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WHAT IS A GALLERY GATEWAY?

Welcome to the Gallery Gateway for The Rosenbach's exhibition *American Voyager: Herman Melville at 200*. This Gallery Gateway provides all of the content presented on-site in The Rosenbach's exhibition galleries via an easily-accessible, easy-to-print online format. The Gallery Gateway is a hybrid of a traditional museum exhibition catalogue and digital exhibitions, which have become popular in recent years. The Gateway presents a large amount of visual and text-based content in a PDF format that makes exhibition content as accessible as possible. The document can be viewed online or downloaded to a personal device for viewing or printing.

The purpose of the Gallery Gateway is to make exhibition content available to those who cannot visit The Rosenbach in person and to create a permanent record of the information shared in the exhibition.

The Rosenbach will make Gallery Gateways for its exhibitions available in its Online Exhibition Portal at **rosenbach.org/gallery-gateway**. You will also find other special features there, including sound effects for web listening, digital interactives, graphics from the gallery, interviews, and other video content. Check the portal for other features as more Gallery Gateways go live.

WELCOME TO THE GALLERY GATEWAY

HOW TO USE THE GALLERY GATEWAY

View the Artifacts

• Explore photos of objects included in the exhibition.

Read the Text

 Engage with the interpretive text that accompanies artifacts on display in the exhibition.

Consider a Visit!

 Discover The Rosenbach through research, tours, and programs.



KEY EXHIBITION DETAILS

ON VIEW AT THE ROSENBACH FROM OCTOBER 3, 2019-JULY 5, 2020

Few American writers have achieved the cultural impact of Herman Melville, author of the eternal classic *Moby-Dick*, yet he died unrecognized by his contemporaries for his genius. To commemorate the 200th anniversary of Melville's birth, The Rosenbach's exhibition explores the life, works, and legacy of this iconic but under-read author. Making use of The Rosenbach's extensive Melville holdings and numerous loans from partner organizations, including rare manuscripts and first editions, the exhibition examines how Melville fled to the watery fringes of 19th-century life to grasp core truths about American society—and even human nature itself. The exhibition challenges visitors to consider what Melville's writings have to say about modern America through the lens of marine conservation, globalization, social justice, and LGBTQ+ identity.

"Over all our gloom, the sun of Righteousness still shines a beacon and a hope. If we bend down our eyes, the dark vale shows her mouldy soil; but if we lift them, the bright sun meets our glance half way, to cheer. Yet, oh, the great sun is no fixture; and if, at midnight, we would fain snatch some sweet solace from him, we gaze for him in vain!"

—Herman Melville, Moby-Dick; Or, The Whale, 1851

INTRODUCTION

The Rosenbach Reconsiders
Herman Melville, a Quintessential
American Voyager

THE EXHIBITION

The year 2019 marked the bicentennial of the birth of one of the most influential and enigmatic authors in U.S. history: Herman Melville. To mark this notable anniversary, showcase a renowned collection of Melville rare books and manuscripts, and reconsider Melville's legacy through the lens of the 21st century, The Rosenbach unveiled a major exhibition titled *American Voyager: Herman Melville at 200*. Far from a standard re-telling of Melville's literary accomplishments, the exhibition uses a remarkable assemblage of objects from The Rosenbach's own collection and the collections of regional partners and individuals to reexamine what Melville has to teach us today.

The theme of voyaging structures the exhibition—both the oceanic voyages Melville took as a young sailor and his literary voyages into new artistic waters as an author of poetry and prose fiction. A man of metaphysical predispositions with a dark sense of humanity's shortcomings, Melville's writings resonate today as thoughtful and sometimes disturbing studies of the nature of human motivation.

The contents of this Gallery Gateway offer you the opportunity to become acquainted with The Rosenbach's important collection of Melville first editions and related artifacts, and to consider how the famous author's works resonate in modern U.S. society. Melville was obscure for most of his literary career and is famous today for just a few seminal works. *American Voyager* invites you to think beyond *Moby-Dick* when analyzing this author's complex legacy.

SOUND EFFECTS

The American Voyager galleries at The Rosenbach include special sound effects designed to transport visitors to the maritime world so familiar to Melville and his contemporaries. We have uploaded the sound files to The Rosenbach's Gallery Gateway Online Exhibition Portal, rosenbach.org/gallery-gateway. We recommend that you listen to the first sound file, "Melville at Shore," when reading the Introduction and Sections 1–3 of the exhibition (object labels 1–32). Then, listen to the second sound file, "Melville at Sea," when reading Sections 4–7 and the Conclusion (object labels 33–70). The sound effects were designed to evoke two different phases of Melville's literary life. The first section of the show covers Melville's early career, when he was a commercially viable author writing profitable books—and thus "above water" in his finances and literary reputation. The second section of the show covers Melville's most adventurous literary voyaging, and his gradual decline as a commercially successful author, a period in which his reputation and finances often sank "below water." We hope these sound effects, paired with phenomenal artifacts, create a meaningful interpretive experience for you.

GALLERY GRAPHICS

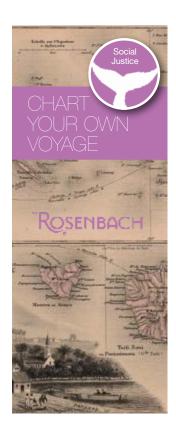
Visitors to the *American Voyager* galleries at The Rosenbach and readers of this Gallery Gateway alike will take note of the beautiful lithographic prints featured throughout the exhibition. These prints are part of the series *Moby Dick: The Passion of Ahab*, by famous 20th-century Philadelphia lithographer Benton Spruance. A copy of the published series is owned by the Print and Picture Department at the Free Library of Philadelphia and is available for viewing online in its entirety at **freelibrary.org/digital**, keyword search "Benton Spruance."

We hope you enjoy exploring this deep dive into an important segment of The Rosenbach's American literature collection. For more information about how to make further use of The Rosenbach's collection, please see "Visit The Rosenbach!" at the end of this Gallery Gateway.

Four Chart Your Own Voyage guides designed to accompany American Voyager offer exhibition viewers the opportunity to sail down special currents through the exhibition galleries, organized around for analytical themes: social justice, marine conservation, globalization, and queer Melville.

The guides, designed as trifold brochures, offer a general introduction to the theme in question, lead viewers to a specially-curated selection of objects included in the exhibition, and pose questions for further thought. The guides are reproduced in their original format near the end of the Gallery Gateway (pages 88-95). Objects featured in each of the guides are identified throughout the Gallery Gateway. To experience the Chart Your Own Voyage guides as they are used in the American Voyager galleries, please consider printing them out (double-sided), folding them, and engaging with their contents while you look at the American Voyager objects described in the guides.

CHART YOUR OWN VOYAGE **GUIDES**



















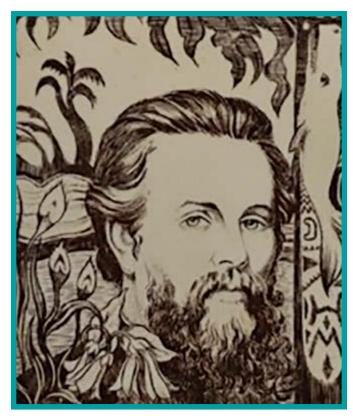








This painting, titled Pequod, the name of Ahab's vessel in Moby-Dick, was painted by Philadelphia-area artist Richard Gabriele in 2014.



Fritz Janschka, "H. Melville," Print & Picture Department, Free Library of Philadelphia

Herman Melville: American Voyager

For many people, the name "Herman Melville" means one thing: Moby Dick, the great white whale. Moby Dick—and his hunter, the peg-legged Captain Ahab—are icons of American literature. But who was the man who created them?

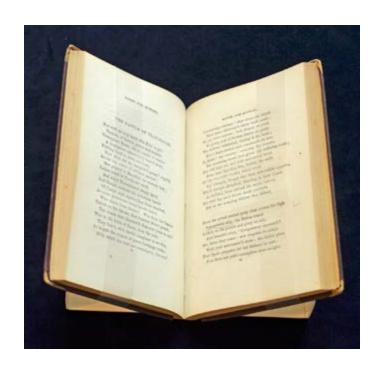
Herman Melville (1819–1891) was an American voyager.

He traveled the world, searching for adventure,
for a career, and for himself.

As a young man he sailed to exotic places and used stories of his adventures to become a famous author, all while he was in his 20s. When Melville wrote *Moby-Dick*, he experimented with new writing styles that most people did not like. *Moby-Dick* did not sell well, and it marked the end of Melville's commercial success as a writer. But he kept writing and published many more stories and poems. Few people appreciated these later works. Only years after his death did critics look back at Melville's writings and see the genius in his art.

Melville's sea voyages helped him offer a global perspective on the United States in the 1800s. His writings wrestle with topics we still struggle with today, like social inequality, politics, sexuality, the state of the natural environment, and the place of the United States in the world.

"I am tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote," Melville's narrator Ishmael says in the opening pages of *Moby-Dick*. A similar itch drove Herman Melville to the edges of the globe as a sailor and whale-hunter. Those voyages resulted in landmarks of American literature.



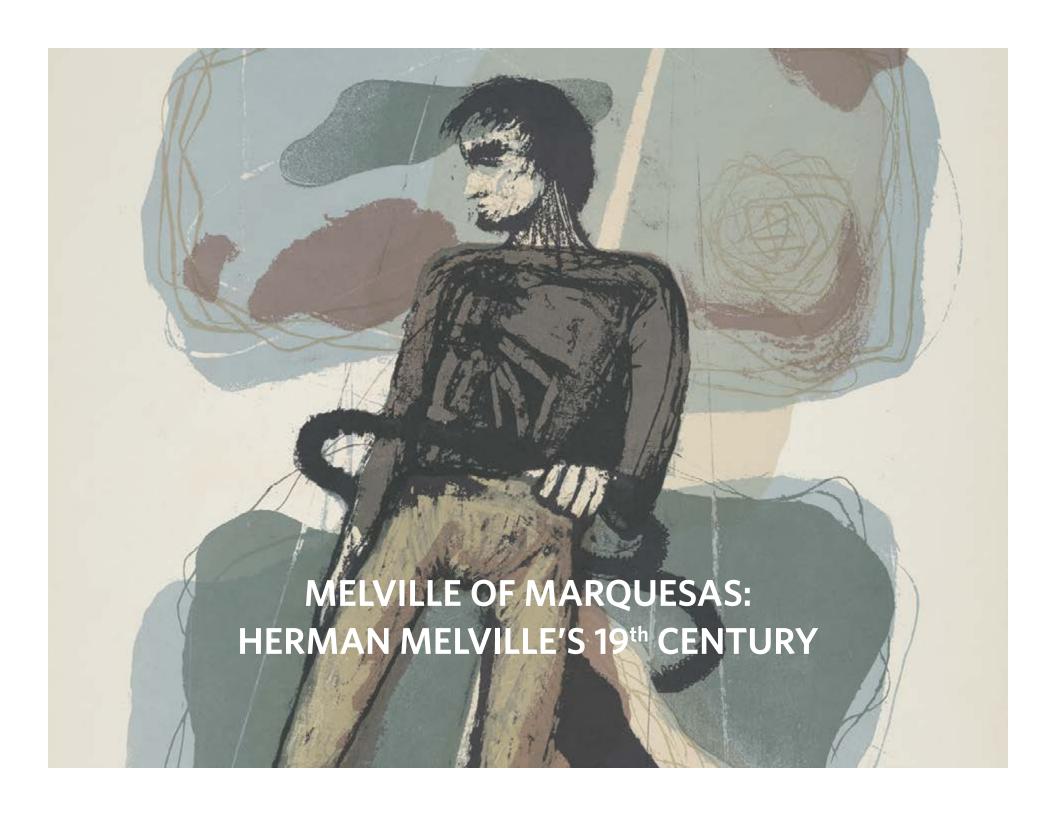
1. F.J. Vingut, Selections from best Spanish poets

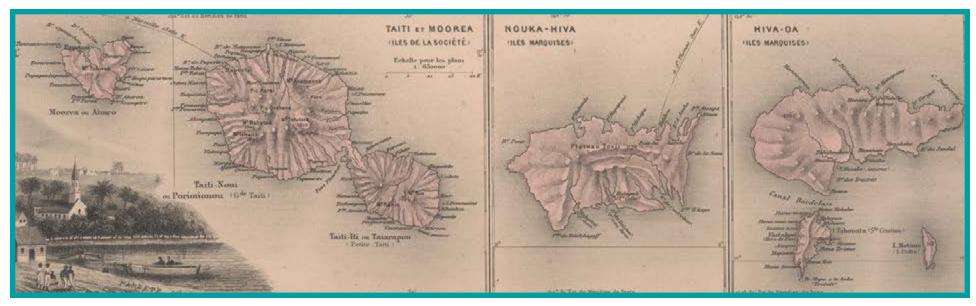
New York: F.J. Vingut, 1856 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

The Rosenbach owns several books that once were part of Herman Melville's personal library, including this volume. While he is more famous today as a novelist and short story writer, Melville was productive and very accomplished as a poet.

A *Philadelphia Inquirer* story about Melville's death in 1891 observed that, while Melville's star had faded, "history is likely to give him a place among America's principal poets." Melville's reputation did see a revival, but mostly for his prose works. Nonetheless, Melville's poetical works are an important part of his legacy. This volume features inscriptions that Melville himself made in the book, some of which appear here.

By the time of his death, Herman Melville had faded into obscurity, and his contemporaries could not envision if and how he would be remembered. This exhibition will explore Melville's lasting impact and showcase a very different legacy than that which the *Inquirer* predicted so many years ago.





Map of French Polynesia showing islands Melville visited during his voyages in the South Pacific, including Tahiti and Nuku Hiva (Nouka-Hiva above), 1900. Map Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia.

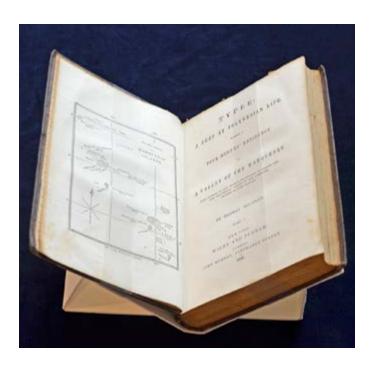
Melville of Marquesas: Herman Melville's 19th Century

Herman Melville's stories and poems reflect the opportunities, tensions, injustices, and adventures that shaped American life in the 1800s. Melville was born in New York City in 1819 and died there 72 years later in 1891. His life spanned the European settling of the North American continent and the spread of the United States' influence across the globe. His financial situation and personal life had as many ups and downs as U.S. history did during that period.

Born into a distinguished family, Herman was still a boy when his father's business failed. This change in circumstances set into motion Melville's many voyages across the United States and the world. His family relocated to Albany, New York. Lacking money, young Herman began exploring career options. He taught school, studied to be an engineer, found work on a merchant ship, and traveled to the American Midwest. He traveled down the Mississippi in a riverboat, and he also started to write.

Melville eventually signed up for a whaling voyage on the vessel *Acushnet*, which sailed from Massachusetts in 1841. This voyage changed his life forever.

On the Acushnet, Melville left the United States behind and sailed to the distant world of the South-Pacific islands, including the Marquesas Islands, Tahiti, and Hawaii. Melville returned home in 1844 and entertained friends and family with tales from his voyages. They encouraged him to write down his stories, which led to Melville's first two books, *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847). The adventure tales made Melville a famous author.



2. Herman Melville (1819–1891), Typee: A peep at Polynesian life, during a four months' residence in a valley of the Marquesas



New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1846 AL1.M531t 846b

Typee was Herman Melville's first novel. The work purports to be biographical; it tells Melville's tale of desertion from a whaling ship and time spent in the Marquesas Islands in 1842. While he wrote that the book contained the "unvarnished truth," this seems unlikely. For many years, critics thought that Typee was an authentic autobiography, but the book owes much of its literary finesse to classic works familiar to readers of Melville's day, including Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe and Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift.

Typee is sensational in nature, but in it, Melville questions the colonial ambitions of the United States and Europe. "When the inhabitants of some sequestered island first descry the 'big canoe' of the European rolling through the blue waters towards their shores, they rush down to the beach in crowds, and with open arms stand ready to embrace the strangers. Fatal embrace! They fold to their bosoms the vipers whose sting is destined to poison all their joys. ... The enormities perpetrated in the South Seas upon some of the inoffensive islanders wellnigh pass belief."



Look for this guide on pages 92-93.



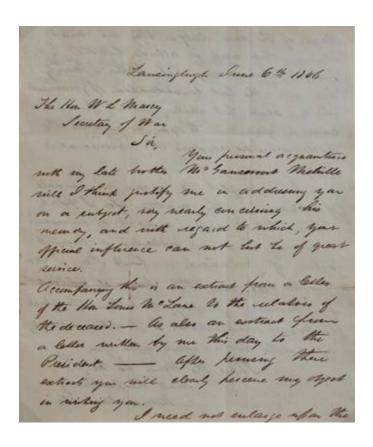
3. Herman Melville (1819–1891), Narrative of a four months' residence among the natives of a valley of the Marquesas Islands; or, a peep at Polynesian life

London: John Murray, 1846 AL1 .M531t 846a

Typee was published in London as Narrative of a Four Months' Residence among the Natives of a Valley of the Marquesas Islands; Or, a Peep at Polynesian Life. It appeared in two volumes with paper covers, seen here.

Melville's novel is a tale of voyage in many senses of the word. It presents the narrator's own global voyage to a tropical land far from home. That physical distance from the Euro-American world creates opportunities for other kinds of voyages. It forces the narrator to confront other cultures and question Western values. "How often is the term 'savages' incorrectly applied!" the narrator proclaims early in the novel. "None really deserving of it were ever yet discovered by voyagers or by travelers. ... It may be asserted without fear of contradiction, that in all the cases of outrages committed by Polynesians, Europeans have at some time or other been the aggressors. ..."

The novel also presents a tale of intimate sexual voyages possible only because of the distance from strict Western conventions for male romantic relationships. Melville provides detailed descriptions of the beauty of the unclothed forms of the Polynesian islanders—both men and women. Tommo, the main character, forms a close bond with the native male Kory-Kory. He tends to Tommo's every need, sleeping beside him, feeding him, and bathing him in a stream. The plot takes place under period suspicions of the Polynesians' cannibalism, enhancing the adventure quality of the novel and contributes to the sensational appeal to contemporary readers. In every respect, life in the Marquesas Islands differs dramatically from life in Western Europe and the United States.



4. Herman Melville (1819–1891), autograph letter signed to the Hon. W.L. Marcy

Lansingburgh, N.Y.: June 6, 1846 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

Herman was not the only voyager in the Melville family. His brother Gansevoort had achieved high status as a political figure and statesman. He had worked as Secretary to the American Legation in London, but died there on May 2, 1846. In this letter, Herman works his family's connections to a prominent New York politician to acquire funds to help cover the costs of settling his deceased brother's affairs.

Secretary of War William L. Marcy, to whom Melville addressed this letter, was an important figure in U.S. political life in the 1800s. He served as a United States Senator, Governor of New York, United States Secretary of War, and United States Secretary of State. As a federal government official, he was involved in the territorial expansion of the United States and the growth of the nation's presence on the world stage.

The Mexican-American War was fought while Marcy was Secretary of War, and he oversaw the Gadsden Purchase, by which the United States acquired land that is now Arizona and New Mexico. He also played a role in Commodore Matthew C. Perry's expedition to Japan and other matters of economic and political importance. **Marcy was one of the key figures in the construction of the global American world to which Melville directed his critiques in many of his stories.**







Herman Melville (1819–1891)

5. Omoo: or adventures in the South Seas

No. XLIII, Murray's Home and Colonial Library London: John Murray, 1847 Beguest of Maurice Sendak

6. Omoo: a narrative of adventures in the South Seas

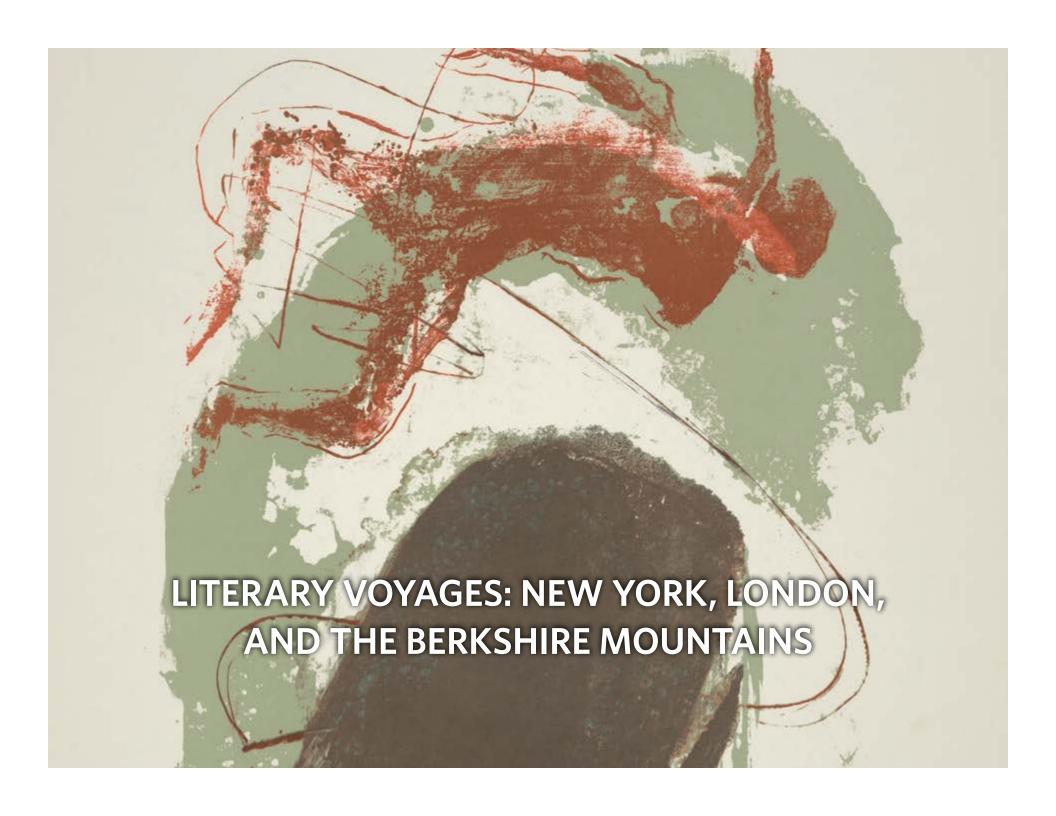
New York: Harper & Brothers, 1847 AL1.M531o 847b copy 2

7. Omoo: a narrative of adventures in the South Seas. In Two Parts

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1847 AL1.M531o 847b

"same" book can often look very different, depending on where it was published, its binding, and even its title. One first-edition copy of *Omoo*, Melville's second book, was published in London by John Murray in 1847, under the title *Omoo*; *Or Adventures in the South Seas.* Melville opted to publish it in London first, in order to prevent the appearance of a pirated edition there. It appeared as part of the "Home and Colonial Library" series. Published in two volumes, the books' paper covers advertise other Murray publications, ranging from works of history to volumes of "popular voyages and travels." The other copies of *Omoo* seen here were published in New York in 1847, under the name *Omoo*: A Narrative of Adventures in the South Seas. The bindings are different on each.

Melville tells readers that the name of the book, "Omoo," is a Polynesian word for "rover." The book functions as a sequel to Typee (2). While Omoo was popular in its time, modern critics view it as less significant than Melville's later, more profound works. Sophia Hawthorne, wife of Nathaniel Hawthorne and herself a friend of Melville, often referred to Melville as "Mr. Omoo."





View from the northeast of Arrowhead, the residence of Herman Melville, at 780 Holmes Road, Pittsfield, Berkshire County, Massachusetts. Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

Literary Voyages: New York, London, and the Berkshire Mountains

Herman Melville was not only an adventure author. He wanted to tell stories of seafaring life and the human experience in new and interesting ways.

Melville's first two novels, *Typee* and *Omoo*, were straightforward adventure tales based partly on the author's memories of life at sea. Flush with the success of these stories, Melville started voyaging in new literary directions. After the publication of *Omoo*, Melville married Elizabeth Shaw and moved to New York City. There, he worked on *Mardi* (1849), which was also a nautical adventure tale, but more intellectual and political than his earlier works. Two more novels, *Redburn* (1849) and *White-Jacket* (1850), followed in a similar direction.

While visiting London in 1850 to search for a publisher for *White-Jacket*, Melville sat in dark pubs, visited historic sites, met with literary figures, and stopped by bookshops. He purchased works by Sir Thomas Browne, William Beckford, William Godwin, and Laurence Sterne. He even acquired a copy of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. Melville's next works drew on the richness of English literature and the ideas he found there.

Melville's trip to London helped spark his ambition to write a story of great artistic depth. In February 1850, he returned from London. Splitting time between New York and the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts, he worked on a book titled *The Whale*, which eventually became known as *Moby-Dick*.







Herman Melville (1819–1891)

8. Mardi: and a voyage thither. In three volumes

London: Richard Bentley, 1849 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

9. Mardi: and a voyage thither. In two volumes

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1849 AL1.M531m

10. Mardi: and a voyage thither. In two volumes

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1849 AL1 .M531m copy 3

Like Melville's earlier books, *Mardi* was published in London by Richard Bentley (8) and in New York by Harper & Brothers. The two American first editions seen here each have important ownership histories. One was owned by Melville's friend the famous American author Nathaniel Hawthorne; you can see that the publishers gave Hawthorne this copy (9). Melville himself presented the other New York first edition to Hope Savage Shaw, the stepmother of his wife, Elizabeth Shaw (10). Melville began courting Elizabeth while working on his novel. Her father, Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court Lemuel Shaw, rightly doubted Melville's ability to provide for a family on his author's wages, but they married anyway on August 4, 1847. You can see Melville's handwriting in these two volumes.

Melville's writing style in *Mardi* departs from that employed in his previous works. Reflecting Melville's expanded reading in classics of literature, the book turns into a romantic adventure with layers of significance and meaning.

A strong current through the book is the narrator's critique of the various governmental power structures he encounters around the world. The Chartist revolt in England, the Civil War in the United States, and the Revolution of 1848 in France all underscore the narrator's point. It was poorly received by critics and the reading public, who expected the novel to be in keeping with Melville's earlier works.





Herman Melville (1819-1891)

11. Redburn: his first voyage. Being the sailor-boy confessions and reminiscences of the son-of-agentleman, in the merchant service



London: Richard Bentley, 1849 ALL M531R

12. Redburn: his first voyage. Being the sailor-boy confessions and reminiscences of the son-of-a-gentleman, in the merchant service

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1849 AL1.M531R 849b

Writing quickly after the commercial failure of *Mardi* in an effort to shore up his finances and support a growing family, with *Redburn*, Melville sought to return to favor in the eyes of the reading public.

In this book, Melville returned to his experience serving as a cabin boy at age 19 on the merchant ship *St. Lawrence*, which traveled from New York to Liverpool, England. The book recounts the story of 15-year-old Wellingborough Redburn, who, like Melville himself, had been born into a genteel family but, lacking financial stability, turned to the sea. The book tells of Redburn's labors aboard ship and also offers commentary on the poverty the young man encounters in Liverpool, providing another chance for Melville to showcase his political and social critiques. The book was better-received by critics and the general public than was *Mardi*, though its sales were unimpressive.

Look for this guide on pages 94-95



Herman Melville (1819-1891)

13. White-jacket; or the world in a man-of-war

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850 AL1.M531w copy 1



14. White jacket: or, the world in a man-of-war. In two volumes

London: Richard Bentley, 1853 AL1 .M531w 853

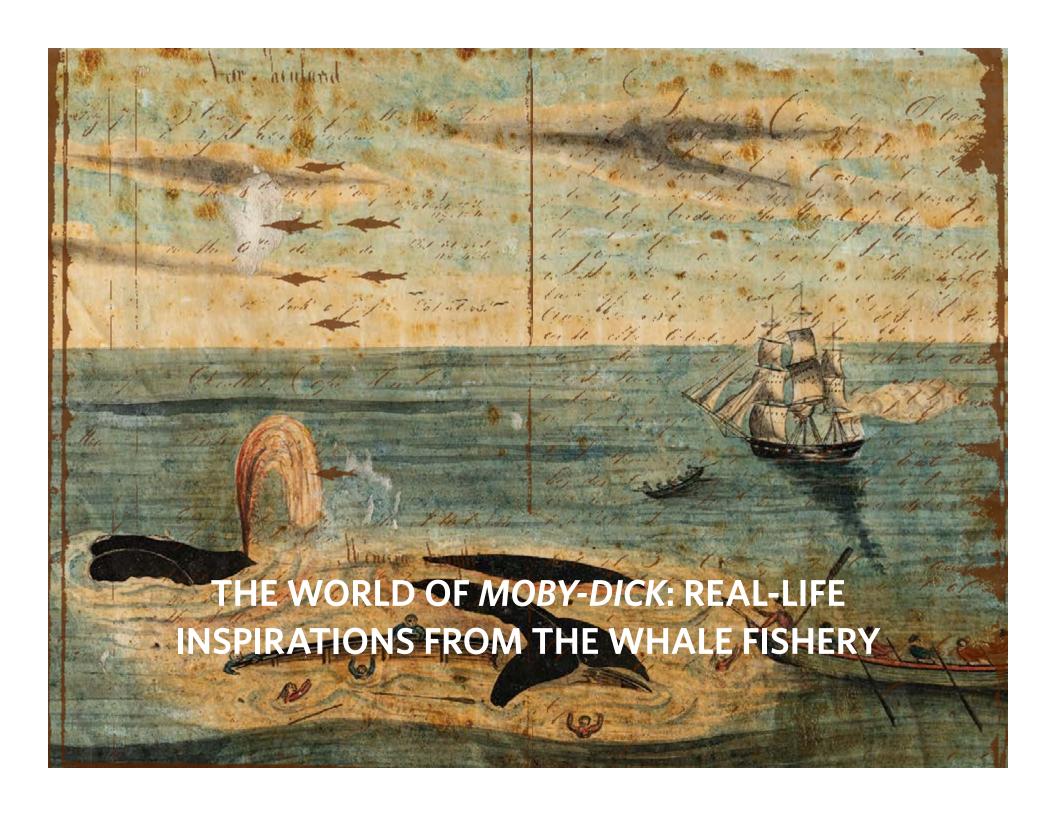
White-Jacket was Melville's fifth book. He based the novel on his own experiences as a sailor in the United States Navy, having served on the frigate *United States*, one of the U.S. Navy's original six frigates.

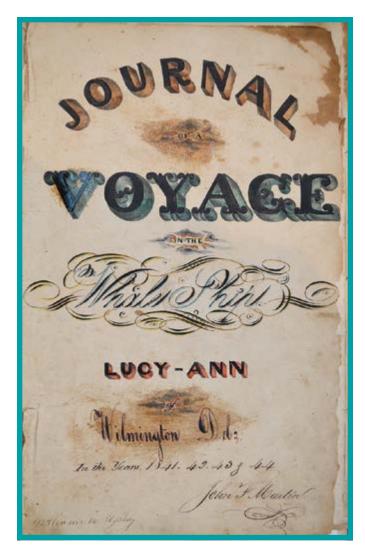


Melville had signed up for naval service after deserting the whaleship Acushnet. He sailed from Hawaii to Boston onboard the United States and, in the interim, became disgusted with the abuses endemic in naval service, especially flogging. His novel brought these abuses to the attention of the reading public. The novel had relevance to Americans beyond naval affairs because the evils of slavery, corporal punishment included, were gaining attention in the public sphere. Congress was considering a bill to ban flogging just as Melville wrote this book, enhancing its relevance to civic discourse. The New York edition of White Jacket seen here belonged to Melville's friend the New England author Nathaniel Hawthorne.



Look for this guide on pages 94-95





Illuminated title page of John F. Martin, whaling logbook "Journal of a Voyage in the Whale Ship *Lucy Ann*," November 1841–June 1844. Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society, Wilmington, Delaware.

The World of *Moby-Dick*: Real-Life Inspirations from the Whale Fishery

Moby-Dick, Herman Melville's most famous book, took a familiar part of American life in the 1800s—the whaling industry—and turned it into a psychological voyage.

Melville's famous novel blended fact and fiction. Like his earlier works, *Moby-Dick* was based on personal experiences at sea, along with stories he heard and read.

Whaling and sailing were culturally important activities during Melville's lifetime. For thousands of people, the whale fishery provided jobs, adventure, and no small share of danger. For millions more, it supplied consumer products like lamp oil.

Melville read about monstrous whales and shipwrecks in real-life accounts, like Owen Chase's *Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-ship Essex* (1821) and Jeremiah N. Reynolds, "Mocha Dick: Or the White Whale of the Pacific," published in *The Knickerbocker Magazine* (1839). At the New York Society Library, Melville read a book called *An Account of the Arctic Regions, with a History and Description of the Northern Whale-Fishery* (1820). These items are all displayed here and in Gallery 2.

In Wilmington, Delaware, a group of businessmen founded the Wilmington Whaling Company to compete with the New England whaling industry that Herman Melville documented in his novel. Some young Pennsylvanians found their way to Wilmington rather than New Bedford, Massachusetts, in their quest to set out to sea. Manuscripts from the Wilmington Whaling Company are featured in this exhibition. In 1844, a Pennsylvanian named John Martin, who had joined a Wilmington whaling crew, wrote in his journal: "Cursed whaling and quit it. Damn them who will not get up after night and burn their shirts to make a light to curse a whale ship."





Nathaniel Currier (1813–1888), lithographer and publisher

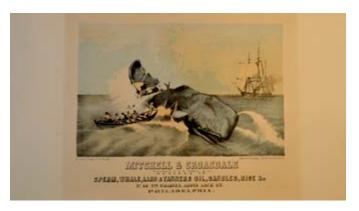
15. "The whale fishery 'laying on"

Hand-colored lithograph on wove paper New York, 1852 Loan, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, gift courtesy of Richard Miner, 1966.089

16. "Capturing the whale"

Hand-colored lithograph on wove paper
New York, [undated; ca. 1852?]
Loan, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, gift courtesy of Richard Miner, 1966.018.005

These lithographs, printed by the famous lithographer Nathaniel Currier, illustrate two stages in the process of hunting and capturing whales. In the first image, sailors in small whaleboats cautiously approach their prey with killing lances ready to strike. The second image shows the killing process well underway—both the horrific panic of the whale itself and the physical risks to the whalemen caught up in the fray.







17. Advertisement for "Mitchell & Croasdale ... dealers in sperm, whale, lard & tanners oil, candles, rice &c. No. 30 Nth wharves, above Arch St. Philadelphia"

W.H. Rease, lithographer. Wagner & M'Guigan, printer. 1850s Loan, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, gift courtesy of J. Welles Henderson 1995.035.002

18. "George W. Carr, manufacturer of whalebone & rattan ..."

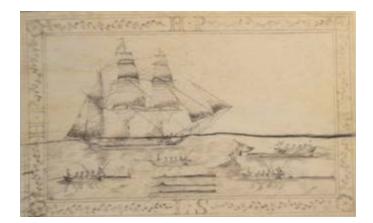
(Advertisement featuring an image of a whale and information about whale products)
Loan, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, gift courtesy of J. Welles Henderson 1987.035.0052

19. "Oils - candles - commission merchants" whale product advertisement

Loan, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, gift courtesy of J. Welles Henderson 1978.074.027

Whales were a common presence in everyday life for American consumers in the 1800s and early 1900s. These advertisements promoting products of the whale fishery combine details about consumer goods made from whales with depictions of the animals themselves.

The lithographic print (17) is both an informative work of art and an advertisement for the various products of the whaling industry available to consumers in Philadelphia in the mid-1800s. Created for oil merchants Mitchell & Croasdale, it shows whalers in a moment of chaos as they capture their prey. Why do you think Mitchell & Croasdale made such a violent image a part of their advertisement? What do you think their customers would have felt when they saw this image?







20-22. Unknown artists, scrimshaw

18009

Loan, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, gift courtesy of Richard Miner 1966.025 Loan, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, gift courtesy of J. Welles Henderson 2003.044.002 Loan, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, gift courtesy of Frank T. Howard 1967.311

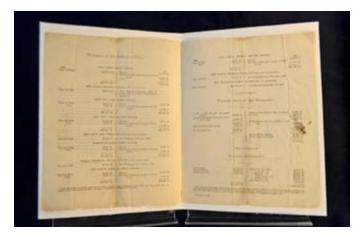


Though whaling provided moments of excitement, danger, and adventure, much of the sailors' time was spent wiling away hours between chases. The art of "scrimshaw" developed in the 1700s as a craft that is closely associated with whalers in popular memory today. Sailors would engrave designs into the teeth or baleen (a filter-feeding substance in the mouths of some whales) and then apply pigments into the lines they'd created to unveil images. Typical scenes included seascapes, pictures of ships, and portraits. The three examples shown here depict whaling vessels at sea and sailors at work hunting and capturing whales.

These objects are historical artifacts. Today, the Endangered Species Act and other international conventions prohibit the harvesting and sale of whalebone, along with ivory and bone material from other animals including elephants and rhinoceros. With the United States' Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 USC 1361-1407), which went into force on December 21, 1972, Congress banned the "taking" of marine mammals and the sale of animal parts. Museums are allowed to share pre-1972 examples of marine animal parts as part of their educational mission, which is why The Rosenbach has these items on display. To learn more about whale conservation today, visit the World Wildlife Fund's website, worldwildlife.org/species/whale.



Look for this guide on pages 88-89.







23. Circular

Wilmington, Del., March 1840, Wilmington Whaling Co. Manuscript Materials F1, Delaware Historical Society

24. Wilmington Whaling Company daybook

Wilmington, Del., ca. 1841-1847, Delaware Historical Society

25. Wilmington Whaling Company ledger

Wilmington, Del., ca. 1835-1846, Delaware Historical Society



26. Minutes of a meeting of the stockholders of the Wilmington Whaling Company held at the house of John M. Smith

Wilmington, Del., 4 November 1833, Wilmington Whaling Co. Manuscript Materials F1, Delaware Historical Society

Perhaps because of Moby-Dick, when most people think of the U.S. whale fishery, they think of two places: Nantucket and New Bedford, both in Massachusetts. While whaling in the 1800s was primarily a New England affair, its success inspired businessmen in other regions to try their hand at the trade. In the 1830s, a whaling company formed in Wilmington, Delaware, then a small port city on the Delaware River just 30 miles from Philadelphia. The enterprise was backed by Philadelphia financiers. These documents reveal the history of Wilmington's own whaling business.

The origins and financing of the Wilmington Whaling Company reflect business trends in the first decades of the 1800s: the rise of the joint stock company and speculative investment. Seeing the success of whaling in New England, moneyed men opted to experiment with whaling by investing in companies like this one. The company was founded in 1833. Before long, Philadelphia bankers including Thomas Biddle invested in the company.

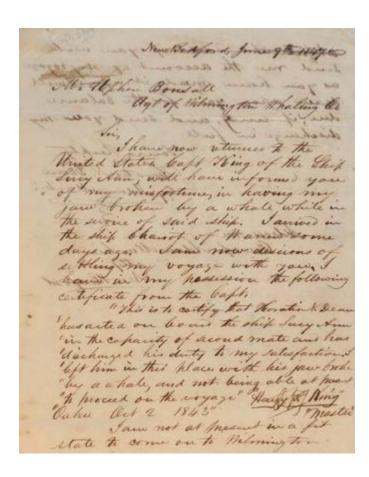
A printed circular (23) reveals the company's struggles to make sustainable profits. This circular asks the stockholders to contribute funds to the company to meet expenses. After noting the returns from recent voyages, including one described as a "total failure," the circular presents an optimistic picture. Troubled economic times in the 1840s, continued misfortunes catching whales, and hesitant investors led to the company's folding in 1844.

The daybook (24) lists expenses incurred by the company on a daily basis. The figures in the daybook were eventually transferred to the ledger (25). Also on display are the minutes (26) of a meeting of the company's stockholders, including the signature of famous Delaware businessman E.I. du Pont, who founded what became the DuPont chemical company.

Today, the greatest legacy of the Wilmington Whaling Company is certainly the stories of its sailors. See objects 27, 28, and 29 to learn more.



Look for this guide on pages 88-89.



27. Horatio N. Dean, letter to Stephen Bonsall, agent of the Wilmington Whaling Company

New Bedford, Mass.: 9 June 1847 Delaware Historical Society

While he may be the best-remembered sailor on a whaling expedition in the 1800s, Herman Melville was not the only American voyager to have adventures at sea. Many ordinary sailors who did not become published authors had experiences that would have been familiar to Ishmael, Queequeg, and Captain Ahab from the novel Moby-Dick. One such man was Horatio N. Dean, a sailor who took a voyage of a lifetime aboard a Wilmington Whaling Company vessel beginning in 1841.

In this letter (written by an attorney on behalf of Dean), the sailor asks Stephen Bonsall, who worked for the Wilmington Whaling Company, to pay Dean his wages. "Sir, I have now returned to the United States," Dean begins. "Capt. King of the Ship Lucy Ann, will have informed you of my misfortune, in having my jaw broken by a whale while in the service of said ship." After Dean suffered this injury, Captain King left him on the island of Oahu in 1843—three and a half years before he would return to the United States.

"I am not at present in a fit state to come on to Wilmington," Dean wrote Bonsall at the end of the letter. He requested that his payment be sent to New Bedford. The last recorded entry in the Wilmington Whaling Company daybook (24) shows that **Dean was paid, bringing an end to his long ordeal.**



28. John F. Martin, logbook of the whaler, Lucy Ann

November 1841-June 1844 Delaware Historical Society

The Wilmington Whaling Company lasted only a few years and is, for the most part, a forgotten piece of the region's history. Wilmington did not become the New Bedford of the Mid-Atlantic, despite the ambitions of the men who had chartered the company. While the company's economic contributions proved minimal, its cultural impact was important—due in large part to the artistry of John F. Martin, a sailor who worked on the whaler *Lucy Ann*.

Martin was born in the late 1810s or early 1820s and grew up in Pennsylvania. Whereas Ishmael, the narrator in *Moby-Dick*, sailed out of New Bedford and Nantucket, Martin traveled south to Wilmington to begin his whaling voyage. He served three stints onboard a Wilmington whaling vessel. While aboard the *Lucy Ann* between 1841 and 1844, he worked as a harpooner. On this three-year voyage, Martin, a talented artist and intellect, kept two illustrated journals, one of which is on display here. It features a beautiful illuminated title page as well as records of whales chased, captured, or lost throughout the voyage.

Darby, Oz. Nov. 21 - 1902. To The Historical Society of the Opto of Telaware I have often thought that the log ... Which accompanies this should belong mesentino it at the same time regretting that I can give but a meagre account a John & Martin , the man who Wrote it. I know nothing of him mon to the year 1841 When ar Pring Mate of the Lucy arm for sailed from Wilming ton Del in november of that year. My father then a round man made this bryage with him , and in after seare - me Latter having married and settled in Philadelphia whom his return from this Voyage Iran & Martin made my father house his home when returning from subsequent voyages. as a child I remember these truits to our home and the man interesting things which he would bring and leave

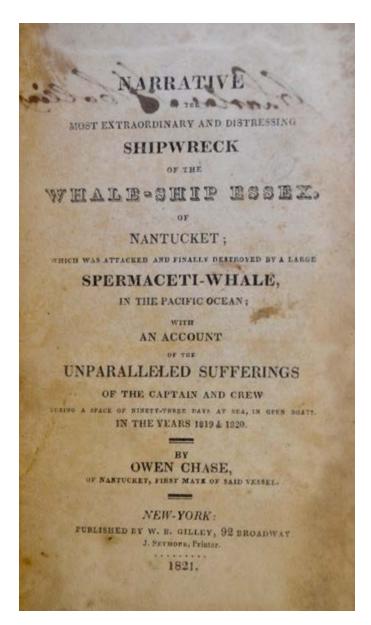
29. Letter from donor of the John Martin journal, 21 November 1902

Wilmington Whaling Co. Manuscript Materials F1 Delaware Historical Society

The John Martin logbook (28) was donated to the Delaware Historical Society in 1902 by James McGahey, who lived in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, just outside Philadelphia. McGahey's father had been a shipmate of Martin, who came to visit the McGahey household in Philadelphia. The old sailor made quite an impression on young James, with his stories and relics of life at sea. Here is what McGahey had to say about Martin in a letter written in 1902:

I can give but a meagre account of John F. Martin, the man who wrote [the log book]. I know nothing of him prior to the year 1841 when as First Mate of the "Lucy Ann" he sailed from Wilmington, Del. in November of that year. My father, then a young man, made this voyage with him. And in after years—my father having married and settled in Philadelphia, upon his return from this voyage—John F. Martin made my father's house his home, when returning from subsequent voyages.

As a child, I remember these visits to our home and the many interesting things, which he would bring and leave with us. Many of them showing his artistic taste and skill. Among his effects were many books. ... His mechanical skill was displayed in the making of a full rigged ship about three feet long. And different articles which he carved with a knife from whales' teeth. His log also shows some artistic ability. These things I think stamp him as something more than an ordinary man, although in appearance he was a typical Yankee sailor of that period. ... He died about twenty years ago.



30. Owen Chase, Narrative of the most extraordinary and distressing shipwreck of the whale-ship Essex, of Nantucket; which was attacked and finally destroyed by a large spermaceti-whale, in the Pacific Ocean; with an account of the unparalleled sufferings of the captain and crew during a space of ninety-three days at sea, in open boats. in the years 1819 & 1820

New-York: W.B. Gilley, 1821 A821 na

The plot of *Moby-Dick* may seem like fantastic fiction. How could Melville have dreamt up such an unlikely tale? The story is not as far-fetched as it first appears. Whale-hunting was common in the 1800s, and tales of disasters at sea spread across U.S. society. One of the most disturbing was that of the whaleship *Essex*. It's a story Herman Melville knew well.

Built in 1799, the *Essex* sailed out of Nantucket, Massachusetts. On a voyage to the South Pacific in 1820, the vessel was attacked by a sperm whale. It sank, leaving the crew of 20 men to try to find land in the small whaleboats that survived the attack. Starving at sea, the castaways ate the bodies of their comrades who had died. Eventually, the survivors drew lots to decide whom they would murder to eat. First Mate Owen Chase wrote this book explaining the history of the ordeal.

During a visit to Nantucket in 1852, Melville met Captain George Pollard, Jr., who commanded the *Essex* when it was sunk. He wrote of the captain: "I—sometime about 1850-3—saw Capt. Pollard on the island of Nantucket, and exchanged some words with him. To the islanders he was a nobody—to me, the most impressive man, tho' wholly unassuming, even humble—that I ever encountered."



31. Jeremiah N. Reynolds (1799–1858), "Mocha Dick: or the white whale of the Pacific: a leaf from a manuscript journal"



The Knickerbocker, or New-York monthly magazine, vol. 13 New-York: Clark and Edson, 1839 AL1. Z1k

Stories of whaling adventures were not hard to find in the 1800s. A tale recounted by American explorer and lecturer Jeremiah N. Reynolds shaped the story that Melville later told in *Moby-Dick*. Reynolds's whale was called Mocha Dick, a name reminiscent of that which Melville would use in his novel. The whale was named "Mocha" because he was most often seen off the coast of Mocha Island near Chile. Writes Reynolds in his essay:

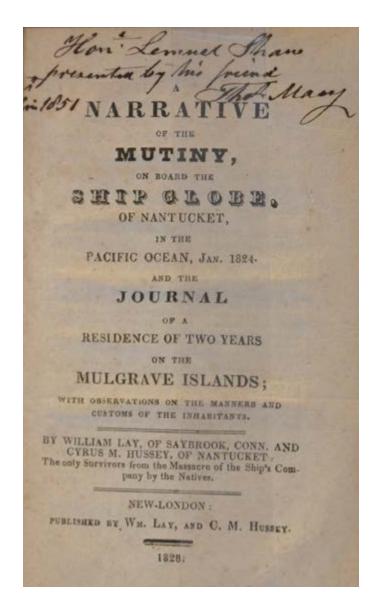
"This renowned monster, who had come off victorious in a hundred fights with his pursuers, was an old bull whale, of prodigious size and strength. From the effect of age, or more probably from a freak of nature ... he was white as woo!!"

First encountered by sailors in the early 1800s, Mocha Dick was battle-worn: "Numerous boats are known to have been shattered by his immense flukes, or ground to pieces in the crush of his powerful jaws." Mocha Dick was eagerly pursued by whaling captains with an Ahab-like desire to tussle with the monster of the deep. "Nearly every whaling captain who rounded Cape Horn, if he possessed any professional ambition, or valued himself on his skill in subduing the monarch of the seas, would lay his vessel along the coast, in the hope of having an opportunity to try the muscle of this doughty champion."

Mocha Dick survived many encounters with whalers before finally being killed in 1838.



Look for this guide on pages 90-91.



32. William Lay and Cyrus M. Hussey, A narrative of the mutiny, on board the ship globe, of Nantucket, in the Pacific Ocean, Jan. 1824. And the journal of a residence of two years on the Mulgrave Islands; with observations on the manners and customs of the inhabitants

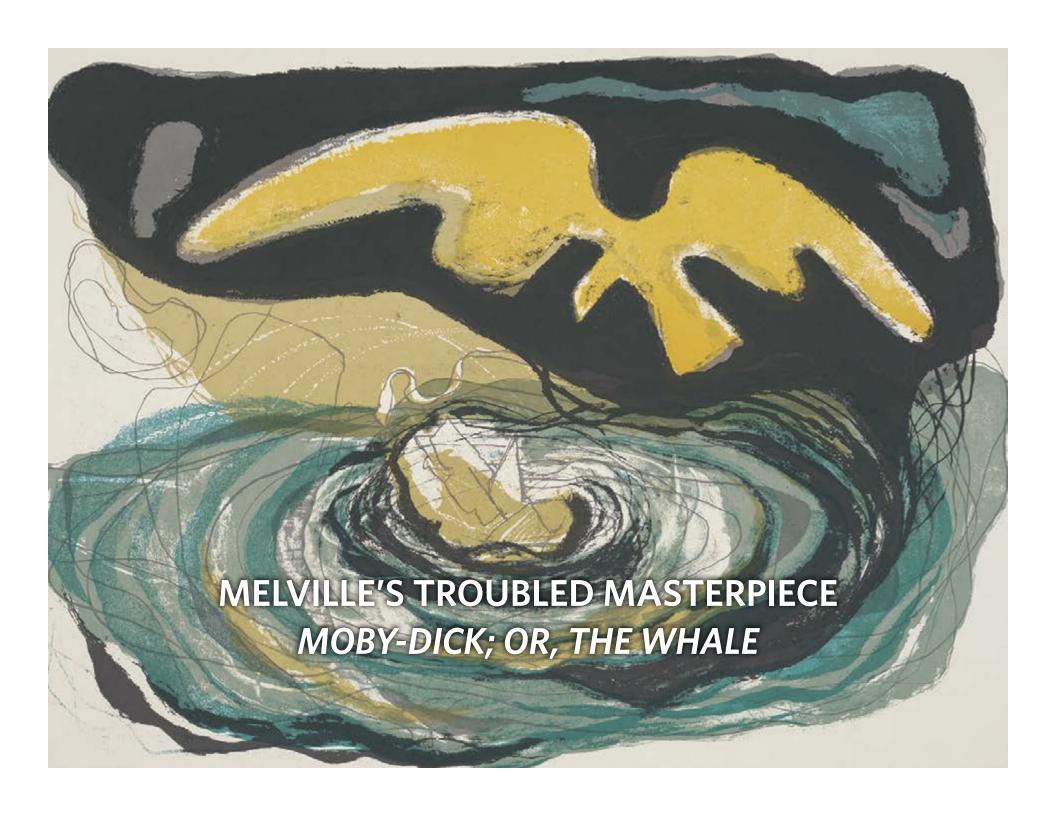
New-London, Conn.: Wm. Lay, and C.M. Hussey, 1828 A 828 narr

Just as Owen Chase's *Narrative ... of the Whale-ship Essex* (30) may have helped Melville create the character of his famed monster, Lay and Hussey's work on the *Globe* further acquainted Melville with the politics of life at sea.

While on a voyage in 1824, the crew of the *Globe* mutinied. The mutineers killed the vessel's officers including Captain Thomas Worth before landing at Mili Atoll, an island in the Pacific. After a smaller subset of mutineers sailed off with the *Globe* to Chile, islanders massacred most of the stranded sailors, with the exception of the authors of this book.

Melville acquired the book in 1851, the same year *Moby-Dick* was published. It was presented by Thomas Macy of Nantucket to his friend Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, Melville's father-in-law. Shaw then gave the book to Melville, who inscribed the book in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, opposite the title page. Macy had sent a letter to Shaw with the book, written on blue paper, which is glued inside the volume to this day. "Herewith I send a copy of the Narrative of the Mutiny on board the Ship Globe as a present to Judge Shaw," Macy wrote. "After the most diligent search I have not succeeded in finding a copy of the loss of Ship Essex. Should I hereafter succeed in precuring [sic] one, I will forward it to thee."

The Rosenbach's copy of *Narrative ... of the Whale-ship Essex* (30) has inscribed in what appears to be a child's hand the name "Wm. Macy" on pages 62 and 63. Despite Thomas Macy's inability to locate a copy of this book, could it be that a member of the extended Macy family owned this very volume?





Benton Spruance, "Strike Through the Mask," from Lawrance Thompson and Benton Spruance, Moby Dick: The Passion of Ahab (Barre, MA: Barre Publishers, 1968). Print and Picture Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia. Courtesy of the Benton Spruance Estate.

Melville's Troubled Masterpiece: Moby-Dick; Or, the Whale

Herman Melville wanted to write a great novel. With *Moby-Dick*, he succeeded. He also lost his audience.

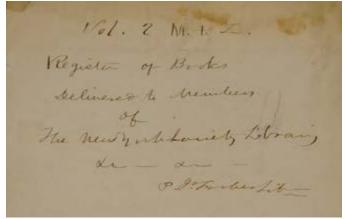
When Melville began writing the book, he probably intended it to be an adventure tale inspired by his own memories of life at sea. But as he wrote, he turned this story of whaling into a complex voyage into the human psyche—namely that of his tragic character Captain Ahab. His book was one of the most innovative pieces of American literature of the 1800s.

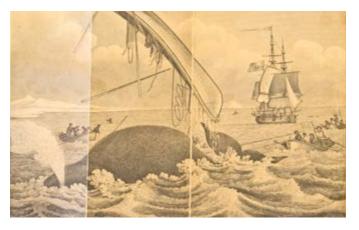
Few people of the time recognized *Moby-Dick*'s genius. Melville himself felt that the book did not achieve its full potential. He wrote to Nathaniel Hawthorne that the novel's "imperfect body" did not do justice to the ideas behind it. Even today, critics agree that problems appear in the book.

Despite its imperfections, the book is regarded as a masterpiece of world literature, and perhaps the greatest American novel.

The story of *Moby-Dick* is told by Ishmael, a young man who signs up for a whaling voyage on the vessel *Pequod*. Onboard the whaling vessel, Ishmael, his friend Queequeg, and other members of the crew realize that their captain, Ahab, is actually on a mission to murder Moby Dick, a white whale who bit off his leg during a previous voyage. Moby Dick eventually kills Ahab and sinks the *Pequod*; Ishmael is the vessel's sole survivor. On display here are important early editions of *Moby-Dick*, which was first published in London as *The Whale*.







33. Herman Melville's share of ownership in the New York Society Library: manuscript

New York: 17 April-7 October 1850 New York Society Library

34. Register of Books Delivered to Members of the New York Society Library, Vol. 2: M - Z: manuscript

New York: 1847–1850 New York Society Library ac1.r2.f11

35. W. Scoresby, An account of the Arctic regions, with a history and description of the northern whale-fishery. Illustrated by twenty-four engravings. In two volumes.

Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1820 New York Society Library Z-M S4234 A3

To find inspiration for *Moby-Dick*, Melville looked to the vast literature on whales and whaling. One source for this literature was the New York Society Library, a private library of which Melville was a sometime shareholder, including for a period of several months in 1850. The library was located in New York City at Broadway between Leonard Street and Catherine Lane during this period, close to where Melville lived.

On display are Melville's share in the New York Society Library (33), a loan book in which the books borrowed by Herman and his brother Allan (also a shareholder) are recorded (34), and the actual copy of W. Scoresby's book on the northern whale fishery that Melville borrowed 169 years ago (35). Note that the loan of the book appears in the last two lines of the right-hand page in the loan book. Records indicate that he did not borrow much else from the New York Society Library during this period when he was deeply engaged with the writing of *Moby-Dick*.



36. Herman Melville (1819–1891) to Richard Bentley, autograph letter signed

Pittsfield, Mass., 20 July 1851 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

Melville wrote this letter to his London publisher, Richard Bentley, on the eve of the publication of *The Whale* (published in New York as *Moby-Dick* shortly after the London edition appeared). Within three months, Melville would earn his place in the literary canon—though he did not know it at the time and never would. *The Whale* received a chilly reception when it was printed. In this letter, in which Melville discusses "my new book," the author turns his attention to a vexing issue that shaped much of Melville's publishing history: the problem of copyright.

Melville complains that the lack of international copyright law—and the pirating of literary texts in other nations after publication in the United States—represents a major problem for working writers. He ends with a casual summary of his work finishing *The Whale*. The United States' first international copyright law was enacted in 1891, the year Melville died.



37. Herman Melville (1819–1891) *The whale*

London: Richard Bentley, 1851 AL1.M531mo 851a



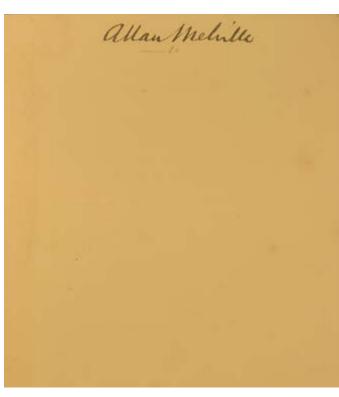
This London first edition of *The Whale* is, to collectors, one of the most iconic copies of the book today. Melville inscribed this volume to his father-in-law, Massachusetts Supreme Court Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, as seen here.

The London first edition of *The Whale* differs in several important ways from the New York first edition of *Moby-Dick*, which appeared later the same year. First, the London edition was issued as a novel in three parts. Second, its spines were decorated to include images of a right whale—an appropriate motif, though Moby Dick was a sperm whale. And third, for uncertain reasons, the text does not appear entirely as Melville intended. This misfortune shaped early reception of the book and merits attention.

A preliminary section of *The Whale* titled "Extracts (Supplied by a Sub-Sub-Librarian)," which Melville intended to precede the novel, appears at the end of the London first edition. More problematic is that the Epilogue, in which Ishmael, the novel's first-person narrator, describes his survival of the wreck of the *Pequod*, was omitted from the London edition. Without this information, readers were left to think that they had read a story told in the voice of a man who died at sea. The Epilogue did appear in later editions.



Look for this guide on pages 88-89.





Herman Melville (1819-1891)

38. The whale

London: Richard Bentley, 1851 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

39. Moby-Dick; or, the whale

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851 AL1 .M531mo 851b

Here you see the London and New York first editions of *The Whale* and *Moby-Dick*, presented side-by-side.

This London first edition of *The Whale* is almost identical to the neighboring set of volumes that belonged to Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw (37), except that each volume in this set contains the signature of its owner, Allan Melville, Herman Melville's brother.

The New York first edition, published by Harper & Brothers, appeared as a single volume. It was published under its now more-familiar title in the United States just a few months after the release of the London first edition.

While it received mixed critical reviews and a tepid commercial reception when it was released, *The Whale*, or *Moby-Dick* as it became better-known, gradually earned an exalted place in the U.S. literary canon in the early years of the 1900s. In an influential work of literary criticism titled *The American Novel*, 1789–1939, Carl Van Doren called attention to the depth of Melville's writing, what his works had to say about the American character, and *Moby-Dick* itself. "*Moby Dick* is the epic of America's unquiet mind, but Melville's age did not recognize itself in that stormy mirror. ... He remains the best, as he was the first, story-teller of the Pacific, and *Moby Dick* is the epic of the ocean."



40. Herman Melville (1819–1891) *Moby-Dick;* or, the whale

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855 AL1.M531mo 855



Herman Melville dedicated his magnum opus to Nathaniel Hawthorne, his friend from the Berkshire Mountains in Massachusetts who did so much to inspire the younger author's literary ambitions. The dedication reads: "In token of my admiration for his genius, this book is inscribed to Nathaniel Hawthorne." This volume was Nathaniel Hawthorne's personal copy of *Moby-Dick*. Hawthorne signed the front flyleaf, as you can see here.

The publication of *Moby-Dick* and its dedication to Hawthorne marked the high point of the friends' relationship. Melville had first met Hawthorne in 1850, beginning an intense relationship that involved many long conversations at their respective homes in the Berkshires. Whereas Melville was passionate and given to bouts of emotional expression, Hawthorne, most famous today for his dark, Puritanical masterpiece *The Scarlet Letter*, was reserved and even somber. Their divergent personalities meant that the intimate friendship proved unsustainable, and they drifted apart over the years. Nonetheless, Melville remained utterly devoted to Hawthorne's legacy. He visited Hawthorne's grave in the mid-1860s.



Look for this guide on pages 92-93

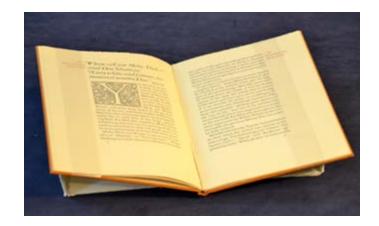


41. Herman Melville (1819–1891), with illustrations by Rockwell Kent (1882–1971), *Moby Dick; or, the whale*

Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1930 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

Closely associated as *Moby-Dick* may be with the mid-1800s, Rockwell Kent provided a refreshing, modern take on the classic in 1930. Kent filled the three-volume set, which has become known as the "Whale in a Pail" by collectors because of its steel container, with dramatic and haunting drawings that capture the dark and elemental spirit of the novel. The large format of the book makes the illustrations all the more striking.

Volume One is open to an image of Ishmael trekking to New Bedford to join a whaling crew. Volume Two shows Kent's illustration for Chapter 76, "The Battering-Ram."



42. Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach (1876–1952), An introduction to Herman Melville's Moby-Dick; or the whale

New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1924 1245/5

Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach, co-founder of this museum and library, played a role in helping reestablish *Moby-Dick* as an American classic in the early 1900s. A respected voice on literary quality, Dr. Rosenbach wrote an introduction to *Moby-Dick* that appeared in a new edition of the novel and was also printed separately as this little book. In it, Rosenbach describes his feelings about the novel. You can see the quote above the fireplace in this gallery. Dr. Rosenbach was one of many scholars and bibliophiles who paid new attention to Melville's works from the 1920s onward. They helped establish Melville's most famous novel as a key piece of American literature.





43-44. Baldwin Gardiner, argand lamps

Brass, ormolu, and glass New York, 1827-1837 2005.0024.001, 2005.0024.002

The most valuable product made from sperm whales was oil for burning in lamps. Sperm whale oil, a form of wax found in the heads of this species, gained renown as the best lamp fuel because its light was clear, smoke-free, and did not emit a stench when burning.

Argand lamps, such as the two you see here, were invented in France and quickly became popular in Europe and the United States. They gave off a bright light equal to several candles and could burn whale, seal, and even vegetable oil. The large well at the center of the lamp held the oil, which was fed through tubes to the lamps, which held wicks within two glass chimneys. The cut-glass decorations refracted the light, enhancing the lamp's effectiveness.

In *Moby-Dick*, Melville mentions the importance of whale oil-lit lamps. Polite society scoffed at the whaling profession, Melville asserts, "yet does it unwittingly pay us the profoundest homage; yea, an all-abounding adoration! for almost all the tapers, lamps, and candles that burn round the globe, burn, as before so many shrines, to our glory!"











45-49. Whaling implements from an unidentified oceangoing vessel (toggle harpoon, killing lance, boarding pike, flaying knife, mincing knife)

Iron and wood
United States, ca. 1900
Loans, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, transfer courtesy of Valley Forge Historical Society
1965.207.055, 1965.267.061, 1965.207.070A, 1965.207.074, 1965.207.067

Though it may be tempting to romanticize life at sea for whalers like Melville, the enterprise was, in fact, dangerous for the whalemen, deadly for countless animals, and disruptive to the ocean's ecosystem. The historic tools of the whale fishery that you see above you and on the wall suggest how violent the process was. While their actual history is uncertain, these items all probably date to the late 1800s or early 1900s.

The **toggle harpoon** was invented by Lewis Temple, a free African American man living in New Bedford. He invented his harpoon in 1845. When it landed in a whale's flesh, the head would pivot open, thus lodging itself securely in the whale and allowing a small whaleboat to be towed by the animal by means of the rope attached to the harpoon. When the whale tired, the boat's crew could kill it with a **killing lance** and use a **boarding pike** to steady their grip when walking on the corpse. A **flaying knife** removed the whale's flesh from its skin, and the **mincing knife** could cut up pieces of whale blubber into small chunks for further processing onboard the ship.

These implements call to mind the whales on which they might have been used in years past. They also call to mind the people tasked with employing them. Can you imagine hunting a 130,000-pound sperm whale with these tools?





Benton Spruance, "The *Jeroboam*," from Lawrance Thompson and Benton Spruance, *Moby Dick: The Passion of Ahab* (Barre, MA: Barre Publishers, 1968). Print and Picture Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia. Courtesy of the Benton Spruance Estate.

Wrestling with Angels: The Art of *Moby-Dick*

In terms of its literary quality, *Moby-Dick* is often compared to works by William Shakespeare and James Joyce. How did Herman Melville come to occupy such impressive company? By exploring new ways of using the English language.

"There are some enterprises in which a careful disorderliness is the true method," Melville wrote in *Moby-Dick*. In some ways, the novel *Moby-Dick* is disordered. Melville himself recognized that the book contained problems in plot, structure, and characterization. But many of these problems stem from the fact that Melville was challenging how novels were typically written in the 1800s.

Instead of straightforward narration, Melville opted for fluid prose that slipped in and out of first-person voice. He tested ideas for writing prose that James Joyce later perfected in the "stream of consciousness" style of *Ulysses*.

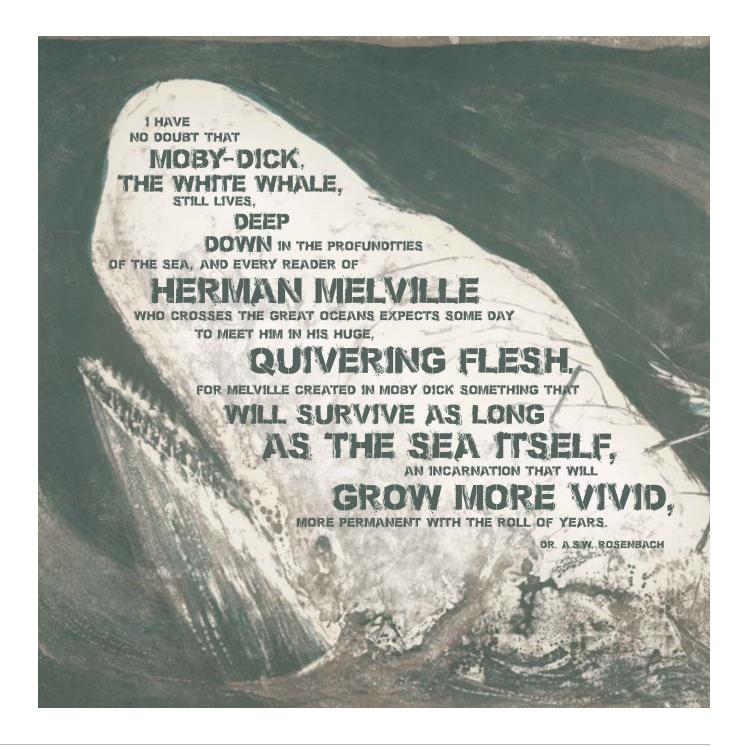
In a poem titled "Art," Herman Melville compared the creative process to wrestling with angels.

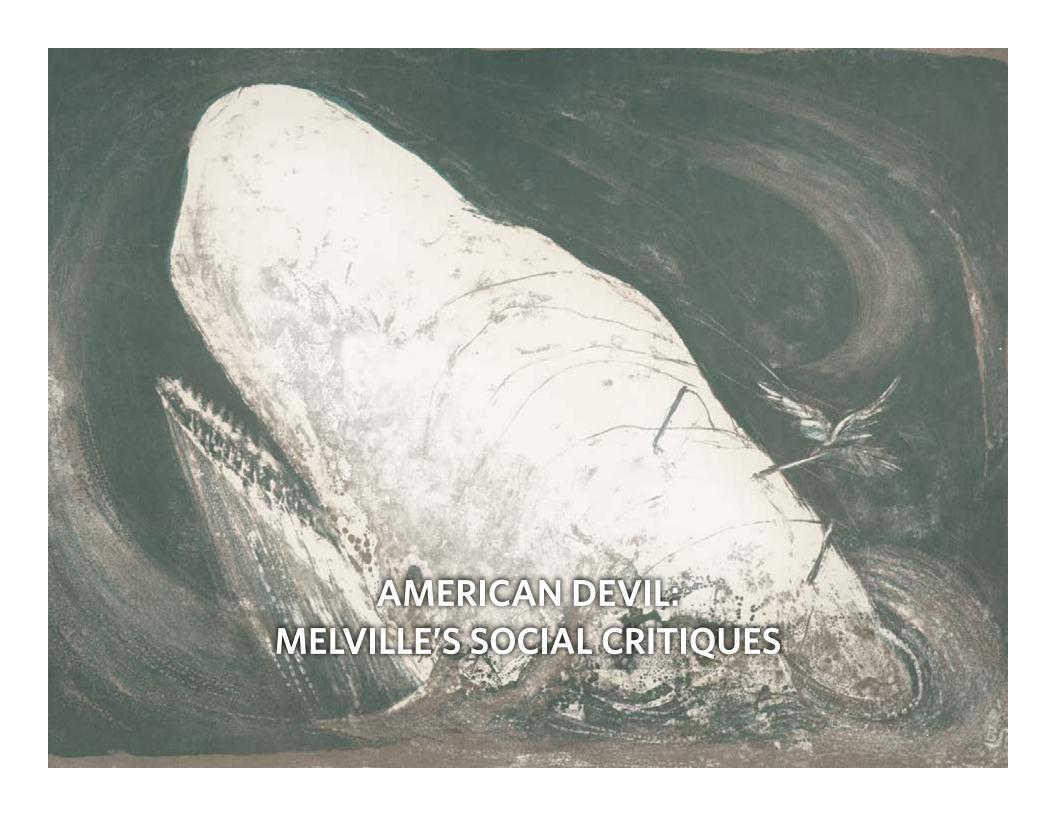
The evolution of Melville's approach to writing, from quite traditional in the book's early chapters to experimental in later chapters, is a defining feature of *Moby-Dick* and reflects how Melville wrestled with the art of composition. *The American Novel* (1921, new edition 1940) by literary critic Carl Van Doren did much to increase Melville's reputation. In his book, Van Doren wrote that "*Moby Dick* is the epic of America's unquiet mind[,] ... the epic of the ocean."

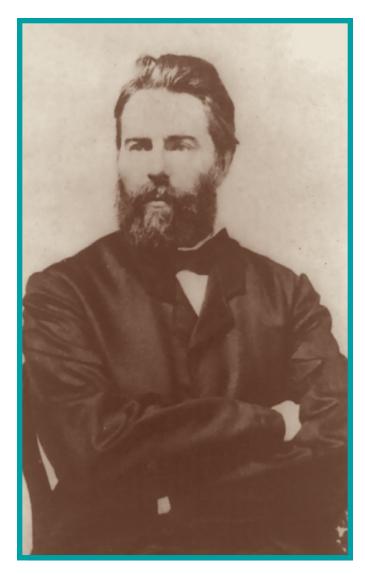
Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach, co-founder of this museum and library, wrote an introduction to *Moby-Dick* that captures the lasting quality of Melville's creation. You can see the quote in this gallery, above the fireplace.

DR. A.S.W. Rosenbach On Moby-Dick

Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach, one of the co-founders of The Rosenbach, was especially fond of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* and played a role in the novel's rise to canonical literary status in the early 20th century. He wrote an important introduction to Melville's novel, which, with his characteristically eloquent prose, Dr. Rosenbach praised the immortal qualities of Melville's fictional creation.







Herman Melville, ca. 1860. Photograph. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

American Devil: Melville's Social Critiques

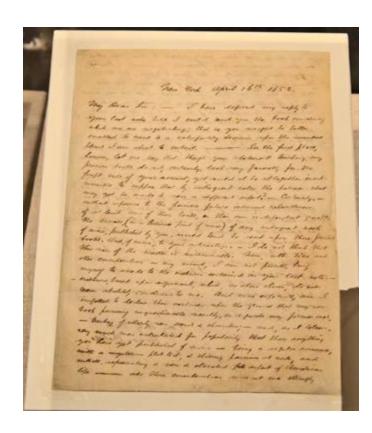
In his writing, Herman Melville voyaged into uncharted stylistic waters. He also challenged the social norms of his time.

Melville was a careful observer of the human condition and did not shy away from uncomfortable topics in his writing. Common themes include injustices in U.S. society and the limits placed on working people's lives. Having experienced financial need himself, Melville was in tune with the challenges others faced.

Captain Ahab's maniacal obsession with hunting the white whale is just the most famous example of how Melville's characters teach moral lessons. *Moby-Dick* is full of references to hot-button topics such as the evils of aristocracy and the United States' aggressive stance toward Mexico. Melville travelled to Civil War battlefields in 1865, and a year later the author published *Battle-Pieces*, a book of poetry about the war. His famous short story "Bartleby, the Scrivener" shed light on the psychological toll of U.S. business life.

He even addressed uncomfortable sexual issues. His novel *Pierre* deals with themes of incest and arrested development. It shocked and repulsed readers of the time.

Melville could write about the hardships of American life because, in many ways, he did not live an easy life himself. After the commercial disappointments of *Moby-Dick* and *Pierre*, he struggled to find a steady job and wrote magazine stories. He tried making money by giving lectures without success. In 1866, he got a job at the New York Customs House, where he worked for 19 years, until 1885. Throughout this time, he continued to write.



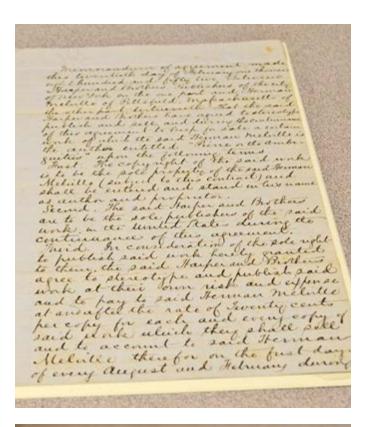
50. Herman Melville (1819–1891), autograph letter signed to Richard Bentley

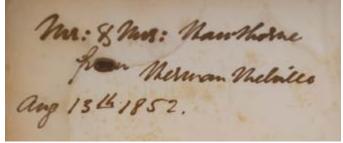
New York, 16 April 1852 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

Writing to his London publisher, Herman Melville attempts to persuade the printer to purchase the manuscript of another novel—*Pierre*—after the commercial disappointment of *Moby-Dick*.

In the first place, however, let me say that though your statement touching my previous books do not, certainly, look very favorably for the profit side of your account; yet would it be altogether inadmissible to suppose that by subsequent sales the balance-sheet may yet be made to rear a different aspect? Certainly, without reference to the possible future increased saleableness of at least some of those books, on their own independent grounds. The success, (in a business point of view) of any subsequent work of mine, published by you, would tend to react upon those previous books. And, of course, to your advantage.

Calling this new book "very much more calculated for popularity than anything you have yet published of mine," Melville implores his London publisher to "let bygones be bygones; let those previous books, for the present, take care of themselves. For here now we have a <u>new book</u>, and what shall we say about <u>this?</u>"





51. Harper & Brothers, contract with Herman Melville for publication of *Pierre; or, the ambiguities*

New York, 1852 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

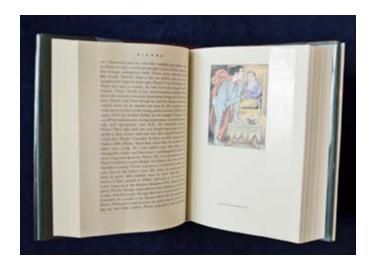
52. Herman Melville (1819–1891), Pierre; or, the ambiguities

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1852 AL1.M531pi

Here you see the contract Melville signed with Harper & Brothers for publication of *Pierre*, as well as the first edition of the novel. Melville presented this copy of the novel to Nathaniel and Sophia Hawthorne on August 13, 1852, as seen in the inscription. Also seen is the book's dedication: "to Greylock's Most Excellent Majesty," a reference to Mount Greylock, a mountain in western Massachusetts that is that state's highest elevation point.

While *Moby-Dick* had received mixed critical reception, *Pierre* shocked and discomfitted Melville's contemporaries. Having filled the novel with autobiographical elements, Melville offered in *Pierre* an uncomfortable portrayal of family life that nonetheless drew on sentimental and gothic tropes common in popular literature of the time.

Pierre is, not unlike Moby-Dick, a personal story as well as a critique of American culture. Pierre Glendinning, Jr., the novel's title character, was born into a family of wealth and standing. Beset by failure as an author, losing claim to his inheritance, and struggling with feelings of attraction to a woman who might be his half-sister, he commits murder and dies at The Tombs, a famous jail in New York City.



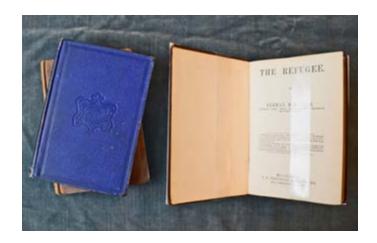
53. Herman Melville (1819–1891), *Pierre; or, the ambiguities*. The Kraken edition

Edited by Hershel Parker. Pictures by Maurice Sendak New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

Maurice Sendak worked with HarperCollins, the descendant of *Pierre*'s original publishers, to illustrate and reprint the novel. Sendak, a great collector of Herman Melville whose Melville first editions now reside at The Rosenbach, believed *Pierre* to be the author's best novel. Sendak illustrated the sexual promiscuity in the text with equally revealing illustrations, making much of the book's dark tone, outlandish plot line, and fantastical, bestial emotions. Unclad male and female figures make the book one of the wildest projects ever undertaken by the author-illustrator of *Where the Wild Things Are*.

The text of *Pierre* presented in this volume also excises a substantial, 150-page addition Melville had made to his manuscript before Harper & Brothers published the original, meaning that it offers a different narrative quality and plot line compared to Melville's novel as first printed.

This copy is signed by both Sendak and editor Hershel Parker, who had approached the famed illustrator about producing the artwork for the book.



Herman Melville (1819-1891)

54. Israel Potter: his fifty years of exile

New York: G.P. Putnam & Co., 1855 AL1 .M531i copy 1

55. Israel Potter: his fifty years of exile

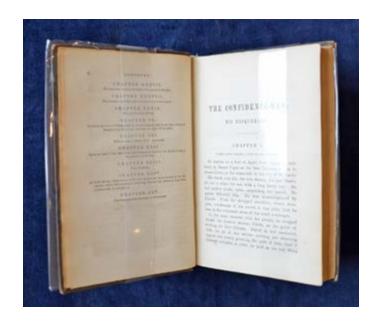
New York: G.P. Putnam & Co., 1855 AL1.M531i copy 2

56. The refugee

Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson & Brothers [1865] AL1.M531i 865

These three volumes show that the "same" books can look very different and possess varied histories. First published as a series of articles in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine, Israel Potter* was printed as a single volume by Putnam & Co. in 1855. You see two first editions here, in different-colored bindings. In 1865, a Philadelphia publisher printed a pirated (unauthorized reprint) edition. That version is also seen here.

Israel Potter is Melville's attempt at historical fiction. He based the novel on the story of a hero of the American Revolution who had published memoirs in 1824. A common man, Potter worked various jobs as he traveled the world—not unlike Melville, who had undertaken various forms of labor to survive. Melville calls himself the editor, not an author, of the book to enhance its status as a factual account, while admitting to have taken liberties with the narrative: "Additions of historic and personal details, and one or two shiftings of scene, may, perhaps, be not unfitly regarded something in the light of a dilapidated old tombstone retouched."



57. Herman Melville (1819–1891), The confidence-man: his masquerade

New York: Dix, Edwards & Co., 1857 AL1.M531co

Where did the term "conman" come from? It refers to a "confidence trick," in which a swindler first gains your trust and then defrauds you. Such a person is known as a "confidence man," or "conman" for short. In *The Confidence-Man*, Melville creates a darkly comic world of thieves and ne'er-do-wells who journey south aboard a Mississippi riverboat and reveal the shortcomings of modern American life. The plot of the novel is reminiscent of the work of Mark Twain, but the book is tinged with Melville's deeply negative assessment of human nature.

Melville traveled on a Mississippi riverboat in 1850, which provided inspiration and material for the novel. Like most of Melville's other books, *The Confidence-Man* takes place on water, not the land. In this case, the setting of the novel is the middle of the North American continent, which underscores the work's status as a satire of American life. *The Confidence-Man* is, appropriately enough, set on April Fool's Day.

The book was published in New York and London on April 1, 1857. It met with positive reviews in both the United States and abroad, though many critics did not understand (or were uncomfortable with) Melville's negative opinion of life in the United States. The book did not sell well. After *The Confidence-Man*, Melville abandoned writing prose in favor of poetry, sensing that he had alienated his audience.

BATTLE-PIECES

AND

ASPECTS OF THE WAR.

BY

HERMAN MELVILLE.

NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
PEASELIN SQUARE
1866.

58. Herman Melville (1819–1891), Battle-pieces and aspects of the war



New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866 AL1.M531b copy 1

Herman Melville is more closely associated with life at sea than U.S. politics. Yet one of his most notable poetic achievements was, undoubtedly, the publication in 1866 of *Battle-Pieces*, a volume of verse dedicated, as Melville wrote, "to the memory of the 300,000 who in the war for the maintenance of the Union fell devotedly under the flag of their fathers." The volume includes over 70 poems. The first verse in the work, titled "The Portent," written in 1859, addresses the death of abolitionist John Brown. Next come 52 "battle pieces" and, finally, 19 "memorial" verses. Despite its political resonance, the book did not succeed financially, selling only 486 copies in two years.



Look for this guide on pages 94-95



Phone anaware his Pettofalle any 7th Seathernes: - Returning brone after a few lays alcourse I find your letter of along 13th cucleting shoot for \$37,50 in fagger for about on day; 20 of Bahami; happens. Phonesses prompt have apper your accel miles, he you law know he deapy I remake you alcek, depoling that you should some len love surray also one affair.



Herman Melville (1819-1891)

59. Autograph letter signed to Dix & Edwards

Pittsfield, Mass. 1 April 1855. AMs 1179/7

60. Autograph letter signed to Dix & Edwards

Pittsfield, Mass. 7 August [1855] . AMs 1179/6

61. Autograph letter signed to Dix & Edwards

Pittsfield, Mass. 19 January 1856. AMs 1179/5

Following critical and commercial disappointments including *Moby-Dick* and *Pierre*, Herman Melville turned to the short story as a way to cover expenses. While he may have viewed short stories primarily as an income-generating enterprise, he became a master of the form. The first letter (59) records the author's process of reviewing proofs for his upcoming short story "Benito Cereno," which appeared in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* (published by Dix & Edwards) in 1855. The story, which tells the tale of Spanish ship captain Don Benito Cereno, later appeared in a collected volume, *The Piazza Tales*.

Despite the dire financial straits in which he lived around this time, Melville proved himself an honest man (or at least one who wanted to maintain good relations with his publisher) when, on August 7, 1855, he returned a payment from Dix & Edwards that had accidentally been issued twice. "I return your check, regretting that you should have been twice troubled about one affair," Melville wrote (60).

The final letter (61) offers a glimpse into the development of *The Piazza Tales* with Dix & Edwards. It contains a draft title and table of contents for the collected volume (without its finalized title, or the prefatory material called "The Piazza" that Melville eventually added) as well as Melville's reflections on this publishing enterprise. "During my talk with Mr. Dix I volunteered something about supplying some sort of prefatory with a new title to the collection," Melville observes, "but upon less immediate consideration, judge that both those steps are not only unnecessary, but might prove unsuitable." The publishers disagreed; the final collection appeared as *The Piazza Tales*.



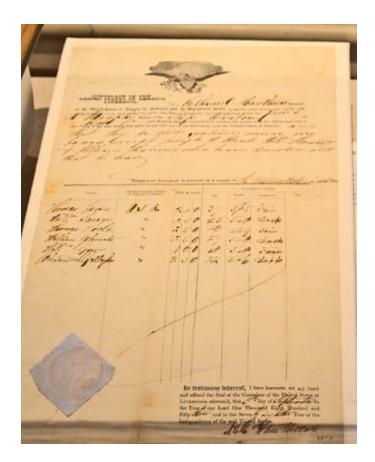
62. Herman Melville (1819–1891), The piazza tales

New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856 AL1.M531p ALPMV

Melville had been reluctant to write for periodicals, but economic necessity eventually led him to do so. He wrote for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*. After *Putnam's* was sold to New York's Dix & Edwards, the publishing house gathered some of his stories from the earlier magazine, added a new piece called "The Piazza," and published it under the title *The Piazza Tales*.

Like so many of Melville's novels, the book proved unsuccessful. Melville earned no royalties, and Dix & Edwards declared bankruptcy in April 1857. The printing plates were sold as scrap metal, and the book was never republished during Melville's life. Nonetheless, it contains some of Melville's finest short stories, including "Bartleby," "Benito Cereno," and "The Encantadas."

The piazza mentioned in the book's title and the first short story in the volume is a reference to the porch of Melville's home in Arrowhead, Massachusetts. Melville based the story on Nathaniel Hawthorne's story "The Old Manse," which appeared in Mosses from an Old Manse (1846).



63. Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), consular document

Liverpool, England, 16 May 1857

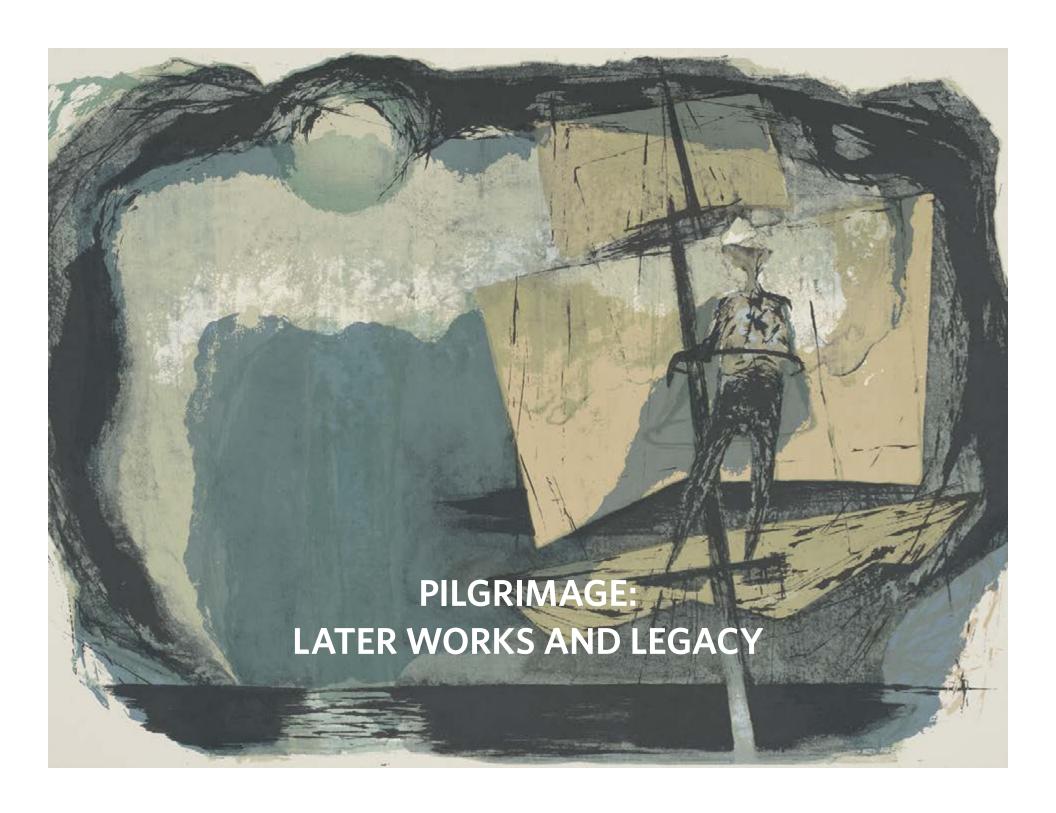


Herman Melville's friend and mentor Nathaniel Hawthorne served as United States Consul in Liverpool, England, between 1853 and 1860, having been appointed by his college chum President Franklin Pierce. This document certifies that James A. Murphy, captain of the ship *Clinton*, would continue sailing to the United States with the exception of two sailors who had deserted. Less than six months before signing this document, Hawthorne had welcomed another maritime visitor to Liverpool: Herman Melville. This is his diary entry about the occasion:

November 20th [1856] — A week ago last Monday, Herman Melville came to see me at the Consulate, looking much as he used to do (a little paler, and perhaps a little sadder), in a rough outside coat, and with his characteristic gravity and reserve of manner. ... Melville has not been well, of late ... and no doubt has suffered from too constant literary occupation. ...

He stayed with us from Tuesday till Thursday; and, on the intervening day, we took a pretty long walk together, and sat down in a hollow among the sand hills (sheltering ourselves from the high, cool wind) and smoked a cigar. Melville, as he always does, began to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken, and informed me that he had "pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated"; but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation; and, I think, will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. It is strange how he persists—and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before—in wandering to-and-fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sand hills amid which we were sitting.

Look for this guide on pages 90-91.





Benton Spruance, "The *Bachelor*," from Lawrance Thompson and Benton Spruance, *Moby Dick: The Passion of Ahab* (Barre, MA: Barre Publishers, 1968). Print and Picture Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia. Courtesy of the Benton Spruance Estate.

Pilgrimage: Later Works and Legacy

After the slow sales of *Moby-Dick*, Melville convinced Harper & Brothers to publish *Pierre*, which proved even less successful. In 1852, the New York Day Book ran a review of *Pierre* titled "HERMAN MELVILLE CRAZY."

None of this stopped Melville. New works continued to appear, and many rank as important pieces of literature today. Short stories in *The Piazza Tales* (1856) include classics like "Benito Cereno." His epic poem *Clarel* appeared in 1876, having been inspired by a trip to the Holy Land. *John Marr*, another collection of poetry, appeared in 1888. After Melville's death in 1891, some friends arranged for publication of *Timoleon*, another collection of verse.

By the time Melville died, he had lost his celebrity. His books, including *Moby-Dick*, were mostly forgotten. On November 2 of that year, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* ran a notice of the author's passing. "The late Herman Melville, commonly known as Melville of Marquesas, was a personage as prominent thirty years ago as Bret Harte [another author] became ten or fifteen years ago, but he had outlived his contemporary fame, and his death within the past month has been almost unnoticed," the paper noted. "Yet history is likely to give him a place among America's principal poets."

Melville was rediscovered after his death, but not primarily for his poetry. In the early 1900s, his prose attracted new attention. Critics noticed that he had pioneered writing styles that had matured with the Modernist movement. *Moby-Dick* claimed a place as an American classic. The manuscript of Melville's novella *Billy Budd* was discovered in 1919. Today, it too is a classic.

Melville was at least 50 years ahead of his time in both thematic content and writing style. He broke down old narrative forms and asked readers to face uncomfortable topics.

Though his reputation was diminished in 1891, Melville is perceived today as a literary genius.



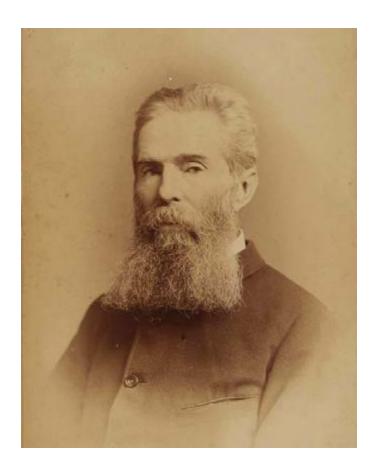
64. Herman Melville (1819–1891), Clarel: a poem and pilgrimage in the Holy Land

New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1876 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

Clarel is Melville's epic poem, based on the author's experiences during a journey to the Holy Land undertaken with financial support from his father-in-law. During a trip through nine nations that encompassed many thousands of miles, Melville kept a journal that he revisited as inspiration for this work.

The poem offers a troubled analysis of humanity's state, at least as Melville sees it, and draws inspiration from classic works including Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach." The theme of religious wandering echoes works including Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. By the time of *Clarel*'s publication, Melville's career as a commercially and critically successful author had ended. As he had with *Moby-Dick*, Melville still entertained hopes of writing a truly great work of literature.

The poem has received a mixed reception among scholars since its appearance. Some have viewed it as antiquated in tone and topic, while others sense an effort on Melville's part to juxtapose traditional styling with modern interpretations. The lengthy poem, consisting of 150 cantos, appeared in two volumes, having been published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, though the project was privately funded by Melville. As was the case with most other Melville works, *Clarel*'s reputation improved in the 1900s.



65. George Gardner Rockwood, portrait of Herman Melville

Albumen cabinet card with appended signature of Herman Melville New York, 1885 Private collection: on loan to The Rosenbach

Gaze into the eyes of the sitter in this portrait.

Does he look like a man who, decades earlier, had written a novel, *Moby-Dick*, that would earn him great fame after his death? Like an author who would call his productive, albeit unprofitable, literary career a success? Like a man on the verge of retirement from an obscure civil service job at the New York Customs House? Or like a man setting out to produce another iconic work of literature, the novella *Billy Budd*—though he would not live to see it published? He was all of those things.

This image, the last portrait of Herman Melville known to have been taken during his lifetime, comes complete with an authentic Melville autograph likely removed from an unrelated document and attached to the cabinet card at a later date. (Similar cabinet cards with signatures attached exist in other collections.) This portrait captured Melville's likeness at a pivotal moment in his later years, as he retired and continued to prepare works that rounded out his literary legacy, including *John Marr, Timoleon*, and *Billy Budd*.

JOHN MARR AND OTHER SAILORS

Herman Melville

Object image from the exhibition not available.

66. Herman Melville (1819–1891), John Marr and other sailors



New York: Privately printed by Theodore L. De Vinne and Company, 1888 Private collection; on loan to The Rosenbach

Originally appearing in an edition of only 25 copies, Herman Melville intended his late volume of verse, *John Marr*, as a gift for friends and family. He paid for its publication by the legendary New York printer Theodore Low De Vinne. The author's name does not appear on the title page, indicative of the fact that everyone intended to receive the book already knew who had written it.

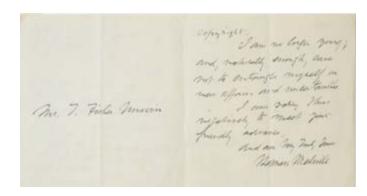
Melville dedicated this volume of poetry to one of his few contemporaries who appreciated the sophistication of his literary efforts: a British author named William Clark Russell who, like Melville, specialized in tales of the sea and called his American counterpart "the greatest genius" in the United States.

The book is divided into two sections. The first offers monologue narratives of seamen "John Marr," "Bridegroom Dick," "Tom Deadlight," and "Jack Roy." One poem in this first section, "Billy in the Darbies," inspired Melville's second-most beloved and treasured work: *Billy Budd*. The book's second section is titled "Sea Pieces."

The story of John Marr reflects the movement of American society away from maritime life, and toward the interior of the continent. It also demonstrates Melville's own reflective state in his later years. In the verse, John Marr, an old sailor, left coastal areas for the prairie. Marr longs for the excitement of seafaring life compared to the monotony of life on the prairie.



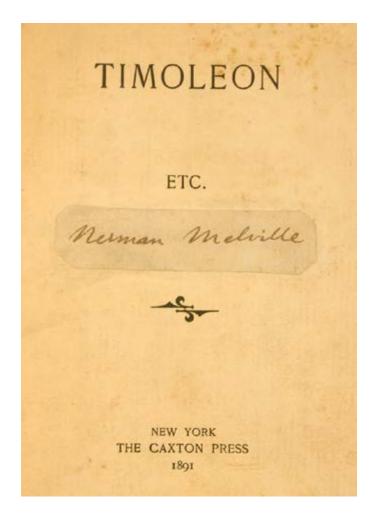
Look for this guide on pages 90-91



67. Herman Melville (1819–1891), autograph letter signed to T. Fisher Unwin

New York, 10 August 1890 AMs 1342/1

Near the end of his life, Herman Melville declined an opportunity to revise and republish his early book *Redburn* (11), as this letter from Melville to British publisher T. Fisher Unwin written in 1890 reveals. "My disinclination to re-cast an old book—tho', as you suggest, some excisions [etc] would undoubtedly improve 'Redburn' as I remember it; this of itself would preclude my entertaining the friendly proposition you make me. Moreover, there is a critical question involved as regards the original English copyright. I am no longer young; and naturally enough, care not to entangle myself in new affairs and uncertainties. I am sorry thus negatively to meet your friendly advance, And am Very Truly Yours Herman Melville." The author took issue with Unwin's request for changes to the book, a point incisively delivered here by Melville's characteristically elegant prose.

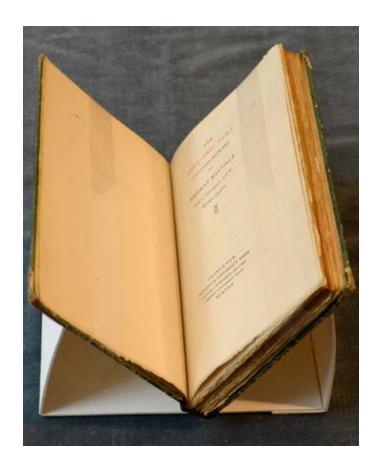


68. Herman Melville (1819-1891), Timoleon, etc.

New York: The Caxton Press, 1891 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

Among the rarest of printed volumes in The Rosenbach's Herman Melville collection is this copy of *Timoleon*, a compendium of Melville's poetry that was published just four months after the author's death. Assembled by Melville with assistance from his wife, the volume combined old and new verses. They intended it as a private endeavor, a gift to give to friends, associates, and family members. Publication proceeded despite the author's passing. The book appeared in an edition of only 25, and the cover of each copy was adorned with a Melville autograph cut from a manuscript and pasted to the volume.

Though the contents of the volume are varied, many of the poems address themes of artistic production and can be read as Melville's reflections on his life and work. The title poem, "Timoleon (394 B.C.)," recounts the story of an ancient Greek hero who was rejected by the public and lived out his years in separation from the society of which he was a part—not unlike Melville's own divorce from literary society of his day.



69. Herman Melville (1819–1891), The apple tree table and other sketches

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1922 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

The renewed interest in Melville's works that emerged following the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth in 1919 saw the republication of many of his writings. In 1922, the Princeton University Press compiled this collection of short stories and Melville's critical essay on Nathaniel Hawthorne titled "Hawthorne and His Mosses." An introduction to the collection by Henry Chapin reads:

The various prose sketches here reprinted were first published by Melville, some in Harper's and some in Putnam's magazines, during the years from 1850 to 1856. "Hawthorne and His Mosses," the only piece of criticism in this collection, is particularly interesting viewed in the light of Melville's friendship with Hawthorne while they were neighbors at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The other sketches cover a variety of homely subjects treated by Melville with a fresh humor, richly phrased and curiously personal.



70. Herman Melville (1819–1891), with foreword by Carl Van Doren (1885-1950), *Billy Budd, Benito Cereno and the enchanted isles*



New York: The Press of the Readers Club, 1942 Bequest of Maurice Sendak

Literary critic Carl Van Doren, who taught at Columbia University, played an important role renewing Herman Melville's reputation as a central figure in the American literary canon in his book *The American Novel* (1921, new edition 1940). Van Doren opens this collection of Melville short stories with a foreword that reflects on the new interest in Melville as a contemporary cultural figure.

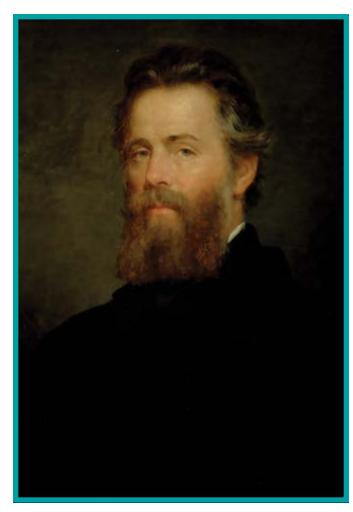
Younger readers will find it hard to believe, and older readers find it hard to remember, that in 1911, when Moby Dick had been in print for sixty years and Herman Melville dead for twenty, the book and its author were not much more than names to the public. ... I bought one rain-spotted copy of Moby Dick for a quarter, and Melville's brother's copy of The Piazza Tales for fifty cents, and a highly interesting Melville letter, with two signatures, for two dollars.

Much has changed in the last one hundred years. Today, Herman Melville's works resound as classics of world literature. There is something distinctively American about them, just as there is about the American voyager who wrote them. They reflect the tension, struggle, and opportunity that defined Herman Melville's era, and our own.



Look for this guide on pages 92-93





Portrait of Herman Melville by Joseph Oriel Eaton, May 1870. Courtesy of Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Our America: Lessons from Melville for Modern Times

Why read Herman Melville today? Why celebrate the 200th anniversary of his birth?

Because his genius is still being rediscovered. And because the problems with which Melville struggled in his stories and poems are still with us.

Reading Herman Melville isn't always easy. But it's worth the effort. On its surface, the story of *Moby-Dick*, Melville's best-known work, belongs to the 1800s. But plunge deeper, and you'll find that this story, and Melville's other books and poems, ask important questions. What is the United States' role in the world? How should humans interact with nature? Why are people cruel to each other? How can written language communicate the human experience?

"It is better to fail in originality, than to succeed in imitation,"

Melville once observed.

Melville's most daring books like *Moby-Dick* and *Pierre* failed to find audiences during his lifetime, but they have earned their author, an American voyager, a lasting place in history.

SPECIAL FEATURES



Crew and wreck of the whaling bark Wanderer on the rocks at Cuttyhunk, Massachusetts
Reproduction of a black and white photographic postcard
Massachusetts, United States: August 27, 1924
Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT 1973.899.471



A model whaling bark is anchored outside the entrance to American Voyager exhibition at The Rosenbach

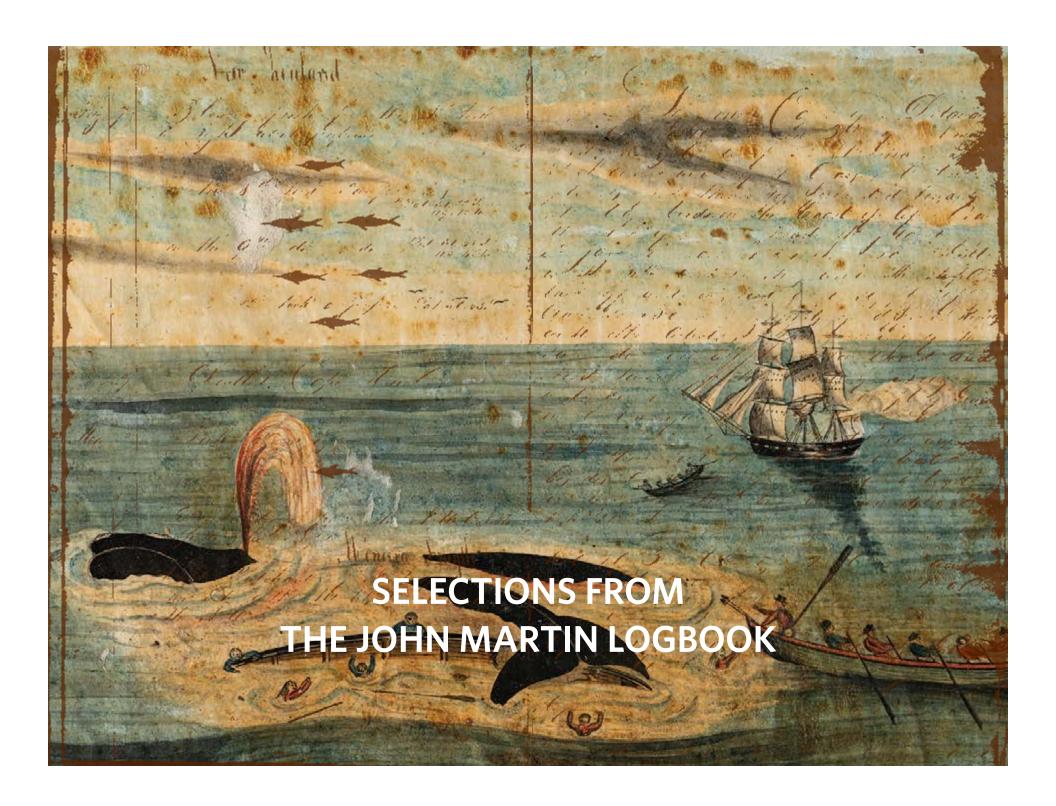
Adalbert Melas Model of the whaler *Wanderer* of 1878

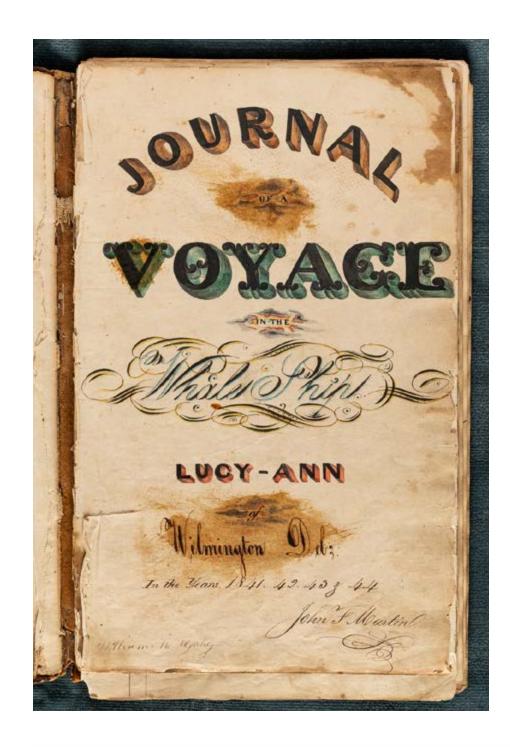
1970s? Loan, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia Gift courtesy of Adalbert Melas 2009.16

American Voyager tells the story of Herman Melville, one of the United States' most famous chroniclers of the sea. Look at this model whaling vessel to imagine life on the high seas for ordinary people during the height of the American whaling industry.

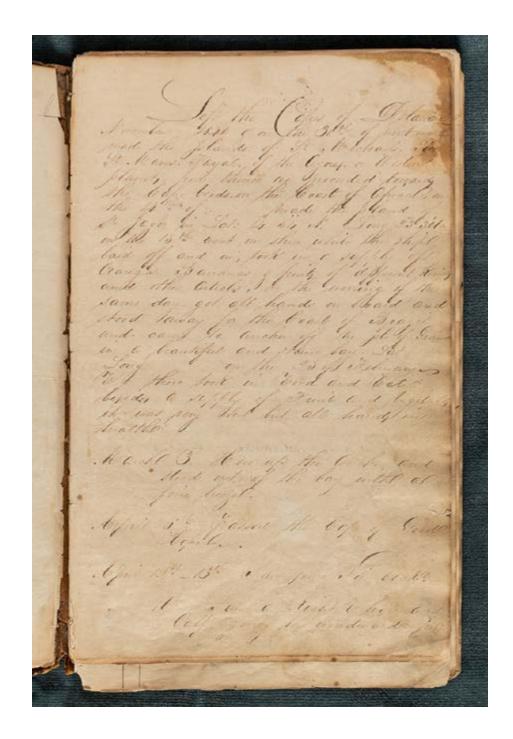
This vessel is the *Wanderer*, a whaling bark from New Bedford, Massachusetts, which long was the United States' whaling capital. (A bark is defined by Merriam Webster's dictionary as "a sailing ship of three or more masts with the aftmost mast fore-and-aft rigged and the others square-rigged.") The *Wanderer* sailed on many voyages before being scuttled off the coast of Massachusetts in 1924.

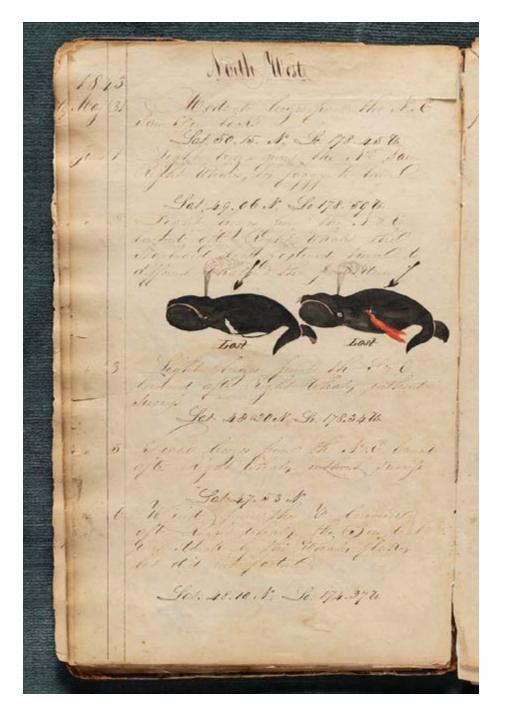
Notice the small wooden oars and whaleboats, which whalemen lowered into the water to hunt their prey. At the very top of the masts are mast hoops that sailors would have worn around their waists as they stood watch at the top of the ship's masts, scanning the waves for whales. Look for images of whaling vessels in the galleries.

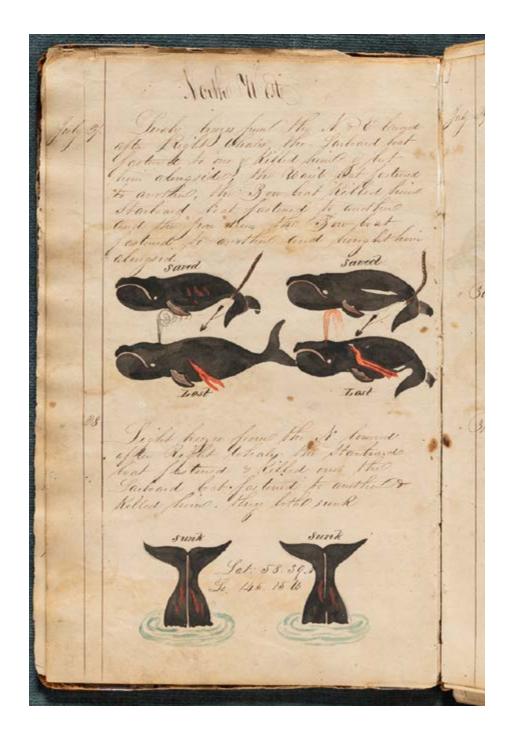


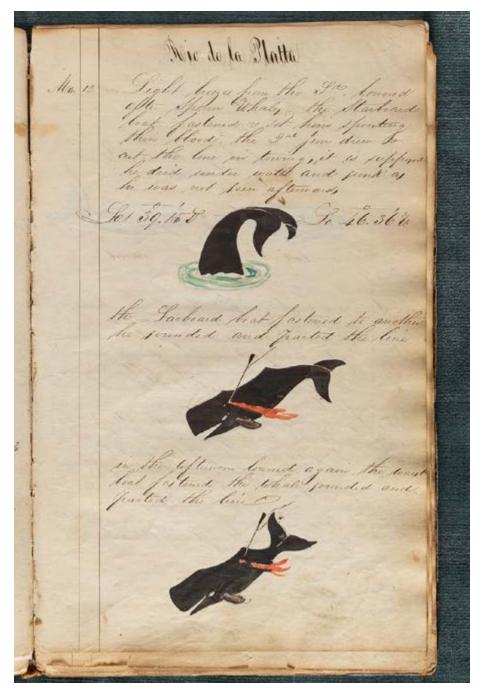


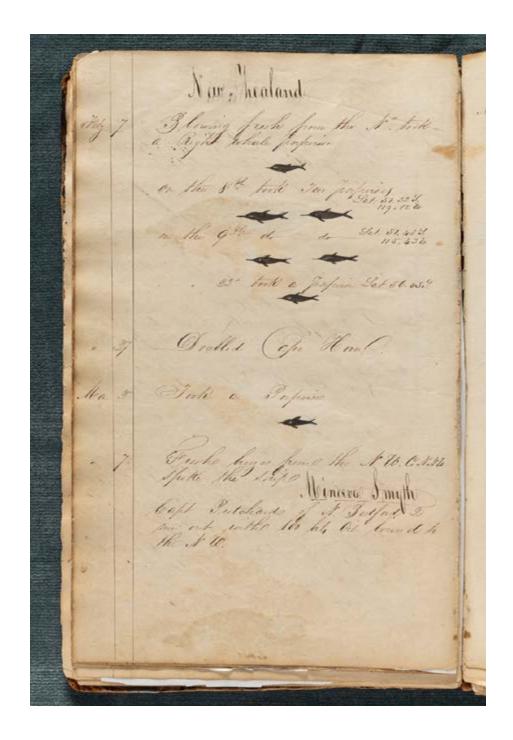
Though not directly connected to Melville, one of the most interesting historical artifacts in *American Voyager* is a log book kept by Wilmington Whaling Company sailor John Martin (object label 28). On loan from the Delaware Historical Society, Martin's illustrated journal offers a window into the world of an ordinary seaman who sailed out of Wilmington, Delaware on a whaling voyage in 1841. Multiple pages from the volume are presented here.

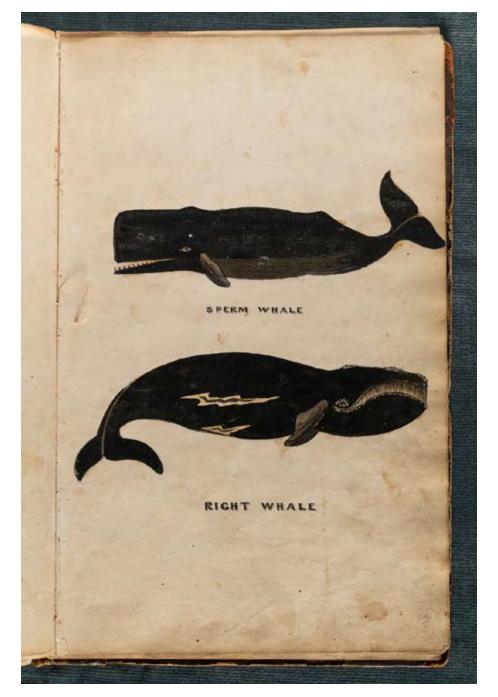












Have you ever killed a whale?

Herman Melville and the crew of his whaleship the *Acushnet* did. Melville also wrote eloquently of the wonders of the natural world. Today, most Americans would probably not want to harpoon whales and turn their bodies into consumer goods. But our society's use of plastic, much of which ends up polluting the oceans, takes a deadly toll on whale populations and other sea life.

HAS OUR CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT IMPROVED SINCE MELVILLE'S TIME?

In March, 2019 the deaths of two whales caught global attention. A dead Cuvier's beak whale washed ashore in the Philippines with 88 pounds of plastic in its stomach. It had died of starvation and dehydration. In Indonesia, a dead, pregnant sperm whale was found with nearly 50 pounds of plastic in its stomach, including laundry detergent containers and fishing line. It too had probably starved because it could no longer digest food.

What is more, climate change affects whales' ocean homes. Melville's books reflect a concern with human-environment interaction. Chart your own voyage to some key texts discussed here for a deeper understanding of ocean ecology.

CONTINUE YOUR VOYAGE QUESTIONS VOYAGE CONSIDER...

Do you think Americans have become more responsible in their care of the environment since Melville's time?

What can Americans do today to improve ocean health?

If Herman Melville were alive today, what do you think his attitudes on environmental conservation would be?

To Learn More...

Attend one of The Rosenbach's regularly-offered Behind the Bookcase: Hands-on Tours that explore themes and questions like these. Check the online events calendar for our "Herman Melville, American Voyager" and "Castaways: Displacement and Opportunity at Sea" tours: www.rosenbach.org/events.



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Marine Conservation CHART YOUR OWN **VOYAGE** a"Est du Mendien de Pari Moorea on Aimeo Taiti Noui Poriononou (Gde Taiti)

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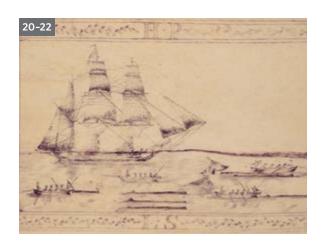


Records of the Wilmington Whaling Company

Like most large-scale human economic activities, the whale fishery involved individual, ordinary men and women who found themselves caught up in a political and business system they could not fully understand or control. American whaling in the 1800s was, first and foremost, a profit-driven enterprise shaped by the financial interests of major investors and other stakeholders. The records of the Wilmington Whaling Company reveal how investors brought capital and technology to the whale hunt.

As technology and industry evolved, so too did whaling. While many of us associate the height of the whaling industry with the middle decades of the 1800s, in fact whaling continued long afterward, into the mid-1900s, which brought enhanced capture and processing technologies to bear on the hunt. Scientists estimate that around 3 million whales died because of hunting in the 1900s. Throughout this time, sperm whales remained among the most frequently targeted species. Most of the world no longer hunts whales, but marine mammals continue to face environmental challenges.

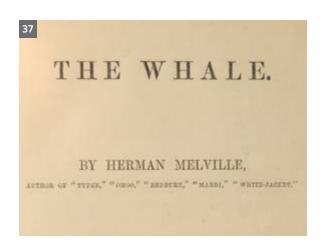
To learn more about the increasing deadliness of whale-hunting in the 20th century, read the article "Emptying the Oceans: A Summary of Industrial Whaling Catches in the 20th Century," by Robert C. Rocha, Jr., Phillip J. Clapham, and Yulia V. Ivashchenko in *Marine Fisheries Review* 76, no. 4 (2014): pages 37-48 (available online).



Unknown artists, scrimshaw

While the American whale fishery was an important and expansive business enterprise in the 1800s and 1900s, its success relied on common sailors like those who made this scrimshaw—people who actually hunted, processed, and transported whale products across the oceans. Present-day conversations about conservation have a similar dynamic, pitting the small actions of everyday people against national and global economic trends. How can ordinary people help preserve the natural world when economic and political forces make transformational progress difficult? Scientists for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) recently announced that they predict one million species could go extinct in coming years unless transformational action on the part of governments is taken to control habitat destruction and climate change. Thus, household-level efforts to improve sustainability must be coupled with policy-level advancements in protecting ecosystems.

Visit the website of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, a United Nations-supported entity, for scientific reports on ecological health and threats to species posed by climate change and natural habitat destruction: www.ipbes.net.



Herman Melville (1819-1891), The Whale

Herman Melville admired whales. He even expressed concern if they would be hunted to extinction, wondering if their fate would be like that of the bison of the American West. In *Moby-Dick*, Melville eventually concludes that whales could not be hunted to extinction, though his analysis did not account for commercial and industrial advances in the 1900s that made it easier to kill far more whales than could be done in the 1840s and 1850s:

But you must look at this matter in every light. ...
Forty men in one ship, hunting the Sperm Whales for forty-eight months, think they have done extremely well, and thank God, if at last they carry home the oil of forty fish. Whereas, in the days of the old Canadian and Indian hunters and trappers of the West, when ... the same number of moccasined men, for the same number of months, mounted on horses, instead of sailing in ships, would have slain not forty, but forty thousand, and more buffaloes. ... Wherefore, for all these things, we account the whale immortal in his species, however perishable in his individuality.

Not many years after Melville's death, it became clear that whales could in fact go extinct, and they were saved only by a coordinated international effort to stop whale hunting in the middle and later decades of last century.

How did the United States reach its current status in world affairs?

Americans today are accustomed to the nation's status as a global economic and political superpower. But the country did not always have this leading role despite an early focus on cultivating trade relationships. Over his lifetime, Herman increase in the United States' standing in world affairs, much of it driven by the maritime economy. He also witnessed the end of the Age of Sail as well as the opening—and closing—of the American frontier. With the growth in the United States' economic power, the stage was set in the 1890s for the nation's increasing status as a political force on the world stage in the 20th century.

SINCE ITS FOUNDING, THE UNITED
STATES HAS BEEN A GLOBALLY FOCUSED
NATION WITH LINKS TO OTHER
COUNTRIES VIA INTERNATIONAL TRADE

In the 1800s, sailors like Herman Melville gained access to cultures around the world, providing the potential to see the United States from different perspectives he acquired through his voyages. Chart your own voyage to some key texts discussed here for a deeper understanding of growing U.S. globalization in Melville's time.

CONTINUE YOUR VOYAGE QUESTIONS VOYAGE CONSIDER...

Could Melville have possessed the same critical stance on American life if he had never left the United States?

Many people call the 20th century "The American Century." Do you think the 21st century will be a second American century? How is U.S. global influence changing today?

To what extent is U.S. influence still tied to maritime trade?

Have you ever taken a voyage to another country that changed your perspective on the United States? To where? What did you learn, and how did it change you?

To Learn More...

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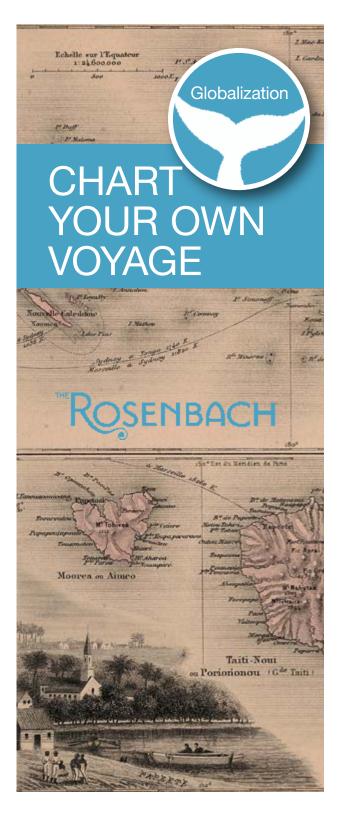


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Jeremiah N. Reynolds (1799–1858), "Mocha Dick: Or the White Whale of the Pacific: A Leaf from a Manuscript Journal," in *The Knickerbocker Magazine*, vol. 13, no. 5 (May 1839): 377–392

In "Mocha Dick," Jeremiah N. Reynolds presents the story of a monstrous whale that terrorized whaleships on the high seas. The article gained a prime place in literary history for the role it played in inspiring Herman Melville's Moby-Dick. Yet the concluding paragraph also merits our attention because of how Reynolds frames his account of whaling adventures within the context of the United States' expanding influence as a maritime economic power:

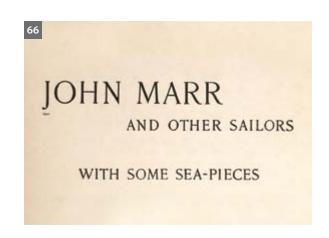
Sail onward, and extend your view around New-Holland, to the coast of Guinea; to the eastern and western shores of Africa; to the Cape of Good Hope; and south, to the waters that lash the cliffs of Kergulan's Land, and you are ever upon the whalingground of the American seaman. Yet onward, to the vast expanse of the two Pacifics, with their countless summer isles, and your course is still over the common arena and highway of our whalers. The varied records of the commercial world can furnish no precedent, can present no comparison, to the intrepidity, skill, and fortitude, which seem the peculiar prerogatives of this branch of our marine. These characteristics are not the growth of forced exertion. ... They are the natural result of the ardor of a free people; of a spirit of fearless independence, generated by free institutions.



Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), consular document

Interestingly, both Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville, two of the United States' most important authors of the 1800s, held government positions focusing on maritime trade at some point in their careers. Nathaniel Hawthorne was appointed to the prestigious position of United States Consul in Liverpool, England, which was a vital port and economic center of the Atlantic trading economy in the 1800s. He owed the position to his old friend President Franklin Pierce, with whom he had attended Bowdoin College in Maine. Hawthorne performed his duties for his four-year term to great effect and gained interesting perspective while abroad. This document, which certifies a ship captain to continue his voyage to the United States, details Hawthorne's work in his position, with its strong focus on maritime commerce.

Likewise, Herman Melville also found government work toward the end of his career, when he lacked an adequate income. The family of Melville's wife Elizabeth had many political connections and used its status to get Melville appointed New York City's customs inspector, which provided Melville and his family with a stable income. The position was nowhere near as prestigious as that which Hawthorne enjoyed, but it is interesting that both great authors found themselves working at the behest of the United States' global maritime economic interest.



Herman Melville (1819–1891), John Marr and Other Sailors

The title poem in this privately printed volume reflects the changing focus of American economic and cultural life by the end of the 1800s. Melville had been born in New York City into a coastal society, the wealth of which derived from oceanic trade. But in coming decades, pioneers moved west, the vast North American continent was settled by Europeans, and the agricultural and industrial potential of the Midwest and West were being realized. The life of Melville's character John Marr reflected this evolution. An old sailor by experience and personality, Marr eventually left coastal areas for the "frontier-prairie." Marr appreciated the people of the American Midwest but found something lacking in their society, namely "the free-and-easy tavern clubs ... in certain old and comfortable seaport towns," not to mention the "geniality, the flower of life springing from some sense of joy in it." When Marr tried to share stories from his old seafaring days, one landloving neighbor informed him: "Friend, we know nothing of that here."

By the time of Melville's death, the United States was no longer a young coastal nation dependent on merchant trade for its wealth. Quite the contrary, heavy industrialization was reshaping the nature of the U.S. economy and everyday life. The Age of Sail had ended with the rise of steamship technology.

Was Herman Melville gay?

It's a tantalizing question, and impossible to answer. Not only did Melville (who married Elizabeth Shaw in 1847 and had four children with her) present a complex and fluid picture of sexuality in his novels and stories, but the gay male social category familiar to Americans today simply did not exist in the mid-1800s. (That is, saying "I'm gay" in the 1800s would not have meant what it does today: transforming a sexual attraction into a social identity.)

DESPITE, OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF,
THE AMBIGUOUS SEXUAL NARRATIVES IN
HIS WORKS, MELVILLE HAS EMERGED
AS A QUEER CULTURAL ICON.

Recent studies of Melville have turned away from questioning the gayness of the author himself or his characters to examine, instead, the many dimensions of sexuality and human relationships in Melville's works, including samesex eroticism. Follow this guide to some key texts that inform queer interpretations of Melville.

CONTINUE YOUR VOYAGE QUESTIONS VOYAGE CONSIDER...

Do we need to understand Melville's own sexual interests in order to interpret his works from queer perspectives? Or do the books stand on their own as queer pieces of literature?

What is the relationship in Melville's writings between geographic voyages and sexual voyages?

What is the correct balance between bringing new, 21st-century analytical perspectives to Melville's works and respecting what we don't know about Melville's personal desires?

To Learn More...

Attend one of The Rosenbach's many related programs or regularly-offered Behind the Bookcase: Hands-on Tours that explore themes and questions like these. Check the online events calendar for our "19th Century Gay Lives," "20th Century Gay Lives," "Queer Herman Melville," and "Herman Melville, American Voyager" tours: www.rosenbach.org/events.

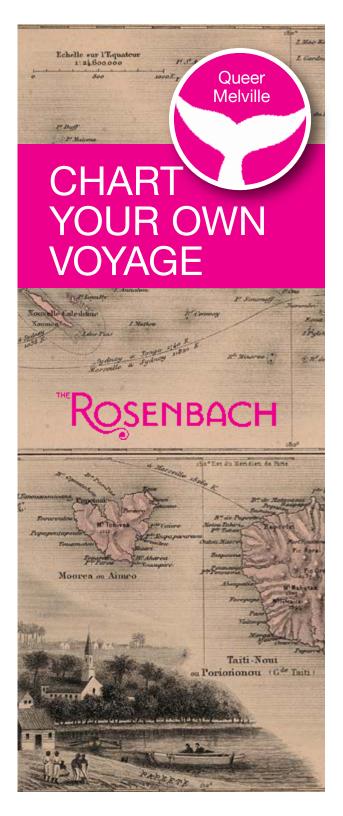


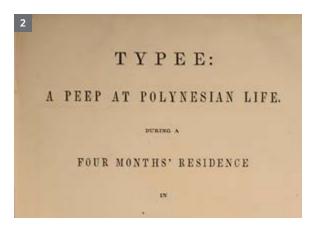
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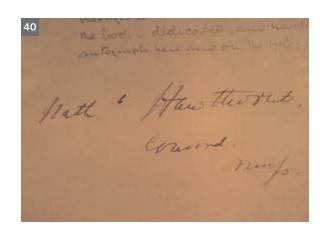


Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life, During a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas

In his first novel, Melville offers Western readers a glimpse of life in the South Pacific. The character Kory-Kory is an islander Melville describes as "twenty-five years of age, and about six feet in height, robust and well made, and of the most extraordinary aspect." In keeping with the Polynesian system of make kinship, Kory-Kory served as the narrator's servant. In this passage, Melville's description of Kory-Kory's attempt to light a fire is interpreted by some queer theorists within this male kinship construct as a metaphor for masturbation:*

At first Kory-Kory goes to work quite leisurely, but gradually quickens his pace, and waxing warm in the employment, drives the stick furiously along the smoking channel, plying his hands to and fro with amazing rapidity, the perspiration starting from every pore. As he approaches the climax of his effort, he pants and gasps for breath, and his eyes almost start from their sockets with the violence of his exertions. ... Suddenly he stops, becomes perfectly motionless. His hands still retain their hold of the smaller stick. ... The next moment a delicate wreath of smoke curls spirally into the air ... and Kory-Kory, almost breathless, dismounts from his steed.

*For more on this topic, see Que Jun, "Queer Space in Herman Melville's Typee," Advances in Literary Study 5 (2017) 22-28, particularly "Part 4: All Male-Loving Couple," and the references therein.

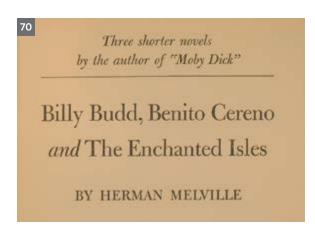


Moby-Dick; Or, The Whale

Melville's classic novel possesses many scenes that have attracted the attention of readers interested in understanding how the author framed homosocial and homosexual interactions in his works. None is more notable than a scene early in the novel, when Ishmael, the narrator, wakes up in another man's arms at the Spouter Inn, where he had shared a bed with Queequeg, a Pacific Islander who would soon become a close friend and companion.

Upon waking next morning about daylight, I found Queequeg's arm thrown over me in the most loving and affectionate manner. You had almost thought I had been his wife. ... It was only by the sense of weight and pressure that I could tell that Queequeg was hugging me.

The copy of *Moby-Dick* seen here belonged to Nathaniel Hawthorne, the famous New England author to whom Melville dedicated his masterpiece. The two had met in 1850, the year before *Moby-Dick* first appeared. Melville was passionate and outgoing, Hawthorne formal and reserved. Nonetheless, they enjoyed an intense friendship before growing more distant, doubtless due in part to the fervor and passion of Melville's regard for Hawthorne. Some scholars have wondered if the passionate friendship might have included erotic feelings on the part of Melville for Hawthorne.



Billy Budd, Benito Cereno and The Enchanted Isles

At the time of his death in 1891, Melville was working on a short story titled *Billy Budd*, which was not published until decades later. Once printed, it earned praise as a classic. It tells the tale of Billy Budd, whom Melville calls the "Handsome Sailor" of his crew, a man so attractive that he becomes the jealous fixation of a comrade, which leads to Billy's death. Melville writes:

In the time before steamships, or then more frequently than now, a stroller along the docks of any considerable sea-port would occasionally have his attention arrested by a group of bronzed marines, man-of-war's men or merchant-sailors in holiday attire ashore on liberty. In certain instances they would flank, or, like a bodyguard quite surround some superior figure of their own class, moving along with them like Aldebaran among the lesser lights of his constellation. That signal object was the "Handsome Sailor." ... With no perceptible trace of the vainglorious about him, rather with the off-hand unaffectedness of natural regality, he seemed to accept the spontaneous homage of his shipmates. ... As the "Handsome Sailor" Billy Budd's position aboard the seventy-four was something analogous to that of a rustic beauty transplanted from the provinces and brought into competition with the high-born dames of the court.

How did Herman Melville's global voyages shape his opinions about the United States?

Melville was extremely critical of the political, social, and economic norms of his day. His writings reflect his concerns over social ills and even sought to shape public opinion.

MELVILLE'S OPINIONS ON SOCIAL
INEQUALITY AND RACE RELATIONS
WERE INFORMED BY HIS WORLDWIDE
VOYAGES AND EXPOSURE TO
OTHER CULTURES.

Unsurprisingly, they often had a maritime focus. A sailor himself, Melville's writings reflect his understanding of and empathy with the plight of ordinary people trapped in exploitative political and labor systems. Chart your own voyage to some of the key texts in which Melville addresses issues of social justice.

CONTINUE YOUR VOYAGE QUESTIONS VOYAGE CONSIDER...

In terms of racial and economic inequality, what has changed about American life since Melville's time? What is the same?

How do you think Melville would respond to injustices in American society today?

How do writers and artists influence public opinion today? If you wrote a book, essay, or letter about a controversial public issue, what would you say, and why?

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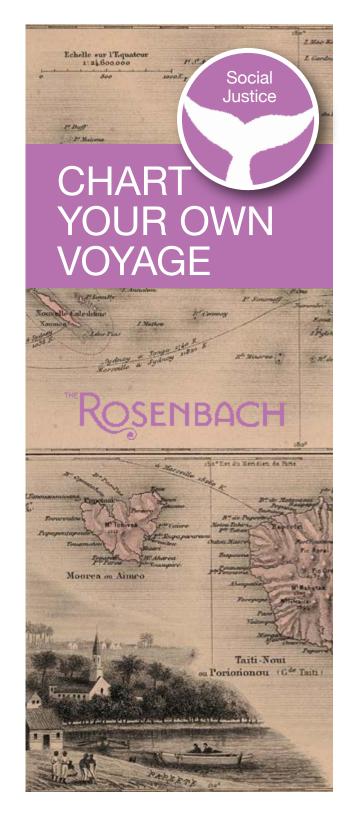
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11

REDBURN:

HIS FIRST VOYAGE.

DEEXD

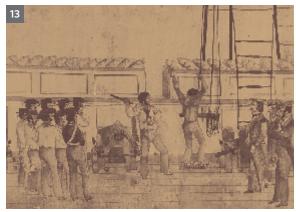
THE SAILOR-BOY CONFESSIONS
AND REMINISCENCES OF THE SON-OF-A-GENTLEMAN,
IN THE MERCHANT SERVICE.

Redburn: His First Voyage. Being the Sailor-boy Confessions and Reminiscences of the Son-of-a-Gentleman, in the Merchant Service

"Poverty, poverty, poverty, in almost endless vistas," observes Redburn, the main character in this novel, during his visit to Liverpool, England. Born to weath, he encounters a degree of human misery he had not yet before seen. The novel is filled with reflections on the place of the working classes in society. Consider Redburn's analysis of the way sailors are treated:

Sailors ... go and come round the globe; they are the true importers, and exporters of spices and silks; of fruits and wines and marbles; they carry missionaries, embassadors, opera-singers, armies, merchants, tourists, scholars to their destination: they are a bridge of boats across the Atlantic; they are the primum mobile of all commerce; and, in short, were they to emigrate in a body to man the navies of the moon, almost every thing would stop here on earth except its revolution on its axis, and the orators in the American Congress.

And yet, what are sailors? What in your heart do you think of that fellow staggering along the dock? Do you not give him a wide berth, shun him, and account him but little above the brutes that perish?



William H. Myers, "Punishment Aboard Ship," from a journal of a cruise on the USS Cyane, 1842–43. NH 1905, courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command

White-Jacket; or The World in a Man-of-War

White-Jacket, Melville's fifth novel, is autobiographical. He based the work on the 14 months he spent in the United States Navy. During his time as a Navy sailor, Melville grew disgusted by the mistreatment of seamen, especially by flogging, a form of punishment in which a victim is hit repeatedly with a whip or stick. As Melville wrote this book, Congress was considering legislation to make flogging illegal. At the time of White-Jacket's publication, whipping was employed against enslaved laborers in the U.S. South, meaning that arguments against flogging in the book possessed social resonances beyond maritime life in a society increasingly divided by the issue of slavery.*

Here are Melville's thoughts on flogging:

According to the present laws and usages of the Navy, a seaman, for the most trivial alleged offences, of which he may be entirely innocent, must, without a trial, undergo a penalty the traces whereof he carries to the grave. ... What torments must that seaman undergo who, while his back bleeds at the gangway, bleeds agonized drops of shame from his soul! Are we not justified in immeasurably denouncing this thing?



Elihu Vedder (1836–1923), "Jane Jackson, Formerly a Slave," courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library

Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War

Melville's *Battle-Pieces*, a book of verse dedicated to the fallen Union soldiers of the Civil War. His verse "Formerly a Slave" offers a hopeful vision for African American life after emancipation. Melville wrote the poem after seeing a portrait of the formerly enslaved woman Jane Jackson painted by Elihu Vedder, which was on display at the National Academy in New York in 1865. What does it mean for Melville to have included this poem in a collection otherwise devoted to military commentary?

"FORMERLY A SLAVE." AN IDEALIZED PORTRAIT, BY E. VEDDER,

In the spring exhibition of the National Academy, 1865

The sufferance of her race is shown,
And retrospect of life,
Which now too late deliverance dawns upon;
Yet is she not at strife.

Her children's children they shall know The good withheld from her; And so her reverie takes prophetic cheer— In spirit she sees the stir

Far down the depth of thousand years, And marks the revel shine; Her dusky face is lit with sober light, Sibylline, yet benign.

^{*}For this interpretation, see Priscilla Allen Zirker, "Evidence of the Slavery Dilemma in White-Jacket," in American Quarterly. Vol. 18, No. 3 (Autumn, 1966), pp. 477-92. Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press; and others.

THE ROSENBACH RECYCLES, REUSES, AND REPURPOSES

In an effort to build environmentally friendly practices, The Rosenbach makes use of repurposed and sustainably sourced supplies and materials wherever possible. For example:

- The Rosenbach has re-lamped 80% of its lighting fixtures with LED bulbs to save energy.
- Exhibition wall panels and labels for *American Voyager* are printed on biodegradable recycled cardboard.
- Chart Your Own Voyage guides are printed on recycled paper.

The Rosenbach takes seriously its responsibilities to create meaningful cultural experiences for visitors and function as an effective steward of natural resources. To learn more about sustainability at The Rosenbach and tell us what you are doing to protect the environment, visit **rosenbach.org/sustainability**.

THERE IS NO FOLLY OF THE BEAST OF THE EARTH WHICH IS NOT INFINITELY OUTDONE BY THE MADNESS OF MEN

Herman Melville, Moby-Dick

88

Pounds of plastic found inside the body of a 1,100-pound whale in the Philippines in March 2019

400

Estimated number of years it will take for a plastic beverage bottle to decompose²

1,000

Pieces of plastic (including 115 cups, 25 bags, four bottles, and two flip-flops) found inside a dead sperm whale in Indonesia³

2050

Estimated year that the weight of plastic in the ocean will exceed the weight of all fish in the ocean⁴

5-13 MILLION

Metric tons of plastic that scientists estimate enter the ocean each year⁵

8.3 BILLION

Metric tons of plastic produced since 1950, with almost half of it made since 2004⁶

¹Daniel Victor, "Dead Whale Found With 88 Pounds of Plastic Inside Body in the Philippines," The New York Times, March 18, 20

Powiel Vistor 21 000 Biograph of Blastic Found Inside Dood Milyla in Indonesia 2 The New York Times Newmber 21 22

Sarah Kanlan "By 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans, study says." The Woshington Post, January 20, 2

⁵ Tatiana Schlossberg, "The Immense, Eternal Footprint Humanity Leaves on Earth: Plastics," The New York Times, July 19, 2017

⁶Tatiana Schlossberg, "The Immense, Eternal Footprint Humanity Leaves on Earth: Plastics," *The New York Times, July* 19, 201



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The Rosenbach offers an array of tours and programs designed to showcase our collections and inspire learning. To learn more, visit **rosenbach.org/visit** and **rosenbach.org/events**.

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The Rosenbach also encourages you to explore the resources of our affiliated institution, the Free Library of Philadelphia. Visit the Free Library's catalog at **catalog.freelibrary.**org to discover Melville-related resources including audiobooks available to Free Library of Philadelphia cardholders. Also, visit **freelibrary.org/collections** to learn about Special Collections accessible at the Parkway Central Library (1901 Vine Street, Philadelphia). Benton Spruance's *Moby Dick: The Passion of Ahab* series of lithographic prints, many pieces from which are reproduced in this Gallery Gateway, have been digitized and are accessible online at **freelibrary.org/digital** with a keyword search for "Benton Spruance."

We foster inquiry, learning, and creative thought by engaging audiences in programs, exhibitions, and research inspired by our collections.



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