

Whaling Terms For Landlubbers: “Gamming”

We promise there will be no swabbing of the decks, scaling to the crow’s nest or flogging via cat-o-nine tails. If you already know what it means to have an appetite for a salt horse, would look forward to gamming (not gaming), or could definitely steer a sea vessel two points on the weather bow then you have no need for this article. Saunter off or perhaps deride this article as being written by a rube. If you are like me – a landlubber – and have an interest in the lexicon, jargon or cant of the old seafarers and whaling history, then climb aboard. Mutiny will be tolerated as long as it’s in the form of corrections, additions and constructive feedback. No walking the plank.

These articles will be light, easy reads. One term described in a few sentences or paragraphs as opposed to the novellas I end up unintentionally writing. Once a term is broken down and explained, and perhaps its context furthered by an historical anecdote, there is really no point in carrying on. So after I blather for a few paragraphs, I’ll finish off with a few of those fantastic, vintage images that the New Bedford [Whaling Museum](#) and [Spinner Publications](#) possess and allow us to use. In a sense, the text within the article is a cleverly disguised way to showcase these photos. Hopefully you’ll extend me a bit of liberty since even if you don’t enjoy the writing, you will be subsequently rewarded through the photos.



*Crew members enjoying
some music aboard the
Wanderer circa 1906
(Whaling Museum)*

There is an enormous wealth of general naval terminology that was utilized by seafarers in general and even more added to that mountainous pile in the way of specific lexicon of whaling masters and crewmen. I'd imagine if one of us landlubbers was transported through time, or were alive in the whaling heyday and had the misfortune to libate too much during a burlseq...ahem...silent movie and woke up at sea, we'd be at a loss for words among the conversation aboard. Pardon the pun. If you're around a few mechanics, a group of musicians, or carpenters, you know what it means to feel lost in the conversation. It *sounds* like English, but shop-talk is virtually incomprehensible to lay people. You may even be familiar with some of the words, just haven't the faintest clue what they mean within context. Sailors have their own language, if you will, and whalers had their own dialect within this language.

Sailing is such a large part of the world's history that many terms are woven right into the language during everyday conversation amongst the general populace. Often, we use naval terms unawares. For example, how many of you have been traveling on foot with company and do as I hope many adults would do: look both way before crossing the street? Though this isn't a popular habit with many of New Bedford's pedestrians who prefer to leap into traffic then look, I'm assuming that isn't you. Anyhow, you look both ways, turn to your partner and without blinking say "The coast is clear." Coast?! We aren't out to sea!

All joking aside, the lexicon is rich, full of euphemisms, innuendos, and meaning. It is a beautiful language in its own right. Shop-talk is born out of necessity. Out to sea, where

loss of life was common and frequent, all needed to be on the same page. Communication needed to be packed with information using the fewest amount of words as possible. A difference of a few seconds, out at sea could mean at best a loss of profit, and at worst, loss of souls. Of course, that may depend on your perspective. If you were a wealthy landlubber, back at home in your estate counting your fortune, you may feel the inverse is true.



*Gamming was a great way
to blow off some steam
(Spinner Publications)*

Like any language or dialect, it would be a shame to lose it to history. New Bedford's success over the years is due in large part to whaling. New Bedford will forever have its history interwoven with that of worldwide whaling. New Bedford's history IS world history. To lose the naval jargon of whaling, would be to lose part of its history and what made New Bedford. So let us dive into this language and have a little fun!

"Gamming" according to the [Free Dictionary](#) is:

1. To visit with.
2. To spend (time) talking or visiting.

Technically speaking a "Gam" [excluding the slang term for legs] is a social visit between whaling vessels, whalers or

the crew. It was coined in the 1840s and generally means pulling alongside another whaling vessel and “hopping” aboard to enjoy a social.

Being out to sea for years at a time, staring at the same ugly mugs can be monotonous, cause mental fatigue and breed conflict. Gamming was a way to perhaps break out some grog, musical instruments and dance a jig. Anecdotes, tall tales told of exaggerated bounties, and the obligatory “one that got away” stories could be swapped.

In essence, it was a way to blow off some steam, boost morale and recuperate.

The term’s etymology has been suggested as deriving from the British “gammon” which is a term that describes misleading or deceptive talk, alluding to the tall tales that were surely told during these socials. Some have suggested it is related to “gaming”, which also surely took place. The image that serves as the banner of this article is from the 1949 movie “Down to the Sea in Ships” and shows a Captain’s wife in a gamming chair being transferred from one ship to the other. If a vessel pulled into port or alongside another ship, the gamming chair would be used to transfer women to the ship.

The movie takes a conservative approach and suggests the chair was used to transfer wives to the boat. However, if you returned to port after years, there would be no reason to bring your wife on board, since one was heading home. In all likelihood, it was used to bring women of lesser repute aboard while at some faraway port to replenish supplies, receive maintenance or repairs.

Considering that the gamming chair would have provided a great view of...ahem...a women’s gams, one has to wonder the words aren’t somehow related.

Looking for other terms to enjoy?

[“Hove Down”](#)

Five (Almost) Forgotten New Bedford Landmarks

While I was born in Plymouth, I moved to New Bedford when I was 4-5 years old. I don't know that I recall very much about Plymouth. My first memory of life was when I was perhaps 1-2 years old. I have shared my first memory with friends in the past and they will ask “How do you know that you were 1-2 years old?”

Well, I vividly recall wearing a diaper (in hindsight) and playing in the grass. There was a tiny thing “playing” in the grass next to me. It approached me, so surely that meant it wanted to play. When you are new to the world, you are curious about everything. *Everything*.

Apparently, My thumb was my connection or feeler to the world. I used it to touch things. In this case, I reached out with thumb to connect with this thing and a powerful sensation of heat and pain exploded and surged through my hand. I turned, and ran towards safety, wailing as I went.

Turns out it was a bumblebee. I was so young, that I had no idea what a bumblebee was. Oddly enough, I would have never recalled that day playing in the grass if it wasn't associated with a powerful memory. Pain is an excellent mnemonic anchor.

I digress. Allow me the liberty, because it isn't altogether without a point.

Moving to New Bedford around 5 years of age meant, virtually my entire childhood is of New Bedford. While not born here, I am of New Bedford. It's instilled in me.

While I have many painful memories of New Bedford, the vast majority of my memories are positive ones. Sorry, cynics.

As I get older, my memory is not what it used to be. In my case, it's abnormal due to years of silent concussions from combat sports, but certainly, a portion of it is a product of growing older. My point with sharing my first memory is that even with normal and abnormal memory loss, I have retained many memories, even ones that would be considered "unimportant." They've been retained because of their intensity and power.

I have many fond memories of a number of landmarks throughout the city. Unfortunately, it's difficult to come across images of many of these. I remember playing tag football in the Car Barn before it was a housing complex. It was an auto salvage facility if memory serves me correctly. I remember crushed or destroyed cars stacked upon each other. They were stacked in rows along opposing walls, leaving a clearing in the center for heavy machinery. That was our football field.

At one point I lived on Clark Street, across from Ketcham Traps in 1978. I remember peering out the second-floor window and shouting to my mother "Everyone got so scared of the blizzard that they left town!! WOW!"

"How do you know that?" she said. A very puzzled mother joined me at the window. "All the cars are GONE." I replied. When she looked out along the streets from our vantage point, she pointed to a thin piece of metal poking out from the snow. "See that?" she started. "That's a car antenna. The cars aren't gone. They are under the snow." What do the youth say

today? "Mind blown?" Understatement.

Any kid who lived in the city during that blizzard knows exactly what comes next. A laser-like focus on one mission: getting outside and being a kid. What followed was 3 days of festivities as the city was shut down.

In the context of winter, there's a saying "You know you are from New England when you get excited when you see a Trans Am."

Anyhow, that's enough of an introduction. If left unchecked, I'll type for a few more hours and we'll never get to the "meat."

So, let's discuss 5 (Almost) Forgotten Landmarks. We'll do a few of these. Here are just 5 that came to my head first.

1. Mars Bargainland/Cash 'n Carry

I'll need some help with this one. I recall bringing cardboard boxes to the mill building that is now the Cliftex Apartments. We would browse through the aisles and fill our boxes and place them on metal rollers. Moms loved this place because you could buy bulk amounts of stuff for low prices. They didn't call it a bargainland for nothing!

2. Kinyon-Campbell Business School

This school, established in 1911, was on a hill below County Street at 59 Linden Street. I lived at 868 County Street, 2 houses away. Because it was below the street, a 12-foot wall abutted County Street. If you hopped the fence at County Street it was a 12-foot drop to the parking lot in Kinyon-Campbell. Guess what that meant after a snowstorm? The plows would drive the snow into the corners creating 12-15' mountains of snow. Once while sliding down one of these mountains on a piece of cardboard I hit a depression in the snow and bounced. Bounced? Upon investigation, there was a piece of plywood under the snow. When I pried it up, I

discovered that the mountain had been hollowed out, complete with snow support pillars!

I have a confession to make. My friend and I would pile a few score snowballs along the top of the mountain. We would prime the piece of cardboard close by. After firing 5-6 snowballs at passing cars, we would hit the getaway cardboard, race down the mountain and disappear into the secret snow cave. Anyone who was going to make us whippersnappers pay for our Tomfoolery must have been confused to pull into the parking lot and see no one.

Please do not forward this article to the New Bedford P.D.

3. Mitchell's Fish and Chips

Mitchell's was a genuine fried seafood spot on County Street. I don't recall if the proprietor was actually British, but the style of fry was. Not only was the batter recipe an imported idea, but the packaging was as well. Each order was wrapped in a newspaper. Can you do that today? I doubt it. We can't hitchhike, walk to school alone, or have our Fish 'n Chips served in an old newspaper.

4. Bob & Eileen's Super Variety Store

This variety store was directly across the street from Mitchell's Fish 'n Chips at 190 Weld Street. Remember penny candy? Remember when it was actually a penny? Yeah, Bob & Eileen's was the premier place to go for penny candy. Get a quarter from mom and head to Bob & Eileen's and deal with the very serious dilemma on what 25 pieces to get. Dump them into a brown paper bag and enjoy. Bob of Bob & Eileen's was Robert Antil's of Antil's in nearby Fairhaven.

5. Twinkie & Wonder Bread Outlet

When I was 5-6 years old I attended Ottiwell School. Five minutes before the bell rang, my mind was focused on one thing and one thing only. Total tunnel vision; Suzy Q's. I would walk home back then. Yeah, you could do that. I'd race out of

the school fish into my pocket to confirm that my pocket change was still there for the umpteenth time and race to Hostess Twinkie & Wonder Bread Outlet on Belleville Avenue. You could get any of the baked goods that the line carried. This was my first glimpse of a first world problem. I vaguely recall a fellow one or two buildings down that would sell freshly made malasadas that I would opt for on occasion.

Which landmarks were part of your neighborhood growing up? Please share them!

Henrietta Howland Green; Another Look at the “Witch of Wall Street”

Separating the chaff

Generally speaking there are two groupings of folks when the name Hetty Green is uttered. One side – the most common one – can be summed up in the quip “Ah...the Witch of Wall Street.” The other is the “I know the name. Just unsure about who she was.” group.

Some will bring up her son Colonel Green, perhaps a mention of a “dish” on an island, and almost always what follows are a few anecdotes; a mixture of truth and urban legend, none of which paints her in a decent light. Here are the most memorable:

- “Isn’t that the rich lady that spent a a night trying to find a 2 cent stamp?”

- “That’s the mean bitch that tried to have her son Ned admitted to a free clinic, to save money, and his leg ended up being amputated!”
- “She refused to use heat or hot water.”
- “That’s the lady that saved money on laundry detergent by only having the soiled portions of her clothing washed.”
- “Hetty Green is the tight-fisted lady that was once carrying \$200,000 in bonds on an omnibus, yet when a passenger mentioned that she would have better been served with a personal coach she replied with *‘Perhaps you can afford to ride in a carriage—I cannot.’*”

Funny how people are remembered for the mundane things.



The appearance that contributed to her infamous moniker (N.B. Whaling Museum)

I bring these things up first to clear them out of the way, so we can get to some real “meat.” There is a wealth of

literature out there discussing these stories. Volumes have been written. Wikipedia, YouTube, and Google cover the same old ground: Hetty Green the miser, the witch, the shrew. If you grew up in the region, and have clicked on this article, you likely have read up on our “antagonist” Henrietta Howland Robinson. You’ve heard the anecdotes and urban legends. To cover what is readily available is to insult the readers and practice redundancy. So, perhaps we can cover those things less oft mentioned. Not unavailable. Not unknown, or secret. Just rarely focused upon.

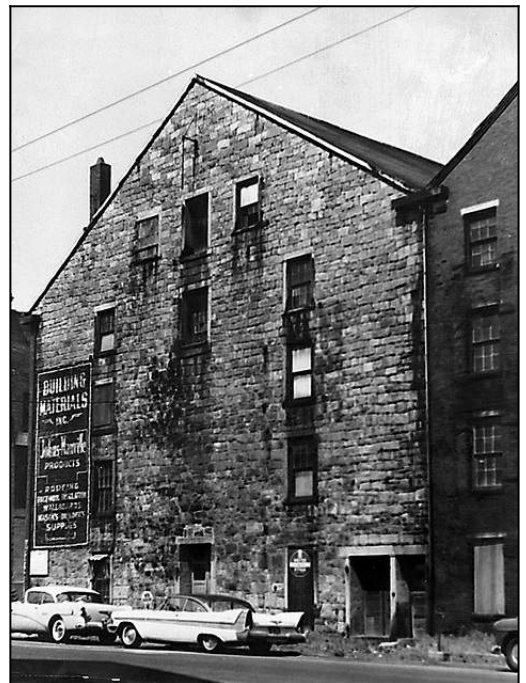
I won’t take a revisionist angle and try to paint Hetty as a misunderstood, philanthropic angel. Those ill words aren’t untrue ones. They’re pretty accurate for the most part – urban legends excluded. The truth about many historical figures – excepting the Hitlers, Pol Pots, and Stalins of the world – is somewhere in the middle. Rarely are the highlights the genuine article. I’d like to drag her somewhere closer to the middle. Not dead center – because that would be overcompensation and false – but somewhere else beside the extreme right. Let’s focus on a different element of the bouquet.

An unusual upbringing

The woman Henrietta Howland Robinson, was born to Edward Mott Robinson and Abby Howland right here in New Bedford in 1834. This was a time, when a male-led society deemed women incapable of a business mindset, or financial matters. There was no shortage of men that simply felt women just couldn’t handle math, especially within the context of economics. Some men were downright hostile to the idea of a woman holding a higher position within a company, let alone having a major presence in the larger regional or national economy.

This historical context is often left out of the recounting of Henrietta’s life. How was a woman to gain rank within a business environment with the societal obstacles of the day? Certainly, politely pussy-footing about wouldn’t be sufficient. Asking nicely would get one nowhere. Having a

special knack, high intelligence, or high academic degree wasn't enough. Liquid capital wouldn't even suffice. What the time needed was a pitbull, a Godzilla, a witch. Only this "monster", stoically and steadfastly, could break these rigid barriers down. Only a Witch of Wall Street could set a precedent in a male-dominated society. Armed with finances, a woman with a specific disposition and traits, born in a family with financial leanings created a "perfect storm" of sorts. She may have been the "Witch of Wall Street", but she was also the boon for feminine societal progress. Here's our Henrietta dragged slightly closer to center.



*Green Counting House –
Union & Front Streets
(Spinner Pub.)*

She didn't start out as a "witch." In fact, there is quite a bit of mention about her rather attractive appearance in her younger years. She had fair skin, "angelic blue eyes", and was referred to as "...a good-looking woman."

Further illustrating a personage that isn't accurately portrayed as a wretched miser, she would earn the moniker "the

pride and pain” of Bellows Falls, Vermont the hometown of her eventual husband Edward Henry Green.

By age 20 there were attempts by her father to “present” her to society armed with the finest wardrobe to attract suitors. Showing the frugality and shrewdness that she would be legendary for, she sold those clothes and invested the money in the stock market.

So how did an “angelic” attractive woman turn into a “witch”?

Henrietta Robinson was raised by her grandfather Gideon Howland and father, the aforementioned, Edward Mott Robinson. This Quaker family owned a rather large whaling fleet and made substantial profits in trade with China. She was surrounded by financiers and businessmen. It was an environment saturated with investments, deals, and accounting and it left an indelible mark on her. Indeed, by the time she was eight years of age, she had already established her own personal bank account.

History shows that her mother, Abby Howland, was sick on a relatively constant basis. When her father’s eyesight began to fail, and because illness made her mother incapacitated, Henrietta by the age of 6 began reading financial papers to her father. Surely there was a soaking up his experience and wisdom. By age 13, she rose within the family’s business and attained official rank as the bookkeeper. At 15 years of age, she gained schooling in Boston.

In 1864, at age 30, her father passed away. He left her between 6-\$7.5 million dollars in liquid assets, equivalent to \$100 million dollars today. According to the times, the inheritance should be placed into a trust fund and managed by – get ready for it – a male. Preferably someone trusty, like a relative. So cemented was this idea, that even Henrietta’s own family fought her to make her abide. Here was some more “fertilizer” to grow a witch. Henrietta had to battle the

standards of the day and her own family to get what was rightfully hers. The setting was molding Henrietta and pressuring her into a set direction. She eventually procured a portion of her inheritance and began to immediately invest in Civil War war bonds.

A few years later, in 1867 she wed wealthy Vermonter Edward H. Green on the terms that their finances were kept separate, even in case of divorce. Having full control over her own finances, Henrietta was now positioned within history and ready to earn her name the "Witch of Wall Street." She would have been named the "Miser of Wall Street" or colloquially (and perhaps chauvinistically) called the "Bitch of Wall Street", if it were not for her general appearance.



*Hetty Green at 18
years old (Whaling
Museum)*

She commonly wore the Quaker garb that her family was brought up in. Outdated long black dresses, which were said to actually be so worn and unkempt that they began to turn a shade of green. Her personal hygiene was so poor and her body odor so foul, that her desk had to be maintained at a distance from others. Henrietta was sailing her own boat and simply wasn't concerned with other people's opinions of how she carried herself.

One has to wonder if her appearance and hygiene were partly

due to her frugality and shrewdness and partly because of its intimidation factor as a woman among men in a male dominated business environment.

Wicked Witch of the East?

Being a “witch” worked within the historical context. She then would pursue a variety of careful, conservative, long-term investments in real estate (New York, St. Louis, & Chicago), railroad industry and government bonds. She would also float loans. She purchased movie theaters, office buildings, hotels, railroads, even cemeteries and churches. She was extremely calculated in her approach to determine what to invest her money on or what to purchase. Every investment was heavily researched. In spite of what many men thought, this woman excelled at math and economics. She was as capable if not more capable than her peers. Stereotype be damned.

Through a number of economic crashes, particularly those of 1857, 1873, 1893, and 1907, she was at her most frugal. This is when she would float her loans and snatch up any buying opportunity that presented itself because of the economic hardship. When it came to nearly all her financial dealings her general policy was to buy low and cash out when they reached a relative high. In 1905 she was quoted in the New York Times as saying “I buy when things are low and nobody wants them. I keep them until they go up and people are anxious to buy.”

Through this manner of dealing, her frugal disposition, and over the course of 50 years, she turned that early inheritance of a few million dollars into over \$100 Million dollars. Historians have estimated that to be anywhere from half a billion to \$4 billion dollars today. She was financially involved and networked across 48 states at some level making her the richest woman on the planet.



Henrietta Howland Green aka the "Witch of Wall Street" (Wikipedia)

Henrietta's Family Life and Legacy

Henrietta bore two children, a son Edward Howland Robinson "Ned" Green on August 23, 1868, and daughter Hetty Sylvia Ann Howland Green on January 7, 1871. In spite of keeping their finances separate, her husband Edward was given special privileges and even loaned money based on who he was married to. His financial house John J. Cisco & Son benefited not only

by who he was married to, but also because Henrietta was one of those who actually invested in the company. Investors thought that the husband of the richest woman on earth who also had a financial interest, wasn't someone you would have to be concerned about defaulting on a loan on. When the house began to collapse, it was learned that the firm had actually loaned Edward money based on who he was wed to. Her primary bank tried to recover some of Edward's debts by seizing some of her assets. They certainly didn't know who they were dealing with!



*Wedding Portrait of
Hetty Green, new
husband Matthew Astor
Wilks, and daughter
Sylvia*

Henrietta withdrew her money immediately and deposited it in Chemical Bank, a leading consolidator of the banking industry. This economic fiasco, caused them to separate and Edward to move out. However, as I mentioned earlier, we're here to cover the lesser highlighted aspects of Henrietta's life; she reconciled with him later in life and personally took care of him in the last years of his life when his health failed. Not

good press for a “witch.”

Henrietta passed away at age 81, in 1916 after a lengthy period of strokes. She willed her entire massive fortune to her children. Her children did not inherit her shrewdness and frugality. Her son Ned did work under her managing some of her properties in Chicago, but liked to spend money and amassed one of the largest and finest stamp collections in the world at that time. History records him as living rather lavishly, but it appears he lifted off of the interest of his \$100 million dollar inheritance, which hovered somewhere around \$1 million dollars per year. Daughter Sylvia married minor heir to the Astor fortune, Matthew Astor Wilks. Her mother of course, made her force a prenuptial agreement on Matthew.

Both children maintained their inheritances and finances through the Great Depression, surely using the tactics, and conservative methods of their matriarch. Ned, of course, owned the Round Hill estate with its famous WMAF radio transmitters and prototype atom smasher. Sylvia left her \$200 million (excepting \$1.3 Million) to 64 different charities primarily involving churches, hospitals, and universities.

Henrietta Howland Green was the “Witch of Wall Street.” That will never change, but she also paved the way for women in the world of finance, or in the workforce period for that matter. She showed that a woman was more than capable to do the job of a man and even do it better. She was a loving wife and in spite of being a miser, left her children her entire fortune. She employed thousands, supporting an untold number of families. This is the other element of the bouquet that is the Hetty Green personage. Perhaps “witch” is too harsh a word. How about “Honey Badger of Wall Street”?

Nah. “Witch of Wall Street” has a nice ring to it.

Celestino Medeiros; In the shadow of Sacco and Vanzetti

By Christopher Daley

The Story of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti

What famous names come to mind when thinking of New Bedford? Some names that may pop into one's head immediately are Herman Melville, Frederick Douglass or possibly Hetty Green, the "Witch of Wall Street." One man whose name probably wouldn't make it to your list but nonetheless was very famous or rather infamous in his own time was Celestino Medeiros. He is totally forgotten today, yet in 1927 his name was on the lips of thousands and in the headlines of newspapers around the world. He lies buried in a pauper's grave in the City of New Bedford at the Pine Grove Cemetery marked only as grave 339.

The reason for his short-lived notoriety was his involvement in the world famous Sacco-Vanzetti Case. In 1921 two immigrant Italian anarchists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were tried, convicted and then sentenced to death for the brutal murder and robbery of a paymaster and his guard while delivering a payroll of about \$15,000 to a shoe factory in South Braintree, Massachusetts. The case became a cause célèbre among many left wing groups and gained worldwide attention.

The common belief among the Sacco-Vanzetti supporters was that the two had been "railroaded" by a corrupt capitalist judicial system for the sole reason that they were both Italian *and* anarchists. These supporters believed that the two were

totally innocent of the crime. The propaganda put out by the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee created a whirl-wind of fervor over the case. There were protest marches to free Sacco and Vanzetti all around America and Europe and as far as Japan. After 1921 there were several motions for a new trial none of which were accepted. Then in 1925 there was a break in the case, one that looked like it might save Sacco and Vanzetti from the electric chair.



Finding Grave #339
(Catherine Reusch
Daley)

Awaiting Conviction Appeal

On November 18th, 1925 Celestino Medeiros, awaiting an appeal of his conviction for killing a bank clerk in a botched robbery in Wrentham, passed a note made out on a slip of paper to a trustee at the Dedham Jail. Medeiros' instructions were to bring the note to Nick Sacco who was a few cells down. Sacco received the note and opened it: *"I hereby confess to being in the South Braintree Company crime and Sacco and Vanzetti was not in said crime,"* the note stated. Sacco immediately contacted his lawyers and soon they had Medeiros writing out a full confession for them. In his full confession he related that he was in the getaway car sitting in the back seat with a gun and instructions to shoot anyone that came up to the car during the robbery.

He further stated that the gang he was involved with was a gang working out of Providence and New Bedford that had been

involved in stealing shoe shipments. Medeiros refused to name the members of the gang but he did say they had double crossed him and not paid him for the job. Out of some warped sense of honor among thieves or some criminal code that he perceived he would not budge and never gave up the names of the gang involved.

Sacco and Vanzetti's lawyer however investigated with what little information Medeiros had given and found a gang working out of Providence and New Bedford with some members who had been arrested for stealing shoe shipments from none other than the Slatter Morrill Shoe Factory in South Braintree where the murder-robbery of which Sacco and Vanzetti were accused took place. This gang turned out to be the notorious Morrelli gang headed by the two Morelli brothers Joe and Frank (also known as "Butsey"). Later, Butsey would become the first Don, or Godfather, of the New England Mafia.

Who was Celestino Medeiros?

Who was this Celestino Medeiros from New Bedford and how did his life go so wrong? Celestino F. Medeiros was born on March 9th, 1902 at Villa Franca, San Miquel of the Azores Islands. He and his parents immigrated to New Bedford around 1904. He attended school in the city until about the age of 15. He did not do well in school due to a problem with his eyesight, which may have been connected to his having epilepsy. It seems he had petite mal seizures and would have blackouts; he would also go blind for long periods of time. Herbert Ehrmann in his book "The Untried Case" states "because of this defect it was at first thought the lad was of subnormal intelligence, but as he matured this apparent sub-normality disappeared. At the time of his trial in 1926 his intelligence rated at least average if not higher."



*House of Correction
where C. Medeiros
served time*

By the age of 14, Medeiros was well on his way to a life of crime with a rap sheet of 12 arrests and a court record of 12 convictions. At the age of 15 he dropped out of school and began his life as a career criminal. By the age of 17 he became associated with a grifter named Arthur Tatro who had concocted a scam in which he, his girlfriend, Medeiros and his sister Mary all posed as members of the fictional American Rescue League. They dressed in elaborate blue-gray uniforms which were very reminiscent of the ones worn by the Salvation Army at the time. They worked the streets of Fox Point- the Portuguese section of Providence and in nearby Fall River, Taunton and New Bedford soliciting donations from the unsuspecting for their criminal cause. On May 1st, 1920 the police caught up with Tatro and Medeiros. They were arrested for fraud and impersonation.

Just 24 days later while out on bail Madeiros was arrested again for breaking into a shop during the night. He was sentenced for the crime on June 14th and remanded to the New Bedford House of Correction where he remained until December 1920. Around this time something happened which has caused historians to believe that Medeiros may have been involved in the April 15th 1920 South Braintree robbery for which Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted.

In January of 1921, Medeiros mysteriously came into possession of a large sum of cash which according to different accounts amounted to about \$2,800.00. This amount has been pointed out by some historians to approximately 1/6 of the payroll money stolen in South Braintree. According to Medeiros' own signed confession there were six bandits in all at South Braintree. With his new found wealth Medeiros left Providence and traveled for the next two years down to Mexico and Texas and as far as St. Paul Minnesota with an un-named "circus girl."

A Return to New Bedford; Gun Battle

In 1923 Medeiros returned to the New Bedford area and went into business on his own as a contractor. He built several garages but soon found he wasn't making enough money and in March 1924 he found himself a job working as a bouncer for Barney Monterios, a Cape Verde Brava, who ran a speakeasy called the Bluebird Inn located in Seekonk, Massachusetts, just four miles over the state line from Providence. He acted as chauffeur during the day for Barney's common law wife Mae Boice, who has been variously described as exceedingly handsome brassy blonde by various writers.



Celestino's Mother

While off duty he spent his spare time up in his room with one of the clubs "girls" named Tessie. It is said that he would lie in bed and scare Tessie by shooting flies off the ceiling with his .38 or his .45 revolver. It's also said that he once used Mae's cats for target practice an incident which sent her into a furor but was soon forgiven. Another incident that has been recalled occurred on July of 1923, when Bibber Barone, a known associate of the Morelli Gang descended upon the Bluebird Inn with several other gangsters, and demanded to take Tessie away.

Medeiros came out onto the porch with pistols drawn and according to Mae Boice's account, yelled that Bibber "and his gang had double-crossed him once and he could forgive them for that, but if they took the girl he would bump them all and it would be sure death." At this threat Bibber and his fellow gangsters climbed back into their car and roared back to Providence. By the following autumn Medeiros' affections turned from Tessie toward Mae. Allegedly he flashed a wad of money in front of Mae and asked her to run off with him. When her husband Barney found out he wouldn't stand for it and fired Medeiros and told him to get out, which resulted in a pitched gun battle in the front yard of the Bluebird Inn. No one was injured; the only victim of the shootout being Medeiros' taillight which was shattered by Barney's parting shot as Madeiros fled in his automobile.

Bank Robbery, Murder and Manhunt

On the morning of November 1st, 1924 Celestino Medeiros along with three other accomplices, Jimmy Weeks, Alfred Bedard and Harry Goldenberg, walked into the First National Bank at Wrentham, Massachusetts and told the patrons and the clerks that "this is a stick up." Medeiros, while training his .45 revolver on the elderly cashier named Carpenter, ordered him to turn over the money. Instead of following directions the Carpenter made a move for the alarm button at which time Medeiros shot him point blank. Upon seeing this, the other

bandits along with Medeiros ran out of the bank, sped off in their car and quickly went into hiding. The cashier died from the gunshot wounds within a day.

A few days later after a man hunt for the three, Medeiros was picked up in Providence at Zack's Hotel, a rundown flop house with two other Portuguese transients, Mingo and Pacheco. Weeks and Bedard were captured a short time later, Goldenberg was never captured. Weeks and Bedard agreed to turn states evidence against Medeiros in exchange for a life sentence and as a result Medeiros was convicted of 1st degree murder and sentenced to death. An appeal was made on the basis that the judge did not instruct the jury that Medeiros was innocent until proven guilty and a new trial was ordered. It was while awaiting the decision on his appeal in Dedham jail that Medeiros passed his now famous slip of paper to Sacco. Medeiros did win a new trial but with the same result he was again convicted of murder and sentenced to death.



*Rogers & Silvia Funeral
Parlor*

Sacco and Vanzetti's lawyers, William Thompson and Herbert Ehrmann made a motion for new trial based on Medeiros' confession and the supporting evidence they found that pointed toward the Morelli Gang as the real culprits in the South Braintree crime. Judge Webster Thayer, the same judge who officiated at Sacco and Vanzetti's trial and who overruled several previous defense motions for new trial overruled the

Medeiros motion and stated that "Medeiros is, without a doubt, a crook, a thief, a robber, a liar, a rum-runner, a bouncer in a house of ill-fame, a smuggler, and a man who has been convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of one Carpenter, who was cashier of the Wrentham Bank." Thayer believing Medeiros to be lying about being involved in the robbery, also pointed to the fact that Medeiros could not identify any of the landmarks at Braintree nor the caliber of the weapons used by his accomplices and that the Morelli's had provided affidavits with alibi's (later found to be concocted) stating that they had no hand in the South Braintree holdup.

"...execution came amidst worldwide marches, protests and riots..."

In a strange twist of irony Sacco, Vanzetti and Medeiros were all scheduled to be executed together. The date of the execution came amidst worldwide marches, protests and riots to free Sacco and Vanzetti. The three were kept in the death house at Charlestown State Prison in adjoining cells. Each of the condemned was offered the services of a chaplain. Sacco and Vanzetti being anarchists and opposed to organized religion, refused. Medeiros, who was brought up Catholic, was in somewhat of a stupor refused the services of a priest as well. The clock struck twelve midnight on August 23, 1927. Of the three condemned men, Medeiros was the first to go to the electric chair. At approximately 12:03am two guards appeared a Medeiros' cell. As if in a semi coma Medeiros rose and was escorted down the hallway into the brightly lighted death chamber into the view of the witnesses, guards and warden. He was guided into the electric chair. His arms were strapped down as he stared off into some distant plane.

The electrodes were placed on him and a leather headpiece was affixed to the top of this head. Then the guard placed the black mask over his eyes. The air stood silent as the guards motioned that all was set. Warden Hendry gave a nod and the executioner pulled the switch. Medeiros' body began to shake

and stiffen. It appeared to levitate in the chair as 300 volts of electricity coursed through his body. After a few seconds those in the chamber noticed the smell of burning hair. The executioner switched the current on then off three times and then Dr. McLaughlin approached applied his stethoscope and pronounced Medeiros dead. The body was quickly put on a stretcher and removed from the chamber. At about 12:11 Sacco was brought in. Looking about at the witnesses and the warden he exclaimed "Vive La anarchy" (Long live anarchy). Then he grew calmer, as if resigned to his fate.



*Grave #339 at Pine
Grove Cemetery*

As he was being strapped into the chair he quietly uttered "Farewell my wife and child and all my friends." The electrodes were fixed, the headpiece applied and then the mask. Warden Hendry nodded once more and the executioner acknowledged the signal and pulled the lever. Then in Italian Sacco called out "mother" and was dispatched to eternity. At 12:18 the last to take the chair was Vanzetti. Vanzetti walked in the death room with great vigor, stood near the warden and then said "I wish to say that I am innocent, I have never done a crime, some sins, but never a crime. I thank you for everything you have done for me. I am innocent of all crime, not only this one, but of all, al all, I am an innocent man." He shook the hands with Warden Hendry, Deputy Warden Hoggsett, Dr. McLaughlin, and two of his guards and then sat in the chair. Strapped in the chair with the mask over his

eyes Vanzetti spoke up once again and said "I now wish to forgive some people for what they are doing to me" A teary eyed Warden Hendry reluctantly performed his duty and gave the final nod. The lever was pulled and minutes later Vanzetti was pronounced dead.

Post Mortem

At the news of the executions riots broke out in several countries and at home in America. The supporters of Sacco and Vanzetti were crushed. Arrangements were made and Sacco and Vanzetti's bodies were put on display at Langone's Funeral Parlor on Hanover Street in Boston's North End for thousands to see. The next day there was funeral procession to the cemetery in which thousands participated. All the attention was on Sacco and Vanzetti as they took their place in history and Celestino Medeiros' place began to slip away.

Medeiros' body was claimed by his relatives and brought to Rogers and Sylvia Funeral Parlor at 216 County Street New Bedford where a few hundred of the curious viewed it. Feeling badly and thinking the Medeiros family destitute, the mayor of the city said that the city of New Bedford would pay for the funeral and the burial. It was later found that Medeiros' mother owned a tenement building at 735 Belleville Avenue in New Bedford and the city revoked the offer of a free burial because the family was not destitute as the mayor had previously been led to believe. As a result, little money was available and Medeiros was buried in the pauper's section of Pine Grove Cemetery, the marker "339" is the only thing to commemorate a life of crime and a connection to one of the world's most famous murder cases.

First Sail Delayed, But Blue Skies Ahead



The historical tall ship Kalmar Nyckel



by
Joyce
Rowley

The historical tall ship Kalmar Nyckel arrived at New Bedford State Pier Wednesday at 4 p.m. for its five day stay in New Bedford Harbor. But wind gusts out of the north kept her in the harbor Friday morning.

"The winds are coming down the (Acushnet) river," said Captain Lauren Morgens, who has been sailing the Kalmar since 2004. "It makes the hurricane barrier look awfully narrow," she said.

The Schooner Ernestina was able to take advantage of the Kalmar's downtime and planned an impromptu adventure for about 50 children that were visiting that tall ship. They'll be treated to a tour of the replica 17th century three-masted pinnace this morning, in addition to seeing the 19th century Ernestina.

From the green-faced gargoyle holding the ship's bell, to the wind gods, mermaids, and other mythic symbols, the children will learn about the superstitions of sailors who sailed for years to reach unknown shores.



*One of four cannons on
the Kalmar Nyckel*

No whistling—you might whistle up a storm. Gargoyles scare away evil spirits and evil winds. Two carved watchdogs sit on the port and starboard rails with one eye open on the water to watch for bad weather but a blind eye to the antics of the crew.

Morgens said some figures represented the King of Sweden's patronage, from the royal red lion on the bowsprit to the Kalmar castle aft. Kalmar Nyckel means "Key to Kalmar" in Swedish. In keeping with tradition, there are carved heads on the stern of the Governor of Delaware and members of the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation who had the vision of building a replica ship. The first captain and the shipwright are also represented.

Researchers found that the original paint pigment was bright, almost gaudy, like a gypsy caravan. The Kalmar was built to be a merchant ship. It's thought that its colors helped display the company's ability to create brightly colored pigments. Then as a naval ship, bright colors demonstrated power and strength.

Four cannons on deck protected it from pirates, as Sweden was at war with Spain at the time. Pirates were state-sanctioned back then, said Morgens, and the Kalmar was under orders to capture a Spanish ship if possible. The Kalmar's companion ship purportedly took a Spanish ship but the captain was fired for failing to share the bounty with the King.



*The Kalmar Nyckel's most
loyal mate!*

The Kalmar replica's devotion to detail has drawn researchers from the Vasa Museum in Sweden who are recreating a 17th century warship and trying to understand how the technology works. The windlass, a human-powered winch that halls up the anchor or unfurls the foresail, may be easy to figure out. But the seven to eight miles of ropes that are connected by pulleys to sails, jib, masts and yards, take years to learn. Hence the phrase, "learning the ropes."

Those who went learned the ropes by helping the crew pull up the anchor, haul up the sails, and set sail for an adventure on Buzzards Bay.

Oh, and the green-faced gargoyle? That's Fred—the longest volunteer crew member, who occasionally get seasick.

The Kalmar Nyckel Foundation is a maritime-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that promotes education while preserving the Kalmar Nyckel's role Delaware's history.

More photos of this fantastic ship can be seen in the NBG Photo Album.

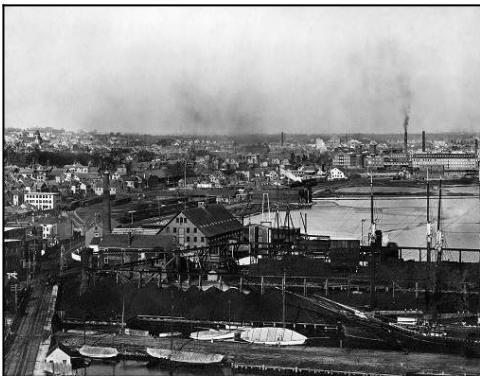
Book Review: A Picture History of New Bedford Volume 1

Road workers take a break to pose at 830 Purchase Street

I would like to pre-empt this review with a confession and a disclaimer. I was immensely enthusiastic about the release of

this book for the months leading up to it. Scratch that. Ecstatic, would be more accurate. For anyone who enjoys local history, this is a big deal. We've been living off of Ricketson and Pease for decades. We're starved.

I have to admit to being a bit biased and perhaps this will skew my review in a more positive light. However, anyone who has come across anything by [Spinner Publications](#) or had any interaction with the staff, knows the professional, world-class organization for what it truly is. It's my honest opinion, that Spinner is incapable of an inferior product. Simply not possible. It comes down to a matter of degree of excellence. A review of this book – or any product from Spinner Publications – is not whether it is good or bad, but where it sits between good and great.



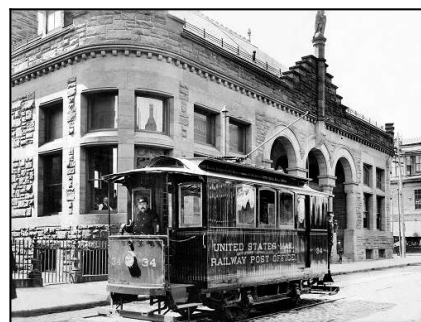
*Overview looking
Northwest*

Before the book release, I wondered about the format. The rhythm and flow of the content. Would the book be coffee table sized? How about the paper quality, especially those pages that will contain those vintage images we have all grown to love? Would it be on par with the iconic historic publications that preceded it?

I was relieved when I held the book and saw it for the first time. The book is big, but not unwieldy. It is a perfectly sized coffee table book, which allows you to take them time to

explore some of the finer details in the photographs. The durable, vivid, high quality front cover was the appropriately chosen, iconic William Allen Wall (1801-1885) "Old Four Corners" oil painting. The image wraps around to the rear, taking up half of that cover. Oh, this was starting out good.

Now, this next part is for those of us book lovers, who perhaps suffer from a bit of OCD. When I get a new book, I turn one page at a time and read every nook and cranny. I must absorb it all, and not miss a single thing. There is no skipping over the forward and hastily rushing to page 1. Oh, no. I'll even admit that I take a whiff. Hey, try that with a Kindle. A book is an experience, not just a read. We dinosaurs like to whiff.



Man in trolley

The book has a minimal amount of introductory pages. After a page thanking sponsor Bristol County Savings Bank for their gift making the book possible, there is a page with the author and editor credits, the Content page, a short forward, and a Contributors page. That's it folks. Straight to the goods.

The book is divided into five chapters, starting of course, with Gosnold in 1602 and ending with "Immigrant City" which highlights the many ethnic groups that comprised the city through the years up to 1925. These chapters make up 294 pages of content. Though the Index, Selected Bibliography and Art Credits comprise an additional 9 pages.

The layout is genius. While chronological, it is organized by

topic in “blocks.” Each topic is generally 1-2 pages, accompanied by vintage photos, and succinct. For example, in Chapter Three (1815-1860) The Golden Age of Whaling, page 79 has a column dedicated to harpoon innovator Lewis Temple and another on darting gun inventor Ebenezer Pierce. Three images accompany this page, one of the sculpture of Temple at City Hall, a 19th century display of harpoon iron and darts, and a schematic of Pierce’s bomb lance.



*Parker Auto Sales
1913 – Labor Day
Motorcycle Ride –
Market Street*

The text is not forced, or placed in a cold, encyclopedic “just the facts” manner. It is concise, and succinct, and infused with personality. You get all the pertinent and interesting facts about each topic, and not thirty boring details that most couldn’t care less about. You get the idea that the gang at Spinner made the “story” their primary objective. People like stories and want to be entertained, not clubbed over the head with endless dates of mundane details. This makes the book incredibly easy to read. It has a “pick up and start anywhere” feel to it. You’re given a choice to start from the beginning or to meander around. You aren’t bullied into starting on page one. That’s a subtle design characteristic, that was well thought out, hence one of the reasons I say the layout is genius.

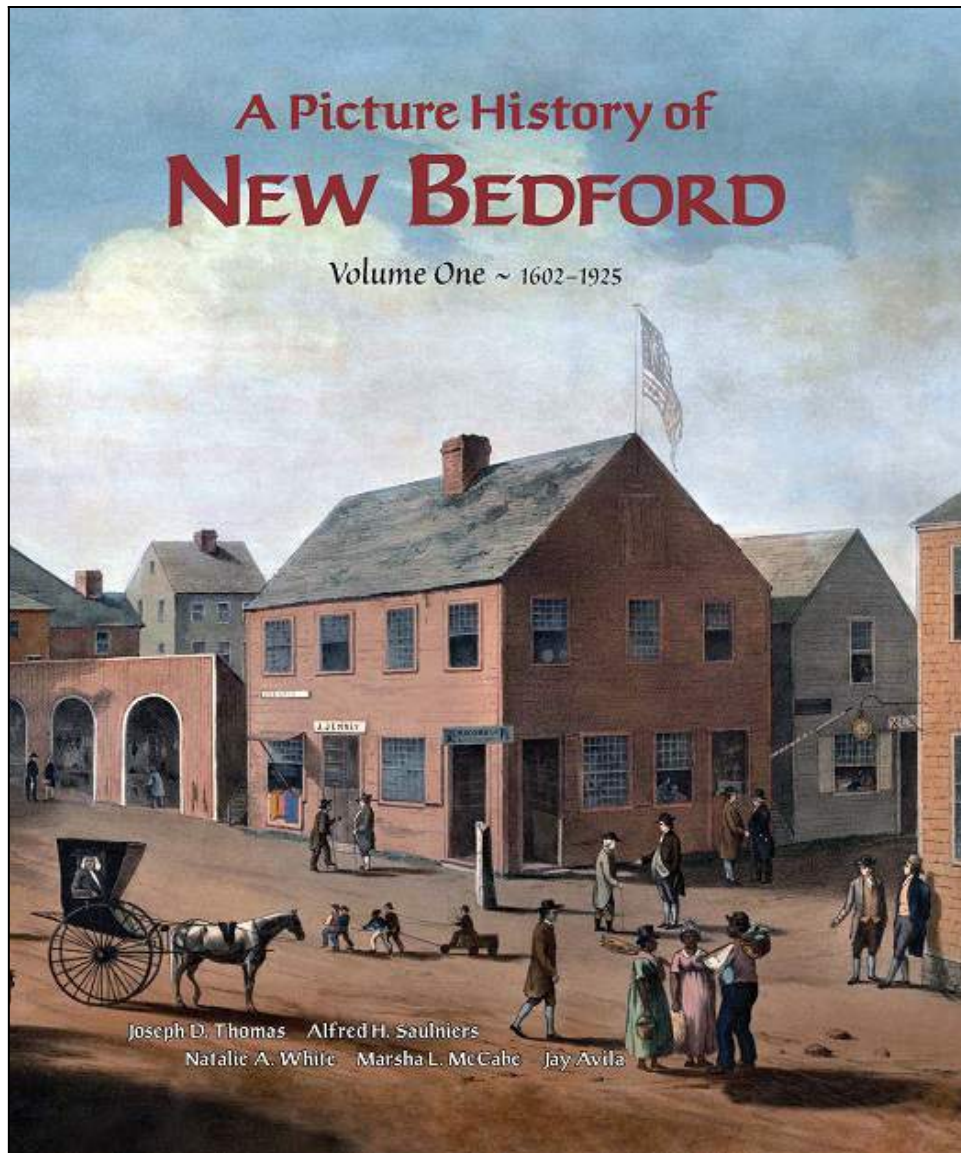
Another reason, is that the images draw you in. Every page has

at least one image and many have more than that. These images are immensely popular. Snapshots of the “bridge” in different stages, seeing the streets we drive down daily filled with horse drawn carriages and derby topped men, and cows grazing on hay where now sits a bank. When you look at these images, it piques your curiosity. You want to know more. Naturally, you will read the text. This is the way a history book should be designed. The “traditional” manner is to make you read a dozen pages and then you be rewarded with a sole photograph. Everyone from a child to the serious historian will enjoy this stellar read.

The crew at Spinner Publications has outdone themselves with a flagship product. They have raised the bar for all future releases. Not just from their company, but anyone who wishes to take a foray into the genre. Anyone who would make an attempt to try this, would – to use a colloquialism, perhaps vulgar, but accurate - “be screwed.”

That means all eyes are on Spinner Pub. for Volume 2. The pressure is on and knowing what we all know about Spinner, they will do the only thing they know how to do: outdo themselves in a world class way and produce a superlative product. I eagerly and enthusiastically await Volume 2.

For a glimpse at more images and info on the book, head to Spinner’s Facebook [Page](#) that they built specifically for the book. For more info on Spinner Publications, you can check out their [Facebook](#), [website](#) or [Flickr](#) account.



*A Picture History of New Bedford Volume 1 1602
– 1925*

City Seeks Partners For Rehab of 1840 Congdon-Lucas House



Congdon-Lucas House built in 1840

The City of New Bedford has announced it will request “expressions of interest proposals” from qualified developers for the rehabilitation, operation and management of the vacant historic building located in Hazelwood Park in the City’s South End.

The Congdon-Lucas House, once a homestead of a rural estate, has been a part of Hazelwood Park since it was acquired by the City of New Bedford in 1901. The iconic Gothic Revival-style structure was built in 1840 and is currently vacant and closed to the public.

Hazelwood Park is a 23-acre park located on New Bedford’s southern peninsula overlooking scenic Clarks’s Cove and municipal beaches. The building is sited on an elevated plateau east of the shoreline, and has dramatic westerly vistas of Buzzard’s Bay.

The City of New Bedford has modeled the Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) after the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Historic

Curatorship Program. It is designed to bring the ideal partner to this unique landmark and identify a mutually beneficial way forward that will allow the people of New Bedford to appreciate and enjoy the building for generations to come.

“The Historic Curatorship Program is a national model and has helped DCR preserve many underutilized historically significant properties,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. He added, “We want to put that same model to work for New Bedford. The strategy is to partner with outside entities that conduct rehabilitation, management and maintenance services in exchange for credit towards a long term lease.”

Like all curator-ship properties, the Congdon-Lucas House presents interesting challenges and many unique opportunities. The City hopes that by finding a partner with long term vision for the property and a sustainable plan, the iconic building will reclaim its place of prominence within Hazelwood Park. August 16, 2013 is the deadline to respond to the City’s RFEI.

New Bedford Streets; A Piece of Americana: Purchase Street

Welcome to our eighth installment of New Bedford Streets; A Piece of Americana. I invite you to read up on the history behind [William Street](#), [Kempton Street](#), [Middle Street](#), [Centre Street](#), [Ashley Boulevard](#), [Elm Street](#) and [Coggeshall Street](#). As usual, I’d like to re-iterate the importance of reader feedback, correction, and contributions.

In the process of exploring these streets, I try to confirm or validate statements and dates by finding multiple sources. Unfortunately, if all those sources are making their statement

based on an older, incorrect source, and there isn't any dissenting information available, there's no way to know otherwise. So by all means, please join in.

In addition, when trying to validate some statements, often there is very little to no information available. I haven't decided which is worse – finding one source, or finding multiple sources, but not knowing if they were all based on an inaccuracy. So help from local historians, those who remember, oral histories and anecdotes handed down through the generations, people with private collections, and even know-it-alls help!

Modest Beginnings

While Purchase Street has always been one of the vending muscles of the city, it wasn't always as important as it is today. The street wasn't chosen to be a shopping destination from the get-go. Originally, it had a more modest name: Fourth Street. As whaling boomed, bringing money, jobs and people to New Bedford, the waterfront's success progressed further into the city. The waterfront was the first stop for many denizens. Any businessman worth his salt would set up shop where the highest traffic was; where those who had money spent much of their time.

Naturally, the waterfront was prime real estate for any types of business, service or trade that would support the whaling industry – skilled and unskilled labor included. Shipwrights, carpenters, masons, coopers, navigators, crewmen, accountants, storage facilities, warehouses, ship supplies, entertainment, taverns, inns; virtually any business would have a greater chance of success close to the money.

To illustrate this point, when one stepped away from the wharves the city's "first" street was Front Street. While this makes no sense geographically, it does from the city's

perspective. The lifeblood and financial heart of the city was at the waterfront. From the perspective of those that worked and lived here, that was the front of the city. It wouldn't take long for these businesses to pile up on top of one another and spill and sprawl westward from the wharves and Front Street. The merchants and city's officials found it prudent and practical to market and promote streets further in.

After Front Street, there were eight numbered streets; first through eighth streets. They still exist today, but a few have been renamed as their function dictated. We still have 1st, 2nd, 6th, 7th and 8th streets, but lost the middle territory. Keeping the names of these streets numbered was practical for giving directions. *"Go to the fifth street up and you'll find a blacksmith."* 3rd street was renamed Acushnet Avenue as traffic opened up and flowed to Cushnea or Acushnet. 5th street was renamed Pleasant Street perhaps because it was meant to be a break from businesses and was landscaped.



*Fourth Street – Purchase Street's Original Name
(Whaling Museum Photo)*

First Organizations to Crop Up

The first mention of Fourth Street on historical record is 1792, when New Bedford's First Post Office was established. The home of William Tobey, the first postmaster, was located on the corner of King and Fourth Street, or what we would call Union and Purchase Street today. The building served as his residence and work. A painting made by William A. Wall in 1807

captures what this spot looked like then. We know the street was still called Fourth Street at least as early as 1834 based on an extant city map. In 1837 an old Unitarian Society's meeting house became the ever popular and historically important, Liberty Hall on the corner of William and Purchase Streets. The popular entertainment destination is referred to by 1837 as being on Purchase Street. So between 1834 and 1837 the street was re-dubbed. Alas, Liberty Hall and its iconic bell were burned down in a fire in November of 1854, along with a dozen other businesses.

Over the next few decades, the city would continue to burgeon and organizations like the YMCA and St. Luke's Hospital would have facilities on Purchase Street. A few theaters would also pop up, like the Olympia Theater. Purchase Street (and Union Street) was bloated with churches, organizations, and businesses. Traffic – pedestrian, horse and public transit – would magnify to the point of being a legitimate issue. In addition, if tracks for [streetcars and trolleys](#) were to be laid down, the street *had* to be widened. The street needed to be widened, but this turned out to be a controversial topic.

Street Widening Project

While Mayor Charles Ashley and the general populace felt the street needed broadening, some city officials and merchants were reluctant to do so. Many merchants did not want their livelihood to go on hiatus or their shop relocated while their building was razed and the project undertaken.



Broadening of Purchase Street in 1913 (Whaling Museum Photo)

In addition, those on the west side of the street felt they would be paying taxes twice. They felt they were already paying taxes and once the widening would be finished they would be responsible for paying an additional tax, called a Betterment Tax, under Massachusetts law. In addition, they would suffer with smaller facilities, meaning less inventory and revenue for shops, and landlords charging tenants less.

In *The American City*, Volume 10 Watson Randolph mentions the street was so narrow and traffic so treacherous that it *"...caused danger to life."* By 1913, residents had had enough and a petition 6,000 strong was brought to the city, who followed with a majority vote approving the idea. The project would happen. Purchase and Union Streets were both broadened to support the increased traffic. The west side of Purchase Street from Union to Elm was expanded by 16' 1/2 feet and the Merchants Bank Building on William and Purchase was completely rebuilt.

The total cost then for the Purchase Street expansion was \$373,885.72, an estimated 30 million dollars in today's money. Damages to local businesses was \$22,114.28 or approximately \$2,500,000. During the reconstruction, these businesses were either demolished or renovated. This foresight allowed Purchase Street to further grow and therefore the city to

prosper.

Not many major events happened in the following decades. In 1956, a parade which drew 50,000 went down Purchase Street led by Gregory Peck who was here to promote the film premiere "Moby Dick." Citizens showed their spirit by donning 19th century garb during the parade. There was also a Captain Ahab Beard contest with an award of \$100 as well as a \$25 savings bond!

So that is how Fourth Street became Purchase Street and got its name! If you have some anecdotes or photos to share or corrections to make please comment below. As with all these articles, a discussion is better than a lecture. So please, hop right in and start yapping!

Purchase Street Timeline

1700s: Purchase Street is known as Fourth Street. A small dirt road.

1792: City's first Post Office, at the William Tobey residence opens on the corner of King & Fourth, or Union & Purchase.

1807: William Wall captures Fourth Street view in painting.

1834: Street map is made.

1837c: Unitarian Society's meeting house on William & Fourth becomes the Liberty Hall. Street is renamed Purchase Street.

1839: Purchase Street from William to Union is paved for the first time.

1869: YMCA leases rooms at the northwest corner of Union and Purchase Streets.

1884: Private foundation St Luke's Hospital began operations at the Taber Estate at 81 Fourth St with 11 beds.

1887: Bradford Smith Building is erected at 1927-1941 Purchase Street.

1890: Photographer [James Reed](#) begins to operate a studio at 5 Purchase Street.

1896: The Dawson Building is erected at 1851 Purchase Street.

1897: Union Street Railway Car Barn and Repair Shop is built at 1959 Purchase Street. Times and Olympia Buildings erected at 908-912 and 880 – 898 Purchase Street respectively.

1906: President Crapo of Union Street Railway has police placed on Purchase Street Line for workers who refused to strike.

1913: Street widening project begins.

1914: [James Reed's](#) Studio is one of the casualties of the widening of Purchase Street.

1916: The Olympia theater is built at 883 Purchase street.

1956: Moby Dick Premiere, 50,000 strong parade, Captain Ahab Beard Contest.

1978: Union Street Railway Car Barn and Repair Shop is placed on the Historic register.

1981: The Greater New Bedford Community Health Center opens on 874 Purchase Street.

1982: The Dawson Building is placed on the Historic Register.

1983: Times and Olympia Buildings both placed on the Historic Register.

1984: Bradford Smith Building is placed on the Historic Register.

1985: C.F. Wing store closes.

2003: Fire at 2343 Purchase Street, Sturtevant & Hook Hardware & Building Supplies.

2012: Elaine Lima's iconic Black Whale Shop closes.

Special thanks to Spinner Publications and the New Bedford Whaling Museum for the images.

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Whaling Terms For Landlubbers: “Hove Down.”

We promise there will be no swabbing of the decks, scaling to the crow’s nest or flogging via cat-o-nine tails. If you already know what it means to have an appetite for a salt horse, would look forward to gamming (not gaming), or could definitely steer a sea vessel two points on the weather bow then you have no need for this article. Saunter off or perhaps deride this article as being written by a rube. If you are like me – a landlubber – and have an interest in the lexicon, jargon or cant of the old seafarers and whaling history, then climb aboard. Mutiny will be tolerated as long as it’s in the form of corrections, additions and constructive feedback. No walking the plank.

These articles will be light, easy reads. One term described in a few sentences or paragraphs as opposed to the novellas I end up unintentionally writing. Once a term is broken down and explained, and perhaps its context furthered by an historical anecdote, there is really no point in carrying on. So after I blather for a few paragraphs, I’ll finish off with a few of those fantastic, vintage images that the New Bedford [Whaling Museum](#) and [Spinner Publications](#) possess and allow us to use. In a sense, the text within the article is a cleverly disguised way to showcase these photos. Hopefully you’ll extend me a bit of liberty since even if you don’t enjoy the writing, you will be subsequently rewarded through the photos.



Vessel JOSEPHINE hove down during casual waterfront scene (Spinner Pub. Photo)

There is an enormous wealth of general naval terminology that was utilized by seafarers in general and even more added to that mountainous pile in the way of specific lexicon of whaling masters and crewmen. I'd imagine if one of us landlubbers was transported through time, or were alive in the whaling heyday and had the misfortune to libate too much during a burlseq...ahem...silent movie and woke up at sea, we'd be at a loss for words among the conversation aboard. Pardon the pun. If you're around a few mechanics, a group of musicians, or carpenters, you know what it means to feel lost in the conversation. It *sounds* like English, but shop-talk is virtually incomprehensible to lay people. You may even be familiar with some of the words, just haven't the faintest clue what they mean within context. Sailors have their own language, if you will, and whalers had their own dialect within this language.

Sailing is such a large part of the world's history that many terms are woven right into the language during everyday conversation amongst the general populace. Often, we use naval terms unawares. For example, how many of you have been traveling on foot with company and do as I hope many adults would do: look both way before crossing the street? Though this isn't a popular habit with many of New Bedford's pedestrians who prefer to leap into traffic then look, I'm

assuming that isn't you. Anyhow, you look both ways, turn to your partner and without blinking say "The coast is clear." Coast?! We aren't out to sea!

All joking aside, the lexicon is rich, full of euphemisms, innuendos, and meaning. It is a beautiful language in its own right. Shop-talk is born out of necessity. Out to sea, where loss of life was common and frequent, all needed to be on the same page. Communication needed to be packed with information using the fewest amount of words as possible. A difference of a few seconds, out at sea could mean at best a loss of profit, and at worst, loss of souls. Of course, that may depend on your perspective. If you were a wealthy landlubber, back at home in your estate counting your fortune, you may feel the inverse is true.



SUNBEAM hove down with crew hard at work (NB Whaling Museum Photo)

Like any language or dialect, it would be a shame to lose it to history. New Bedford's success over the years is due in large part to whaling. New Bedford will forever have its history interwoven with that of worldwide whaling. New Bedford's history IS world history. To lose the naval jargon of whaling, would be to lose part of its history and what made New Bedford. So let us dive into this language and have a little fun!

“Hove Down.” Seeing images of a vessel “hove down” can be a cause for alarm. A person’s initial response is concern. Is the vessel sinking? Have people drowned? Will the ship be saved in time? The first time I saw an image of a vessel “hove down”, immediately conjured images of the film “The Poseidon Adventure.”

The word “hove” is the past tense of “heave”, which in a nautical context means to move into a certain direction, position or situation. Hove has many variations in a naval context:

- **to heave** means to rise and fall rhythmically with the waves.
- **hove to** or **heave to** means to face the bow into the wind so as to come to a halt or drift about.
- **heave out** means unfurl a sail or to shake it loose.
- **heave up** means to raise as in “Heave up the anchor!”
- **heave ho** is an alternate way to say *heave up*.

So, one can heave about, up, to, ho, out or down! Lots of heaving and hoving! (I made that last word up.) To *heave down* or place a vessel in the past tense “hove down” is synonymous with careening or listing. To heave a vessel down is to intentionally lay or tip it onto its side for repair, painting, or cleaning. So worry not! These images show a bark, brig or other vessel that has been intentionally and safely placed onto it’s side to get at the hull that would typically be underwater.

So enjoy these images of many a vessel hove down and next time you see one in an image you can explain it to your friend or family member and act like you’ve known it forever! Duh!

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All images used in this gallery are courtesy of the N.B.

Historical Personages of New Bedford: Lewis Temple

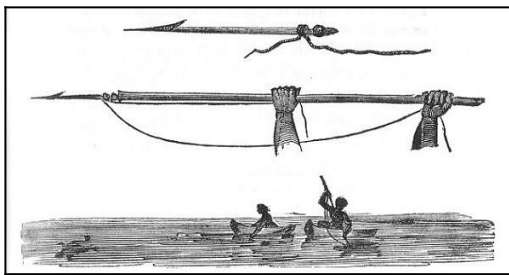
Lewis Temple Memorial in front of the New Bedford Public Library.

Welcome to the fourth installment of the series “Historical Personages of New Bedford.” The first being pharmacist [Robert H. Carter III](#), the second being photographer [James E. Reed](#) and the third was businessman and contractor [Dudley Davenport](#). My intention with this series is to shine some light on the lesser known names and figures of New Bedford’s past. I won’t focus on the more popular and well-known figures since they have not only been covered in substantial depth, but information about these figures is something most people already have a cursory knowledge of. Though redundant to say, if any more information is desired, it is readily available and easily accessible.

Some of these great and popular figures got to be well known, wealthy, or famous on the shoulders of names vaguely recalled or ne’er heard. I don’t want to swing all the way to the other side and overcompensate by saying that these great figures would be no one without those you haven’t heard of. Perhaps they would have, but I think since history has traditionally ignored the lesser-known figures, let’s give them their due!

would be terribly redundant. New Bedford and whaling are synonymous with one another. There is no New Bedford without whaling and no whaling without New Bedford. One of the most important figures in both New Bedford and whaling history was inventor, blacksmith, and abolitionist, Lewis Temple.

Temple was born as a slave in Richmond, Virginia in 1800. To place this in context without getting too “heavy”, this is 60 years before the American Civil War which led to the emancipation of slaves. The Constitution actually protected the slave trade. States above the Mason-Dixon line wouldn’t officially abolish slavery for another 4 years, and the South’s cotton industry was just beginning, so they weren’t letting go of slavery. Temple was born smack dab in the heart of slave country.

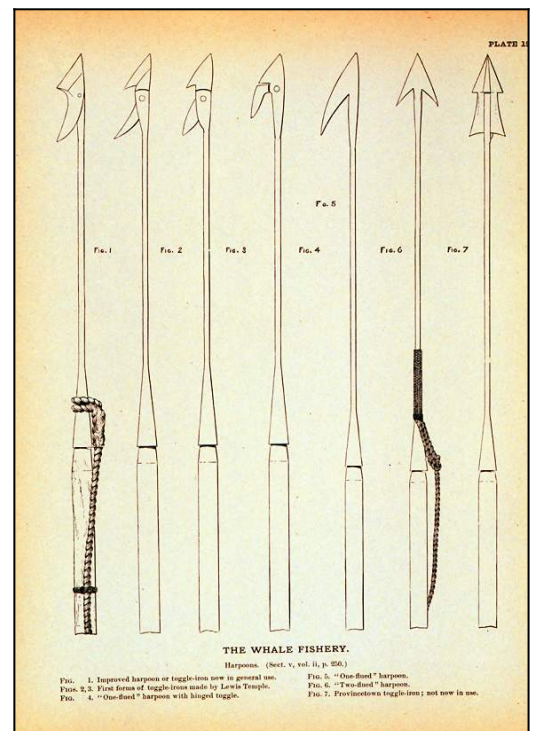


Amerindian harpoons used to harvest turtles

The treatment of slaves during this period was abhorrent. Flogging, lynching, regular beatings, branding, and rape weren’t uncommon. While history records Temple as being a free man, he was not born so. Being surrounded by these conditions must have been psychologically taxing and spiritually draining. Whether he left the South because of these conditions or to find better work is unknown. What is known is that he arrived in New Bedford in the early part of 1829. Likely it was a combination of factors; the north had abolished slavery and was treating black people more humanely – though relatively so – and New Bedford’s whaling industry insured income and needed skilled craftsmen like Lewis Temple.

Temple was a Blacksmith by trade and opened a shop on Coffin's Wharf at 3 Walnut Street. He would practice as a smith at this specific shop for the rest of his life. The same year that he arrived he married a Mary Clark, whose family had recently moved to New Bedford from Baltimore. Together they had three children.

Abolitionism was very important to Temple, and he was very active in the movement. By 1834 he was a free man, one of 315,000, and served two important roles within the anti-slavery movement: he was one of the black auxiliaries to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and vice president of the New Bedford Union Society.



Different Types of Harpoons

Temple made a decent living and was able to support his wife and three children. Since Temple was often crafting tools, harpoons, and other whaling trappings, he was in the thick of the industry "issues." One of those issues was whales who were finally spotted and harpooned, would often still escape. The early harpoons were based on what was *thought* to be utilized

by native Amerindians. In essence, these were spears that penetrated the target but did not fasten to the whale. This was called a "common iron."

A supposed improvement on these common irons was to add a barb called a flue. These harpoons had one or two flues that looked like an arrowhead. These flues were supposed to create drag or friction, snagging the whale when the pulled on. However, they were basically glorified darts that did little to actually keep the whaleboat fastened to the bounty.

Where Lewis enters the history books is with his innovative solution to this problem that haunted whalers in 1848. He did away with the static flues and made the head pivot or toggle. The tip of the harpoon would be streamlined and easily embed in the whale's flesh, yet when the line was tugged the flue would cause the tip to pivot and lengthen. This was so effective that the only way to remove the harpoon was to actually reel the harvest in and butcher it out. This was dubbed the "Temple Toggle", "Temple Iron" and eventually his surname was dropped and simply called the "toggle iron."

Amerindians, especially the Inuit had been using the toggle, made from bone for thousands of years, in spite of the fact that Temple would be credited with its invention. They used them to catch, fish, turtles as well as whales. In addition, Englishman Francis Thompson had invented what is called a grommet pivot for harpoons. Whether Temple just did a better job of observation, actually had intimate contact with Amerindians, was influenced by Thompson's early design, or came up with the idea on his own, isn't known. Temple's version was a vast improvement and one that was vastly sturdier and superior to its progenitors.



Lewis Temple's
Innovation: The Toggle
(Whaling Museum Photo)

Initially, there was resistance and skepticism about the innovation, and in some cases downright refusal. Within the context of the era, while slavery was abolished in the north, there were plenty of social issues that hadn't been yet worked out. Many whites didn't consider blacks to be very intelligent and thought them to be base. Of course, not all people were bigoted and ignorant, and those who were more progressive in thought gave Temple and his toggle iron a chance.

Like many things, word of mouth can be responsible for an immense success in a business. It only took a few voyages where there was a dramatic increase in a harvest for Temple's toggle harpoon to spread like wildfire. Clifford Ashley, author of *The Yankee Whaler*, stated that Temple's toggle was "*the single most important invention in the whole history of whaling.*" Indeed, by 1850 most whaling ships had made the transition and this had a marked effect on the harvest and revenue of the crews and vessels. This proved to be an economic boon for the industry and especially the city. So much so that a law firm, Delano and Pierce offered to pay for Temple to open a new, larger shop.

While Temple was responsible for the toggles invention, he did not patent it and this led to many frauds claiming to be its creator. The toggle entered mass production and Temple was left in the proverbial "dust." He still benefited financially

from the toggle, but missed on on a potential fortune had he patented it.

The city was hired to build his new shop that Delano and Pierce had funded and began construction on a site at the foot of School Street in 1853 on the Steamboat Wharf. While part way into construction, Temple visited the site to see its progress and was crossing a plank placed over a sewer trench. He slipped and fell into the trench because the plank was not fastened by a negligent town worker. I know what you're thinking. I won't say it. I was unable to find any historical records on the breadth and depth of this trench and the extent of Temple's injuries, but suffice it to say that it was a rather large one and his injuries were very severe.



Lewis Temple Memorial
Plaque

While recovering from his injuries, Temple began to sue the city, most likely under the advice and assistance of his friends at Delano and Pierce. Unable to work in the interim, Temple began to slip into financial debt. Within a year, Temple won his case and was awarded \$2,000, but alas his haunting injuries ended up killing him before he saw any of it. To add insult to injury, the \$2,000 awarded was used to pay off the debts accrued due to his inability to work. His heirs, family and estate were not able to benefit from these monies and were left with \$459.

A statue in Temple's honor was erected on the lawn of the

Public Library in 1987. Since Temple was alive in an era when photography was not very common and restricted to the aristocratic and wealthy, a likeness of his son, Lewis Temple Jr. was used. His handiwork and craftsmanship can be seen up close today, as the New Bedford [Whaling Museum](#) has many of his harpoons in their collection.

Lewis Temple was an innovator that greatly contributed to the prosperity of the whaling industry and the revenue generated by it. A monumental figure in economic terms and in the role of African-Americans in society. He disproved the ignorant paradigm of the day on the intelligence African-Americans and showed they were far more capable than the thought of the era dictated. His contribution to the economy, history, and city helped paved the way for African-Americans after him.

If you are interested in the more technical aspects behind the crafting, design, and use of the toggle iron, more reading can be found on this fascinating [website](#). Nerds unite!