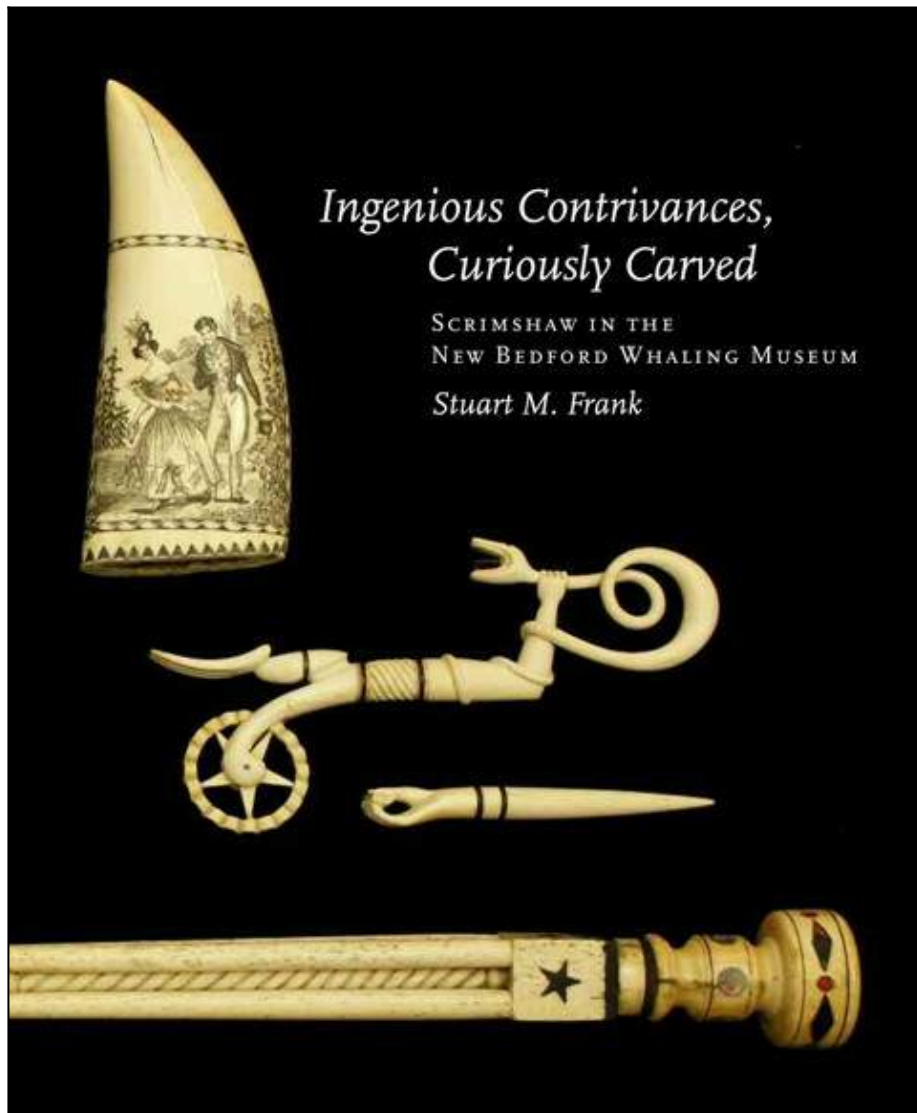


Historic New England awards annual Book Prize to Stuart M. Frank; Program & Reception to Follow



Celebration on November 3, 1-3:00 pm in the Cook Memorial Theater

Historic New England awards its nineteenth annual Book Prize to "Ingenious Contrivances, Curiously Carved: Scrimshaw in the New Bedford Whaling Museum" by Stuart M. Frank, Senior Curator Emeritus.

To celebrate the award, Historic New England and the New Bedford Whaling Museum will host a special program with author Stuart M. Frank on Sunday, November 3 in the Cook Memorial Theater, New Bedford Whaling Museum. The event, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., is free but space is limited. Please call (617) 994-5959, or e-mail Programs@HistoricNewEngland.org to reserve a ticket.

The afternoon includes a reception and remarks by Historic New England staff and Book Prize winners, followed by a book signing. The award-winning books are available for purchase at the event. The New Bedford Whaling Museum is at 18 Johnny Cake Hill, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

“Ingenious Contrivances” is a detailed exploration of the scrimshaw in the collection at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. The port of New Bedford was one of the busiest in the mid-nineteenth century, with sailors departing on voyages that often lasted three or four years. While on these voyages, they spent some of their time carving materials harvested from the whales. The resulting practical and decorative objects, often intricately carved and carefully crafted, would provide mementos and treasured souvenirs for loved ones back home. The range of the work is extraordinary—not simply the decorated sperm whale teeth that the word “scrimshaw” ordinarily brings to mind, but also crimpers and canes, umbrellas and swifts. Anything that could be made of ivory and bone was considered fair game.

New Bedford Whaling Museum Scholarship and Publications Committee chair Llewellyn Howland III said “It is a high honor for our museum to receive this coveted endorsement from Historic New England, and the museum salutes Stuart Frank, curator and author, Richard Donnelly, photographer, Sara Eisenman, designer, and David R. Godine, publisher, for their work in creating this definitive book on scrimshaw, the art of the whalemens.”

Whaling Museum president and CEO, James Russell, noted, "At a time when so many cultural nonprofits are under pressure and must look only to the bottom line, we are particularly pleased to be able to continue publishing world-class scholarship, in this case, a definitive and elegant reference, which furthers the body of knowledge on scrimshaw while providing Stuart the academic freedom to expound upon the depths of our collection. His companion exhibition stands to put real teeth in our commitment to the pursuit of scholarship and to increase general awareness of this most curious of art forms."

The Historic New England Book Prize Committee also recognizes two Honor Books. "Meetinghouses of Early New England" by Peter Benes offers a look at the many roles of the meetinghouse in the community. The book identifies more than 2,200 houses of worship in the region during the period from 1622 to 1830, bringing many of them to light for the first time. "Women's Work: Embroidery in Colonial Boston" by Pamela A. Parmal presents the stories of six women and how needlework shaped their lives, and gives long deserved attention to a unique facet of American visual culture and women's history.

About the New Bedford Whaling Museum

Established in 1903, the New Bedford Whaling Museum is the world's most comprehensive museum devoted to the global story of whales, whaling, and the cultural history of the region. A cornerstone attraction within New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and a park partner, the Museum is located at 18 Johnny Cake Hill in the heart of the city's historic downtown. Wheelchair accessible. For more information, visit the Whaling Museum online at www.whalingmuseum.org.

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