarching argument is that by 1848, from the American perspective, "much of the *eastern* Pacific rapidly became the American *West*."⁴³ Naturally, much of what follows is concerned with the links between the west coast of North America and the Pacific, rather than with the Pacific system as a whole. He begins with an exploration of informal trade networks, particularly in California and Hawai'i, and culminates with the government sponsored United States Exploring Expedition (Ex. Ex.), tasked with surveying coastal waters and conduct scientific studies in the Pacific Ocean from 1838 to 1842. He explores the themes of mistrust, violence, and unintended consequences before concluding that the American turn inward, to the continent and away from the Pacific Ocean, was supported by what he deems "patriotic geology", or geology that made claims for the exceptionality of the American continent.⁴⁴ This approach, which developed after the Ex. Ex., took precedence over geology that looked for connections between America and what lay beyond it, despite the findings of the expedition's geologist, James Dwight Dana, whose writings after the voyage "theorize and provide compelling support for the geological structure and interconnectedness of the

⁴² Igler, *The Great Ocean*, 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 176-178.

ocean basin.”⁴⁵ Despite this conclusion, Iglar effectively integrates the history of the American West into a Pacific world context.

Finally, Armitage and Bashford’s collection, *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People* (2014), brings together a variety of scholars working in Pacific history, creating a dialogue that has been missing from the Pacific World discipline. The intention of the volume is just that: bringing together the often-disparate disciplines of oceanic and Pacific history. As Armitage and Bashford note in their introduction, “the Pacific has been historicized too, although its scholars have generally stood to one side of the new thalassology, and so have sometimes been perceived as absent altogether.”⁴⁶ They posit that the “north/south divide” and maps centred on the Atlantic Ocean, which lead to a fragmented image of the Pacific, have been obstacles to “pan-Pacific histories,” which is what they hope to foster in *Pacific Histories*.⁴⁷

The mission of the collection was not to “conform to any single vision of Pacific history nor have they converged on any agreed conception of their subject and its boundaries,” but to allow each contributor to write their own Pacific history.⁴⁸ There was no mandate to “artificially...integrate, the histories of the insular Pacific and the littoral Pacific.”⁴⁹ This is important to the history of a region that is at once inextricably connected and disparate. Ultimately, the volume was intended to integrate the history of the Pacific into world history as much as it was meant to amalgamate the history of the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁴⁶ Armitage and Bashford, “Introduction,” 6. Armitage and Bashford describe ‘the new thalassology’ as “the turn towards the waters of the world, the dwellers on their shores and islands, and the modes of interaction across maritime spaces.”

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

Pacific Ocean as a field. *Pacific Histories* is not the first book to take advantage of the recent interest in Pacific World histories, as the works explored here demonstrate; Armitage and Bashford are clearly aware of this new scholarship.⁵⁰ The true innovation of *Pacific Histories* is that it has the potential to reach a wider, and more varied, audience than any individual scholar working on the Pacific might hope to.

The Atlantic World concept is a frame of reference, not a historical entity. The Pacific World paradigm, which is now being advocated by scholars such as Armitage, Bashford, Matsuda, Iglar, et al. should be used in the same way. Using these two bodies of scholarship in conjunction with one another is an opportunity to place trans-oceanic whaling voyages from Halifax and Saint John in their wider context.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 21-28. Particularly footnotes 2, 30 & 73.

CHAPTER 2

Origins And Identities: Maritime Whalemens Traversing The Atlantic, Indian, And Pacific Worlds

Whaling voyages bound to the Pacific and Indian Oceans from Halifax and Saint John represent a small number of voyages and vessels over a relatively short period of time, but they were not isolated episodes. They form a part of two much larger narratives: whaling from New England ports and seafaring in general from Halifax and Saint John. The whaling vessels studied here frequently cruised in company with American whale ships during their time at sea and departed from the same wharves as other merchant vessels in Halifax and Saint John. Whaling vessels and their crews frequently made shorter trans-Atlantic crossings between their longer voyages to the Pacific and elsewhere. Jethro Brooks, upon his return to Saint John aboard the *Peruvian* from the Pacific grounds in 1845, ended his log with remarks about preparations for his following voyage aboard the same vessel:

While at St John discharged our crew and paid them off and shipped an other crew which consisted of 17 hands including myself all told...our crew [were] chiefly from our former whaling crew. Took on board a deck load of lumber...And sailed again on the 8th for London in a thick snowstorm.¹

The *James Stewart*, also of Saint John, reportedly made a voyage to London as well as completing five whaling voyages in the course of her twelve-year career.² The men on board these vessels were also frequently attached to multiple industries and ports. James Doane Coffin, for instance, cut his teeth on coastal voyages and runs to Bermuda before joining the whaling crew of the *Margaret Rait* in 1835.³ Thomas Creighton made his

¹ Jethro B. Brooks [hereafter JBB] on the *Peruvian*, 1841-45: 27 April 1845.

² NBM, *The Fredericton Loyalist*, 15 May 1845.

³ Captain James Doane Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-1844: the journal of a Whaling cruise from Barrington, N.S.*, edited by Marion Robertson (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1984), 11.

first voyage aboard the whaling barque *Rose* in 1843, but he spent the remainder of his seafaring career on merchant vessels, where he met his end in 1862.⁴ Jethro Brooks, meanwhile, was a native of Nantucket who must have joined the New England whaling fleet in the years prior to his tenure as master aboard the Saint John ship *Peruvian* from 1841-45 and who eventually returned to those ports.⁵ These three men, examined below, are representative of the individuals who participated in Pacific whaling voyages from Halifax and Saint John. Due to the small scale of the industry in these ports, a community of specialist personnel that existed in the larger New England whaling ports never developed in the Maritimes. As a result, this thesis argues that the distinctions between whalers and other sailors—indeed, between sailors and regular citizens—that existed in larger ports did not materialize in Halifax and Saint John during the period from 1827 to 1848. Despite the large distances and long periods of separation involved in the whaling trade, the influence of home was often close at hand, affecting the attitudes and decisions of sailors as much as events at sea.

The factors governing life at sea in the nineteenth century were diverse. Maritime historians have long debated whether going to sea removed men from the societies they left behind or if their shipboard existence was merely an extension of their time on land. This chapter will apply this question to the journals kept by Maritime whalers. How

⁴ Ship Information Database, ship's official no.: 35984, [http://daryl.chin.gc.ca:8000/SEARCH/BASIS/vessel/public/vessel/...fax%27+ORDER+BY+NA ME/Ascend%26M%3D1%26K%3D4195%26R%3DY%26U%3D1](http://daryl.chin.gc.ca:8000/SEARCH/BASIS/vessel/public/vessel/...fax%27+ORDER+BY+NA%20ME/Ascend%26M%3D1%26K%3D4195%26R%3DY%26U%3D1) (accessed 15 October 2013). According to the Creighton family, the *Beauty* was returning from Puerto Rico, where she had been trading for the firm Creighton & Grassie (owned by two of Thomas's uncles).

⁵ Even in Halifax and Saint John, the "international mixture of crews" was an accepted fact in the nineteenth century. See Judith Fingard, *Jack in Port: sailortowns of eastern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 74.

did life at sea affect life at home and vice versa? How did time spent at sea change individual men? Did men at sea maintain the beliefs instilled in them by society at home? Going to sea separated men from the institutions of society, but it did not necessarily remove their influence. James Coffin's journals, which allow for a longitudinal examination of life at sea, reveal that his time at sea was still affected by concerns at home. In Coffin's case, this primarily manifested itself in the form of longing for his sweetheart, and later wife, Mary Doane. His relationship with Mary and his career at sea advanced simultaneously and the two became intertwined, particularly after 1845, when Mary joined Coffin aboard the whale ship *Athol*.

The ability of the seafaring experience to alter a man's outlook should not be discounted. Thomas Creighton and James McNab, were both young men from prominent families when they went to sea for the first time, but despite their similarities they had disparate experiences aboard ship. Creighton, who sailed as the captain's apprentice, came to identify with his ship's officers, despite pre-existing friendships with foremast hands. James McNab, despite his affluent upbringing, went to sea as a foremast hand and adverse conditions—and disagreements with the ship's officers—solidified his relationship with his fellow sailors.

Finally, Jethro Brooks did not exhibit a significant change during the time frame described in his journal (1841-45), but it is clear that Brooks defined himself in opposition to the foreign cultures he encountered. This is most evident in his religious convictions and those of his fellow whalers. When and how these men chose to express their religious beliefs suggests that encountering new cultures helped reinforce their pre-existing views as well as a collective identity among men of similar origins.

Late into the nineteenth century, seafaring labour in Halifax and Saint John was a seasonal workforce that had strong ties to people and industry on land.⁶ The reservations about the quality of whaling crews, expressed by American sailors, was articulated in regard to all seafarers in Halifax and Saint John, where there was a constant shortage of labour and lack of formal regulation of skill that culminated in crews of questionable ability interspersed with career sailors of considerable expertise.⁷ Despite the solidification of these conditions over the course of the nineteenth century, Judith Fingard, in her study of sailors in the ports of Halifax, Saint John, and Quebec, concludes that prior to 1850 crews were homogenous and often familiar to one another, “sailors remained a jack of all trades,” and lengthy stays in port allowed them to participate in “the economy and the character” of a place.⁸ Eric Sager argues that relationships at sea were not determined by the environment of the ship, as many sailors claimed, but by men.⁹ He discusses seafaring as labour history, and believes that, especially in the nineteenth century, it should be viewed in the context of other labour movements.¹⁰ He claims that the changes to seafaring labour in the nineteenth century “were not analogous to a parallel process occurring on land; these changes *were* industrialization as it occurred at sea.”¹¹ This theme of continuity between life at sea and life on land, at least in the

⁶ Judith Fingard, *Jack in Port: sailortowns of eastern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 13.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 47-8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹ Sager, Eric W. *Seafaring Labour: the Merchant Marine of Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Maritime provinces, was reiterated by the meeting of the Maritime History Group at Memorial University of Newfoundland, entitled “Working Men Who Got Wet”.¹²

Marcus Rediker argues that men who went to sea were qualitatively different than those who remained on land. Sailors used strange words and pronunciations, wore distinctive tarred breeches and checked linen shirts.¹³ Life on board a ship was isolated from life on shore.¹⁴ Rediker argues that seamen lived their lives in almost complete isolation from landed society. As a result, they developed customs and beliefs that were unique to the trade of seafaring and discarded the values and norms of their counterparts on land. This isolation was emphasized by the absolute dominion of the captain. Because seafaring was performed in isolation, the master of a vessel was in absolute command and, Rediker tells us, “he ruled like a despot.”¹⁵ This officer-crew dichotomy resulted in the development of two—contradictory—collective identities.

Daniel Vickers, conversely, has argued against the notion—expressed by men such as Richard Henry Dana Jr. in the nineteenth century and perpetuated by historians such as Marcus Rediker ever since—that “life at sea eventually rendered men incapable of life on shore.”¹⁶ Vickers asserts that while sailors were shaped by their experiences at sea, they were equally influenced by the time they spent on land.¹⁷ At the beginning of

¹² *Working Men Who Got Wet*, ed. Rosemary Ommers and Gerald Panting (St. John’s, NL: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1980).

¹³ Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁵ Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 84.

¹⁶ Daniel Vickers, “An Honest Tar: Ashley Bowen of Marblehead,” *The New England Quarterly* 69.4 (1996): 531.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 532.

the nineteenth century, the average sailor in American ports spent only seven years at sea.¹⁸ According to Vickers, what these men did with their remaining years was equally as important to their identities as their activities aboard ship.¹⁹ He notes that while their voyages may have been far-flung, most sailors maintained connections to their port of origin.²⁰ Vickers tells us that, “one cannot assume...that the experience of voyaging abroad in varied company for the relatively few years they spent at sea culturally detached them from home.”²¹ Vicker’s study is particularly relevant to the subject at hand because he focuses on smaller American ports that bear a strong resemblance to the close-knit communities of Halifax and Saint John.

Vickers has also written about the whaling industry specifically. He discusses how labour relations aboard a vessel differed drastically on the long voyages, often at least three years, required for whaling in the Pacific in contrast to the shorter voyages in the early days of the industry. He estimates that by the mid-nineteenth century the average long-haul whaling voyage lost at least half of its crew to desertion.²² Vickers also suggests that racism was deeply ingrained in the whale trade from its early days in Nantucket. White settlers, reluctant to do the backbreaking work of an oarsman and unwilling to work for the profit of another, often provided the capital for shore stations and hired men from the Wamponoag and Nauset tribes to do the menial labour. Despite their own reluctance to do this work, white Nantucketers did not view their native

¹⁸ Ira Dye in *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 552.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 553.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Daniel Vickers, “Nantucket Whalemens in the Deep-Sea Fishery: The Changing Anatomy of an Early American Labor Force,” *The Journal of American History* 72.2 (1985): 282.

neighbours as reliable employees.²³ This unequal distribution of labour and profits foreshadowed the relationships between white whalers, their black crewmates, and the indigenous peoples they encountered in the Pacific.

Briton Cooper Busch argues that increased economic stress on the whaling industry as the nineteenth century progressed, as kerosene and petroleum became more readily available, widened the gap between the forecabin and after cabin.²⁴ As profit margins decreased, ship owners looked to hire inexperienced hands who could be paid reduced wages.²⁵ Busch views whalers as young men who were mistreated by their employers and officers and who stood in opposition to the established social order on land and aboard ship.²⁶ The revelry of whalers at liberty, for instance, led to conflict with missionaries, who represented the social institution of religion.²⁷ Whalers also clashed with government authorities; incidents such as the Honolulu Riot in 1852 were rare, but the incident that sparked it—the alleged mistreatment of a whaler at the hands of a government official—may not have been.²⁸ Busch, like Rediker, views the ship at sea as a place of confinement for the common sailor.²⁹

Other whaling scholars, such as Margaret S. Creighton, are more inclined to agree with the continuity between life at sea and life on land established by Vickers. Creighton explores whaling through the lens of gender and draws attention to the ritual

²³ Vickers, Daniel. "The First Whalers of Nantucket." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 40.4 (1983): 568.

²⁴ Busch, "Whaling Will Never Do for Me", 4-5, 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 106-107.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 177-178, 180, 185-186.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

remembrance of loved ones at home practiced by whalers—crewmen and officers alike—while at sea.³⁰ For Creighton, there are more subtle factors at play in shipboard dynamics than the rank dichotomy, and she concludes that even after years at sea, sailors “carried with them skills and social practices that were probably translatable to circumstances ashore.”³¹ Even while at sea sailors could not, and often did not want to, escape the lives they left behind. But remembrance served particular purposes: memories of home were never far from a whaler’s mind, ready to be recalled when needed—usually when whales were scarce.

The extant record of the Pacific and Indian Ocean whaling industry from Halifax and Saint John is limited to thirteen documents—an assortment of logbooks and journals—and nine authors. These documents vary widely in detail; some authors recorded little information beyond what their employers at home required them to, others documented their personal escapades alongside these rote entries. While the proclivity of these men to record their experiences in detail sets them apart from their fellows, their experiences at sea, and their relationships with home, were not extraordinary. The men explored in detail below—James Doane Coffin, Thomas Creighton and James McNab, and Jethro B. Brooks—offer insight into the lives of Maritime whalers.

³⁰ Margaret S. Creighton, “Davy Jones’ Locker Room: Gender and the American Whaleman, 1830-1870,” in *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920*, ed. Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 128, 131.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 136.

James Doane Coffin: The Maintenance Of Landed Identity At Sea

James Doane Coffin was born in Barrington, Nova Scotia on 12 March 1814. His people were of the sea. His family came to America in 1642 and he was descended from Tristram Coffin, one of the nine original settlers of Nantucket. A century later, in 1762, his ancestors migrated to Barrington, newly founded by fellow New Englanders.³² Despite his Nantucket heritage, records suggest he was a Methodist.³³ James's seafaring career began as a young boy and he made his first ocean voyage, to Bermuda, at fifteen.³⁴ Six years later, he sailed aboard the barque *Margaret Rait* on her first whaling voyage, to the Indian Ocean. James would spend the next nine years sailing aboard her in various capacities. Marion Robertson, in her 1984 transcription of his diary from 1840-44, claims that Coffin was made master of the *Margaret Rait* in 1836, but his own journal from this voyage indicates that he was more likely to have been the vessel's second officer.³⁵

³² Marion Robertson, "Introduction" in *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-1844: the journal of a Whaling cruise from Barrington, N.S.*, edited by Marion Robertson (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1984), 10-11.

³³ "James Fernandez Coffin," Nova Scotia Vital Statistics, Death Records, Truro (Colchester County), Year: 1917, Book: 31, Page: 323, No. 1071. <https://www.novascotiagenealogy.com/ItemView.aspx?ImageFile=31-323&Event=death&ID=112483> (accessed 7 July 2016).

³⁴ Robertson, "Introduction," 11.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; James Doane Coffin [hereafter JDC] on the *Margaret Rait*, 1836-38: 20 Aug 1836, 25 June 1837, 6 July 1837, 25 Sept 1837. It is unclear where Robertson obtained the information about Coffin's supposed captaincy in 1836, but in his own journal from that voyage he refers to the "Captain" on several occasions as well as to "Mr. Lane the chief officer", indicating that Coffin himself did not fill either of those positions. This is further confirmed by an entry in Coffin's subsequent journals indicating that he met, near Waikawa (New Zealand), "a brig, tender to the [General William], Lane, "the man who was mate of this ship *last voyage*," Master." See JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1838-40: 7 Aug 1838.

Coffin was commander of the *Margaret Rait* when she left Saint John in 1838, again to cruise the Indian Ocean. Upon his return to Saint John in 1840, Coffin married the progeny of another prominent Barrington family, Mary Doane.³⁶ That same year, he commanded the *Margaret Rait* on her first voyage in the Pacific whaling trade, marking their fourth voyage together. While at sea for four long years, Coffin yearned for his new bride, to whom he had been married for only three months before setting sail. When he returned home in 1844, Coffin was greeted not only by his wife but also by a baby daughter, Mary Ester.

Coffin's next voyage was a departure from what came before. His nine years aboard the *Margaret Rait* came to an end; in 1845 he sailed aboard the newly constructed, full-rigged ship *Athol*. He also chose to take his wife and young daughter with him to sea in a custom that gained popularity among whaling captains in the second half of the nineteenth century.³⁷ This new arrangement brought both happiness and sorrow: Mary bore a son on 8 April 1846 near the island of Juan Fernandez; their daughter, Mary Ester, died in Sydney in 1848 after contracting brain fever.³⁸ Coffin sold the *Athol* later that year and returned to Saint John by other means, marking the end of his thirteen-year career in the whaling industry.³⁹ Mary died shortly after their return, in 1853. James founded the shipping firm of *Thomas Coffin and Company* with his brother and retired as a master mariner in 1859, after the death of his second wife, Abigail. His

³⁶ Robertson, "Introduction," 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

son by that marriage, John, was drowned in 1870 after falling from his father's ship in Falmouth Harbour, England.⁴⁰ James Doane Coffin died in 1885.

Throughout his time at sea, Coffin maintained a close emotional bond to those he left behind in Nova Scotia. This relationship rose and fell over the course of his career, particularly in response to his marital status. While some historians have emphasized the creation of a new collective identity among individuals who went to sea, scholars of historical identity more broadly assert that individuals are capable of assuming multiple identities simultaneously.⁴¹ Coffin's continued close association with his place of origin was not mutually exclusive from his developing identity as a mariner and whaler.

Coffin's whaling career stretched from 1835 to 1848. Twelve years of his journals, from 1836 to 1848, remain. The effects of the major events of Coffin's life are easy to read in those journals. The journals he kept as an officer aboard the *Margaret Rait*, 1836-38, and as her master, 1838-40, were meticulous. During the former voyage, he left an entry for all but two days spent aboard—642 entries over the course of 644 days (99.7%). On the latter voyage he was less thorough but still left a remarkably comprehensive record, writing 620 entries during 731 days spent at sea (84.8%). Coffin was very much the aspiring officer, focused on his career and eager to please his employers. The record he kept of the voyage from 1836 to 1838 is particularly devoid of personal details: he wrote about home in only two of his many entries (<1%).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴¹ Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 145, 149; Chris Weedon, *Identity and Culture: Narratives of Difference and Belonging* (New York: Open University Press, 2004), 7; Stephen Reicher, "Crowds, Agency and Passion: Reconsidering the Roots of the Social Bond," in *The Psychology and Politics of the Collective: Groups, Crowds and Mass Identifications*, ed. Ruth Parkin-Gounelas (New York: Routledge, 2012), 82.

Not yet in command of the *Margaret Rait*, Coffin enjoyed more peace of mind on this voyage than he would subsequently. He recorded his unease about the uncertainty of the *Margaret Rait*'s success only twice, at the beginning of the voyage. In November 1836 he wrote, "dark times for getting much oil this season," and agreed on Christmas Day, "saw nothing...dark times."⁴² Once in command of the *Margaret Rait*, and directly responsible for the success of the voyage, Coffin was increasingly anxious about the endeavour. On his first voyage as master, 1838-40, 34 of his 642 entries (5.3%) entertained his dark thoughts about the expedition. His disquiet began early, in the second month of the cruise: "this head wind makes time hang heavy" and, a few days later, "my patience is quite exhausted with tacking and half tacking and gaining nothing."⁴³ Coffin worried about making the whaling grounds for the season, and about reaching their first port of call before supplies ran low.⁴⁴ In a string of short, emotionless entries, ones such as these stand out.

These outbursts were more or less evenly distributed throughout the voyage, indicating that anxiety underpinned his outlook on the venture rather than relating to a particular incident. In this journal, 1838-40, he also related more frequently about home. Forty-one (41) of his 642 entries (6%) referenced home in some fashion, increasing from only two of 620 entries (<1%) on the previous voyage. These reveries were frequently intertwined with his concern for the success of the voyage, as they were in November 1838:

⁴² JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1836-38: 28 November 1836, 25 December 1836; 2 of 620 entries (<1%).

⁴³ JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1838-40: 22 August 1838, 28 August 1838.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*: 31 August 1838, 2 September 1838.

We are now in the place that I expected to have found whales, but there is not the [sign] of one here, so now for the longitude of 90. If that fail, I think I shall need a [straight] jacket...Mr. Kenny and I have had a [tête-a-tête] this afternoon (accounting the pleasures of Home and its society) which we engaged tolerably well [until] the termination when my thoughts, and I dare say his, turned to with a long drawn sigh to the old theme: that of catching no whales.⁴⁵

Despite his concerns, Coffin recorded only a few months later that the *Margaret Rait* had more oil aboard than she had in the same length of time on her three previous voyages and that he could “now think on the endearments of Home with something like a sort of melancholy pleasure.”⁴⁶ He refers to his friends at home on seven occasions, but he used more stirring language in reference to his time at sea: “the sea is smooth the sky clear and the moon larger but the most pleasing sight is the clear red blaze as it streams aloft from our try works. I begin to anticipate the time as not being far distant when I shall start for Home.”⁴⁷ Coffin desired to return home as quickly as possible, but this need was fuelled as much by professional ambitions as it was by a yearning for the place itself.

Coffin returned from this voyage in July 1840 and shipped out again in October of the same year. During the interim, he married Mary Doane, also of Barrington, Nova Scotia. Coffin dedicated his journal over the next four years to Mary, and lamented their separation far more frequently than he did the contents of the *Margaret Rait*'s hold, despite being absent for twice as long as he had on previous voyages. On this voyage, Coffin's second as master, he wrote only 286 entries over the course of 1333 days at sea, a significant decrease from what came before, recording his thoughts only 21.5% of the time. These entries tended to be more effusive than those kept regularly in the years from

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*: 28 November 1838.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: 23 January 1839.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*: 14 January 1840.

1836 to 40. Two weeks after departing Saint John, Coffin wrote to his newly wed and abandoned wife:

My dear Mary: In order to make the writing of this journal pleasant to myself I must dedicate it to you who have so long been the main spring of all my actions and the chief cause of all my happiness and who now are and I hope long will continue my only love, my dear Mary.⁴⁸

Coffin mentions his wife in eight of his entries, but it is clear that the aims of his journal writing had shifted. From 1836 to 1840, he dutifully recorded his activities at sea as they pertained to the success of the voyage. From 1840 to 1844, Coffin's entries focused on his activities in port and his conversations with other captains who also had wives at home. His motivations for record keeping changed from that of producing an objective account of the voyage to creating an epistle for his sweetheart.

Coffin's expressions of anxiety about the success of the voyage decreased during this second voyage as master, though not to the same level of ease exhibited prior to becoming master. Only eight of 286 entries (2.8%) expressed unease and, unlike in 1838-40, it was usually tied to a specific event—losing sight of the boats in rough seas, the outbreak of scurvy on board, or the reduction of duty on foreign whale oil imports in England—rather than a persistent gloom hanging over the voyage.⁴⁹

Coffin's outlook and preoccupations shifted again when he sailed aboard the ship *Athol* in 1845. He had spent ten solitary years whaling in the *Margaret Rait*; now he was in command of a larger, newly constructed vessel and sailed with his wife and young daughter in tow. Many of the entries Coffin formerly recorded for Mary's benefit disappeared in the journal he kept during this voyage. He made only three references to

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: 29 October 1840.

⁴⁹ Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-1844*, 20 (5 January 1841), 32 (23 July 1841), 55-6 (22 December 1842).

home over the course of 356 entries (<1%), for instance. The anxiety that plagued him prior to his marriage returned, and was somewhat stronger than it had been previously. His concern was not unwarranted: the voyage of the *Athol* was plagued by misfortune. Coffin's daughter, Mary Ester died in Sydney on 3 February 1848 after contracting "brain fever".⁵⁰ Benjamin Doane recorded the despair felt by Coffin and his wife at this event, though Coffin himself omitted the event from his log.⁵¹ Six months later, Coffin recorded the death of Mr. Thomas, first mate, during the pursuit of a whale:

A Sad day! The morning was very fine, lowered for whales and Mr. Thomas struck. In lancing the whale he was thrown overboard, sank, and was seen no more...he is gone poor man! I shall never sail with another such. He was a most valuable man. A first rate whale man and one who was always ready to do what I wished with cheerfulness.⁵²

Coffin was deeply affected by the death of Mr. Thomas and believed the prospects of the voyage were as well. He made only two additional entries following Thomas's death. Benjamin Doane, who sailed aboard the *Athol* as a boatsteerer, recorded the fate of the voyage in his memoir: after Thomas's death, Coffin sailed to Honolulu where, despairing of making a successful voyage without the assistance of his first officer, he sold the two thousand barrels of oil in the *Athol*'s hold. He then sold the *Athol* to the Portuguese Governor of Goa, then a tiny colony on the Malabar Coast, before taking passage to London from Mumbai.⁵³ Not surprisingly, this was Coffin's last whaling voyage; it was

⁵⁰ Benjamin Doane, *Following the Sea*, ed. Heather M. Doane Atkinson (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing and Nova Scotia Museum, 1987), 164. Robertson, "Introduction," 12.

⁵¹ Doane, *Following the Sea*, 164.

⁵² JDC on the *Athol*, 1845-48: 21 August 1848. Mr. Thomas was made first mate after the original mate, Mr. Taylor, tried to run Coffin through with a lance. (Doane, *Following the Sea*, 135.)

⁵³ Doane based his memoirs on his journal, kept at the time of the voyage, and his memory of events. He left the *Athol* at Sydney in the spring of 1848 (with Captain Coffin's blessing) after an argument with the second mate, Mr. Shields, and shipped aboard a merchant vessel bound for London. See Benjamin Doane, *Following the Sea*,

also one of the last whaling voyages to depart from Saint John for the Pacific and Indian Ocean whaling grounds.

This voyage demonstrates that life at sea was shaped by a multitude of factors. It was a combination of personal and professional tragedies that led Coffin to abandon the *Athol*, an ill-fated ship on her maiden voyage, after spending a decade whaling successfully in the decrepit *Margaret Rait*.⁵⁴ Coffin did not record the death of his daughter in his journal, perhaps believing the event had no place there, or perhaps too distraught to put pen to paper. The death of Mr. Thomas only six months later was a blow from which the voyage would not recover. Coffin repeatedly praised Thomas's prowess as a whaleman; crew mate Benjamin Doane described him as a "brave and loyal officer."⁵⁵ Both accounts of the voyage give the impression that it was the culmination of these events, as well as trouble with the *Athol*'s original first mate, Mr. Taylor, that led to the termination of the venture.

Coffin was a career sailor, like many of the men with whom he sailed. His journals are an extraordinary window into the development of an individual over the course of a lifetime spent at sea. Most journal keepers offer only a glimpse into their lives over the course of a single voyage. To have such a complete set of records is generally rare, and is unique in the case of the Halifax and Saint John whaling industries.

165. Mary Coffin, James Doane Coffin's granddaughter, offered a different version of this narrative in her three-part contribution to a Yarmouth newspaper on the subject of whaling in the 1960s. *The Yarmouth Light*, 24 September-8 October 1964; JDC on the *Athol*, 1845-48: 14 September 1848.

⁵⁴ Coffin repeatedly complained about the condition of the *Margaret Rait*, particularly the rate at which she took on water.

⁵⁵ JDC on the *Athol*, 1845-48: 24 December 1846, 16 September 1847, 21 August 1848. Doane, *Following the Sea*, 168.

Coffin's emotional state was influenced simultaneously by life at home and by life at sea, with each taking precedence at different points in his life. For Coffin, going to sea did not remove the influence of home, nor did bringing his home life to sea efface concern for his seafaring career.

Thomas Colton Creighton And James McNab: The Development Of Collective Shipboard Identity

While Coffin's journals demonstrate the influence of life at home on the individual at sea, the records left by Thomas Creighton and James McNab show how bonds forged at sea were dependent on shipboard divisions despite pre-existing social connections. Identity is widely theorized to be a "relation of difference."⁵⁶ This is true of both individual and collective identity.⁵⁷ While all of the men sailing on whaling ships from Halifax and Saint John shared a similar cultural background, community "is never simply the recognition of cultural similarity...but...premised on various forms of exclusion and constructions of otherness."⁵⁸ The stressors of life at sea, exemplified below through the shortage of food at the end of a long voyage, were part of a process that divided the crew of a ship. Looking specifically at the psychology of crowds, and what drives collective action, physiologist Stephen Reicher has theorized that social

⁵⁶ Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era", in *Culture, Power and Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 15; Weedon, *Identity and Culture*, 19; Reicher, "Crowds," 77.

⁵⁷ Gupta, "Culture," 13; Reicher, "Crowds," 77.

⁵⁸ Gupta, "Culture," 13. The idea of fixed cultures is out of fashion among anthropologists, who now view culture as fluid and contingent. Anthropologist James Clifford described the "boundedness" of culture as a "literary fiction—albeit a "serious fiction"" and as "a deeply compromised idea I cannot yet do without." See Gupta, "Culture," 3.

identity is the extension of the self, rather than a rejection of it, whereby a group defines itself through collective markers of difference and similarity.⁵⁹ Once this group identity has been established, the “well-being of the group becomes [the] well-being [of the individual]” and the individual’s beliefs are reinforced by collective belief.⁶⁰ Long whaling voyages could be brutal ordeals; any number of misfortunes could befall a vessel and her crew, from the paucity of prey to shipwreck. All hands were theoretically invested in the success of the voyage through the lay system whereby each man received a share of the bounty, proportional to their role aboard ship, instead of a fixed wage.⁶¹ In reality, masters and officers stood to gain far more than foremast hands, and masters had the added pressure of answering directly to the ship’s owners for the success or failure of the venture. As a result of these factors, divisions of common interest typically developed among crews. Thomas Creighton and James McNab are examples of collective identity formation among officers and among foremast hands, respectively.

Thomas Colton Creighton was born into a prominent Halifax family on 18 July 1825.⁶² His father was a wealthy merchant, and two of his uncles were partners in the shipping firm of Creighton and Grassie.⁶³ Thomas was seventeen years old when he sailed out of Halifax Harbour in January 1843 as apprentice to Captain Thomas Wood, a family friend. His voyage aboard the barque *Rose* was his first, but it would not be his last: Thomas received his master’s certificate in 1852. In 1862 he was master of the brig

⁵⁹ Reicher, “Crowds,” 77, 82.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 77-78.

⁶¹ Clifford Ashley, *The Yankee Whaler* (Dover: New York, 1966), 5.

⁶² His family name would later become famous through the work of his granddaughter, folklorist Helen Creighton.

⁶³ Ehlers, *The Captain’s Style of Command*, 112.

Beauty when it sank near Herring Cove on 25 February on a return voyage from Puerto Rico. Thomas and his seven-year-old son, Frank, were both lost.⁶⁴ Apart from his seafaring career, the details of Creighton's life are slim. He belonged to the Church of England, was the eldest of at least seven children—though he was closest to his brother George—and he married Anne Albro on 7 June 1849.⁶⁵ The pair had five children, including Thomas's namesake, born six months after his death.⁶⁶ According to Creighton family tradition, Anne refused to give up hope of Thomas's return for thirteen years after his ship was presumed lost at sea and she never wore widow's mourning.⁶⁷ She died in 1914 at the age of ninety.⁶⁸

James Burrows Davis McNab was born in Newfoundland in 1809 to a lesser branch of a well-to-do Halifax family. His father, John McNab, a captain in the British Army, was the son of Peter McNab, who purchased an island in Halifax Harbour, which now bears the family's name, in 1782.⁶⁹ Peter came to Halifax in 1763, and acquired

⁶⁴ Ship Information Database, ship's official no.: 35984, <http://daryl.chin.gc.ca:8000/SEARCH/BASIS/vessel/public/vessel/...fax%27+ORDER+BY+NAME/Ascend%26M%3D1%26K%3D4195%26R%3DY%26U%3D1> (accessed 15 October 2013). According to the Creighton family, the *Beauty* was returning from Puerto Rico, where she had been trading for the firm Creighton & Grassie (owned by two of Thomas's uncles).

⁶⁵ Note by Isabelle Creighton on her transcription, Dalhousie University Archives, "Diary of Thomas C. Creighton on Barque *Rose*, 1843-46," Transcribed by Isabelle Creighton, Accession No. 87-71; biographical note on Thomas Colton Creighton fonds, NSA; Creighton Correspondence.

⁶⁶ Note by Isabelle Creighton on her transcription.

⁶⁷ Note by Isabelle Creighton in "Misc. items connected with the Creighton Family," Accession No. 87-71 DAL MS 2 102, Thomas Colton Creighton fonds, DA, Halifax.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* and Nova Scotia Historical Vital Statistics, Death Register <https://www.novascotiagenealogy.com/ItemView.aspx?ImageFile=9-480&Event=death&ID=74179> (accessed 3 March 2014).

⁶⁹ Ehler, *The Captain's Style of Command*, 27; Friends of McNab's Island Society, "4.0 The McNab Family (1782-1934)", http://mcnabsisland.ca/mcnab_family (accessed 16 May 2016).

considerable wealth: he purchased McNab's Island for £1000.⁷⁰ James's uncle, Peter McNab Jr., served on the Governor's Legislative Council, beginning in 1838.⁷¹ In 1828 his sister married Joseph Howe, who would, in turn, become both Premier and Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia.⁷² James's mother, Eleanor Davis, was the daughter of Commissary General Burrows Davis, his namesake.⁷³ James himself married Sarah Curry in 1836.⁷⁴ The Government of Canada census conducted in 1871 places James in Dartmouth and lists his religion as Presbyterian.⁷⁵ He was employed as a clerk by the Board of Works.⁷⁶ James died in Dartmouth on 19 August 1871 at the age of 62.⁷⁷

James McNab and Thomas Creighton were of an age when they went whaling, eighteen and seventeen, respectively, in 1827 and 1843. Both were the progeny of prominent Halifax families, both were going to sea for the first time, both were becoming fully-fledged men at the same time that they were becoming sailors. Despite the apparent similarities between these two young men, their experiences on the waves of the Pacific Ocean differed significantly. This difference of experience was largely the result of

⁷⁰ Friends of McNab's Island Society, "4.1 Peter McNab I", http://mcnabsisland.ca/peter_mcnab_1 (accessed 16 May 2016).

⁷¹ Friends of McNab's Island Society, "4.2 Peter McNab 2", http://mcnabsisland.ca/peter_mcnab_2 (accessed 16 May 2016).

⁷² Ehler, *Captain's Style of Command*, 27 (footnote 14).

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Nova Scotia Vital Statistics, Marriage Bonds, <https://www.novascotiagenealogy.com/ItemView.aspx?ImageFile=1800-6861&Event=marriage&ID=197708> (accessed 16 May 2016).

⁷⁵ Library and Archives Canada, Census of 1871, Item #718901, RG31 – Statistics Canada, Microfilm C-10553 <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1871/Pages/item.aspx?itemid=718901> (accessed 16 May 2016).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Death Registrations: James B. McNab, Year: 1871, Book: 1808, Page: 324, Number: 581, <https://www.novascotiagenealogy.com/ItemView.aspx?ImageFile=1808-324&Event=death&ID=23032> (accessed 16 May 2016).

differing status within their respective crews: Creighton went to sea aboard the *Rose* as a quasi-officer; McNab sailed aboard the *Pacific* as a hand before the mast. This simple fact preordained whom their primary associates among the crew would be and how they were likely to react when the social order aboard ship was challenged. This was abundantly clear when supplies ran short, as they often did on a lengthy whaling cruise.

Creighton began his voyage adrift among his crew mates: he was neither foremast hand nor officer. When the *Rose* made her first port of call, he “went ashore with the starboard watch on liberty from whom I separated as soon as I possibly could and took a solitary walk.”⁷⁸ As time passed, Thomas gained more skill as a sailor and spent more time living and working along side the ship’s officers.⁷⁹ By June 1844, a little more than a year after leaving Halifax, Creighton recorded enjoying his time in Apia with the second and third mates.⁸⁰ By 1845, as the voyage toiled towards its end, he was referring to them as his “brother officers.”⁸¹ The *Rose* and her crew sailed from Oahu for Halifax on 8 October 1845. It was on this leg of the journey that food ran low and tempers ran high, fuelled by unfavourable winds that prolonged a voyage already three years gone. On 20 January 1846, three months in to what would become a five month journey home, Creighton made his status aboard the *Rose* explicit: “...cleared out my cabin for the last time this side of Home. Today spent the forenoon making out the peoples Shop Bills.

⁷⁸ Thomas Colton Creighton [hereafter TCC] on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 15 June 1843.

⁷⁹ The literature surrounding the development of an occupational identity emphasizes that “becoming skilled is a social activity” and that the acquisition of skills occurs within a social setting. See Alan Brown, “A Dynamic model of occupational identity formation,” in *Promoting Vocational Education and Training: European Perspectives* (Tampere: University of Tampere, 1997), 1, 4.

⁸⁰ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 9 June 1844.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*: 2 October 1845.

Afternoon had a “yarn” with the Old Man about home and turned in.”⁸² Creighton was not simply another hand among the crew, but a confidant of the captain who performed executive duties.

The following day, on 21 January 1846, Creighton recorded the first signs of trouble, “We have pretty hard tack now as all the small stores are out and there is nothing but Beef, Bread & Beans left & but precious few of the latter.”⁸³ His concerns persisted as the voyage drew on.⁸⁴ Contrary winds prolonged the voyage home, and by the time the *Rose* made George’s Bank Creighton recorded that “we started the last Barrels of flour today and have only one more cask of water in the Ship.”⁸⁵ Fortune favoured them the following day when a generous schooner captain donated “two quarters of Beef and half the coffee he had without any charge” to their empty cupboards.⁸⁶ Creighton expressed concern and frustration over the lack of food on board—and complained about its quality—but never became alarmed about the situation.

When a similar situation developed aboard the *Pacific* in 1830, again near the end of a long voyage, McNab reacted in a different manner. His perspective reflects that of men who were on the opposite side of the crew dichotomy. McNab made only two entries about the shortage of food on the return voyage. On 2 July 1830 he recorded the hunger he and his crew mates suffered:

...This morning (after standing 8 hours on deck during the night) I had for my breakfast about one pint of mint tea without a single mouthful of anything to eat (all hands short allowance). I offered 2/6 for one cake of bread but could not obtain it. All hands before the mast being as hard pushed as myself. Hunger must

⁸² *Ibid.*: 20 January 1846.

⁸³ *Ibid.*: 21 January 1846.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*: 7 February 1846, 18 February 1846, 5 March 1846.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*: 6 March 1846.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*: 7 March 1846.

be felt pretty keenly when any person after working in the manner (that whalemens have to, to obtain a living) I have had to for these last 41 months, will offer two shillings and sixpence for a single cake of bread weighing about a quarter of a pound...⁸⁷

Two weeks later, he recorded that the issue had been resolved and the captain had agreed to increase the daily allotment of bread.⁸⁸ McNab reserved the details of the conflict for a lengthy postscript.

The day prior to the restoration of full rations, the crew, still hungry after a breakfast of only mint tea, refused to perform their duties when ordered to work by the first mate. The entire crew moved aft—an area of the ship reserved for officers—and the mate called the captain on deck to confront the disgruntled sailors. A man named Alexander McNaughton spoke up on behalf of the crew, complaining that they had not been allotted enough food and that part of what they had been given was rotten. The two men debated the legality of these measures, to which McNaughton responded by asking that the men be given extra time below if they were not to receive additional rations. McNab also recorded the interjection of another man, Alexander Demings: “I have not had enough to eat since I came round Cape Horn (He might have said nor while at the other side of it – it would have been truth.) and I am half starved.”⁸⁹ The parenthetical comment was McNab’s own. The crew proceeded to go below to the forecabin in protest, until the captain called them on deck to their duty, to which they acquiesced. The captain was later heard asking one of the crew what else he was expected to do with so few provisions left on board; he was counselled to put in to one of the many ports on the way to Halifax. The captain protested that it would “displease the owners” to do so.

⁸⁷ James Davis McNab [hereafter JDM] on the *Pacific*, 1827-30: 2 July 1830.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 18 July 1830.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 67 (note 3, dated 17 July 1830).

McNab closed his note on the incident with a comment that conveyed his personal feelings toward the captain and his concern for the owner's profits:

I daresay the owners would have felt very highly pleased to have undergone the fatigue that we did on the Coast of California (night and day) most of the time living upon Elephant tongues – and to be told – here, you must eat those, or go without anything. I don't think they would have got 900 barrels of oil – on board of their well and bountifully provisioned Ship.⁹⁰

The following day the captain agreed to increase the ration of bread allotted to each man. The dynamics aboard the *Pacific* and the *Rose* were not identical. Captain Cartwright and Captain Wood were different men who cultivated distinctive relationships with their crews. The incidents aboard these two ships, and the way McNab and Creighton responded to them, does demonstrate that the divisions of rank aboard ship had a profound affect on individual men.

Creighton's journal makes clear that he had friends aboard the *Rose* before he went to sea. This included both the foremast hand Bob Liddell and Captain Wood. Creighton frequently mentions Liddell, noting at the outset of the voyage that both men were a part of the starboard watch.⁹¹ When Liddell fell from the rigging and died after eleven months at sea, it was Creighton who wrote a letter home to Mr. Liddell.⁹² In the case of Captain Wood, the letters Creighton received from his aunt detailed visits between the two families in Dartmouth while the men were away at sea.⁹³ The first mate, Mr. Coughlan, was also mentioned in this correspondence in much the same manner.⁹⁴ While James McNab is much less explicit about these matters, it is quite likely that he

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁹¹ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 15 January 1843.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 8 November 1843,

⁹³ Creighton Correspondence, 5.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

also had prior knowledge of the men he sailed with fifteen years earlier aboard the *Pacific*. Adverse conditions at sea had the potential to disrupt the social order established through connections made at home.

Jethro B. Brooks: Definition Of The Self Through Difference

Much less is known about Jethro B. Brooks, master of the ship *Peruvian* on her voyage to the Pacific Ocean from Saint John in 1841-45.⁹⁵ Brooks was an American, as many other captains in the Halifax and Saint John fleets appear to have been.⁹⁶ He was born in Nantucket on 25 September 1811 and died in New Jersey in 1878; his logbooks were discovered in an old family home on Nantucket Island after the Second World War.⁹⁷ Brooks's whaling career probably did not begin with the *Peruvian*, nor did it end with her: he was master of the ship *Sally Ann* from New Bedford in 1847 and the barque *Baltic* of the same in 1851.⁹⁸ Brooks was thirty years old when he sailed from Saint John. His wife, Winnifred Coffin, died the year before, probably from complications of

⁹⁵ He was also master of the *Peruvian* for a shorter voyage from Saint John to London after returning from the Pacific.

⁹⁶ Thomas Wood (barque *Rose*, 1843-46), Caleb Miller (ship *Pacific*, 1837-40), and Charles Pease (*Margaret Rait*, 1835-36, 1836-38) were all likely American considering references made in the relevant journals and their participation in the whaling fleets of American ports. Miller subsequently sailed as master of the barque *Smyrna*, New Bedford, 1841-45, during which voyage his crew mutinied and Miller later fell overboard and drowned. See the Logbook of the *Smyrna* from New Bedford, 1841-45, Old Dartmouth Historical Society Collection, reel 1107A and Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, Karin Gleiter, *In Pursuit of Leviathan: Technology, Institutions, Productivity, and Profits in American Whaling, 1816-1906* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), Appendix 10A, Table 10A.1.

⁹⁷ Bill Hoadley, *PLEASE Walk Your Horses Up This Hill: A Nantucket boyhood* (Xlibris Corporation ebook, 2011), chapter 8.

⁹⁸ Jethro B. Brooks, Whaling Crew List Database, New Bedford Whaling Museum, https://www.whalingmuseum.org/online_exhibits/crewlist/search.php?term=jethro+b.+brooks&search_by=name (accessed 16 May 2016).

childbirth. It is unclear when Brooks married Phebe Barnard, but considering the pressures of caring for three children under the age of five and his career of absence, Brooks was probably remarried by the time he departed for the Pacific aboard the *Peruvian*.

Brooks—in contrast to Coffin, Creighton, and McNab—kept a brief account of his time at sea. Most of his entries were only a line or two long, though he compensated for his brevity with regularity: he made 1171 entries during 1290 days at sea (91%). Brooks offers little insight into his personal life, either at home or aboard ship. There are, however, indications that Brooks shared many of the same experiences and sentiments as his more prolific counterparts. Seven months after departing Saint John, for instance, he recorded his concerns about the prospect of the voyage in much the same tone as James Coffin: “Nothing to be seen to cheer our lowly hearts after keeping the most intense lookout we have not seen a sperm whale since passing Cape Horn and do not know when I shall.”⁹⁹ Brooks was prone to occasional outbursts of sentiment: “And now another day is gone like a thousand losing [vanities] and left no more traces behind than our [gallant] ship in passing through the trackless deep.”¹⁰⁰ So while his log was often devoid of sentiment, Brooks was not.

Despite his American origins, Brooks was also part of the same community that bred Halifax and Saint John’s other whalers. Ships travelled thousands of kilometres to reach the Pacific whaling grounds. Crews spent years at a time separated from family and friends.¹⁰¹ The degree to which this separation affected sailors has been debated at

⁹⁹ JBB on the *Peruvian*, 1841-45: 6 May 1842; 7 May 1842.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 26 July 1842.

¹⁰¹ With the notable exception of indigenous crew members from the Pacific.

length by maritime historians, but the consensus among maritime historians is that mid-nineteenth century Halifax and Saint John were small communities that allowed social bonds formed on land to remain intact at sea.¹⁰² Contrary to the conviction that long periods spent at sea alienated mariners from their origins, meeting diverse individuals around the globe often served to reinforce, rather than deteriorate, pre-existing beliefs among Maritime whalers. Michael J. Braddick asserts, in relation to the early development of the Atlantic world, that, “at the margins of civil society people were led to express some of their core values—values which could be taken for granted closer to home.”¹⁰³ This principle held true in the era of Pacific expansion. Encountering cultural difference on the far side of the world precipitated a reassertion of EuroAmerican identity. While cruising the Pacific Ocean, Maritime whalers witnessed a variety of religious rites, both indigenous and Christian, which differed from their own practices. These experiences led whalers to reassert—rather than question—their own religious convictions.

Mariners carried their existing behaviours and attitudes with them when they travelled to the Pacific Ocean. At sea, mariners continued to be constrained by social structures that originated in their homeports, faraway networks of friendship and dependency. On many islands, mariners were confronted by colonial institutions—the customhouse, mission churches, governors and consuls—that kept imperial ideals and identities close at hand. Going to sea did not make mariners new men; the men discussed

¹⁰² See above, footnote 6.

¹⁰³ Michael J. Braddick, “Civility and Authority,” in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 112.

here retained their British North American identities, and continued to adhere to the values and ideas of their day. Instead of destabilizing their beliefs, the new social systems and religious practices they encountered in the Pacific encouraged them to cling more closely to their existing assumptions.¹⁰⁴

Religion was a major influence on perceptions of the Pacific Ocean, its islands, and its peoples. Missionary accounts formed the foundation of travel literature about the nineteenth-century Pacific.¹⁰⁵ EuroAmericans were eager to learn about this vast, under-explored region and missionary texts circulated widely, not only among religious communities.¹⁰⁶ Literary scholar Anna Johnston, who specializes in missionary and colonial writings, argues that missionary writers had a vested interest in portraying Pacific peoples as “wanton, morally depraved products of original sin.”¹⁰⁷ In order to justify their presence in the Pacific, and their authority over Pacific peoples, they needed to represent the places they “targeted for evangelical work as sites of dire immorality.”¹⁰⁸ These accounts informed readers at home and played a fundamental role in the formation of a British consciousness of the South Seas.

Not all sailors were models of Christian devotion, but the extant journals from the Halifax and Saint John trade demonstrate the capacity of mariners to maintain religious conviction at sea. The most extreme example of this was James Doane Coffin, who

¹⁰⁴ Charles W. J. Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment: thinking geographically about the age of reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 7-8.

¹⁰⁵ Anna Johnston, “Writing the Southern Cross: Religious Travel Writing in Nineteenth-Century Australasia,” in *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, Tim Youngs, ed. (London: Anthem Press, 2006), 208.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

wrote to his mother in 1842 “I often...wish that mother[s] could know of what vast importance their pious instruction might be to a son...that is to be a sailor, [a] barrier to debauchery.”¹⁰⁹ He scribbled passages from the New Testament, with notes, in the blank pages of his journal as “a more efficient means of acquiring scriptural knowledge than would [be] the mere reading of the scriptures.”¹¹⁰ The crew of the *Peruvian*, under the command of Jethro Brooks in 1844, was said to have “enjoyed a revival of religion” by the chaplain of the Seaman’s Friend Society in Honolulu.¹¹¹ A crew member later recalled the event to the chaplain at Lahaina (Maui), as a more moderate success: “I believe that almost every man in the ship at that time was convicted, but the wiles of Satan and worldly temptations have proved too strong for all but a few, who, trusting in God’s assistance, still profess to honour Christ as their Lord.”¹¹² Brooks also seems to have remained unconvinced by his crew’s newfound devotion: following the incident in Honolulu, he recorded that all the “People [were] onshore with *pretentions* of going to Church.”¹¹³ While the piety of individual crew members varied, all were raised in the intrinsically Christian environment of British North America.

Brooks’s excursion to Kīlauea (on the Island of Hawai’i) is a prime example of the inextricable relationship between people and place in the Pacific:

¹⁰⁹ JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1836-38: a letter to his parents, dated 20 February 1842.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, back matter, undated.

¹¹¹ Wallace, *In the Wake of the Wind-Ships*, 9.

¹¹² *Ibid.* In her survey of American whaling journals, Margaret S. Creighton notes that many sailors attended church when able, though whether they went of their own free will or to please a religious captain is unclear. See Margaret S. Creighton, *Dogwatch & Liberty Days: Seafaring Life in the Nineteenth Century* (Salem: Peabody Museum, 1982), 65. For further discussion of why men who were typically irreligious might be proponents for religion observance at sea, see Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast: A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea*. (New York: Random House, 2001).

¹¹³ JBB on the *Peruvian* 1841-45: 17 November 1844. Emphasis added.

On [February 18] I started to visit the celebrated volcano of Kilouar about 30m inland. My suit was Mr. Cutlip, 3 natives, and my self...we took lodgings for the night in a native hut. After we had got our suppers and got ready to retire to rest a young native offered up prayer for our protection and safe return. He was very particular to remember the white strangers that had come amongst them.

Brooks's journey to the volcano involved prolonged interaction with indigenous peoples.

The prayer of this "young native" was the only detail Brooks recorded about his companions and guides on the journey to Kīlauea. This tableau of Christian devotion stands in contrast to the description of indigenous Hawaiian rituals that followed.

Brooks's description of Kīlauea demonstrates that evidence of indigenous practices lingered despite the overthrow of the traditional *kapu* system in 1819 and the arrival of Protestant missionaries in 1820:¹¹⁴

While in the bottom of the crater we saw a native woman's skeleton placed on the lava nearly burnt to a coal beads round her neck and a fowl done up in native style by her side she must have been carried there by her friends with great labour. This being the only work of their former superstitious rites. They formally sacrificed human victims to this awful pit before the missionaries came amongst them.¹¹⁵

The physical environment was not something mariners experienced in isolation from cultural context. Brooks was not only visiting a natural wonder, but a site of spiritual importance to indigenous Hawaiians. The Polynesian goddess of fire, Pele, was traditionally believed to reside in volcanoes; this belief persisted among many Hawaiians even after the Christianization of the islands and the marginalization of other traditional deities.¹¹⁶ Brooks demonstrates his awareness of the religious meaning of Kīlauea in his

¹¹⁴ Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands*. Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1974), 64; Jennifer Fish Kashay, "From Kapus to Christianity: The Disestablishment of the Hawaiian Religion and Chiefly Appropriation of Calvinist Christianity," *Western Historical Quarterly* 39.1 (2008): 18.

¹¹⁵ JBB on the *Peruvian*, 1841-45: 11 March 1844.

¹¹⁶ H. Arlo Nimmo, "Pele, Ancient Goddess of Contemporary Hawaii," *Pacific Studies* 9.2 (March 1986): 122.

description of the “native woman’s skeleton”. He writes disparagingly of the “former superstitious rites” of the people of Hawai’i, yet however disdainful—and ill informed—he may have been about those rituals, he was aware of them when he embarked on his journey to Kīlauea.

Despite expressing his disregard for indigenous beliefs about the volcano, Brooks himself invoked religious metaphors to describe the scene, equating it to biblical depictions of Hell:

Here the Great Jehovah has displayed one of his greatest wonders of this little globe. Here in this mighty chasm with fire and brimstone all around us the earth and the rocks all a molten and rolling in waves or boiling like a pot and the sulphurous stench almost insupportable here is a place to contemplate Jehovah’s awful works here is a scene for the painter or the poet. If the writers of the bible had stood here while describing the pit of hell they could not have materially altered their representation from what we actually saw while at this place...But when I tell you that I have stood on the bank and thrown stones into the melted earth and rocks you would hardly believe me but such is the fact.¹¹⁷

His description of the crater, as well as his experience of it, was influenced by sacred imagery. For instance, the Book of Revelations describes the fate of sinners in “the fiery lake of burning sulphur” (KJV) or “the pool burning with fire and brimstone” (DRA).¹¹⁸ These images are replicated in Brooks’s description of the crater with its “fire and brimstone all around us” and the “sulphurous stench.”¹¹⁹ Brooks’s expedition to Kīlauea was one of both physical and cultural exploration. He could not experience Kīlauea separately from its religious and cultural meanings: both his own and those of indigenous Hawaiians.

¹¹⁷ JBB on the *Peruvian*, 1841-45: 11 March 1844.

¹¹⁸ Revelations 21:8. King James Version and Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition.

¹¹⁹ JBB *Peruvian*, 1841-45: 11 March 1844.

Thomas Creighton's experience in Hawai'i, once again at Lahaina, demonstrates how religion, leisure, and encounters with indigenous peoples all formed a part of visiting port while cruising the Pacific Ocean. On 21 September 1845 he recorded:

went to the Seaman's Bethel...After which...went to a Kanaka Church where there was a very full congregation. Stopped there until the service and singing (which was very good and my chief inducement for going there) was over and then went out and lay in the grass and read our own Liturgy.¹²⁰

Thomas was a particularly devout individual, but visiting the "Kanaka Church" seems to have been as much a novelty to him as a display of devotion. Thomas's religious tourism—attending a public church service—morphed into voyeurism the following day.

While wandering the streets of Lahaina, he recorded:

I heard an awful howling noise, which induced me to enter the hut from which it proceeded. Where I found a young native woman in the last agonies of death surrounded by about ten or twelve natives who were rubbing and pinching her hands feet and body, and howling in the most deafening manner, before I left the hut she breathed her last when the noise was redoubled & I left the house.¹²¹

Reading this passage, one is left wondering if Thomas would have shown the same disregard for the death of an individual at home in Halifax. Hawaiians may have been ritualistically Christian by 1845, but Creighton describes this scene in a distinctly foreign way.

Most Hawaiians and Haligonians were Protestant Christians in the early nineteenth century, but the exact nature of their rituals—and Creighton's regard for the people involved—differed between the two groups. The Hawaiian elites abandoned their traditional belief systems and supported missionary efforts, but Christianity's hegemony

¹²⁰ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 21 September 1845.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 22 September 1845.

in the islands was not absolute.¹²² Members of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions resident in the islands in the 1830s wrote “embarrassed letters to their patrons in New England, explaining that the islands appearances were deceiving, that the outward Christianity of the natives was a product of pressure by the chiefs.”¹²³ Jennifer Fish Kashay, in her survey of the factors that contributed to the abrogation of Hawaiian religion, concludes that the “adoption of Calvinist Christianity undoubtedly represented a blending of religious and cultural beliefs, i.e. syncretism, rather than a true understanding and belief in the theology of the American evangelists.”¹²⁴ As a result of this religious blending and compromise, it was possible for Thomas to experience both the official Christian rites of the mission at Lahaina and also the more traditional ceremonies and behaviours of the Hawaiian outside the formal power of the missionaries. Thomas’s other experiences with indigenous Christianity while in the Pacific also suggest that this episode represented a departure from Christian ceremony. Elsewhere, he is appreciative of the efforts of missionaries and the adherence of Pacific peoples. His description of the Hawaiian woman’s death suggests a departure from this acceptance. The service held for the benefit of indigenous Hawaiians was a respectable ceremony

¹²² The over throw of the *kapu* system in Hawai’i was the result of a long process set in motion by the arrival of foreign men who (sometime unwittingly) disrespected the system and allowed Hawaiians, especially women, to circumvent it. This was particularly the case with the wife of Kamehameh I, Ka’ahumanu, who effectively took control of the Hawaiian kingdom in 1819 upon her husband’s death and young son’s ascension. While the elites used the religion introduced by American missionaries in 1820 to further their own political ambitions and as substitutes for traditional religious justifications of their rule, most Hawaiians continued to practice their religion as they had in the past. See Kashay, “From Kapus to Christianity,” 19-29.

¹²³ Daws, *Shoal of Time*, 97.

¹²⁴ Kashay, “From Kapus to Christianity,” 39.

Thomas could participate in; the death of an indigenous woman—attended by mourning relatives—was a curiosity to be observed.

Experiencing new forms of Christian worship—out of curiosity rather than a sincere interest in the belief system—seems to have been of interest to sailors in foreign ports more broadly. For sailors from predominantly Protestant British North America, Catholicism was as distant from their own form of worship as ‘pagan’ rites. James Coffin certainly thought so when he visited Payta in 1843. While there, Coffin resolved to observe the “feast of Santa Carmon”, which was taking place in the city at that time:

On Saturday I told the American consul that I had an idea of attending church on the morrow and asked him if the *worshippers of the Virgin would be offended at seeing a heretic* within the walls of their sanctuary...We then persuaded Capt. Taber to become Catholic for one day, and on Sunday morning...we entered the church in company with Dr. Noel, an Irish resident of the place who kindly offered to conduct us to a seat...in a niche...was placed the Virgin with a number of other little images about her, and they were illuminated by about 70 wax candles which were burning on either side and above their heads. When I entered the church I was, like the rest, presented with a little toyish looking thing of which I knew neither the use nor the position. I then followed my *pilot* towards the row of chairs on the larboard side. The navigation, however, was somewhat critical for the ladies were assembled and squatted on the floor...being comfortably seated and having indulged in a few hasty glances in order to ascertain the lay of the land and look of the people, my attention reverted to my toy with which I had been presented on entering the door and the use of which not a little puzzled me. At first I thought I might be something which I would have to return to the sexton on leaving the church and was about tossing it into my hat, when it struck me that it might possess some of the rare virtues of some much esteemed saint and to be indifferent about it shock the feeling of the pious Catholics...From what I had seen previously of Catholic ceremonies, I was induced to believe them generally imposing and solemn, but on this day much of the performance appeared to me quite *ridiculous*. Yet it is not my intention to ridicule them for we are not all of the same mind.”¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-1844*, 62-4 (19 September 1843). Emphasis added. The experiences of Benjamin Doane, who sailed with James Coffin on the *Athol*, 1845-48, in Saint John while preparing for that voyage exemplify the tensions between Catholics and Protestants in that city. Doane inadvertently got in the middle of this feud after procuring an old sword cane that had formerly belonged to an Orangeman, which resulted in his being assaulted by several Irishmen in York Point (the Irish

Yet ridicule them he did. Coffin viewed the Roman Catholic Mass as a spectacle, dismissing it much as Thomas did the death of the anonymous woman in Hawai'i. He described the service at length, with disparaging comments interspersed:

Their dress consisted of a notched cap that in my view imparted its share of the diabolical...and their feet were adorned with shoes, I may be mistaken, but I think about fourteen inches in length...I could not help thinking would much become Auld Brimstone himself. The incense which was burning at the base of the altar, or rather the effect which it produced struck me very ludicrously...[when] my father had a sick cow and in the course of treatment which he pursued for her convalescence, he made a fire of old shoes, old rope and tar, and held her head over the smoke, which caused the cow to cough, if I recollect rightly, about as much as the incense (which was to the smell very much like the old rope and old shoe smoke) did the ladies. The ludicrous comparison intruding itself upon my mind, I was for a few moments under considerable difficulty to restrain my risibilities (sic).¹²⁶

The Catholic mass was foreign to Coffin, and he tried to make sense of it through implicit comparison to his own prior experiences.

Coffin's attendance at mass resembles Brooks's visit to Kīlauea in several ways. Coffin, like Brooks, was attending a site sacred to another sect, whose rituals and beliefs he had little knowledge of. He too needed a guide to navigate the situation: Brooks required a guide to show him the path to the volcanic crater, Coffin needed a "pilot" to help him navigate the physical and ceremonial complexities of worship. Brooks was more interested in the volcano than his indigenous guides and recorded minimal details

Catholic ghetto of Saint John) on the eve of Queen Victoria's birthday. Doane describes how the two factions—Catholic Ribbon Men and Protestant Orangemen—would brawl every St. Patrick's and Orangemen's Day. He recalled in his memoir that, "this was the year of the Potato Famine in Ireland; that the Irish feeling against England was at the time very bitter...and that three years later, the trouble culminated in the Rebellion of '48." See Doane, *Following the Sea*, 52-54.

In 1847 and 1849, while Doane and Coffin were sailing aboard the *Athol*, Saint John experienced urban riots precipitated by Catholic-Protestant conflict. See Gordon M. Winder, "Trouble in the North End: The Geography of Social Violence in Saint John, 1840-1860," *Acadiensis* 29.2 (2000).

¹²⁶ Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-1844*, 64-5 (19 September 1843).

about the later without exploring the links between indigenous beliefs about the volcano, his own religious interpretation of the site, and the current religious practices of indigenous Hawaiians. Coffin described the Catholic Mass in detail, but is ultimately dismissive of the rituals he observes without endeavouring to understand them. Despite participating physically in the ceremony, even joining the procession that followed, Coffin remained an outside observer, unable to traverse the boundaries between his own experience and the beliefs of the people he witnessed. Instead, both men used these encounters as an opportunity to reassert their own religious convictions and identities.

Geographers James Duncan and Derek Gregory define “travel writing as an act of translation”, of making one place relatable through the experiences of another.¹²⁷ This cultural translation, like its linguistic counterpart, is imperfect: “the translation of one place into the cultural idioms of another loses some of the symbolic loading of the place for its inhabitants and replaces it with other symbolic values.”¹²⁸ Places have meanings and the Pacific islands were imbued with indigenous meaning long before the arrival of EuroAmericans, who failed to fully understand them.¹²⁹ These meanings were further obscured by the biases and motives—religious, imperial, and otherwise—of the men who described them for the reading public at home. Whether or not Brooks, Creighton, and Coffin were able to fully comprehend the religious rites they witnessed, their encounters with “otherness” facilitated the maintenance of a collective religious and social identity among these men and their peers.

¹²⁷ James Duncan and Derek Gregory, “Introduction,” in *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 4.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹²⁹ Jason W. Smith, “The Bound[less] Sea: Wilderness and the United States Exploring Expedition in the Fiji Islands,” *Environmental History* 18 (2013): 729.

Conclusion

Life at sea was influenced by a variety of factors. Whalemens from Halifax and Saint John identified themselves according to conditions at home and at sea. The case of James Doane Coffin demonstrates that going to sea did not remove the relationship whalemens in the Pacific and Indian Oceans had with their homes. Coffin's connections to home were, at times, superseded by immediate concerns at sea—such as intense concern about the success of a voyage—but the opposite could also prove true—as was the case with his preoccupation with his wife after his marriage in 1840.

The similar but divergent trajectories of Thomas Creighton and James McNab demonstrate how shipboard dynamics and divisions could lead to vastly different group identification in men who had similar origins on land. Both young men were the product of prominent Halifax families and yet Creighton came to identify closely with the *Rose's* officers while McNab made common cause with the *Pacific's* foremast hands. This division of interest between the two segments of a ship's population was demonstrated by their reactions to the shortage of food at the end of their respective voyages. While Creighton reacted to the dwindling food supply with cool detachment, McNab participated in a heated encounter between the ship's officers and crew. McNab also considered the incident to be of more overall importance, if the attention he paid to it in his journal is any indication. At home, Creighton and McNab were social equals; at sea they came to identify with different social groups based on their experiences aboard ship.

Encountering 'exotic' cultures, exemplified above through religious practices, led whalemens to reassert their own religious beliefs. This was a phenomenon that occurred across the boundaries of rank (officers and crew), specific origin (British or American),

and age (green hands and experienced officers). Experiencing foreign peoples gave whalers a clearer definition of their own identity. In the face of religious difference, the collective religious identity of whalers became more sharply defined.

Finally, these various incarnations of identity existed simultaneously. James Coffin and Jethro Brooks undoubtedly shared a common interest with their officers in opposition to the collectivity of their crews in addition to maintaining ties to social structures at home. Thomas Creighton and James McNab, ensconced in their intra-crew conflicts, were never completely isolated from their lives at home. Creighton, for instance, wrote his journal as an extended letter to his aunt Eliza, while McNab eschewed the life of a sailor after returning home and worked in a clerical capacity for the City of Halifax. While both were invested in the events taking place at sea, this did not preclude their continued attachment and interest in affairs on land.

CHAPTER 3

Separate But The Same: Understandings Of The Ocean In Maritime Whaling Journals

Oceanic history is not maritime history. The two fields are not mutually exclusive, but the former rarely considers the latter. Oceanic paradigms, most recently the Pacific world but more prominently the Atlantic world, present the ocean as a “metaphorical space of connection”.¹ For maritime historians, the ocean is a real physical space; it not only facilitated the spread of ideas, people, and goods, but was space where events could take place. Oceanic history ignores the ocean, while its practitioners ignore maritime history. Oceanic historians have only recently begun to explicitly acknowledge the connections between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.² Maritime historians traversed this frontier long ago. Richard Henry Dana Jr. sailed from Boston to the coast of California via Cape Horn in 1834-36. He published his famous account of that voyage, *Two Years Before the Mast: A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea*, in 1840. Dana’s account has long been central to the study of maritime history because it offers a remarkably detailed account of life at sea. Historians of the New England whaling industry, which sent ships to the Pacific Ocean in droves by the nineteenth century, are also well versed in the connects between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and circulation within the latter.³

¹ Philip E. Steinberg, “Of other seas: metaphors and materialities in maritime regions,” *Atlantic Studies* 10.2 (2013): 156. See also W. Jeffrey Bolster, “Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History: Maritime Communities and Marine Ecology in the Northwest Atlantic, 1500-1800,” *The American Historical Review* 113.1 (2008): 21; and Hester Blum, “The Prospect of Oceanic Studies,” *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 125.3 (2010): 670.

² van Ittersum, “Are We All Global Historians Now,” 25.

³ The 1980s and 1990s saw a peak in academic scholarship concerned with the New England whaling industry.

This chapter will explore the boundaries of the Atlantic and Pacific world paradigms by asking how nineteenth-century mariners viewed and experienced the ocean. What boundaries did they recognize between oceans? How did the passage from one ocean into another affect their seafaring experience? The terminology used by Maritime whalers to describe their geographic location and surroundings suggests that the idea of ocean basins—Atlantic or Pacific—was not of particular use to them. Indeed, the phenomenon of fixed, all-encompassing descriptors for the ocean is a relatively recent invention.⁴ Terms that delineated spaces *within* ocean basins were more commonly used by mariners, and early modern society in general, because these terms were more practical and, in the case of whalers, better described how they used the ocean.⁵ More broadly, it was the eighteenth-century trend of Enlightenment geography to conceptualize oceans as “maritime pathways of human activity”, typically in close proximity to continental landmasses, rather than as ocean basins.⁶ Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen, in their critique of modern geography, identify the idea that geography is merely the description of existing phenomena, rather than the quasi invention of them, as one of the most harmful misconceptions that pervades the public consciousness.⁷ In reality, geography often does a poor job of description too, trying to impose order on

⁴ Mark Peterson, “Naming the Pacific,” *Common-place* 5.2 (2005), www.common-place.org.

⁵ Many of the terms used to delineate particular oceans or seas were bestowed on bodies of water before it was technologically possible to navigate the open ocean and thus either confirm or invalidate the idea that the waters of the world were distinct, separate seas. See *ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 11.

fundamentally disordered features.⁸ Lewis and Wigen assert that even the most commonly accepted tenants of geography, such as continental divisions, are “arbitrary”.⁹ Accepted geographical divisions change over time and variable terminology reveals shifting beliefs about the world.

The use of specific geographic monikers to break up oceanic space does not suggest that whalers viewed smaller areas as closed systems. Their voyages around the world, and the consistency of their experience throughout, suggests that they viewed the ocean as a global system. Their perceptions of danger across the oceans of the world, as outlined in their journals, will be explored below to demonstrate the continuity of attitudes about seafaring even in far away seas. Whalers recognized the divisions of the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean, but they had little use for these terms and partitions. The Atlantic and Pacific world paradigms are useful tools, but their utility has limits.

Oceanic paradigms encourage historians to explore connections where there were once barriers, but they do little to explain how mariners—the men who physically traversed the oceans of the world—conceived of the waters where they plied their trade. In the case of the whaling industry it is also deficient in scope: many whalers cruised the waters of the Indian Ocean, particularly those surrounding Madagascar; many more passed through these waters in transit to the Pacific hunting grounds, opting to round the Cape of Good Hope rather than Cape Horn. Thomas Creighton indicated in his journal aboard the *Rose* that both might be the case, with whaling vessels hunting in the Indian Ocean before seeking their prey in the Pacific.¹⁰ The idea of an Indian Ocean world, with

⁸ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 11 May 1843.

a similar theoretical lineage to the Atlantic world phenomenon, has not gained the same popularity with Atlantic world historians that Pacific world frameworks have recently come to enjoy.¹¹ While historians tend to focus on specific ocean basins, the distinctions between them were not as straightforward for nineteenth-century mariners. Philip E. Steinberg warns that the:

danger, then, is that maritime region, although born out of a critique of the idea that the world consists of stable, bounded places where “society” is an explanatory variable, could itself emerge as an organizing trop that, through geographic shorthand, obscures the contested and dynamic nature of social processes and functions.¹²

The utility of oceanic paradigms should not be allowed to obscure their limits.

Mariners tended to view the ocean—and their place within it—in relative terms, relating their position to the nearest significant landmass. Whalers, in particular,

¹¹ For a comprehensive summary of recent Indian Ocean world literature, see Sebastian R. Prange, “Scholars and the Sea: A Historiography of the Indian Ocean,” *History Compass* 6.5 (2008): 1382-1393; Prasannan Parthasarathi and Giorgio Riello, “The Indian Ocean in the Long Eighteenth Century,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 48.1 (2014): 1-19; and Edward A. Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). The *Oceans Connect Initiative* at Duke University in the 1990s included a working group on the Indian Ocean (in addition to three others on Eurasian Seas, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic) and the authors of the resulting special issue of the *Geographical Review* included the Indian Ocean in their explorations of ocean basin frameworks, which were thematically, rather than geographically, subdivided. See Karen Wigen and Jessica Harland-Jacobs, ed. “Oceans Connect,” Special issue, *The Geographical Review* 89.2 (1999). The Indian Ocean also figured in the analysis of the Atlantic world paradigm conducted in the *William and Mary Quarterly*’s 2006 “Beyond the Atlantic Forum.” See Games, Allison, Philip J. Stern, Paul W. Mapp, and Peter A. Coclanis, “Forum: Beyond the Atlantic,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 63.4 (2006): 675-742. The 2005 “Oceans of History” Forum in the *American Historical Review*, which included reflections on the Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Pacific literatures, neglected to include the Indian Ocean, an omission the forum’s editor, Karen Wigen, deemed “regrettable”. See Karen Wigen, “AHR Forum: Introduction,” *The American Historical Review* 111.3 (2006): 718. Parthasarathi and Riello, in their assessment of the state of the ‘Indian Ocean world’, note “one of the challenges for Indian Ocean scholars is that of forming closer links and collaborations with scholars working on the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and the Pacific.”

¹² Steinberg, “Of other seas,” 162.

viewed the ocean in terms of their occupation, defining space by the availability of their prey within it. Of the 6888 entries made by the twelve journal keepers from 1827 to 1848, a combined 30 years of record keeping, the term “Pacific” was used in reference to the ocean only five times.¹³ The term “Atlantic” was used to refer to that ocean only ten times.¹⁴ Ironically, the term “Indian Ocean”, which has not come in to vogue among practitioners of oceanic history, appears to have been much more popular among nineteenth-century mariners, and was used thirty-four (31) times in the journals studied here.¹⁵

¹³ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 11 May 1843, August 1843; JDM on the *Pacific*, 1827-30: 27 February 1828; Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait*, 1840-44, 23 (18 February 1841); JBB on the *Peruvian*, 1841-45: 16 October 1841.

¹⁴ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 11 May 1843; logbook of the *James Stewart*, 1834-35: October 1834; JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1838-40: 25 April 1840, 30 May 1840; JDM on the *Pacific*, 1827-30: 23 June 1830.

¹⁵ Specifically by the *James Stewart* and *Margaret*, which hunted within it, and referred to their vessels as cruising in the ‘Indian Ocean’ in the heading of multiple pages. This may have been because the Indian Ocean, unlike the Pacific and Atlantic, was named after an adjacent landmass: the Indian subcontinent. As Mark Peterson notes, and the journals of Maritime whalers attest, bodies of water are most commonly named after land regions. The waters around Antarctica, for instance, were referred to as the South Seas, the Southern Ocean (after the Southern continent long theorized to exist in the globe’s southern reaches), or, most recently, the Antarctic Ocean (after the continent that *does* exist at the South Pole), while the term ‘Indian Ocean’ was reserved for the waters closer to India. See Peterson, “Naming the Pacific” and Martin W. Lewis, “Dividing the Ocean Sea,” in “Oceans Connect,” ed. Karen Wigen and Jessica Harland-Jacobs, Special Issue, *Geographical Review* 89.2 (1999): 209.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Oceanic References

Ocean	Number of References	Sources
Indian	31	Logbook of the <i>Margaret</i> 1835-38 (24) Logbook of the <i>James Stewart</i> (5) Creighton (2)
Atlantic	10	Logbook of the <i>James Stewart</i> (5) Coffin 1838-40 (2) Creighton(1) Logbook of the <i>Margaret</i> 1835-38 (1) McNab (1)
Pacific	5	Creighton (2) Brooks (1) Coffin 1840-44 (1) McNab (1)

The usage of these terms when they do appear is indicative of how mariners at this time conceived of the world’s seemingly endless expanse of water: seven of the references to the Atlantic Ocean were made specifically to the *South* Atlantic Ocean. Similarly, James Coffin and Jethro Brooks referred to their location as the *South* Pacific Ocean. Thomas Creighton, meanwhile, further illuminates this point when the *Rose* crossed the equator in August 1843: “We are now in the *North* Pacific which is the *fifth* Ocean we have been in.”¹⁶ Geographer Martin W. Lewis argues that terms for the aqueous regions of the world are constantly in flux and that the idea that they are constant is a modern construct.¹⁷ Gary Y. Okihiro agrees, “the Atlantic Ocean...is a creation of the mind...It depends upon worldview and perspective.”¹⁸ A synopsis of how four journal keepers—James Coffin, Thomas Creighton, James McNab, and Jethro Brooks—

¹⁶ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 5 August 1843.

¹⁷ Lewis, “Dividing the Ocean Sea,” 189.

¹⁸ Gary Y. Okihiro, “Of space/time and the pineapple,” *Atlantic Studies* 11.1 (2014): 85.

referred to their location within the ocean without using these monikers is demonstrative of how mariners, and particularly whalers, conceived of their place upon the waters of the world between 1827 and 1848. Their designations for oceanic spaces indicate that their perceptions of it were relative, rather than fixed, and that the idea of oceanic basins was a construct they acknowledged but rarely engaged with.

The nineteenth century was a time when explorers and mariners alike were attempting to make sense of maritime space, new and old. Between Ferdinand Magellan's entry into the Pacific Ocean—his name for it—in 1521 via the straits that bear his name and James Cook's voyages, beginning in the 1760s, trans-Pacific voyages were rare. The Manila Galleons made their annual transit from Mexico to the Philippines beginning in 1565, creating what Mark Peterson calls “a fragile trading channel” with their “solitary journeys.”¹⁹ Occasional voyages of discovery were launched, such as William Dampier's voyages in the 1690s—facilitated by skills acquired as a privateer in the same waters.²⁰ During the same time, voyages criss-crossed the Atlantic Ocean with much greater regularity. Even still, it was only in the twentieth century that hydrographic surveying technology and navigation equipment progressed far enough to ensure consistently safe sea travel. Until that time, the acquisition of hydrographic knowledge was performed haphazardly by official expeditions while individual mariners were often left to discern the finer points of their specific routes for themselves.

¹⁹ Peterson, “Naming the Pacific.” Peterson notes that despite the recurring nature of these voyages, “in the quarter millennium (1565-1815) that they traversed the Pacific, the crews of the Manila galleons never came upon the Hawaiian Islands, never charted the islands and coasts of the unknown Pacific reaches.”

²⁰ Geraldine Barnes and Adrian Mitchell. “Measuring the Marvelous: Science and the Exotic in William Dampier.” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 26.3 (2002): 45.

The waters of the Pacific Ocean may have been particularly unfamiliar—the last discovery of an island in the Pacific occurred in 1859—but they were not necessarily more dangerous. Navigational errors and inadequate charts could bring a voyage to a swift and tragic end anywhere in the world. The navigational hardships experienced, and the practical knowledge acquired, by the Halifax and Saint John whaling fleet, in all the world's oceans, demonstrates that voyages to the newly opened Pacific Ocean were arduous, but not necessarily more dangerous than their Atlantic contemporaries, and that by the nineteenth century there was nothing extraordinary, in practical terms, about sailing to the far side of the world.²¹ Hydrographic uncertainty was an accepted fact of nineteenth-century seafaring. The distribution of the incidents discussed below across the oceans of the world indicates that there was continuity in the adversity faced by seafarers and their interactions with the sea.

Defining Space, Making Place: Oceanic Monikers In The Journals Of Four Maritime Whalemens

When the Maritime whaling industry began in 1827, both routes to the Pacific—around the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn—were commonly in use. Whaling voyages from Halifax and Saint John traversed the tip of Africa or South America—sometimes both—in the course of their hunt. As a result, men engaged in the whaling trade criss-crossed the oceans of the world. The terms they used to describe their location

²¹ The long duration of whaling voyages to the Pacific, as opposed to shorter voyages in Atlantic waters, could be a source of increased tension aboard ship. Conditions that were a minor annoyance or conflicts that simmered on short sea passages could become major points of contention over the course of several years. These problems were exacerbated by long-distance voyages, but not unique to them. See Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea*, 189-197.

within those oceans is indicative of how they thought about them. They used grand terms such as the ‘Pacific Ocean’ or ‘Atlantic Ocean’ on occasion, but their descriptions of ocean space were usually more precise..

James Coffin began his whaling career cruising the southern waters of the world. While he left no record of his time aboard the *Margaret Rait* on her voyage 1834-36, the logbook kept by Charles Pease, first mate, survives.²² Pease tells us that the *Margaret Rait* cruised the waters of the Indian Ocean, but never refers to it as such. Pease states the vessel’s destination as “the Mozambique [Channel]”, between Mozambique on the African continent and the island of Madagascar, or simply as “eastward” or “the Cape of Good Hope”.²³ After the *Margaret Rait* left Table Bay (Cape Town, South Africa) in November 1835, Pease declared her to be “On the Eastern [Whaling] Ground”.²⁴ References like these are common among all whaling journals. Mariners recorded themselves as being not in a large body of water, but in relation to prominent geographical features or in specific areas within them. Whalemen were also fond of denoting their location by the hunting grounds they worked.

On his second whaling voyage, in 1836-38, Coffin continued this trend in his own journal. Coffin declared the *Margaret Rait* to be “on [the] Whale Ground” when she reached an expanse of the South Atlantic Ocean between the coast of Brazil and St Helena en route to New Zealand.²⁵ And that is how Coffin described his destination: “Towards New Zealand”, “Towards New Holland” (Australia); then later, “on the coast

²² Pease was later master of the *Margaret Rait*, 1836-38.

²³ Charles Pease [hereafter CP] on the *Margaret Rait*, 1834-36: 23 February 1835, 26 August 1835, 3 October 1835.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 20 November 1835.

²⁵ JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1836-38: 28 September 1836.

of New Holland”, “off New Zealand”, “Cruising off the East Coast of New Zealand.”²⁶

Then, on the voyage toward home, he described his return to the Atlantic Ocean in the following terms: “on the “East Cape”, “Towards Cape Horn”.²⁷ Perhaps more important than the fact that Coffin used these terms, is the fact that he did not refer to his location or destination, at any point during this voyage, as the “Atlantic” or “Pacific”.

This trend continued when Coffin went to sea as master of the *Margaret Rait* in 1838. In this instalment, he did refer to the “South Atlantic Ocean”—twice.²⁸ More often, he used prominent landmasses to distinguish his location. On entering the Indian Ocean he commented that he was “anxious to get East of the Cape”, and that he was, successively, “West of the Cape” and “East of the Cape of Good Hope”.²⁹ Later, when the *Margaret Rait* neared the Pacific Ocean, Coffin referred to the vessel as “West of Van Dieman’s Land”.³⁰ This indicates that while mariners recognized divisions between oceanic spaces, they did not necessarily view them as separate or discontinuous. On his voyage from 1840-44, Coffin referred to himself as “in the South Pacific Ocean” once.³¹ When he entered that ocean a week previous, this time by way of South America, he deemed himself “west of Cape Horn” instead.³² The majority of his place markers throughout the remainder of the voyage focused on whether he was “on”, “towards”, or

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8 January 1836, 26 January 1837, 26 February 1837, 28 March 1837, 31 October 1837.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 16 November 1837, 17 November 1837, 26 December 1837.

²⁸ JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1838-40: 25 April 1840, 30 May 1840.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 8 October 1838, 16 November 1838, 18 November 1838.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 11 January 1839, 18 January 1839.

³¹ Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-44*, 23 (18 February 1841).

³² *Ibid.*, 23 (9 February 1841).

“headed to the Off Shore Ground”.³³ Coffin’s final voyage in 1845-48 contains similar references, though there was no mention at all of the “Atlantic” or “Pacific”. His preoccupation with whaling grounds did continue. Additionally, he noted cruising in the “Sachalin Sea”, the “Sea of Ochotsk”, and the “Sea of Japan”, throughout the voyage.³⁴ All this to say that mariners found it more helpful to think of their location in terms of specific areas rather than sweeping expanses of ocean. Whalers, additionally, designated space according to the movement of their prey.

While physical features such as the Capes might have been viewed as divisors of the ocean, they also served as important links between them. John McAleer explores the importance of the island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic to the British trade in Asia and concedes that after the capture of the Cape of Good Hope in 1806 the latter became a significant link between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.³⁵ Nonetheless, he argues that St. Helena and the Falkland Islands were important links without which long voyages to the Pacific and Indian Oceans would have been impossible.³⁶ McAleer contends that contemporaries were aware of the importance of the South Atlantic to accessing the wider world. He argues that these examples have wider implications for historians of empire and ocean: “just as they offered way stations for historical travellers voyaging between oceans, so they also provide historiographical bridges between the different “worlds” of

³³ *Ibid.*, 25 (23 April 1841), 38 (21 September 1841; 24 September 1841; 6 October 1841), 51 (4 October 1842), 61 (19 September 1843), 66 (14 October 1843).

³⁴ JDC on the *Athol*, 1845-48: 8 June 1847, 16 September 1847, 19 September 1847, 4 August 1848, 21 August 1848, 14 September 1848, 9 May 1848, 17 December 1848.

³⁵ John McAleer, “Looking east: St Helena, the South Atlantic and Britain’s Indian Ocean World,” *Atlantic Studies* 13.1 (2016): 3-4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 79-80.

the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans.”³⁷ These episodes suggest that, just as historians once viewed the ocean as an obstacle for historical actors, the divisions between oceanic worlds has been overstated.

Thomas Creighton referred to the oceans he passed through as such on three occasions. He mused, at the outset of his journey, about the ocean’s ability to carry him far from home: “who would have thought last year at this season, that I would now be 1/3 across the Indian Ocean.”³⁸ Soon after, upon arriving in the Pacific Ocean, he mentioned all three oceans in one fell swoop, commenting on the wind that filled the *Rose*’s sails:

when we were in the *Atlantic Ocean*, and we have been scudding before it, all across the *Indian Ocean*, and have made Van Diemen’s Land today, after a passage of 36 days, from the Cape of Good Hope and 116 days from Halifax and have at last arrived in the *Pacific* without having taken any whales.³⁹

When the *Rose* ventured north to hunt right whales in 1843, Creighton noted “yesterday we crossed the line...We are now in the *North Pacific* which is the *fifth Ocean* we have been in.”⁴⁰ Nineteenth-century mariners did not consider the Atlantic or the Pacific Ocean as whole entities, but rather viewed them as at least two separate Oceans each, divided by the equator: the North and South Atlantic and Pacific, respectively. These references were the only ones Creighton made to either ocean as a whole. Overall, he was far more preoccupied with his ship’s location in reference to major latitudes and longitudes, such as the equator, the tropics, and the Prime Meridian.⁴¹ This indicates that

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

³⁸ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 14 April 1843.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 May 1843. Emphasis added.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5 August 1843. Emphasis added.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 17 September 1843, 6 December 1844, 29 December 1844, 13 May 1845, 28 August 1845, 28 October 1845, 11 November 1845, 20 January 1846.

while the world's water might offer a continuous conduit for travel, which Creighton acknowledged, it was still subject to artificially constructed divisions.

James McNab's account of the voyage of the *Pacific*, 1827-30, was also mostly devoid of oceanic monikers. He used these terms twice. The first occasion was the death of foremast hand John George, whose body was "committed...to the deep of the *Pacific Ocean*."⁴² Notably, this term was used in a metaphorical, rather than strictly geographical, sense. Much later in the voyage, on the journey home, McNab noted "this day considered ourselves in the *Atlantic Ocean* after an absence of three years and two months."⁴³ Beyond these two references, which indicate that he did recognize these distinctions, McNab dubbed his seafaring foray a "voyage...to the Coast of Japan."⁴⁴ He repeated this several times during his time at sea.⁴⁵ Interestingly, McNab was nowhere near Japan. When he declared the ship to have "arrived at our cruising grounds" in May 1829, the latitude and longitude he recorded for the same day place him roughly halfway between Japan and Hawai'i.⁴⁶ This demonstrates that McNab's understanding of ocean space was as much culturally constructed as physically realized.

Jethro Brooks, similarly, acknowledged the Pacific Ocean at the outset of his voyage with the heading: "Ship Peruvian from St John NB On A Whaling Voyage to the South Pacific Ocean".⁴⁷ He never used the term again. Brooks preferred terms such as "near the equator", "On the Off Shore Ground", "near Japan" (again, while

⁴² JDM on the *Pacific*, 1827-30: 27 February 1828.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 23 June 1830.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 4 February 1827.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2 May 1828, 27 April 1829.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 13 May 1829.

⁴⁷ JBB on the *Peruvian*, 1841-45: 16 October 1841.

approximately half way between Japan and Hawai'i), and “near the coast of Kamtchatka (sic)” (also some distance from the Kamchatka Peninsula).⁴⁸ The limited accuracy of the available technology made specificity difficult, but mariners attempted it to the best of their ability.

The frequency with which these men—James Coffin, Thomas Creighton, James McNab, and Jethro Brooks—used terms such as ‘Atlantic’ and ‘Pacific’ was not unique. While such references were rare in these four journals, the other journal keepers surveyed in this study used them even less. None of this is to say that nineteenth-century mariners did not recognize the existence of the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans or the validity of these terms, but these monikers were of little use to mariners while working on the waves. Martin W. Lewis, in his study of the changing conceptions of sea space over time, concludes that names for and divisions of the world’s oceans have always been fluid.⁴⁹ Before the nineteenth-century, geographers were not concerned with precise nomenclature and “imperfect synonyms abounded, and the transposition of place-names was common.”⁵⁰ The idea that the oceans can be scientifically divided, and that they have been by the International Hydrographic Organization, is a decidedly modern conception.⁵¹ Lewis concludes that studying the history of oceanic divisions does not reveal a narrative of progress towards more accurate divisions, but rather reflects “aimless wandering...[as] different ways of dividing and labelling the sea come in and out of fashion, each successive view reflecting the epistemic environment of its time

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 2 December 1841, 26 May 1842, 9 June 1842, 10 May 1843, 19 May 1843, 29 May 1843, 19 May 1844.

⁴⁹ Lewis, “Dividing the ocean sea,” 189.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 211.

without adding any cumulative conceptual purchase.”⁵² Perceptions of the ocean are specific to their time and place. The outlook of Maritime whalers was closely tied to their personal experience with the sea: their mobility on the ocean and their exploitation of its resources. Men who circulated within multiple ocean basins and explored many corners of them required more precise language than that of oceanic basins.

Maritime Misfortune: Encountering Danger In All The World’s Oceans

The fact that whalers recognized, often arbitrary, divisions of the ocean does not necessarily indicate that they experienced their work differently across it. Life at sea in the nineteenth century was a constant struggle towards navigational specificity. The Longitude Act (1714) was established by the British Government as an incentive for determining a practical method of finding the longitude of a vessel at sea. The Act offered a prize to whoever was able to solve the problem. It was not until 1761 that finding longitude by lunar distance became a proven method and the efficacy of chronometers as an alternative technique was not confirmed until its use during James Cook’s second voyage, from 1772-1775.⁵³ Determining longitude was a complex procedure, even after the advent of the chronometer. These devices were expected to lose time and this could be accounted for in the formulas used. The trick was to know the “error” or daily rate, as it was commonly known.⁵⁴ In bad weather mariners might have to rely on older, alternative methods such as dead reckoning. Latitude and longitude are

⁵² *Ibid.*, 210.

⁵³ Derek Howse, “Navigation and Astronomy in the Voyages,” in *Background To Discovery: Pacific Exploration from Dampier to Cook*, edited by Derek Howse (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 166-71.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

measured by degrees, minutes, and seconds with each progressive measurement denoting greater accuracy. Nineteenth-century mariners were rarely capable of measuring their position beyond the ‘minute’ and often only recorded their degree of latitude or longitude. Worse still, these calculations were sometimes off by several degrees. Each degree of latitude is approximately 111 kilometres apart; degrees of longitude are 111 kilometres apart at the equator, becoming progressively closer together as they near the poles. The difference of one degree of latitude or longitude could radically change where a vessel was thought to be. Practitioners of oceanic history have begun to call for “incorporating the actual, lived experience of the ocean into the studies of maritime regions.”⁵⁵ The anticipation, and acceptance, of danger at sea formed a prominent part of the seafaring psyche. Richard Henry Dana Jr., for instance, reflected, “whatever your feelings may be, you must make a joke of everything at sea.”⁵⁶ The dangers of life at sea, though seldom remarked upon, still weighed on the minds of mariners.

Trading opportunities and the exploitation of natural resources drew vessels to the Pacific Ocean in ever-greater numbers in the nineteenth century. Demand for accurate navigational aids quickly outstripped the knowledge of official bodies. The United States Exploration Expedition (Ex. Ex.), established by the American government in 1838, illustrates this point. The Ex. Ex. was established to increase the availability of reliable cartographic information for mariners by a government whose citizens increasingly relied on Pacific commerce for their financial success. The American government viewed the Pacific as a place that needed to be tamed—and as a place that *could* be tamed—through

⁵⁵ Steinberg, “Of other seas,” 161.

⁵⁶ Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 36.

exploration and documentation. The United States had strong economic interests in the Pacific Ocean, not least among them the whaling industry. To promote these interests, the Ex. Ex. was dispatched to the Pacific Ocean from 1838 to 1842. Jason W. Smith, in an article focused on the expedition's time spent charting the Fiji Islands, writes, "cartography laid powerful claims to the ocean" though it was still little understood by Americans, mariners included, even by mid-century.⁵⁷ Smith rightly claims that charts were cultural documents that influenced perceptions of the Pacific Ocean in America, noting, for instance, which islands were inhabited by cannibals, as well as navigational tools.⁵⁸ But Smith also suggests that "mariners...were at the mercy of their charts" and only the improvement of them could make maritime travel in the Pacific safer.⁵⁹ Mariners certainly looked to their charts for guidance, but they realized they were deficient and behaved accordingly.

The absence of information on charts does not necessarily equate to the actual absence of knowledge. For instance, by the time the Ex. Ex. set out for the Pacific, whaling ships had been operating there on a regular basis—profitably and without catastrophic losses—for nearly half a century.⁶⁰ Smith claims, truthfully, that the Ex. Ex. returned to the United States with "unprecedented knowledge of the Pacific Ocean", but it is unclear how this new information benefited everyday mariners in the Pacific. After spending three months charting the Fiji Islands, the expedition had run out of time to

⁵⁷ Smith, "The Bound[less] Sea," 711.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 719-20.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 723.

⁶⁰ Michelle Burnham argues that the risks incumbent upon industries in the Pacific were muted by "narrativizing risk" and the large amounts of time and distance involved. See Michelle Burnham, "Trade, Time, and the Calculus of Risk in Early Pacific Travel Writing," *Early American Literature* 46.3 (2011): 431.

complete its survey.⁶¹ One officer engaged in the effort remarked privately that the charts were not ideal and that they should not be relied upon for their precision! Despite the new charts, he warned that “navigators [should] keep their eyes open when running in this group...even if they should have a cargo of charts aboard.”⁶² This was no different than the state of affairs beforehand. Smith acknowledges this comment, but fails to appreciate its full meaning. If mariners were consistently charting courses across the Pacific to specific places with inaccurate and out-dated nautical charts, they must have been acquiring their knowledge through different means: personal experience. Government sponsored voyages to the Pacific were the minority: most mariners relied on information passed by word of mouth among themselves—gleaned from years of personal experience—to supplement their incomplete and inaccurate charts.

The work of Alexander Dalrymple, an employee of the East India Company (EIC), demonstrates that flawed charts plagued mariners around the globe, not just in the Pacific sphere. Dalrymple recognized that disaster often befell ships in well-travelled waters and proposed to systematically survey logbooks held by the EIC in order to construct more accurate charts of their shipping routes. The EIC agreed to his scheme in 1779. The impetus for their acquiescence was the loss of the company ship *Colebrooke* the previous year. The *Colebrooke* sank after striking Anvil Rock, in False Bay, Cape of Good Hope, despite multiple previous losses on the rock as early as 1745.⁶³ Despite his ambitions, Dalrymple quickly learned that the creation of accurate charts was not as

⁶¹ Smith, “The Bound[less] Sea,” 726-6.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 732.

⁶³ Andrew S. Cook “Surveying the Seas: Establishing the Sea Routes to the East Indies”, in *Cartographies of Travel and Navigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 83.

simple as ‘crowd sourcing’ logbooks. The inaccuracy of dead reckoning, only slowly giving way to the use of chronometers at the end of the eighteenth century, meant that there were conflicting accounts of marine bodies. For example, Dalrymple was forced to include the non-existent islands of Ady and Candy, which were likely a transposition of the nearby Chagos Archipelago, on his 1780 chart of the western Indian Ocean, as a precaution.⁶⁴

Dalrymple was also frequently frustrated by the failure of cartographers to reflect new innovations in their new editions. Reprints of charts often did not reflect new information gathered since their original printing, even if that information was commonly accepted.⁶⁵ This lethargy was compounded by the propensity of individual captains, particularly in the navy, to publish individual accounts, which could vary wildly from one survey to the next.⁶⁶ Thus, Andrew Cook has concluded that “the mariner, with few charts to hand and no basis for the objective assessment of those he had, continued to rely, in Halley’s terms, on “latitude, lead and lookout”” long after one supposes he should have had to.⁶⁷ In the early nineteenth century, knowledge of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans could not be assumed with much greater certainty than that of the Pacific.

Inadequate charting in the Pacific Ocean exacerbated these problems, but it was by no means an issue specific to navigation in those waters. Whaling vessels that sailed from Halifax and Saint John encountered uncharted obstacles throughout their voyages and in all the oceans they navigated. Issues with chronometers, for instance, plagued

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

navigators in waters around the globe. Latitude could be determined in a variety of ways, but longitude relied either on lunar distance or chronometer. The latter was the simpler of the two methods and was determined using the difference between local time and Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).⁶⁸ Chronometers were used to keep track of GMT while at sea.⁶⁹ These unreliable devices could confound even the most skilled seamen. It was not uncommon for ships' captains to compare their longitudes and find them variable by several degrees—which could equate to hundreds of kilometres. Even if a captain were capable of determining the location of his ship, locating landmasses was still a difficult task even by mid-century; inaccurate and incomplete charts were commonplace. Assuming the original surveyor had faithfully noted the location of an island, mapmakers were notorious for erroneously representing their work.⁷⁰ John O. Sands, as part of a larger study of exploratory developments, notes that engravers were also guilty of introducing inaccuracies and that mariners were aware of the unreliability of their sources.⁷¹ Sands adds that “to know that something is wrong and to know what is actually right are two separate matters.”⁷² James Coffin demonstrated this point when he made Abingdon Island (Pinta, Galapagos Islands) in 1841:

At sunset the island of Abingdon bore E 15 m dist. Long. by chron 90 32; by bearings land 90 55. The reason that I do not alter the rate of the chron. so as to make it correspond with the Long. of these islands is *because it is said they are placed from 15 to 30 m further west than they really are.*⁷³

⁶⁸ Howse, “Navigation and Astronomy,” 171.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ John O. Sands, “The Sailor’s Perspective: British Naval Topographic Artists,” in *Background To Discovery: Pacific Exploration from Dampier to Cook*, edited by Derek Howse (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 188.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-44*, 29 (2 June 1841). Emphasis added.

Navigational charts might be thought of as general guides rather than precise maps, a fact that mariners were well aware of. Thomas Creighton hints at a similar occurrence during his time aboard the *Rose*. Cruising on the line in 1844, Thomas recorded that

land was raised from the mast head bearing N by W at 6 we were up with it, it is a small low sand bank surrounded by a reef and in Lat 0' 50' N Long 176' 10' W it is not laid down on any of our charts or Epitomies (sic.) but it may be New Nantucket which we heard was one degree further west.⁷⁴

This is yet another example of the persistent inaccuracies in the charts available to nineteenth-century mariners, but it also suggests that navigational information passed between mariners much as other news did. The charts Thomas and his superiors had aboard to facilitate navigation did not offer any insight into what island they had run across. It was information passed informally from ship to ship that offered the only clue.

The difficulties encountered by James Coffin on his final voyage demonstrate that navigation could be challenging in all waters. On his voyage aboard the *Athol* (1845-49), Coffin was plagued by an inaccurate chronometer. On 25 October 1845, long before he passed Cape Horn and entered the Pacific, he recorded, “by a lunar [observation] today I find the [chronometer] about 10° too fast.”⁷⁵ In November he again recorded, “the Greenwich time shown by [chronometer] compared with that deduced from a distance between the moon and mars is 6°21” too fast. [Chronometer] 10.57.6. Lunar 10.50.45 Green time (sic.)”⁷⁶ Coffin recorded testing the device twice more before the month was out.⁷⁷ When the *Athol* arrived off the coast of Cape Horn two months later, Coffin compared the chronometer’s reading with the bearings taken from Staten Land (Isla de

⁷⁴ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: July 9, 1844. Emphasis added. New Nantucket is now known as Baker Island, United States Minor Outlying Islands.

⁷⁵ JDC on the *Athol*, 1845-49: 25 October 1845.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 13 November 1845.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 20 November 1845 and 21 November 1845.

los Estados, Argentina), complaining, “the [chronometer] is wrong again it’s a Humbug.”⁷⁸ In May of that year Coffin put in to Callao (Peru), in an attempt to remedy his problem once and for all: “I went in for the purpose of getting a chronometer and four men. The men I got but the chron., no.”⁷⁹ Coffin’s troubles were extreme—demonstrating the fragile nature of a new and complex technology—but they were not unique.

Ships’ captains frequently compared their longitudes when they met at sea to ensure that their chronometers were functioning properly and that they were actually where they believed themselves to be. Coffin did so at the outset of his voyage aboard *Athol* when he encountered the *Christopher Mitchell* off the coast of Brazil. On 6 October 1845, and again the following day, he recorded both his own longitude and that taken from the nearby vessel.⁸⁰ Their calculations disagreed, though not grievously so. On that second day, Coffin also recorded a longitude determined by lunar distance: it coincided more closely with the *Christopher Mitchell*’s calculations than with his own, perhaps a sign of the trouble to come. In May 1847, Coffin recorded a lunar distance taken by himself and each of his officers alongside the results from the chronometer. This was probably a training exercise for the junior officers as well as a check of the chronometer and Coffin’s own calculations. Of the six lunar distances recorded, no two are alike, but they are all similar and, most importantly for the navigation of the *Athol*, they agreed with the chronometer.⁸¹ Coffin was not the only whaling master to struggle with navigation. Jethro Brooks, commander of the *Peruvian* from Saint John 1841-45,

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 20 January 1846.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 12 May 1846.

⁸⁰ JDC on the *Athol*, 1845-49: 6 October 1845 (Latitude: 15d 7m S; Longitude: 31d 54m W) and 7 October 1845.

⁸¹ JDC on the *Athol*, 1845-49: 10 May 1847.

was also plagued by similar problems. Like Coffin, Brooks sometimes recorded the longitude of the ships he encountered at sea, and near the end of the voyage he found his chronometer to be defective.⁸² On the voyage home in March 1845, Brooks “found our [chronometer] 100 miles west of her reckoning” while off the coast of Brazil.⁸³ Adrift alone on the open ocean, mistaking the ship’s location could lead to disaster. The difficulties of determining one’s own location were compounded by the difficulty of knowing where to expect land, which was complicated by the vastness of the Pacific Ocean.

The last discovery of a Pacific island by Europeans occurred in 1859, after the men this study focuses on returned home to Halifax and Saint John. These men sailed at a time when there was not only a belief that new islands might still be discovered, but also a real possibility that they could be. Many of the islands discovered prior to their travels had not yet been added to navigational charts. Worse yet, they may have been added incorrectly. To supplement deficient charts, journal and logbook keepers made note when an island suddenly appeared where it was not expected to be. Even in the nineteenth century, it was worth noting when the charts agreed with observations—and when they did not. Caleb Miller, master of the *Pacific* on her voyage 1837-40, was lucky enough to record that landmarks agreed with his charts more often than they did not. He did so when the *Pacific* made Sunday Island (Raoul Island, New Zealand) in 1838, recording his latitude and longitude followed by a note that, “this agrees with the island

⁸² JBB on the *Peruvian*, 1841-45: 15 November 1841, 10 December 1841, 6 January 1842.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 19 March 1845.

as laid down in the Chart.”⁸⁴ Cruising between Tonga and New Zealand in 1839 he recorded that “[French] Rock got some [latitudes] which agreed with the [latitude] and [longitude] of the Rock as laid down in I. W. Norris Chart (sic).”⁸⁵ In the 1830s it was a notable occurrence when islands were laid out correctly in the charts.

A decade later, James Coffin demonstrated why such instances were worth recording. On his way from Ascension (Pohnpei, Micronesia) to Guam, Coffin recorded,

dashing along at the rate of about 9 [knots] when about 9 PM the cry of land ahead was heard. Hauled the topmast [studding] sail wore around...tacked and weathered the island. This is a low island bearing NW ½ W from Ascension *it is not noticed on the charts. We were near going on to it.*⁸⁶

This island that nearly brought Coffin’s voyage to an unfortunate end could have been either Oroluk or one of the Hall Islands, which both lie between Pohnpei and Guam.

Oroluk was discovered in 1565 on the same voyage that established the course of the Manila Galleons, but a full account of it was not published until 1887; the captain of a British trading vessel discovered the Hall Islands in 1824.⁸⁷

Around the same time, the voyage of the *Rose* was plagued by similar anxieties. Sailing men of the day were well aware of the deficiencies of their navigational charts and Thomas Creighton recorded, while cruising the Marshall Islands, that they were “Expecting to make the land any moment as the Islands of the Radack Chain (sic.) are not laid down correctly in the charts and *we have run over several without seeing them.*”⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Caleb Miller [hereafter CM] on the *Pacific*, 1837-40: 7 November 1838.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 23 February 1839. Now L’Esperence Rock, in the Kermadec Islands.

⁸⁶ JDC on the *Athol*, 1845-49: 11 April 1848. Emphasis added.

⁸⁷ Max Quanchi and John Robson, *The A to Z of the Discovery and Exploration of the Pacific Islands* (Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, 2009), xx, 7, 79.

⁸⁸ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 10 April 1844. Emphasis added. Ralik Chain, Marshall Islands.

Creighton and his shipmates were aware, through their own experience, that the charts they possessed were both incomplete and inaccurate.

On occasion, the uncertainty of the Pacific led to excitement. In 1835, the log keeper aboard the *Peruvian* recorded encountering,

a small island covered with trees, with a white sand beach all around about a quarter of a mile long...there being no such island laid down in our charts we considered it first discovered by us, and we accordingly gave it the name of 'Leavitt's Island,' being in latitude 10.4 south longitude 152.25 west.⁸⁹

This may have been a more frequent occurrence in the Pacific than in the Atlantic or Indian Oceans by this time—or perhaps not. Using the location recorded for “Leavitt’s Island” it is impossible to determine what island this crew from Saint John “discovered”. The coordinates refer to an empty stretch of ocean circled by French Polynesia to the south and east, Kiribati to the north and Samoa to the west. “Leavitt’s Island” could easily have been any one of the islands belonging to those groups, making it a spectre much like Dalrymple’s Ady and Candy islands in the Indian Ocean.

Whalemen from Halifax and Saint John could encounter danger long before reaching the Pacific Ocean. Thomas Creighton noted an obstacle in the Cape Verde Islands he called Leaton’s Rock “between [Bonavista] and St. Iago...a very dangerous shoal...in Long Lat 16° 47’ N Long 23° 15 W.”⁹⁰ Even by 1843 mariners still made note of hazards, presumably ignored by chart makers, in the well-travelled Atlantic Ocean. James McNab recorded receiving a warning about a similar hazard lying off the north coast of Argentina while the *Pacific* cruised near Baja California. The warning was

⁸⁹ NBM, Excerpt from the *Evening Times Globe*, Stuart Trueman, “Rollicking Whaling Days Here Were ‘Big Business’ Days Too”, 15 June 1935.

⁹⁰ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 12 February 1843.

passed to the *Pacific* from the ship *Albion*, detailing a hazard encountered by the schooner *Ariel* on her passage from Liverpool to Valparaiso:

The object seen was about six feet above the surface of the water and twenty or thirty in circumference (above water but larger underneath) when close to saw another --- object ahead about a cables length to the N.E. of the first two or three feet below the surface of the water – also of a reddish appearance. The sea was breaking over them and making a noise. There was some seaweed and an immense number of sea fowl about them. *This dangerous rock not being mentioned in any Chart or Manuscript whatever, I consider it of importance that it should be made public so that others may be aware of the danger – it being in the general rout round Cape Horn and to the West coast of South America—its correct position I give as follows –*

Latitude by a good meridian altitude of the sun 40d 0m S. Long. By a good lunar observation taken that day – also by chronometric observation 57d 37m W.⁹¹

Mariners had to be cautious no matter what part of the world's ocean they travelled.

Atlantic waters could prove just as hazardous as the Pacific.

The most tragic episode of the short lived whaling industry in Halifax and Saint John demonstrates that navigating the well-known Atlantic was equally as dangerous as cruising the Pacific. The *Courier*, a Saint John newspaper, announced the launch of a new vessel for the whaling fleet, the *Thomas Millidge*, on 12 July 1834:

built expressly for the [whaling trade]...[and] owned by G. D. Robinson &Co. and Mr. N. S. DeMill...[was] towed out of the harbour on Monday last by the steamer Maid of the Mist, fully equipped for voyages to the Pacific and Indian Ocean. These vessels are principally manned by young men belonging to this Province, and have the earnest wishes of the community for their success and safety.⁹²

The *Courier* followed the *Thomas Millidge's* progress around the world just as it did the other vessels in Saint John's whaling fleet. It was reported on 7 March 1835 that she was

⁹¹ JDM on the *Pacific*, 1827-30: Note 2. Emphasis added. This information was received from the *Albion* on 24 November 1828, it is unclear when the *Ariel* discovered the obstruction.

⁹² NBM, *New Brunswick Courier*, 12 July 1834.

spoken the 25 October 1834 with four whales; in July she was reported to have been “off Madagascar” on 2 April 1835 and was spoken in the Mozambique Channel 1 July 1835 with “700 wh., 120 sp.”.⁹³ It was on her return voyage to Saint John, hold filled with oil, that the *Thomas Millidge* met her end. The Saint John *Observer* reported on 12 April 1836:

Shipwreck. – We regret to have to announce the ----- loss of the fine new Whale Ship Thomas Milledge, owned by Messers. G. D. Robinson & Co. and N.S. DeMill, of this city, together with her cargo, just returning from her first voyage of 21 months, with 1000 barrels black, and 400 of sperm oil, a number of tons of whalebone &c., within a few miles of her destined port, having run on the rocks near Musquash [in the Bay of Fundy] between 7 and 8 o'clock on Sunday morning last, in a very dense fog, and the wind strong from the S. W. Left Pernambuco early in March, and by an observation --- on Friday last found themselves south of Grand Manan, then ran for the Bay, but fog setting in that night, could not descry the land in any direction on Saturday night lay to, and on Sunday morning shaped their course as they judged by the soundings, for Partridge Island at the entrance of their harbour, but the tide and wind setting the ship in-shore, rocks and breakers were all at once discovered...both anchors were instantly let go, but too late to save the vessel, as she swung round on the rocks, and all efforts to save her were of no avail. Part of the crew continued by her till evening, doing what service they could, when she began to break up, the casks of oil floating out of her and starting against the rocks, and yesterday morning the ships had wholly disappeared. The crew consisted of 38 individuals, who by the loss of the cargo (from the proceeds of which their pay was to be derived, they being, as is customary in whaling ships, on shares.) which was uninsured, are truly in a piteous state, many of them having likewise lost their clothes, and stand in need of the generous sympathy and assistance of the public.⁹⁴

James Coffin remembered a similar incident—if not this wreck itself—while cruising the Pacific in 1843. He opined “How should I feel to grease some of the Bay of Fundy rocks with *Mag*'s ribs and trucks and a full cargo of sperm oil?”⁹⁵ The loss of the *Thomas Millidge* served, then and now, as sobering reminder of the power of the sea and the

⁹³ *Ibid.*, *The Courier*, 7 March 1835, 18 July 1835, 9 January 1835.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, *New Brunswick Observer*, 12 April 1836.

⁹⁵ Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-44*, 56 (22 December 1842).

inability of seafarers to combat it even when equipped with new technologies and local knowledge.

Maritime whalers realized, through their lived experience, that the lines drawn through the ocean were arbitrary. A ship could sink thirty kilometres from home just as easily as it could on the far side of the world. In his study of the circulation of the pineapple around the globe, Gary Okihiro concludes that “there are no Atlantic or Pacific oceans absent [the] intervention [of the mind]...discourses, comprised of language and ideology, display the exercise of power to segregate, while the physical manifestation...reveals a single world and world ocean.”⁹⁶ Whether or not they acknowledged it in their terminology, Maritime whalers lived this continuity every day they spent at sea.

Conclusion

For nineteenth-century mariners, the ocean simultaneously represented continuity and discontinuity. The language they used to describe different portions of the ocean indicates that they recognized regions within it based on multiple—often invisible—divisions. Their experiences living and working on the ocean suggest that the way these men interacted with the ocean differed little, even in its distant reaches. Terms such as ‘Atlantic’ and ‘Pacific’ were recognized and used, but in conjunction with a multiplicity of other divisions. These men used geographical touch-stones—the equator, tropics, and Prime Meridian—to define the spaces they occupied. They referred to nearby—and sometimes distant—places to make sense of particular sections of an ocean basin.

⁹⁶ Okihiro, “Of space/time and the pineapple,” 97-98.

Whalemen defined space through their use of it, designating particular expanses of ocean as a specific whaling grounds.

Despite conceiving of the ocean as a multitude of smaller plots, there was still constancy to life at sea, even when it carried men around the world. The ocean—Atlantic and Indian, as well as Pacific—was a place of danger in addition to a source of work. Whalemen from Halifax and Saint John acknowledged the perils of their trade around the globe. The Pacific Ocean may have been the newest addition to the EuroAmerican sphere in the early nineteenth century, but its navigation was not necessarily more hazardous. The wreck of the *Thomas Millidge*, so close to home after a distant voyage, demonstrates that disaster could strike anywhere at sea—and mariners knew it.

Oceanic paradigms allow for insight into the connections men made while sailing from port to port—but the time in between was more than a link in a larger network. For men who lived and worked at sea, this time and space was full of meaning. Whalemen understood the ocean in a *maritime* rather than an *oceanic* sense. The use of oceanic paradigms has the potential to obscure that understanding. They help historians conceptualize the intricate links that existed between disparate pre-modern communities, but as a concept they lack the depth required to understand the lived experience of mariners. Dividing the world's ocean space into hermetic systems is also disingenuous. While historians limit the connections of the Atlantic world to the Atlantic Ocean, it is clear that nineteenth-century mariners and their contemporaries did not view Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope as significant barriers to the world at large. To fully understand the nineteenth-century 'Atlantic world' historians must also look beyond it.

CHAPTER 4

Exploitation And Experience: Individual Perspectives On The Pacific Ocean, Its Islands, And Peoples

By the time Samuel Cunard and his associates outfitted the ship *Pacific* and sent her around the globe in search of whales in 1827, there was already a wealth of information about the Pacific Ocean—some true, some false—circulating in the EuroAmerican imagination. These preconceptions primed whalers from Halifax and Saint John to view the islands of the Pacific and their inhabitants in particular ways and some of these ideas are evident in their accounts. What is most striking about the journals kept by these men is their *lack* of uniformity. There was no standard cultural encounter: individuals, even, did not react consistently to Pacific islands or their peoples.

The relationship between whalers and indigenous peoples was one of contradictions: at turns friendly and disdainful, familiar and distant, omnipresent but invisible. The men studied here never reported violence with Pacific peoples, but the possibility lingered in their imaginations. Interactions with many islanders were restricted to trading activities. This trade facilitated the length of whaling voyages—the fruits and vegetables they provided were necessary to prevent scurvy and starvation—but journal keepers rarely recorded the details of these interactions. Some encounters with indigenous populations went well beyond these superficial interactions: indigenous islanders also lived aboard whale ships as crewmen: working, sleeping, and eating alongside men from the Maritimes.

The whalers interpreted their interactions with Pacific peoples and places in diverse ways, but several patterns persisted. Their relationship with the ocean and its islands was primarily one of exploitation. Whalers filled their holds with the blubber

from dozens of different whales, turning the waves and their ships red with blood. They stripped the land as carelessly as they did the sea. They took firewood to fuel their try works, fish and sea birds to fill their plates—along with pigs and bullocks that were introduced to new habitats by Europeans to provision ships (and destroy ecosystems)—and when the whales failed they harvested seals from the shore to fill their quota of oil. Above all else, whalers voyaged to the Pacific Ocean *for whales*. This did not mean, however, that they were blind to the places and peoples that surrounded them. They admired the beauty of the Pacific islands as they destroyed it and they disparaged Pacific peoples even as they used their labour and their goods to survive and to thrive economically.

Pacific Theories: Europe And The ‘New World’

Information about the Pacific could be purchased by literate individuals of means in the form of first-hand accounts—complete with illustrations—of several late-eighteenth century voyages, most notably those of Captain James Cook, which sold thousands of copies.¹ A multitude of accounts by less memorable individuals—“ship captains, castaways and captives, disgruntled or impoverished sailors, missionaries, and merchants”—were also available by the early nineteenth century.² These accounts gave rise to “paired images [of the Pacific]—of violence and profit, of cannibalization and accumulation.”³ The Pacific was portrayed as a place of both danger and promise,

¹ John E. Crowley, *Imperial Landscapes: Britain’s Global Visual Culture, 1745-1820* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 75.

² Burnham, “Trade, Time, and the Calculus of Risk,” 430.

³ *Ibid.*, 432.

though literary scholar Anna Johnston suggests that the division between real and fictitious accounts was blurry and that contemporary readers had difficulty telling the difference between the two.⁴ Long before explorers actually visited the Pacific Ocean, there were “fanciful and fraudulent voyage accounts” in circulation that purported to be true accounts of the Southern continent, which many Europeans believed to exist.⁵ Further to this point, John E. Crowley argues that the representations of colonial spaces created by explorers and their artists, crafted to protect imperial interests, were often based on familiar scenes at home rather than on reality.⁶

The earliest accounts of the Pacific came from sanctioned voyages of exploration conducted, to an extent, in the name of science. William Dampier, for instance, adhered to the model of objective observation imposed by the Royal Society that was “fundamentally opposed to any romanticizing of the unfamiliar by those who...actually experienced it.”⁷ James Cook and Joseph Banks were also beholden to the “precepts of the Society,” which sponsored their voyage, and Banks later became president of the institution.⁸ Sarah Johnson claims that even these early, scientifically minded accounts of islands in the South Seas were interspersed with a paradisiacal rhetoric that likened them to Eden.⁹ Johnson, who studies eighteenth-century literary accounts of the South Seas, claims that this tradition had its roots in the sailor’s overwhelming desire to make landfall

⁴ Johnston, “Writing the Southern Cross,” 202.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Crowley, *Imperial Landscapes*, 34, 47-48, 66.

⁷ Barnes, “Measuring the Marvelous,” 47.

⁸ Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific 1768-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 2.

⁹ Sarah Johnson, “Missionary Positions: Romantic European Polynesian from Cook to Stevenson,” in *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, Tim Youngs, ed. (London: Anthem Press, 2006), 180.

after months at sea, a fantasy that was typically represented as reaching paradise.¹⁰ This Romantic trend developed over the eighteenth century and writers came to portray “tropical landfalls [as] paradise regained, and the realization that humans had not, after all, been expelled from the garden.”¹¹ This view of the South Seas was a contrast to the moralizing missionary accounts that developed simultaneously.¹² This “evangelical religious perspective” portrayed Pacific peoples as “benighted and wicked savages”.¹³ The environment of the Indian and Pacific Oceans was typically experienced within the landscape of indigenous cultures and EuroAmerican interactions with them, both historical and immediate. These interactions were, in turn, represented through the scientific lens of explorers, the civilizing rhetoric of missionaries, and romantic literature.

At the same time that visions of the Pacific came to be influenced by nineteenth-century Romantic ideals, a similar phenomenon was occurring on another frontier, that of the American West. Kerry R. Oman argues that even fur traders and trappers, who are often depicted as outside the influence of eastern American and European society, came to represent their experiences and depictions of the western landscape through the tenants of Romanticism.¹⁴ Their firsthand accounts of the West were not as deeply romanticized as the literary accounts of Washington Irving or the landscape paintings produced by the Hudson River School artists, but were clearly influenced by the same ideals.¹⁵ Writers and artists praised wilderness, but trappers and traders had a more complicated

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 182-3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹² *Ibid.*, 185-6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁴ Kerry R. Oman, ““Rejoicing in the Beauties of Nature”: The Image of the Western Landscape During the Fur Trade,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 29.4 (2009): 302.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 308.

relationship with their surroundings. The latter “spoke positively about the West...in terms of landscape, not wilderness;” it was a place of beauty, but also of danger, where “the threat of perishing was a constant reality.”¹⁶ Encounters with indigenous Americans often contributed to the fur traders’ impression of untamed wilderness.¹⁷ Traders and trappers were “conditioned...to try and understand their surroundings” through the aesthetics of Romanticism, but their accounts were a combination of those ideals and their own lived experience.

In her introduction to *Victorian Literature and Culture*’s 2015 special issue on the nineteenth-century Pacific Rim, Tamara S. Wagner describes the Victorian attitude toward exploration and the empire as one of “[fascination and anxiety]”; the literature of the day portrayed the Pacific as a place of adventure, “enticingly wild and exotic.”¹⁸

Bernard Smith explains that,

The exotic was what the European was not and so helped Europe to define itself...It was a category of accommodation by means of which the European perceived and interpreted the Other according to the limits and constraints of European understanding.¹⁹

Smith goes further and claims that the “exotic” could also be found in Europe, among the poor, in rural regions, and in isolated communities. These people were as culturally removed from upper class European society as indigenous peoples on the far side of the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Tamara S. Wagner, “Introduction: The Nineteenth-Century Pacific Rim: Victorian Transoceanic Studies Beyond the Postcolonial Matrix,” in “The Nineteenth-Century Pacific Rim,” ed. Tamara S. Wagner, Special Issue, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 43 (2015): 223.

¹⁹ Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific in the Wake of the Cook Voyages* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 9-10.

world.²⁰ The “exotic” was not simply something distant, strange, or new: it represented the antithesis of nineteenth-century European ideals.

Charles Withers argues that it was the discovery of these differences that gave rise to the European “Enlightenment’s self consciousness...based on distinctiveness.”²¹ Europe came to view itself in “relation to the exotic Otherness” of places such as the Pacific.²² The eighteenth-century philosopher Montesquieu typified the “environmental paradigm” of his time and strongly influenced the generations that followed. He believed, in the Hippocratic tradition, “that fertile soils produced weak, cowardly men, while barren soils bred brave sons...It followed that ‘people are, therefore, more vigorous in cold climates.’”²³ This conviction was used to differentiate the peoples of Europe from those of Asia and beyond.²⁴ Environmental differences were used to explain and “establish ‘otherness’... in times of rapidly widening geographical horizons or intensified inter-ethnic contact.”²⁵ Ideas about environmental determinism grew out of uncertainty about Europe’s place in the wider world it was slowly discovering. Thomas P. Dunlap argues that it was during this period of discovery in the late eighteenth century, that natural history—the ways that science organized knowledge about the world—invented the world as Europeans understood it.²⁶ This formal scientific knowledge grew parallel

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

²¹ Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment*, 12.

²² *Ibid.*, 7-8.

²³ David Arnold, *The Problem of Nature: Environment, Culture and European Expansion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 20-21.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12

²⁶ Thomas P. Dunlap, “Creation and Destruction in Landscapes of Empire,” in *City, Country, Empire: landscapes in environmental history*, ed. Jeffry M. Diefendorf and Kurk Dorsey (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 213.

to “practical knowledge and local experience” of distant places, but the former took precedence in the minds of most.²⁷

This was evidenced by resistance from the East India Company’s hierarchy to the attempts by successive governors of St Helena, a Company holding, to prevent further deforestation and erosion.²⁸ These governors took actions such as requiring the enclosure of livestock and an attempt ““to exterminate the goat population, which [was] identified as peculiarly destructive.”²⁹ Islands were a world in miniature and it was clear to those who observed the effects of the plantation system and clear cutting on their environment firsthand that these actions had devastating consequences.³⁰ Environmental historian Richard H. Grove uses this example, as well as events in the Canary Islands and the West Indies, to refute the claim that EuroAmericans first became aware that their actions could be detrimental to the environment at the end of the nineteenth century. He argues that, “as early as 1840, one can clearly distinguish the emergence of fully developed environmental concerns and conservation policies strongly reinforced by what were considered to be scientific interpretations of environmental interactions.”³¹ Grove also suggests that these ideas were born out of the observations of natural scientists that used them to critique colonial practices more widely.³² At the same time that men of science were using environmental degradation to comment on political systems, the “classical

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

²⁸ Richard H. Grove, *Ecology, Climate and Empire: Colonialism and Global Environmental History, 1400-1940* (Cambridge, UK: The White Horse Press, 1997), 49-51.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

³² *Ibid.*

idea of the island as a social refuge was revived” and there was even hope that a geographic “Eden” could be found across the ocean.³³

Anthropologist Christian Marouby argues that Europeans struggled to reconcile their own beliefs and ways of life with the empirical facts revealed to them through the exploration of the ‘New World’. The idea of the “noble savage” was born out of Europe’s unwillingness to accept the ability of indigenous societies to function smoothly despite their lack of ‘civilization’ as evidenced by the absence of institutions such as formal schooling, court systems, and organized religion. The discovery of new peoples destabilized EuroAmerican belief systems—not least among them the Biblical creation myth—and had the potential to undermine the social order by providing an alternative example of social organization.³⁴ The idea that indigenous societies might function more efficiently than their European counterparts was untenable.³⁵ Marouby argues that it was the inability of EuroAmericans to reconcile their own beliefs about how society should operate with the alternative example presented by indigenous peoples that led to the circular logic of the “noble savage”.³⁶ Europeans denied the virtues of indigenous societies by naturalizing them, reducing them to a production of ‘nature’ rather than ‘nurture’.³⁷

³³ *Ibid.*, 46

³⁴ Christian Marouby, “From Early Anthropology to the Literature of the Savage: The Naturalization of the Primitive.” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 14 (1985): 290.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 291.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 294.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 296; Raf De Bont, ““Primitives” and Protected Areas: International Conservation and the “Naturalization” of Indigenous People, ca. 1910-1975,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 76.2 (2015): 217.

These ideas, wrought by the scientific elite, trickled down to other levels of society, informing beliefs about the new lands being opened to Europe through eighteenth- and nineteenth-century exploration efforts. Using broadside ‘ballads’ depicting transportation to Australia between 1790 and 1860, Dorice Williams Elliot argues that for the majority of the working class—save those unfortunate enough to themselves be transported—Australia was a blank space on the map.³⁸ These broadsides were the main reading material for the lower classes in the nineteenth century, with illustrations providing even greater access to a population with limited literacy.³⁹ She argues that the lack of details specific to Australia included in the descriptions of the environment in which these ballads took place that, in both the written and pictorial components, perpetuated the ideal that Australia truly was “terra nullius”, an empty place.⁴⁰ Yet for the men who actually visited the Pacific, Australia—and the other Pacific islands—was far from empty.

Most of the Pacific islands frequented by whalers were populated. Whalers traded with these people, used them as guides for their adventures, came into conflict with them, and treated them with varying degrees of respect and disdain. Many of the references made to indigenous peoples in voyage accounts are brief. Occasionally, however, whalers were compelled to record their interactions in greater detail. While the views of individuals cannot be generalized and used to represent whalers as a whole, these accounts do make explicit the beliefs that informed EuroAmerican-

³⁸ Dorice Williams Elliot, “Transported to Botany Bay: Imagining Australia in Nineteenth-Century Convict Broadside,” in “The Nineteenth-Century Pacific Rim,” ed. Tamara S. Wagner, Special Issue, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 43 (2015): 236.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 242.

indigenous encounters. These accounts also reveal that mariners did not experience the physical environment they encountered in isolation from culture—their own and those they visited. Their perceptions of the places they visited were influenced by the values and beliefs of EuroAmerican society.

The relationship between human beings and the natural environment is a complicated one, dependent on time, place, culture, and class. In the edited collection *Uncommon Ground*, William Cronon, et al., explore the idea of “nature”, critically assessing what “nature” means and acknowledging the human influences on what we consider “natural”.⁴¹ Cronon argues that there is no single, universal “nature” despite our use of the word as if there were; our idea of what is and is not natural and our relationship with those things will always be contingent and contested.⁴² Despite that fact, the physical “reality of nature is undeniable. The difficulty of capturing it with words—not even with the word “nature” itself—is in fact one of the most compelling proofs of its autonomy.”⁴³ Debates about the meaning of nature and the relationship of human beings to it are not a recent invention.

The edited collection *American Victorians and Virgin Nature*, explores similar ideas in their nineteenth-century incarnations. In the introduction to that collection, T.J. Jackson Lears suggests that there is a problem—not unique to our time—both with taking

⁴¹ William Cronon, “Introduction: In Search of Nature,” in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, edited by William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 25-26.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 55-56, 51.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 52.

“nature” as given and with viewing it solely as a cultural construct.⁴⁴ In Richard White’s contribution to the collection, he claims that for American Victorians, “labour in the land did not destroy nature; it was nature’s way of finishing the landscape.”⁴⁵ These men believed that nature created nations—with the environment instilling itself in the character of the individuals who inhabited it—and that labour did not destroy nature but completed it.⁴⁶ In this vein, White describes Victorians as “[indifferent] to wild nature.”⁴⁷ He cites the relentless extraction of natural resources for economic gain by all levels of society in the nineteenth century as evidence of this claim.⁴⁸ It was only at the end of the century that men like John Muir began to view labour and settlement as “destruction and defilement” and to appreciate unaltered landscapes.⁴⁹ White claims that the shift in attitude towards the environment in the late Victorian period was a reaction to the rapid “loss of existing landscapes.”⁵⁰ But the remorse for what had been lost was to come. During the period under review here, the environment was viewed as a tool to be used for the advancement of human beings.

During the same period, many theorists speculated about the relationship between people and place. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries produced many scientific

⁴⁴ T. J. Jackson Lears, “Introduction,” in *American Victorians and Virgin Nature*, edited by T. J. Jackson Lears (Cambridge, Mass.: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2002), ix-xi.

⁴⁵ Richard White, “Transcendental Landscapes,” in *American Victorians and Virgin Nature*, edited by T. J. Jackson Lears. Cambridge (Mass.): Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2002), 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

models used to legitimize “racial ideology.”⁵¹ David N. Livingstone, geographer and historian, argues that geography was a critical element in these scientific discourses, which he calls the “moral discourse of climate.”⁵² It was a widely held belief—propagated by the various scientific institutions of the day, such as the Ethnological, Anthropological, and Geographical Societies of London—that “climate *produced* race” or that ““Nature” had created different races and *placed* them in appropriate geographical régimes.”⁵³ This was coupled with a belief that acclimatization was not possible, an idea that seemed to be supported, for instance, by the high mortality rates among imperial soldiers serving in tropical climes; such examples served to convince common men as well as scholars of the veracity of these claims.⁵⁴ The scientists of the day used statistics and medical evidence to support their assertions of a, “geography of proper places.”⁵⁵

James Hunt, founder of the Anthropological Society of London, was the most notable proponent of these theories.⁵⁶ Knoxian principles of racial biology—which attributed certain moral traits to various races—also formed a part of this discourse.⁵⁷ It was an American, George R. Giddon—a polygenist and a prominent Victorian Anthropologist—who began the trend of creating maps to depict the distribution of races with his 1857 “Geographical distribution of monkeys in their relation to that of some inferior types of men.”⁵⁸ Climate was also believed to play a role in the character of a people: “salubrious

⁵¹ David N. Livingstone, “The moral discourse of climate: historical considerations on race, place and virtue,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 17.4 (1991): 428.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 414.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 416.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 417.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 415.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 417-8.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 421-4.

climates *produced* superior peoples; pernicious climates...propagated inferior stock.”⁵⁹

These theories influenced what sorts of people might be expected to be found in the various parts of the world. Tim Youngs, a scholar of travel writing, confirms that these ideas were perpetuated through written accounts. He suggests that travel writing was a means of exerting imperial influence over the places being described and that an ideology of Western—and British, in particular—superiority was omnipresent.⁶⁰

Pacific Realities: The Lived Experience Of Maritime Whalemens

The episodes of encounter recorded in the extant journals of the Maritime whaling trade demonstrate that these popular beliefs about the nineteenth-century world influenced mariners’ perceptions of the places they encountered. These theories helped them make sense of foreign experiences. Equally influential in their opinions, however, were their own first-hand observations. Bronwen Douglas, in her survey of the descriptions of Pacific peoples written by James Cook on his three successive voyages, argues that representations “were not motivated purely by preconceived European stereotypes...such representations were *also* products of travellers’ personal experience of actual encounters with indigenous people and the confusion, stress and exaggerated emotion such meetings entailed.”⁶¹ European perceptions were often reactions to indigenous actions and their implications for the success of the voyage or survival of the

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 426.

⁶⁰ Tim Youngs, “Introduction: Filling the Blank Spaces,” in *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, Tim Youngs, ed. (London: Anthem Press, 2006), 4-5.

⁶¹ Bronwen Douglas, “Voyages, Encounters, and Agency in Oceania: Captain Cook and Indigenous People,” *History Compass* 6.3 (2008): 715.

crew.⁶² As Anne Salmond demonstrates in her studies of first contact in New Zealand and Tahiti, EuroAmerican-indigenous encounters were influenced as much by indigenous beliefs, myths, and agency as they were by Europeans.⁶³ The events that followed first contact were often a series of mounting miscommunications.⁶⁴ The divergent attitudes of Maritime whalers support the notion that experience, as much as theory, influenced perceptions of the Pacific.

The journals kept by James Coffin on his successive voyages reveal the many notions about Pacific peoples that could co-exist simultaneously within one individual. His first two recorded voyages, aboard the *Margaret Rait* from 1836-38 and 1838-40, followed similar itineraries. Both voyages carried him across the Indian Ocean to the southern shores of New Zealand, lasted twenty-one and twenty-four months, respectively, and involved a long period of shore whaling. Despite these similarities, there is a stark contrast between the details recorded in each about the people and places Coffin encountered. For the two years he spent aboard the *Margaret Rait* during the first of these two voyages, he made one mention of indigenous peoples, while lying at Stewart Island, New Zealand: “20 natives on board.”⁶⁵ The absence of further references in this journal belied the potential contact Coffin had with foreign peoples on his travels.

During this voyage he called at ports where he could easily have encountered them—and

⁶² *Ibid.*, 722.

⁶³ Anne Salmond, *Aphrodite's Island: The European Discovery of Tahiti* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 459.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 19. Anne Salmond, *Two Worlds: First Meetings between Maori and Europeans, 1642-1772* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), 22, 431.

⁶⁵ JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1836-38: 29 April 1837.

recorded doing so on later voyages—yet he made no mention of them in his records from 1836-38.

On the following voyage, 1838-40, Coffin did not mention indigenous peoples with much greater frequency—he made only five references to them in a journal of similar length—but his entries indicate a familiarity that extended beyond his scant comments. When the *Margaret Rait* arrived at Ruapuke Island, at the tip of South Island, New Zealand, Coffin recorded hearing “the report of musketry on shore. The natives are afraid I think for this is the first ship that ever anchored in this harbour.”⁶⁶ His assumptions show that violence between indigenous peoples and EuroAmericans was a constant concern, despite its infrequency. It also demonstrates that stereotypes about indigenous peoples persisted among mariners despite concrete evidence—the possession of muskets clearly indicated prior contact with EuroAmericans—to the contrary.

Coffin’s entry the following day further demonstrates the absurdity of his statement. As it happened, he was previously acquainted with one of the “natives” supposedly frightened by their presence:

I went on shore this morning to pay the natives a visit, about 25 of them assembled on the shore and appeared somewhat relieved when one of them who recognized me, announced, that it was Mister [Coffin]. *I learned that the cause of the discharge of musketry that we heard last night was that they were afraid that the ship had brought Roubullak and his tribe; their inveterate enemies, to make war with them; and they wished to intimidate them by letting them know they had plenty of powder.* There are about 200 natives on this island who have left the adjacent coast and embodied themselves here for their better security against their enemies...The chief “Bloody Jack” has lately returned from Sydney “where he had an interview with the governor” and brought about one hundred pounds worth of property which he bought with whale bone that he collected by searching the beaches along the coast of New Zealand... His eagerness to emulate the Sydney government has led him to convert an old mill, into a watchouse (sic).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1838-40: 4 April 1839.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 5 April 1839.

This encounter demonstrates that despite his earlier silence, Coffin had previously met some of the inhabitants of Ruapuke. He was also aware of the complexities that governed EuroAmerican-indigenous pacts and relationships more widely. The beginning of this encounter was tense, but it was not a first encounter.

A month later, while the *Margaret Rait* was lying at the mouth of the Waikawa River, on South Island (New Zealand), not far from Ruapuke, Coffin offered a glimpse of the amicable relationships that existed between whalers and indigenous peoples, on a casual basis. Another acquaintance from his previous voyage arrived to trade: “Kikorah, the old chief who supplied us with potatoes last voyage, arrived this afternoon. He appears much pleased to see us.”⁶⁸ This relationship, as fleeting as it may have been, was amicable: “restless as I have been I think that I have laughed more today than I ever did in one day for the last four years of my life at our game with old Kikorah. Among other tricks, Mr. Taylor charged his pipe with powder; the explosion of which, together with the old chief’s amazement, presented a truly ludicrous scene.”⁶⁹ Both of these encounters, at Waikawa as well as Ruapuke, demonstrate that Coffin had more prior knowledge and contact with New Zealand’s indigenous population than he had previously recorded. Upon his return to the area, and his reunion with these individuals, he was inclined to record more detail.

Coffin’s subsequent voyage, 1840-44, presents contradictions of a different nature. Several passages indicate that he viewed the Pacific islands in the paradisiacal tradition of early exploration, complete with assumptions about the innocent nature of

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: 20 May 1839.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: 22 May 1839.

island inhabitants, despite immediate evidence that contradicted this one-dimensional representation of islands and peoples. Coffin described Gorgona Island (Columbia), in Eden-like terms:

The greatest part of it is mountainous, but there is enough of available land to employ a good number of inhabitants, and it is so fertile and so easily cultivated that *one cannot but say that nature designed it for a place of ease and enjoyment for its inhabitants*. Its earth contains a considerable quantity of *gold dust*, and its shores from the depth of three fathoms water contain the *pearl oyster* in such numbers as to make the pearl fishing a very profitable business.⁷⁰

Today, Gorgona Island is known as the Gorgona National Natural Park, where the Columbian government is working to preserve its unique ecosystems, but Coffin's portrayal speaks to nineteenth-century ideas about exploration and nature as much as it does the beauty of Gorgona. His description reflects the Victorian belief that human activity completed nature rather than destroying it.⁷¹ EuroAmericans praised the Pacific environment for its plentiful offerings, but believed it lacked the refinement of human work: Coffin admired the land but admonished its people for not taking advantage of it. His assessment is a more accurate reflection of EuroAmerican ideals than it is of Pacific realities.

Coffin was equally in awe of the unique natural features of St Paul's Island (Île Saint-Paul) in the Indian Ocean. The island of Île Saint-Paul is the upper most part of a volcanic crater, one of only a few land masses dotting the southern Indian Ocean. As

⁷⁰ Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-44*, 49 (27 August 1842). Emphasis added. Coffin made similar comments when he arrived at the Island of Tima Shee (near the Sōya Strait, between Japan and Russia) in 1848: "This is a mountainous island but has a good deal of very fine soil. There were a few huts about the shores, the inhabitants of which took to their heels as soon as they saw our boat approaching. From what could be discovered they were preparing a sort of Manni Hibitana for food but *doing nothing in agriculture*." See JDC on the *Athol*, 1845-48: 25 July 1848.

⁷¹ Discussed above, footnote 45.

Coffin described it in 1839, “the pool is about three fourths of a mile in diameter, and forms almost a perfect circle to the eye. The land, except on that side toward the sea, rises very steeply, and uniformly from the surface of the water, to the top of the mountain, which is high and level.”⁷² When they came upon the island, Coffin “went on shore, with Mr. Kenney and half the ships company,”⁷³ presumably to explore, as the island was uninhabited. Coffin described the ‘discovery’ of the island’s hot springs:

When I got on shore, the water had over flown the principle spring, which, “as I have been told” boils; but I found several places where the water was so hot, that I could not hold my hand in it. I was amused with the incredulity of some of my people, who upon being told that the water was hot, looked at it hesitatingly, and then said one, that water is not hot, at the same time thrusting his hand boldly into it. But he withdrew it as much surprised as burned. In this manner they all Tried the temperature of the water, the last, “notwithstanding he had seen six or seven try it before him” getting as much burned as the first. I thought it singular that I could see no steam arising from it.⁷⁴

Coffin and his compatriots were in awe of the island’s natural features. The southern Indian Ocean has few landmasses and Île Saint-Paul was an important way station for nineteenth-century mariners on their voyage to the Pacific. Coffin does not mention resupplying while ashore, but other whalers noted it as a source of fresh fish.⁷⁵ The island also supported a population of pigs and goats deposited there for the purpose of aiding mariners.⁷⁶ Despite the practical nature of a stop at Île Saint-Paul, or perhaps fuelled by it, whalers viewed the island as a paradise.

⁷² JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1838-40: 4 January 1839.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ En route to the Pacific Ocean, Thomas Creighton recorded, “Last Saturday we made the Island of St Paul’s which is a desolate desert island. We intended landing to get some fresh fish but it blew so hard we could not for which I was very sorry as *there is a boiling spring on the shore that I would like to have seen.*” See TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 25 April 1843. Emphasis added.

⁷⁶ Rhys Richards, “The Maritime Fur Trade: Sealers and Other Residents on St Paul and Amsterdam Islands,” *The Great Circle* 6.1 (1984): 25.

Île Saint-Paul was an unpopulated island, a hundred kilometres from its closest neighbour (Île Amsterdam) and over a thousand kilometres from any other land mass. These factors made it one of the few places where the physical environment of the Indian and Pacific Oceans could be experienced in isolation from its peoples and a moralizing EuroAmerican rhetoric. This was a rare occurrence. The environment of the Indian and Pacific Oceans was typically experienced within the landscape of indigenous cultures and EuroAmerican interactions with them, both historical and immediate. Île Saint-Paul, without a population in need of a missionary's instruction, escaped this process.

Coffin viewed at least some of the Pacific Ocean's residents in equally stereotypical terms, describing them as being in a primitive, innocent state. In contrast to his earlier reticence, he described trading with the inhabitants of Easter Island in 1843 in extreme detail:

a salubrious climate, and appears to be teeming with inhabitants, who are yet in the primate state. The produce of the island consists of sweet potatoes, yams, bananas and sugar cane. In exchange for these they take the scraps which remain from blubber when it is tried out, small pieces of wood and fishbones. The manner of exchanging articles with them is as follows: Take your articles of trade—scraps &c—in your boat and pull within about a cable's length of the shore, which is pretty rough, and upon which the surf breaks heavily. The natives with a basket, containing about half a peck of potatoes, fast to their backs or around the waist, plunge into the breakers, swim off to the boats, pass their baskets in; which we riffle of their contents, put in the scrap, hand the basket to its owner, and away he goes for the shore. Our boats that went in in the morning, met some of those children of nature a mile from the shore, and I have been told they sometimes will swim three or four miles off to a ship...I could not but admire their dexterity in swimming and in choosing the proper moment for coming off from the shore through the surf, and for going in again and climbing up the rough and almost perpendicular rocks.⁷⁷

Coffin went on to describe his trading encounter with a young indigenous woman in detail; she coquettishly induced him to present her with several scraps as gifts after

⁷⁷ Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-44*, 69-72 (26 December 1843).

“amusing [him] with her attitudes and gestures for a short time.”⁷⁸ His experience at Easter Island destabilized his (firmly held) belief that Pacific peoples were improved by the imposition of Christianity and “civilization”:

I have heard many men of my profession who have seen much and had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with almost all the natives of the islands of the Pacific Ocean say that civilization and the introduction of missionaries among them have done more harm than good. But whenever I heard a man affirm this as his opinion, I could not avoid being impressed with an unfavourable opinion of him. I could not help thinking him a prejudiced man and not possessed of that love for mankind, which ought to warm every human heart. But when I approached as near to the shore of Easter Island as the surf would admit and was lying on my oars deeply interested in the scene before me, I became a little staggered, a little wavering, somewhat irresolute as to what I should do if I had possessed the power of at once advancing these people to a state of civilization. Would I raise them to the comforts and the miseries of a civilized life, or allow them to remain in the apparently *happy ignorance* to which they now live?⁷⁹

It seems unlikely that, in 1843, the inhabitants of a much-frequented island such as this would still be living in a “happy ignorance” of European ways. After all, Coffin gained entertainment from the young indigenous woman; she gained valuable trading material—for free. As Jeffrey Diefendorf and Kurk Dorsey note, however, “there is no fixed border between [ideas about what constitutes] nature and culture” and Coffin’s opinion of the natural environment no doubt influenced his view of the people who lived there.⁸⁰

Jethro Brooks also provides evidence that whalers were fascinated by the ‘natural world’ in the Pacific Ocean. Brooks’s average entry lasted only a few lines, and an entire week could fit onto a single page, but on 11 March 1844, while at anchor in Byron’s Bay (Hilo Bay, Hawai’i), Brooks made an uncharacteristically long entry,

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1840-44: 69-72 (26 December 1843).

⁸⁰ Jeffrey M. Diefendorf and Kurk Dorsey, “Challenges for Environmental History,” in *City, Country, Empire: landscapes in environmental history*, ed. Jeffrey M. Diefendorf and Kurk Dorsey (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 5.

describing in detail—four pages worth—his excursion to the “celebrated volcano of Kilouar” (Kīlauea).⁸¹ Brooks’s attention to this incident—discussed above, in Chapter 1—in his otherwise pedantic journal, demonstrate that geographic features held as much, if not more, interest for mariners. After all, Brooks spent several days travelling with indigenous Hawaiians, but most of his account deals with the volcano: “at night we built a small one-sided house on the top of the crater to secure us from the wind we spent most of the night in gazing at the awful and *impressive* scene.”⁸² The volcano was impressive, he found the people less so.

These descriptions fit well with the images and ideas about the Pacific perpetuated by authors, artists, missionaries, and scientists. Less prominent in Coffin’s journal were the facts that contradict these images. Despite his remove from the indigenous peoples as described above, several of Coffin’s shipmates were Indigenous islanders. In twelve years of journaling, he mentioned the presence of these men only three times. In May 1843 he lamented an illness that had swept over the crew of the *Margaret Rait*, one of them, “Friday, a Sandwich Islander, poor fellow! it has thrown into a consumption. The doctor says he will not recover.”⁸³ A month later he reported “poor Friday, a native of the Sandwich Isles, died of a consumption, and at 9 A.M. we committed the corpse to the deep.”⁸⁴ Coffin’s only other entry on the subject suggests that Friday was not an exception among the *Margaret Rait*’s crew: “old Harry Bluff, a Sandwich Island native, shouted from the masthead, “There she blows,” a sound I had not

⁸¹ JBB on the *Peruvian*, 1841-45: 11 March 1844.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 11 March 1844. Emphasis added.

⁸³ Coffin, *Journal of the Margaret Rait, 1840-44*, 58 (26 May 1843).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 59 (28 June 1843).

heard for two long months.”⁸⁵ While he mentioned them little, these men would have been omnipresent during Coffin’s time at sea, much more so than Kikorah or the coquettish girl at Easter Island. These men, though little can be discerned about them, demonstrate that Indigenous islanders were a permanent part of the Pacific whaling experience. Their contact with crews was intimate; they were a part of the crew, not outsiders.

This revelation contradicts what Maritimers then and since have believed and perpetuated about the Maritime whaling industry. Contemporary newspaper accounts and early-twentieth-century chroniclers frequently denied the presence of Pacific peoples among Maritime whaling crews. When the barque *Beaver* was launched from Halifax in 1835, it was praised as “the first occasion where native enterprise has wholly depended on native resources.”⁸⁶ The author claimed the *Beaver* to be the first whaling vessel to depart Halifax or Saint John without the assistance of American officers or crew. While there may or may not have been American born mariners aboard the *Beaver*, it is likely that her voyage to the “South Seas” did include “natives” of other lands. Using indigenous labour was practical not only because it was readily available in the Pacific, where uncommitted EuroAmerican mariners were rare, but because it gave whaling masters the ability to ship extra hands while cruising for whales without having to ship a full complement home. The activity of whaling required far more men than the actual operation of the ship itself;⁸⁷ once the hold was full it made more sense to discharge

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 74 (11 January 1844).

⁸⁶ NBM, *The New Brunswick Courier*, 20 June 1835, Excerpt from the *Halifax Times*, Tuesday last.

⁸⁷ Busch, “*Whaling Will Never Do For Me*”, 8.

excess labourers—easier to do when those men were residents of the Pacific rather than the Atlantic—than to sail home with a full whaling crew.

The journals of James McNab and Jethro Brooks suggest that the practice of recruiting indigenous crewmen was not an anomaly. James McNab noted at Lahaina (Maui, Hawai'i) in 1828, that three deserters were found and “returned to their duty” and three “kanackas” were added to the crew.⁸⁸ Less than a year later, off the Galapagos Islands, three indigenous crewmen—there is no indication whether or not they were the same three added to the crew in Hawai'i—were sent to the whale ship *Minerva*, which was short on hands.⁸⁹ When another crew member, James Knox, became ill, he was left in Lahaina to recover and a “kanacka” was shipped in his place.⁹⁰ McNab seldom discussed Pacific peoples. He made only five references to them in total. Considering his preoccupation with the inner workings of the crew—as evidenced by the events discussed in Chapter 1—it is not surprising that he took more interest in the addition of indigenous men to the crew than he did to the spectacle of trading with Pacific peoples.⁹¹ Brooks recorded shipping and discharging indigenous islanders on five occasions and offered more detail than McNab. At Tahiti in March 1843, Brooks shipped “3 natives...Bob Jones, Jack Brown and Jim Fina.”⁹² Indigenous men made up a strong contingent of the *Peruvian*'s crew under Brook's tenure as master: he shipped two more

⁸⁸ JDM on the *Pacific*, 1827-30: 28 April 1828.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 15 December 1828.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 26 April 1829.

⁹¹ McNab hints that he did experience such trade even if he did not record it in detail. See JDM on the *Pacific*, 1827-30: 9 October 1829. For a discussion of the likelihood of trade between whale ships and indigenous peoples even when such encounters are absent from the written record, see Alastair C. Gray, ““Light airs from the south’: Whalers’ Logs in Pacific History,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 35.1 (2000): 112.

⁹² JBB on the *Peruvian*, 1841-45: 4 March 1843.

of them at Lahaina and another at Honolulu, all in April 1843.⁹³ The Tahitians and Hawaiians were discharged at Lahaina later that year: “discharged [William] Boyd, mate, and paid him off. Discharged also Jim Fina, Bob Jones, Jack Brown, all natives of the Tahitian Isles. Discharged also Philip Howland, Joseph Allen, Bill and John Bowlin, all natives of Hawaii. Shipped N Foles in place of [William] Boyd.”⁹⁴ Before leaving port again, Brooks “shipped James Rowes, Meallis Moller, Seamen. Bell Hall and Jim Levy, Natives.”⁹⁵ The records of James Coffin, James McNab, and Jethro Brooks indicate that indigenous men were often engaged as mariners aboard whaling ships from Halifax and Saint John, a practice carried over from the New England trade.⁹⁶ Public descriptions of the industry, and whalemens’ own accounts, tend to ignore indigenous participation in the Maritime whaling industry, but when EuroAmerican labour was scarce, their participation was necessary for the success of a voyage.

Despite the practical implications, and the occasional reference in Maritime whaling journals, accounts at home in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick repeatedly ignored the presence of indigenous islanders among whaling crews. The whaling industry was described as “a nursery for experienced and excellent sailors”, it was implied that this function extended only to men from the Maritimes.⁹⁷ When the *Rose* of Halifax departed on a voyage in 1829, she was reported to be manned by “32 hands, 28 of whom are men born and brought up in the country;” the remainder were implicitly

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 21 April 1843, 25 April 1843.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 31 October 1843.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18 November 1843.

⁹⁶ Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds*, 185.

⁹⁷ NBM, *Saint John Gazette*, 10 June 1829.

American or British.⁹⁸ When the *Margaret Rait* arrived in Saint John in 1840, the Saint John *Observer* noted that the barque was “manned entirely by British subjects.”⁹⁹ Much of this rhetoric no doubt sprang from the requirements of the colonial and imperial governments concerning the importation of oil to England from the colonies: whale products that were “caught by British Colonial vessels, of whose crews three-fourths were British subjects, was within the meaning of the Act of 6th George IV, and could be exported to England, subject to a duty of but one shilling per ton.”¹⁰⁰ The reduced duty was accompanied, in Nova Scotia, by the dual inducement of a bounty paid by the colonial government.¹⁰¹ Another newspaper article, published in 1935, claimed, “English and American captains commanded, in most cases, but the crews were native New Brunswickers.”¹⁰² The presence of Pacific peoples among American whaling crews has long been acknowledged, most memorably by Herman Melville in the character of Queequeg, but also by numerous historians of the industry.¹⁰³ Despite the rhetoric of the time, Maritime whaling crews were not immune to the factors that precipitated the inclusion of indigenous islanders.

⁹⁸ NBM, *Saint John Gazette*, 25 November 1829, taken from the *Halifax Novascotian*.

⁹⁹ NBM, *St. John Observer*, 11 July 1840.

¹⁰⁰ *Acadian Recorder*, 1 May 1926.

¹⁰¹ *Acadian Recorder*, 1 May 1926. NSA, RG1 Vol238 #67, letter from Samuel Cunard to the Hon. Charles W. Wallace, Treasurer, dated 21 September 1831, requesting the continuance of the bounty offered by the colonial legislature.

¹⁰² NBM, Excerpt from the *Evening Times Globe*: Stuart Trueman, “Rollicking Whaling Days Here Were ‘Big Business’ Days Too”, 15 June 1935.

¹⁰³ See Busch, “*Whaling Will Never Do For Me*”, 7; Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 9; Marion Diamond, “Queequeg’s Crewmates: Pacific Islanders in the European Shipping Industry,” *International Journal of Maritime History* 1 (1989): 124; Igler, *The Great Ocean*, 119; Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds*, 185.

The presence of indigenous islanders on whale ships indicates that Maritime whalers had closer contact with Pacific peoples than the stereotypical beach encounter allows. None of the extant journals reveal what Maritime whalers thought of their indigenous crew mates, or how they interacted with them. The experience of Richard Henry Dana Jr. on the coast of California in the 1830s offers some insight into how indigenous men might have been viewed. Dana spent four months working on shore at a hide-house alongside a group of “Kanakas” that he became “well acquainted with.”¹⁰⁴ When Dana returned to the beach several months later, he was distraught to find Hope, one of his ‘Kanaka’ friends, in the thrall of a terrible illness:

The sight of him made me sick and faint. Poor fellow! During the four months that I lived upon the beach, we were continually together, both in work, and in our excursions in the woods, and upon the water. I really felt a strong affection for him, and preferred him to any of my own countrymen there.¹⁰⁵

Dana went to his captain and asked for medicine from the ship’s chest to help Hope. The captain refused to help “a damned Kanaka.”¹⁰⁶ Dana’s actions suggest that EuroAmerican mariners were willing to accept Pacific peoples as members of their workforce. The other man’s reaction demonstrates that Dana’s ready acceptance of indigenous coworkers was not universal.

Only Thomas Creighton, always eager to record the details of his adventures for his audience at home, frequently described the Pacific peoples he encountered.¹⁰⁷ While Coffin maintained a friendly, though condescending, perspective on Pacific peoples,

¹⁰⁴ Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 158.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 266.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 267.

¹⁰⁷ According to the Creighton family, the intended reader was Thomas’s aunt, Eliza Creighton. Eliza also kept a journal while Thomas was at sea, a portion of which he received from the *Java* in October 1845. A transcript of Eliza’s journal is attached to Thomas’s journal at the Dalhousie University Archives.

Creighton's reactions ranged from detached to disdainful and frequently centred on the potential for violence. At Hope Island (Arorae, Kiribati), in 1843, Creighton described the inhabitants as "very peaceable and...perfectly naked."¹⁰⁸ At Strong's Island (Kusaie, Caroline Islands), he noted "the natives are not very friendly and it is dangerous for a ship to go there alone."¹⁰⁹ At Ascension (Pohnpei, Micronesia), he conceded that the "natives seem friendly", before deciding that they were "civil but not generous."¹¹⁰ At Barings Island (Namarik Atoll, Marshall Islands), Creighton hinted at the potential violence that underlay EuroAmerican-indigenous dealings: "The natives seem quite friendly set. Tho' a few years ago they tried to take a ship but did not succeed tho' they killed the Captain and Officers and seventeen hands."¹¹¹ He found the people of Covel Island (Ebon Atoll, Ralik Chain, Marshall Islands) to be "a savage looking set."¹¹² Creighton indicates that the wariness between the two groups—at least in his mind—ran both ways: "two canoes came off, but were afraid to come near the Ship."¹¹³ Interactions with indigenous groups

¹⁰⁸ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 8 July 1843.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 22 November 1843.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 25 November 1843, 26 November 1843.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10 April 1844. Rodrigue Levesque identifies this as the "Awashonks incident of 1835." See Levesque, "Canadian Whalers in Micronesia," 233. The Falmouth Historical Society in Massachusetts holds the logbook of the *Awashonks*: the *Awashonks* sailed from Falmouth in 1833 under Captain Prince Coffin. Captain Coffin, his first and second mates, and four other men were killed in October 1835 by the inhabitants of Namarik after thirty or more of them had come aboard the *Awashonks*, ostensibly to trade. At least nine crewmembers, and perhaps more, were killed and the ship was sailed home by acting Captain Silas Jones, presumably the former third mate. See Falmouth Historical Society, *Logbooks and Maritime Records Held at the Falmouth Historical Society*, <http://falmouthhistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/Logbooks.pdf> (accessed 4 March 2014).

¹¹² TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 16 April 1844.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 21 April 1844. Touching Island (Butaritari Island, Kiribati).

and EuroAmericans varied widely; both sides might be friendly or hostile depending on their past interactions and personal temperaments.

Creighton's own experience bears this out. Cruising off Erromanga (Vanuatu), the master of a sandalwood trader from Sydney warned the crew of the *Rose* that,

The natives [are] canables (sic.). Captain Jones said that the other day he had a skirmish with the natives, they attacked his boat while getting off wood and one of his men shot one of them and the rest tore him to pieces and eat him before his eyes so they are not much improved since Mr. Williams first landed.¹¹⁴

In contrast to the perceived barbarity of the people of Erromanga, Captain Wood brought three indigenous men—from another island—aboard:

They are much darker than any natives I have seen and have curly hair, wear no clothes but are not so savage looking as the natives of this Island. They say that at Tanna an Island 30 miles to windward of this there are some native missionaries from Samoa and that the natives there are not Canables (sic.)... In the evening the natives before they turned in sang a hymn and said their prayers that the Samoa missionaries had taught them.¹¹⁵

On their way to Tanna (Vanuatu), the *Rose* made another stop at nearby Immer (Aniwa, Vanuatu), where “we found two men, one woman & one child who with tears in their eyes begged our Captain to take them to Tanna, as the natives here treated them very ill and they were afraid of their lives. The Natives are a savage looking set.”¹¹⁶ The *Rose* carried this strange mix of Pacific peoples to Tanna where, according to Creighton, the “natives are much more civil.”¹¹⁷ Despite this assessment, he noted that the missionary stationed on the island had fled, “as the consequence of a row that the Captain of a Whale ship had with the natives in which some of them were killed and he was afraid of their

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20 December 1844.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21 December 1844.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 23 December 1844.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 24 December 1844.

avenging themselves on his family.”¹¹⁸ In all the extant journals of the Maritime whaling trade, there was never a single incident of violence recorded between these men and indigenous islanders.¹¹⁹ Despite Creighton’s cynicism, the relationship with Pacific peoples was tame more often than it was not.¹²⁰ To many whalers, indigenous islanders were crew mates and valuable trading partners, not terrifying, unknown entities.

Encounters with indigenous peoples and the natural landscape of the Pacific Ocean were unavoidable. They were necessary to the success of any whaling voyage and sometimes sought out as sources of amusement or adventure. It should not be forgotten, however, that the primary function of a whaling voyage was to harvest a specific quota of whales as quickly as possible and return home with their oil. However else individual men may have viewed the Pacific, in this they all agreed: the Pacific Ocean environment was a place to be exploited. This was implied by the very nature of the whaler’s work. This attitude extended to the island ecosystems of the Pacific as well, which were

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24 December 1844.

¹¹⁹ Frederick William Wallace, in Part I of *In the Wake of the Windships*, details an incident between the crew of the *James Stewart*, a Spanish beachcomber, and the people of Sydenham Island (Nonouti, Kiribati): the chief mate, third and fourth mates, and three crewmen were held hostage on shore having been lured in to a trap on the pretense of trade. Captain Kenney, from whose memoirs Wallace claims to draw, remedied the situation by taking a number of indigenous hostages until their comrades were induced to free the captive whalers. Wallace describes the crew of the *James Stewart* as “prepared for action with a four-pounder gun, eighteen muskets, and a deadly assortment of keen-edged cutting spades, lances and boarding-knives.” Unfortunately, Kenney’s original account has been lost, and Wallace’s style makes it difficult to determine whether or not Kenney’s narrative has been embellished. Wallace, *In the Wake of the Windships*, 16-24.

¹²⁰ It should be noted that Creighton was much less apprehensive about interactions with indigenous peoples that were in closer contact with the ‘civilizing influence’ of missionaries. Creighton on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 9 July 1843, 2 June 1844, 21-25 December 1845.

used to sustain mariners on their long journeys around the globe and within the Pacific Ocean.

In addition to whales, whalers wreaked havoc on wildlife wherever they went. Unable to fill the hold of the *Pacific* near the end of her voyage in 1829, her crew resorted to sealing on the beaches of Baja California, near Cedros and Natividad Islands, killing a total of 1,314 elephant seals. James McNab commented on the lack of mature prey, indicating that harvesting activities had begun to have an effect on population growth: “there were a number of Yearlings or young Elephants but only saw 3 or 4 old ones.”¹²¹ They also harvested 289 terrapin—turtles—during their voyage, primarily from Charles Island (Floreana, Galapagos Islands). The large turtles were a favourite of whalers because they could live for up to a year without being fed and thus provide a steady supply of fresh meat.¹²² When Thomas Creighton and his crew mates sighted penguins in the Falkland Islands, their first instinct was to hunt them; he recorded that they “amused ourselves trying to shoot them.”¹²³ No animal, on land or sea, was safe from whalers. Porpoises were caught and served as “mince pie”.¹²⁴ While operating from a shore whaling station in Waikawa River (New Zealand) in 1839, James Coffin spent his time pigeon hunting “to divert the mind from the many anxieties which are, on all sides, ready to pour in upon it.”¹²⁵ He recorded four such outings, on one occasion noting that he and several crew members had killed twenty-six birds on their

¹²¹ JDM on the *Pacific*, 1827-30: 10 December 1829.

¹²² *Ibid.*, summary.

¹²³ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 16 December 1845.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 24 December 1845.

¹²⁵ JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1838-40: 18 April 1839. Thomas Creighton also reported the capture of seabirds, “This afternoon caught two of the largest Albacore that I have ever seen.” See TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 13 May 1845.

“excursion”.¹²⁶ Soon after he lamented that “the pigeons having all left the wood near the sea and gone farther away”, he had nothing to amuse himself with.¹²⁷ Fresh water fish were subjected to the same treatment: Coffin reported that his crew made several fishing expeditions at Stewart Island (New Zealand) in April/May 1837 alone, and on one such excursion caught “several hundred fish.”¹²⁸ These activities were common among whalers. As Creighton’s penguins and Coffin’s pigeons suggests, hunting was both a means of survival—the provision of fresh meat—and a source of amusement.

Whalers had little regard for the number of whales they killed and, frequently enough to warrant note, they killed whales they did not bother to process. Thomas Creighton reported the typical turn of events: “The 3rd mate got fast again to a calf & cut him adrift when dead being too small to lose a fair wind.”¹²⁹ Immature whales were sometimes harpooned to be used as bait for the adult females, who were reluctant to abandon their young. Creighton reports the use of this practice on several occasions.¹³⁰ On one occasion, James McNab recorded that in addition to the two, fifteen-barrel whales taken the same day, the Captain also got “a calf to which he fastened to try and make the game heave to.”¹³¹ This was common practice among whalers. They thought little of killing young whales to attract mature whales only to cut the dead calves free afterward. This practice demonstrates the lack of awareness whalers had of their impact on whale

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 19 April 1839. See JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1838-40: April/May 1839.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8 May 1839.

¹²⁸ JDC on the *Margaret Rait*, 1836-38: 26 April 1837, 1 May 1837, 2 May 1837.

¹²⁹ TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 9 May 1844.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3 January 1844, 19 December 1844,

¹³¹ JDM on the *Pacific*, 1827-30: 25 February 1829.

populations; they treated whales as an unlimited resource, casting back in to the sea those too small to be worth the time it would take to process them.

Whalemen viewed the abundance of the Pacific Ocean first and foremost as natural resources free for the taking. All that was required to obtain profit from these resources was their labour—primarily in the form of the whale hunt—or the trade of small items they deemed worthless, “old iron hoops”, for instance, which indigenous peoples accepted as currency.¹³² This attitude of brazen exploitation was not specific to individual whalemen, or even whalemen as a group. Kerry R. Oman notes a similar mentality among fur traders in the Canadian and American West during the same period: writers, artists, and even traders and trappers themselves, might describe the West in Romantic terms, but for the traders and trappers it was first and foremost “a temporary place of residence, a place of work.”¹³³ In *Environment and Empire*, William Beinart and Lotte Hughes argue that the “expanding capitalist economy devoured natural resources and transformed them into commodities.”¹³⁴ The same actions that degraded the Pacific environment bolstered the Atlantic economy. Whalemen turned living creatures into a marketable product, mincing and boiling whales into oil and carrying it home to turn a profit. The economy in Halifax and Saint John benefited from the exploitation of far away resources, and viewed these locales in that context. The idea of conservation was present in the nineteenth-century, but it was not one contemplated or applied by whalemen.

¹³² TCC on the *Rose*, 1843-46: 21 April 1844.

¹³³ Kerry, “Rejoicing in the Beauties of Nature,” 308.

¹³⁴ William Beinart and Lotte Hughes, *Environment and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.

The whale fishery was a boon to the economies of Halifax and Saint John. In 1831 “A FRIEND TO COMMERCE” wrote to the editor of the Saint John *Courier* praising the actions of Charles Stewart for “introducing into this our favoured Port a WHALING business, which will be beneficial to every class, from the highest to the lowest” and “rousing [us] from our lethargy.”¹³⁵ A decade later, the Saint John *Herald* reported the arrival of a whale ship in New Bedford carrying the most profitable cargo yet returned, and commented that “the Whale Fishing is with us as yet in its infancy, but promises to be eventually more lucrative than any other trade in which we could embark.”¹³⁶ The whale fishery in Halifax and Saint John was profitable, for a time, and notices of the payment of dividends to the shareholders of the Mechanics’ Whale Fishing Company periodically appeared in the Saint John Newspapers throughout the 1830s.¹³⁷ In 1843 the Saint John *Herald* announced the incorporation of the Halifax Mechanics’ Whale Fishing Company, an imitation of the same in Saint John. The *Herald* went on to commend the shareholders for taking up the trade because it would “add to the wealth of the country without exhausting its resources.”¹³⁸ While whalers did not self-consciously express an awareness of the effects of their industry, it was clearly understood that resources *could* be exhausted. The effects of the industry on the ecology of the Pacific Ocean were far removed from the minds of those engaged in and profiting from it.

¹³⁵ NBM, *New Brunswick Courier*, 19 November 1831.

¹³⁶ NBM, *Saint John Herald*, 3 October 1842.

¹³⁷ NBM, Excerpt from the *Evening Times Globe*: Stuart Trueman, “Rollicking Whaling Days Here Were ‘Big Business’ Days Too”, 15 June 1935.

¹³⁸ NBM, *Saint John Herald*, 4 January 1843.

Conclusion

There was no standard interaction between whalers and Pacific peoples. The majority of the men who sailed aboard whaling vessels from Halifax and Saint John came from similar cultural backgrounds, with the significant exception of the indigenous islanders who joined them once they reached their destination. The former group of men would have been exposed to a variety of theories and facts—some more credible than others—concerning the Pacific and its peoples long before they arrived there. Some of these influences and predispositions were evident in their accounts of exploration and encounter in the Pacific. Despite this uniformity of origin, there was no archetypal EuroAmerican-indigenous encounter or reaction to them.

Whalers from Halifax and Saint John were primed to view the ‘natural’ world in similar ways, but they all reacted differently to the peoples they met. James Coffin was open to interactions with indigenous peoples, and viewed them in a positive—if patronizing—light. His relationship with Kikorah, for instance, indicates his willingness to fraternize with Pacific peoples when the opportunity arose. James McNab, by contrast, was uninterested in the Pacific peoples he undoubtedly interacted with, if the contents of his journal are any indication. Jethro Brooks also seemed to lack interest in Pacific peoples, though he was content to spend time among them in order to facilitate his excursion to Kīlauea. Thomas Creighton’s attitude towards Pacific peoples is best described as apprehensive: episodes of earlier violence always present in his mind. Even taken individually, no pattern emerges governing their reaction to contact with indigenous peoples, despite the presence of overarching theories about the Pacific Ocean and its peoples in EuroAmerican society.

Despite this individuality of experience, all of these men shared the common lens of exploitation. Maritime whalers were present in the Pacific to turn a profit for their employers in the Atlantic. Their exploitation of the Pacific whale population was the catalyst for this attitude and it influenced every aspect of their voyages. Whalers killed seals, terrapin, and seabirds as readily as they did whales. They cut wood for their fires and traded with Pacific peoples for large quantities of local produce. Taken individually, it is easy to ignore, as they did, the potential repercussions of their actions. It is only as a whole—the Maritime industry as well as the hundreds of vessels sailing from American ports—that the true destructive nature of their actions is visible. Whalers did not just exploit whales, they took for granted all of the resources that the Pacific Ocean had to offer.

CHAPTER 5 Conclusion

*And now another day is gone like a thousand losing [vanities] and left no more traces
behind than our gallant ship in passing through the trackless deep.*
- Jethro Brooks, ship *Peruvian*, 26 July 1842

The Maritime whaling industry ended as suddenly as it began. The stockholders of the Mechanics' Whale Fishing Company of Saint John voted to settle its affairs in 1845; their ship *Mechanic* was sold at auction in Saint John in April 1846.¹ The ship *Pacific*, also of Saint John, was reported at Valparaiso in January 1846, "expected to be condemned."² The barque *Rose* of Halifax, home to Thomas Creighton during his time at sea, was sold in London in 1846.³ The ship *Java* was sold to Saint John merchant James Kirk in 1847.⁴ James Coffin sold the ship *Athol* in Goa, India in 1848.⁵ The remaining vessels of the Maritime whaling fleet undoubtedly met similar ends; after 1850 there would be no more whaling voyages from Halifax and Saint John.

The industry in these ports was short lived and small in scale by comparison to its American counterpart. In its time, however, it was a major industry in Halifax and Saint John. The limited scope of the industry allows for an exhaustive assessment of the materials pertaining to it that remain. In order to understand the men and events of the Maritime whaling industry, they must be placed in the context of the Pacific whaling trade, Maritime and nineteenth-century seafaring, and the global system of oceanic circulation that had developed by the early nineteenth century.

¹ NBM, *New Brunswick Courier*, 8 November 1845, 28 March 1846.

² NBM, *New Brunswick Courier*, 9 May 1846.

³ Levesque, "Canadian Whalers in Micronesia," 227, footnote 14.

⁴ NBM, *New Brunswick Courier*, 26 October 1847, 30 October 1847.

⁵ Benjamin Doane, *Following the Sea*, 165.

The extent to which going to sea altered men has long been debated by maritime historians, most notably Marcus Rediker and Daniel Vickers. Rediker argues that there was a radical separation between the culture and attitudes of men on land and men at sea.⁶ Vickers, conversely, asserts that the seafaring experience did not drastically impact the lives of men who took part in it.⁷ Briton Cooper Busch applied this debate to the whaling industry, emphasizing the conflicts between whalers and authority figures—officers at sea, government and religious officials on land.⁸ Margaret Creighton, however, focuses on the connections whalers maintained with their ports of origin.⁹ The case of Maritime whalers suggests that reality fell somewhere in the middle of these two extremes.

Chapter Two discusses these themes—estrangement and engagement with life on land—as they relate to Maritime whalers. The experiences of James Coffin, Thomas Creighton, James McNab, and Jethro Brooks indicate that going to sea both was, and was not, a retreat from life on land. The case of James Coffin, viewed over the course of a decade, demonstrates that even his long years at sea did not remove his concern for affairs at home. His personal relationships, carried on despite the distances and time spans imposed by the Pacific whaling industry, indicate that these factors did not necessarily remove the influences of life on land. Home may have continued to influence whalers, even on the far side of the world, but they were simultaneously impacted by the immediate conditions of life at sea. Thomas Creighton and James McNab came to

⁶ Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 161.

⁷ Daniel Vickers and Vince Walsh, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 3-4.

⁸ Busch, “*Whaling Will Never Do for Me*”, 106-107, 177-178, 180, 185-186.

⁹ Creighton, “Davy Jones’ Locker Room,” 128, 131.

identify closely with the ship's officers and foremast hands, respectively, during their time at sea. Despite the insular nature of Halifax society at the time, and their elevated status within that society, it was their rank aboard ship that determined their associations at sea. Over the course of their time at sea, they came to identify more closely with their respective cliques, and their differing responses to food shortages demonstrate how hierarchical associations influenced their experiences. Jethro Brooks's response to diverse religious practices—consistent with those of James Coffin and Thomas Creighton—suggests that the collective identity and values shared by the men of the Maritime whaling fleet could be *reinforced* by, as well as maintained throughout, far flung voyages.

Many observations about the interconnectivity of the pre-modern world rely on a view of the ocean as a conduit, rather than a barrier, for cultural exchange, communication, commerce, and travel. The Atlantic world paradigm worked to reveal connections between places and events that were previously obscured by the boundaries of national and imperial histories. Recently, practitioners of Atlantic and oceanic history have turned their gaze to the Pacific.¹⁰ While these paradigms are useful as a heuristic tool, they do little to explain the lived experience of the ocean.¹¹ Chapter Three examines the terminology used by Maritime whalers to describe the ocean, demonstrating that the divisions imposed by historians are, in fact, simply divisions imposed by historians. Nineteenth-century whalers understood the ocean as an assemblage of smaller spaces, but simultaneously eschewed the idea that these partitions were a barrier to their

¹⁰ See Chapter One, footnote 21.

¹¹ See Chapter Three, footnote 1.

activities. Danger was omnipresent in the lives of mariners, demonstrated by the care they took to note marine hazards and corrections to their charts around the globe. There was a continuity to life at sea that was unaffected by considerations about where one body of water ended and another began, the novelty of EuroAmerican seafaring in the Pacific, or the distance travelled from home. A full understanding of the nineteenth-century requires a global, rather than oceanic, perspective.

Seafaring itself was altered little by its extension to the Pacific Ocean, but experiences in port could be drastically different than what whalers had previously encountered. Chapter Four discusses the shared cultural background that exposed Maritime whalers to similar ideas about the Pacific Ocean prior to their voyages there.¹² Despite their exposure to similar notions about the Pacific, their reactions to the places and peoples they encountered were remarkably diverse. The events described in the extant journals of Maritime whalers, even the most prolific among them, were unremarkable in the sense that they were common to all men engaged in the whaling trade. What is unique about these sources is the perspective they offer on those events. Each individual reacted differently to these common occurrences. The only link that joined their perspectives was the lens of exploitation, which grew out of the aims of the whaling industry and tinted their view of everything and everyone they encountered in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

¹² See Johnston, "Writing the Southern Cross"; Crowley, *Imperial Landscapes*; Smith, *Imagining the Pacific*; Marouby "From Early Anthropology to the Literature of the Savage"; Elliot, "Transported to Botany Bay."

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