You will likely be reading this Bulletin while we are still in the midst of the coronavirus public health emergency and it is my greatest hope that this edition finds you safe and healthy. With that in mind, there may be dates published in these pages that may shift as a result of the situation. While I certainly hope that this crisis comes to a speedy conclusion, I am more mindful now than ever of the value of togetherness.

As a Museum, we are a place of gathering on many levels. We collect and steward the objects, literature, and stories of our region's history. We protect and share some of the most vital data and research in the world of marine mammal bioacoustics. We unearth hidden stories of some of the most impactful women to have walked our streets. We curate our Collection in ways that share not only our spectacular art and objects, but the unique stories that connect us to them.

Most importantly, however, we are a place for you to see yourselves reflected in the stories we tell. The shift we have had to make during these times away from being a place where we can all physically gather has felt tectonic in size. The Museum team moved swiftly to share our stories and Collection digitally to give you an opportunity to remain connected from the comfort of your own home. From our compelling regional history, our inspiring fine and decorative art, the contemporary scientific data that serves to help protect and preserve marine life, and to our new tools for educators to teach in this digital classroom moment, you can find it all at www.whalingmuseum.org/MuseumFromHome.

I look forward to our return to togetherness and this still remains a celebratory year for the Museum. Our history, our inspiring fine and decorative art, the contemporary scientific data that serves to help protect and preserve marine life, and to our new tools for educators to teach in this digital classroom moment, you can find it all at www.whalingmuseum.org/MuseumFromHome.

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The Centennial anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment (some women's right to vote) is inspiring everyone to get involved with Lighting the Way as we launch new aspects of the project and continue to discover histories of remarkable women.

Coming this summer is a landmark art exhibition and publication, A Wild Note of Longing: Albert Pinkham Ryder and a Century of American Art. The show will bring together major masterworks across the career of New Bedford native, Albert Pinkham Ryder, who achieved legendary status among artists during his lifetime. This is the first exhibition of Ryder’s work since 1990 when an exhibition was hosted by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Brooklyn Museum.

And finally, in the spirit of togetherness, I am tremendously excited to launch our initiative called From Common Ground: A Community Mosaic. Coming this summer is a landmark art exhibition and publication, A Wild Note of Longing: Albert Pinkham Ryder and a Century of American Art. The show will bring together major masterworks across the career of New Bedford native, Albert Pinkham Ryder, who achieved legendary status among artists during his lifetime. This is the first exhibition of Ryder’s work since 1990 when an exhibition was hosted by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Brooklyn Museum.

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High School Apprenticeship Program
Celebrating 10 Years!

In 2010, the Museum’s Board of Trustees, championed by Gurdon B. Wattles, launched the High School Apprenticeship Program. The program, which provides New Bedford students with access to resources and experiences that deepen community engagement, promote personal and professional development, and cultivate college and career success, quickly became a pillar of the Museum’s mission and education vision. Today, the program serves as a model of creative youth development programs, which are programs that use the humanities, arts, and sciences to help young people build skills and access resources needed to excel in adolescence and adult life. Throughout the past 10 years, the program has earned two national awards, completed numerous dynamic student-led projects, and all apprentices, 100%, have graduated from high school.

There are many indicators of the program’s success. Counted among them are the growing number of alumni who find their way back to the Museum for work, internships, or just the friendly check-in visit. To date, more than half of the program’s alumni have reconnected with the museum in some capacity. Currently, one student serves as the program’s alumni coordinator and two program alumni serve on the Museum’s education committee.

Events and exhibitions supported by and designed for young adults are perhaps one of the program’s greatest contributions. In November 2019, apprentices hosted the Museum’s first ever Teen Night, an event specifically designed to help the next generation see the Museum as a space for them.

Success has also meant sharing the Apprenticeship Program model locally and nationally. There continues to be a growing number of exchanges and sharing between the Apprenticeship Program and other institutions. From presenting about the program’s model at the Best of Out-Of-School-Time (BOOST) conference in Palm Springs California to a similar presentation at the New England Museum Association Conference, as the program moves forward, so has its connections to the broader creative youth development field.

However, before the successes of national awards, alumni participation, teen nights and conference presentations, the Apprenticeship Program was just getting started. In January 2010, six students enrolled in the program’s inaugural class. With a curriculum and schedule much different than that of today, the first class completed the 6-month pilot program in June 2010. Now a decade later, the first class of apprentices have gone on to various things including earning graduate degrees and starting families.

Fast forward to June 2020 and seven apprentices will mark the program’s tenth graduating class, completing a three-year apprenticeship program journey and representing how the program continues to grow and change. While many things have changed about the program since its creation, it remains true that collaborations and partnerships are its strength.

The milestone celebration will focus on the program’s evolution, student achievement and bring together past apprentices, museum trustees and staff, current students and families, and a larger network of program supporters and collaborators who are directly connected to the program’s ongoing structure and success. The event will recognize program partners like The Immigrants’ Assistance, Bristol Community College, and Junior Achievement, who have supported the program since its early days and have made the successes of the students possible. The celebration will also look ahead to the future and the long-term growth and sustainability of the Apprenticeship Program.
Boats, Barbs, and the Blue Ocean: Common Elements of World Whaling Cultures

By Michael P. Dyer, Curator of Maritime History

The exhibition Cultures of Whaling encompasses the comparative display of several basic, but universal ideas including deep ocean travel, barbed weapons attached to lines, and boat design. Apart from these elements there is little overlap between whaling cultures, at least until modern whaling systematized the industrial hunt in the 20th century.

Whales live in the sea and people hunt them from boats using barbed instruments attached to some sort of line. Little overlap, apart from these elements, crosses over between whaling cultures, or at least it didn’t before modern whaling largely systematized the industrial hunt in the 20th century. Some people eat whales and others harvest whales for raw materials useful for commercial products. These two main distinctions are fundamental to understanding the motivations of different whaling cultures enabling the comparative study of many whaling techniques across time and space.

Throughout history, every whaling culture developed its own methods of capturing whales, and every culture worked out the same conclusions, although the means to that end differed radically. Some whaling cultures, like the Azoreans and the Japanese, lived directly adjacent to prime whale habitat, spotted whales from lofty lookouts, and dispatched their whaleboats from shore to hunt. Some cultures, like those of the Basque country, the Northwest Coast, and colonial North America, were also shore-based, but relied upon the seasonal migrations of animals, which appeared along the coasts with some regularity year by year. Some, like the Western Europeans, Australians, and Yankee whalers, dispatched whole fleets of vessels to scout the seas and hunt anything they could catch. Apart from the highly sophisticated net whaling techniques of Japanese shore whalers in the late 17th to the late 19th centuries, all of the above cultures depended upon boats, barbed implements, and some sort of rope, or other strong line. Even the Japanese relied upon harpoons and lances to dispatch the huge animals once entangled in the nets, the whole operation of which involved a large contingent of different boat types.
The Vessels
By the same token, one cannot help but wonder at the determination of maritime cultures to traverse the open seas at all. Water is an unnatural element for humankind, but the sea is both a bountiful larder and a potential highway, particularly for island dwellers. During periods of glacial incursions, for instance, where terrestrial pathways were obstructed, boats enabled travelers to skirt high walls of ice as they moved about. Not all cultures encountering glacial incursions developed into maritime cultures. Those that did traversed ocean habitats particularly amenable to various species of whales, bowheads (Balaena mysticetus) in particular. These slow, fat, creatures were prime targets for subsistence hunters and much later, commercial whalers. Seafaring, not in boats, but in large, wind-driven ships, enabled Europeans to bypass the endlessly costly mercantile layers of the long-Silk Road to Asia Minor from China and travel directly from Europe to the East. In their explorations northward seeking an easy passage to the Orient, European mariners came into direct contact with both bowhead whales, and the cultures that hunted them. Maritime cultures specialized in building boats made of everything from animal hide, to hollowed-out tree trunks, to sawn planks, to steel. Hunting whales led to the development of boat types that were designed, built, and launched, specifically for that purpose. In the Arctic, Eskimos built their boats from the skins of walrus (Odobenus rosmarus) and bearded seals (Ergyntheus barbatus) deliberately sewn with great finesse onto wooden frames. Some of the boats, like kayaks, were small. Some, the great whaling umiaks could hold a dozen or more men and their gear. Makah whaling canoes were made from massive cedar tree trunks, hewn and steam bent into their final forms. The construction of such boats and their use involved elaborate ceremonies and rituals to firmly ground this whaling people into a psychological and emotional plane of awareness that unified the people, their tools, and the animals they hunted. These were ocean-going craft commonly employing eight men in the seasonal hunt for the Gray whales that migrated along the North-west Coast. Japanese whaleboats were built from jointed planks with no interior framework, however, in their general form they resembled the Northwest Coast boats to a far greater degree than either type resembled the boats of other cultures. This can hardly be coincidental as Japan is among the most ancient of the world’s maritime cultures its potential influence, of even accidental, could be significant.

Cordage
As far as the development of technology among the Arctic peoples is concerned, hunting both the walruses and bearded seals for their hides to build boats demanded similar types of techniques employed in whaling, only on a somewhat smaller scale. Walrus in particular are a formidable prey, being of great size and weight, with long, ivory tusks and great dexterity in the water, and possessing a thick leathery hide. Walrus hide and tusks provided important raw materials for Eskimo hunters including the hide to make stout line as well as the skin boat coverings. In the tusks, which could be fashioned into several of the elements making up harpoons. Similarly, rope walks are common elements to Western maritime culture. Unlike the hide lines of the Arctic people, Westerners twisted hemp fibers and later manila fibers into long, strong ropes. Sealing under seal depended upon such cordage, while its development was an essential element in commercial whaling. In New Bedford, whaling merchants established the New Bedford Cordage Company in 1842, especially to make ¾ inch manila whale line. It became the industry standard.

Harpoons
It was the harpoon design combined with the tough rawhide walrus skin rope that enabled the capture of whales, seals, and walruses. After contact with American and European whalers who introduced steel, Eskimos hunters incorporated it into their harpoon designs replacing the age-old stone blades with metal. Traditional Eskimo harpoon blades were made from slate mounted on a carefully aligned and carved piece of ivory possessing a single barb with a pivot hole bored across it through which the hide rope passed. This type of harpoon was effective as the sharpened slate cut easily through hide (or blubber as the case may be) and the pivot hole allowed the harpoon to lock sideways after penetration. The harpoon tips were detachable from their shafts, which were made up of wood handles fitted with ivory tips, into which the harpoon would nestle as the rawhide line ran down along the length of the shaft. The Makah whalers of the Olympic Peninsula adopted a similar technique. Their harpoons employed mussel shell as a blade with elk antler barbs and a short line made from twisted whale sinew, all fitted and bound together with strips of bark and smoothed down with spruce resin. The blade was delivered with a long wooden pole to which was attached a long line of twisted cedar bark and a seal skin float. The harpoon was an offshoot allowing the barbs to toggle outward after penetration. By contrast, it took Europeans and Americans many, many years to develop this concept into a usable technology.

Europeans made harpoons out of iron resembling large arrows with backward sweeping barbs and a conical-shaped base into which the wooden handle of the weapon was fitted. Harpoons of this design hardly changed for centuries from when Basque whalers first employed them until the nineteenth century. Weapons of this sort, when employed in tandem and attached to a good whale line, stored in tubs in a strong, fast boat equipped with other iron gear worked well. The problem with Western harpoons was that they cut themselves out of the blubber and often pulled loose through the same hole. Many whales were lost when the harpoons would “draw” from the whale. While Americans experimented with materials and designs, particularly as the whaling industry advanced into the 19th century, it would not be until 1848, when Lewis Temple of New Bedford invented an iron toggling harpoon head, that the age-old Eskimo and Makah innovations would find their way into mainstream commercial whaling. Iron toggling harpoons continued to develop from that point on until the great, heavy, 5’ long 90 mm harpoons of the 20th century whale fishery with swivel heads and four independent toggles began to be mass produced in Norway.

Other Techniques
Other commercial whaling innovations proceeding directly from the industrial roots of Western Europe and the U.S. eventually included the use of explosives, and these too evolved. From the Christopher C. Brand shoulder guns of the late 1840s and the hand-held darting guns that combined a bomb lance with a harpoon of the 1870s, bomb lances eventually evolved into fragmentation grenades mounted to the tips of the 90 mm harpoons of the modern whale fishery.

To this day, whalers of the Arctic employ darting guns and shoulder guns to take bowhead whales.
Seals, Sea Lions, and Walruses
Joining Whales Today

By Robert Rocha, Director of Education and Science Programs

This spring, the Museum’s Whales Today exhibition will be expanded to include vital information about seals, sea lions, and walruses.

The Williams A. Watkins Collection of Marine Mammal Sound Recordings is one of the more significant gifts of biological data ever received by the Museum. The recordings of cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) dominate this collection, but the recordings of pinnipeds (seals, sea lions, and walruses) are just as impressive.

Locally, harbor seals (Phoca vitulina) and grey seals (Halichoerus grypus) are the most common and best known species of the 33 species of pinniped. Like all pinnipeds, they are marine mammals that have flippers instead of feet and are carnivorous. They spend much of their time in the water, but haul out for varying lengths of time to rest, molt, and mate. Females also come ashore to give birth and suckle their young. Seals do not have external ears and cannot tuck their rear flippers under their bodies, which makes them awkward on land. Sea lions have external ears and can rotate their rear flippers underneath, so they are more mobile than seals when out of the water, and also more vocal. Walruses have tusks, feed by suction, and have two air sacs in their throats that they can inflate.

Along our coast, pinnipeds encounter many of the human-created challenges that threaten cetaceans: entanglement, boat strikes, noise pollution, marine debris, and ingestion of toxins moving through their food. Like cetaceans, pinnipeds are protected by the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the 1973 Endangered Species Act.

Thanks to those protections, their populations have sustained healthy growth, although the great white shark population has enjoyed the steady source of food and grown in numbers along with seals. That is likely why we hear so many more reports of shark sightings around New England.

These increased numbers of marine mammals have had somewhat inverse effects on recreational activities. In New England, whale watching is now a thriving industry, with boats leaving from at least a dozen ports. People come from all over in hopes of seeing a whale. However, an increase in seal and shark sightings scare some bathers and surfers away from beaches and shorelines.

In some cases, basic misunderstanding of a seal’s need to haul out on a daily basis has led to unfortunate results. Well-meaning people have been bitten or seals have had to jump back into the water without getting the full amount of rest they need.

A greater understanding of the biological needs of all marine mammals is the underpinning of the conservation and research that is part of this museum’s mission. The new pinniped portion of the exhibition will focus on the biology and habitats of both harbor and gray seals. Visitors will learn about their habits and the adaptations needed to live a semi-aquatic existence.

Whales Today has transformed the entire Jacobs Family Gallery and the Turner Gallery into an exciting new experience for our visitors, for our staff, and for interpretation by our docents. It is an attractive and highly informative blend of old and new, large and small, artistic and informational, fun and alarming. One of the new features of the exhibit that contains both old and new is the display case in the Jacobs Family Gallery, located beneath the stairs.

This beautiful backlit case houses 42 objects of cetacean natural history and one fish artifact that relates directly to one of the centuries-old illustrations in one of the drawers below the case. Artifacts include sperm whale teeth and gums, a baleen whale waxy earplug, porpoise and sperm whale fetuses, and a variety of oils. One object that stands out in the case, on long-term loan from Dr. James Broda from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, is an unaugmented narwhal tusk. Normally, for all male narwhals, their left tooth (they only have two teeth in total) will grow forward out the mouth and through the upper lip in the form of a tusk. It is a very long tooth with sensory endings along its length. This tusk on display comes from a very young animal. The story of how Dr. Broda obtained it is an interesting one.

We will let him tell it in his own words:

“The story of this tiny Narwhal tusk begins in 1994. I was assisting an anthropologist engaged in fieldwork in the remote hunter-gatherer village of hertoq. (Population ~ 110 native Inuit) on the east coast of Greenland. In my spare time I’d roam the highlands surrounding the village, fishing and exploring. Upon my return one day, a woman from the village warned me that it was dangerous “up there” because that’s where the spirits of the last hunters of the village [the Kivitoq] roam. It’s only safe down here at sea level! I insisted that I liked the hills and the hidden tarns… full of eager Arctic Char, and would probably continue my forays despite the risk. A few days later, the woman came by for a visit and told me that in order to be protected from the Kivitoq I needed a Tupilok [spiritual token] to carry along on my trips. She then presented me with the tiny, fragile ivory Narwhal tusk that you see here. She told me that the tusk was from a fetal Narwhal, inside her mother when she was harvested. It was loaded with good spirits. I carried my Tupilok wherever I went, and never had any doubt that it had come from a baby whale, found in the womb of her dead mother.

I decided to confirm the ‘fetal’ nature of the tusk before handing it over to the museum. …Dr. Kirstin Laidre, polar scientist, and Narwhal expert at the University of Washington… dismissed the story that the tusk was from an unborn calf. All Narwhals calves, male or female, are born tuskless and the characteristic twisted tusk only begins to form, primarily on males, after a year or so. Instead, she described, the little tusk at hand is actually… either waiting to begin growth and protrusion, or the spare, undeveloped tusk[s] that remains in the skull for the life of the whale. It could have been recovered from a carcass that had washed ashore, or from a Narwhal captured by the Inuit hunters.”

Please come in and see the little tusk and the rest of the objects in this beautiful new display case. They are equally fascinating and illustrative.
Youth Voices for the Ocean

New Exhibition

Exhibition Dates:
February 1 – September 7, 2020
Upper Level Rotating Galleries

This special exhibit features artwork by the student winners of the international Ocean Awareness Contest run by local nonprofit Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Programs.

Since 2012, Bow Seat’s annual Ocean Awareness Contest has invited young people around the world to creatively explore critical conservation issues in ocean health—including plastic pollution, fossil fuel extraction, biodiversity loss, and climate change—with a focus on humans’ roles as both problem-makers and solvers. More than 13,000 students from 106 countries and all 50 U.S. states have responded through visual art, writing, film, and music.

These powerful works by young artists expose what is happening to our ocean; reflect on what it means to be a human in the 21st century; discover and advocate for solutions on personal and planetary scales; and inspire a culture of respect and action for all life on this blue planet.

The Book of the Earth, Denis Avdic, Age 14, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Deep Hope, Ari Su, Age 14, Boyds, Maryland

Consuming Nature, Risty Lee, Age 12, Los Angeles, California

For up-to-date calendar listings visit www.whalingmuseum.org
A caça à baleia nos mares de Cabo Verde
(Whaling in Our Cape Verdean Seas) opens in Cabo Verde

The Museum has opened a collaborative exhibition at the recently inaugurated Museu da Pesca in São Nicolau, Cabo Verde. Titled A caça à baleia nos mares de Cabo Verde (Whaling in Our Cape Verdean Seas), the exhibition highlights Cape Verdeans’ involvement in the global whaling industry with the introduction of Yankee whalers to Cape Verdean shores. Curators at the Whaling Museum assisted the Museu da Pesca in designing and installing the exhibition after the Museum’s inauguration in November 2019.

The inauguration was an historic marker of the diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Cabo Verde, which has lasted for more than two centuries. Historical ties go back even further: 18th century Cape Verdean mariners joined the crews of American whaling ships in pursuit of opportunity and, over time, friends and family followed. The Port of New Bedford served as a veritable “Cape Verdean Ellis Island.” Successive waves of immigration from Cabo Verde and other Portuguese-speaking countries have made the region home to the largest Lusophone community in the United States.

Dignitaries in attendance at the Museu da Pesca inauguration included the Mayor of Tarrafal, José Freitas de Brito; Prime Minister Dr. Paulo Veiga; Cabo Verde Secretary of State for the Maritime Economy; and the U.S. Ambassador to Cabo Verde, Jeff Daigle, who remarked that he was “very impressed with the quality of the museum and hopes that Cape Verdeans will also be proud of what this museum represents for its history and the relationship between the two countries.”

Dr. Akeia de Barros Gomes, New Bedford Whaling Museum Curator of Social History, played a pivotal role in mounting the new exhibition. Akeia de Barros Gomes traveled to Cabo Verde in December 2017 to take an inventory of exhibition elements and monitor the progress of the Museu da Pesca. After the inauguration, she returned to assist the museum’s curatorial team with the design and installation of the new exhibition.

In 2018, Akeia de Barros Gomes learned that her great grandfather was a whaler from the island nation who arrived in New Bedford in 1917 on the packet Indiana and then was a boat steerer aboard the bark Wanderer in 1918 and 1921. When installing the new exhibition, she and her colleagues in São Nicolau included a photograph of her great grandfather standing at the bow of the Wanderer and reading his harpoon. “It was quite an experience to be able to ‘return’ him and his story to Cabo Verde as part of the celebration of the enduring and evolving communities of the area,” she said.

In 2020, the Museum is launching an initiative called Common Ground: A Community Mosaic New Bedford is an extraordinary place of infinite possibilities, where different paths from around the world have intersected and defined the city’s character. For the next three years, the Museum will be collecting and sharing the stories of the community—with their own words. Through writing, audio and visual recordings, and other means, community members are going to have the opportunity to lend their voice to the collective story of Greater New Bedford. The initiative will culminate in an exhibition that shares the lived experiences of the enduring and evolving communities of the area.

From its beginnings as a part of Wampanoag territory to its early Azorean and Cape Verdean immigrants, and more recent Central American and Caribbean immigrants, the common thread throughout New Bedford’s history has been migration and its ethnic and cultural diversity—the heartbeat of this port city. Like a mosaic, this exhibition will highlight how the diverse identities and individual stories intersect to create a singular picture of New Bedford—finding the common ground.

Until the latter half of the 20th century, museums were focused on research and study, preservation of artifacts, and collecting, with little regard for general visitor experience and virtually none for experiential learning. In addition, rarely were there challenges to dominant narratives or a focus on the experience of the privileged. There were few challenges to the omission of women, people of color, indigenous people, the poor, or the disabled. Today, we are providing a platform for the hidden and quieted voices of the marginalized and the privileged. A singular picture of New Bedford—finding the common ground.

Stay tuned for more details this spring and summer!

Common Ground: A Community Mosaic

Exhibition

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In the Neighborhood

A collection of original artwork
by Alison Wells

Upcoming Exhibition

May 2020 – May 2021
Braitmayer Gallery

As part of Common Ground: A Community Mosaic, the Museum will exhibit a collection of original works by beloved and well-known local artist Alison Wells. Originally from Trinidad & Tobago, Alison relocated from the Caribbean to the south coast of Massachusetts in 2004 and has found New Bedford to be a source of creative inspiration. This exhibition will be Alison’s story of her lived experience in Greater New Bedford.

“New Bedford has been my home away from home for the past 15 years. This area has and continues to serve as a major source of inspiration throughout my career in the United States, both consciously and subconsciously. I am influenced greatly by its rich architecture; its prolific fishing harbor; its fascinating histories of Whaling; the Underground Railroad & Textiles; its multicultural backbone and the artistic veins that pump the city with life and vitality. I fuse these significant influences along with my Caribbean culture and sensibilities to create unique and vibrant mixed media paintings in this series titled, In the Neighborhood.” – Alison Wells

Ripples. Through a Wampanoag Lens

A collection of original artwork
By Elizabeth James-Perry

Upcoming Exhibition

June 2020 – December 2020
Herman Melville Room

“Ripples. Through a Wampanoag Lens” featuring the work of artist, Aquinnah Wampanoag whaling descendant and marine scientist, Elizabeth James-Perry opens this June as part of Common Ground: A Community Mosaic. The exhibition of her work, which includes wampum work, quillwork, and other media, will educate visitors about Northeastern Coastal Wampanoag creative expression rooted in traditions of wampum handwork, involved in record keeping and treaty making protocols that carry forth into the present.

The artist will share her perspective on the historical and contemporary Native woman’s experience in Massachusetts and indigenous gender roles. Her deep knowledge of the environment will be highlighted in how she tells the story of the unique interactions that Wampanoag communities have had with different cultures over the past 400 years. Wampanoag communities were impacted by not only European peoples and worldly naval officers, but by Wampanoag whalemen at home.

Tribal Government/U.S. treaty relationships will be explored as well. These relationships were vital in decisions surrounding indigenous sovereignty and related rights, including the traditional and ceremonial activities related to fishing, and beached or nearshore marine mammal hunting.
In July 2020, the New Bedford Whaling Museum will open a landmark art exhibition titled *A Wild Note of Longing: Albert Pinkham Ryder and a Century of American Art*. The show will bring together major masterworks across the career of New Bedford native, Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847-1917), who achieved legendary status among artists during his lifetime. This is the first exhibition of Ryder’s work since Elizabeth Broun’s 1990 retrospective, which was hosted by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Brooklyn Museum.

For the first time ever, a significant number of paintings by other artists will be exhibited concurrently to show Ryder’s profound influence on a century of avant-garde American painters. Well-known modernists such as Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, Jackson Pollock, and Hans Hofmann were inspired by Ryder’s experimental approach to technique and abandonment of tradition. A dozen paintings by some of these artists and others will constitute a second section of the exhibition, linking Ryder to early twentieth century modernism.

Ryder’s continuing influence on present-day artists will also be revealed. Painters Bill Jensen, Pousette-Dart (both Nathaniel and Richard), Albert York, Lois Dodd, Wolf Kahn, Jill Moore, Peter Shear, Katherine Bradford, Alan Praziak, Farrell Brickhouse, Sue Miller, Emily Auchincloss among many more, acknowledge Ryder as a key inspiration or spiritual mentor even now, a century after his death.

*A Wild Note of Longing* will highlight Ryder’s most iconic paintings, including 11 exceptional examples from the Smithsonian American Art Museum, such as the *Flying Dutchman, Jonah*, and *Pegasus Departing*. An additional 15 Ryders have also been secured from other institutions and private collectors, including the National Gallery of Art (*Mending the Harness*), the Brooklyn Museum (*The Grazing Horse*), The Phillips Collection (*Dead Bird*), the Wadsworth Atheneum (*Weir’s Orchard*), the Lyman Allyn Art Museum (*The Mosque in the Desert*) and the Toledo Museum of Art (*Spring*).

"Ryder’s artworks…reveal their allure slowly over time, after repeated looking. We fall in love with his art through a deepened sensual engagement with the forms, colors, and density of the medium over time."

— Elizabeth Broun

"Art is long. The artist must buckle himself with infinite patience. His ears must be deaf to the clamor of insistent friends who would quicken his pace. His eyes must see naught but the vision beyond. He must wait the season of fruitage without haste, without worldly ambitions, without vexation of spirit. An inspiration is no more than a seed that must be planted and nourished. It gives growth as it grows to the artist, only as he watches and waits with his highest effort."

— Albert Pinkham Ryder

A Prevailing Spirit

Christina Connett Brophy, The Douglas and Cynthia Crocker Endowed Chair for the Chief Curator

Excerpt from upcoming publication “A Wild Note of Longing: Albert Pinkham Ryder and a Century of American Art”

One of the most intriguing things about Albert Pinkham Ryder is his authenticity, one of the many factors that contribute to the cult status he had already achieved during his lifetime. While we can find parallels and numerous connections with his peers on many fronts, probable inspiration from the sites of his youth and travels, and the influence of predecessors and contemporaries, Ryder was a prophetic visionary, seeing and representing the world in a way that diverged from everyone else. Like George Inness, he searched for a new and authentic visual language for landscape; like Robert Swain Gifford and countless others, he sought inspiration in Europe and Africa, testing Barbizon tones and orientalist themes; and like J. M. W. Turner, he eschewed interest in the long-term physical integrity of his masterworks in favor of a more visceral experimentation in material and effect. Throughout, he somehow retained an originality of vision that was both ancient and modern, a link between old and new, between reality and memory.

Ryder rejected the grand-format paintings of Albert Bierstadt and the crispness of his Düsseldorf style, the detailed land-and-seascapes of William Bradford, the literary naturalism of the Hudson River School, and even, to some extent, the Tonalism of his acquaintance Dwight Tyron. As Lloyd Goodrich and others have pointed out, Ryder was “remote from the prevailing spirit of his time.” That was true, but he was also to redefine the prevailing spirit on the horizon. He served, knowingly or not, as a bridge between his peers and followers, between European and American modernism, realism and emotive naturalism. He privileged the internal over the external, spiritual evocation over technical proficiency, intimate compression over conspicuous grandeur. A true pioneer, Ryder was at the center of the cultural shift from a European-driven modernity to a powerful and uniquely American voice.

It is fortuitous for New Bedford, Massachusetts, that the father of American modernism at one time called our city home, and that his brief time here overlapped with the transitions in American painting that reflected our search for a uniquely national visual expression. A Wild Note of Longing brings Ryder home again.
The shape of Ryder's legend was well established by the time he died in 1917 at age 78. He was already revered as a "soul attuned" to the world of the imagination, an idealist in a materialist age who brought a spiritual fervor to his art. This reclusive artist was heralded as the harbinger of a new age in part because the emerging generation of artists needed a respected leader to underpin their new movement. The organizers of the 1913 Armory Show featured Ryder with ten paintings in a central gallery surrounded by young modernists, as if they were acolytes tending a shrine. Even though the most radical developments in European art were being debated in New York, the organizers sought an ancestor figure—more specifically, an American ancestor—to claim for their modern movement a distinctly nativist heritage. Ryder served their interest by offering a developmental path that seemed independent of Europe.

How and why Ryder became the best choice for this ancestor role is significant. After 1900, his increasing eccentricities made him almost a cult figure among younger artists. He was a sufferer; his feet and eyes gave him endless problems, and he was overweight, suggesting that he likely had diabetes, for which there was no effective treatment at the time. He lived as a recluse in his Greenwich Village rooms, rarely leaving except to wander all night along the wharves, absorbed in the skies and moon. His small apartment became a sanctuary, bewitching to friends who came to see the paintings slowly evolving over the years, but equally shocking for the mountains of debris everywhere, left behind to the end, and one technical achievement carried through against innumerable obstacles and with many variations, but without apparent aesthetic parentage, entirely original in technique. The 1918 memorial retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum confirmed Ryder's art as an iconic monument, a self-created temple to spirit and emotion. Ryder was heralded as the harbinger of a new age in part because the materialist age who brought a spiritual fervor to his art. This reclusive figure, fed, but not controlled, by emotion.

The artist should not sacrifice his ideals to a landlord and a costly studio. A rain-tight roof, frugal living, a box of colors and God's sunlight through clear windows keep the soul attuned and the body vigorous for one's daily work.

— Albert Pinkham Ryder, 1905

The Soul Attuned
Elizabeth Broun

Excerpt from upcoming publication "A Wild Note of Longing: Albert Pinkham Ryder and a Century of American Art"
Ryder’s Legacy
William C. Agee

Excerpt from upcoming publication “A Wild Note of Longing: Albert Pinkham Ryder and a Century of American Art”

Ryder’s legacy is vast, forming a distinct chapter in American art. It took root in the early 1880s and is still in full force today. However, to suggest that Ryder may well be the most influential American artist in America may seem a rash statement. But it’s not a new idea. Consider what the artist and critic Walter Pach said in 1911: “The work of Albert P. Ryder seems destined to hold a permanent and very high place in American art.” Or Marsden Hartley’s words ten years later: “I find him so much the legend among professional artists.” And surely, Roger Fry, who spoke of Ryder’s “undeniable genius” as early as 1908, would not disagree. In his 1938 Tree Chart of Contemporary American Art, Nathaniel Pousette-Dart, progenitor of three generations of artists, gave a whole branch to Ryder and his offshoots, Eilshemius, Reginald Marsh, Paul Cadmus, and Arthur Dove. Remember, too, that the organizers of the 1913 Armory Show – Pach, Walt Kuhn, and Arthur B. Davies among them – gave Ryder the place of honor as a father of modern art in the central gallery at this landmark event. Most famously of course, Jackson Pollock proclaimed in 1944 that “the only American master who interests me is Ryder.”

His influence through generations of artists has often been quiet, even invisible, like an underground stream, but nevertheless one that flows steadily. He is rarely discussed in college classrooms, so artists and other usually come upon him by surprise. Since Elizabeth Broun’s seminal 1990 exhibition and catalogue, very little has been written about the ongoing dialogue with Ryder’s work, although there have been smaller shows on the topic. It’s an inside job, mostly among artists, who have kept his art alive and brimming with possibilities. From the start, it has appeared in all manner of ways and forms, sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle, sometimes clear only to the artists themselves. It has jump-started the careers of some artist and remained at the core of their work, even though their art has gone in apparently far distant directions.

That Ryder’s first admirers were artists was noted as early as 1890 by critic Henry Eckford. The list of those who have engaged with his work is long and spans nearly a century and a half: Winslow Homer, Marsden Hartley, Arthur Dove, Thomas Hart Benton, Hans Hofmann, Nathaniel and Richard Pousette-Dart, Clifford Still, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Milton Avery, Forrest Bess, Bill Jensen, Ron Bladens, Lois Dodd, Katherine Bradford, Albert York, Myron Stout, John Walker, Bruce Conner, Jill Moser, Sanford Wurmfeld, Linda Lynch, and Wolf Kahn. Artists have kept his spirit and methods going strong even at this moment: among them working today are Emily Aushinsclou, Alan Pruniniak, Peter Shear, and Farrell Brickhouse, which Jensen, Kahn, and Dodd, now old masters, continue to explore in their exploration of Ryder’s art. Both Jensen and Kahn have recently said to me, “Ryder is still one of my gods.” His force is so widely felt today that it is scarcely possible to keep track of it, let alone right sufficiently of it. But listen to the artists, look at what they are doing, and you’ll know Ryder is a living presence.

William C. Agee is the Evelyn Kranes Kossak Professor Emeritus of Art History, Hunter College. He has written extensively on American art. He is founding editor, contributing editor, and co-author of the essays in Sturt Davis: A Catalogue Raisonné; former Director of The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Pasadena Art Museum; and former curator at the Whitney Museum and Museum of Modern Art. His most recent publication is Modern Art in America, 1908–1968: A Critical and Thematic History.

"Major artists were impacted by Ryder by one way or another. His impact and influence is really that vast. I believe Winslow Homer picked up on the aspects of Ryder, especially his light, and his moon imagery. Ryder is perhaps most famous for what is now called the ‘Ryder Moon.’"

– William C. Agee


Lighting the Way: Historic Women of the SouthCoast

Lighting the Way uncovers the remarkable stories of women who have shaped their SouthCoast communities. Many extraordinary women have been profiled as part of the project. As educators and philanthropists, abolitionists and crusaders for social justice, investors and confectioners, sister sailors and millworkers, women from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds have shaped the SouthCoast communities, the nation, and the world. Since 2017, Lighting the Way has been unearthing stories of women’s callings that required grit, tenacity, and enduring commitment to their families, careers and communities, and sharing those stories.

2020 is the 100th Anniversary of U.S. Congress ratifying the 19th Amendment to the U.S. constitution, which made it illegal to prevent a woman from voting based on her sex. Early on in our research, we learned of three women from the SouthCoast who identified as Suffragists - Elizabeth Terry Delano, Marie Equi, and Cecil Clark Davis. These three white women all worked for the passage of the amendment and lived to see it ratified by Congress. Their stories are featured on the Lighting the Way website - historicwomensouthcoast.org and on the following pages.

These three women are exemplary, but they don’t tell the whole story of the struggle for voting rights for women. The 19th Amendment prevented voting discrimination based on sex, but in practice, many women of color and many poor women could not vote because of other laws and restrictions. There were women in the SouthCoast, who may not have identified as suffragists, who also worked to secure rights and voting access for these women as well as for men who did not have it. Indeed, many women worked on voting rights for African American men, and 2020 marks another important milestone in voting rights history—the 150th anniversary of the 15th Amendment, which states that the right to vote cannot be denied based on race.

Even when women have not had sanctioned political power, they found many ways to be civically engaged through political and non-political processes. The Lighting the Way website is filled with stories of women, from the 17th century to the current decade, who may not yet have had the right to vote, been in political office or held official leadership roles, yet worked tirelessly and effectively to make changes, build communities, and help people.

To commemorate the ratification of the 19th Amendment and to honor the unfinished legacy of the women’s suffrage movement, Lighting the Way programs in 2020 will highlight historic women of the SouthCoast who were civically engaged and encourage women today to exercise their constitutional right to vote. Visit www.historicwomensouthcoast.org to discover the remarkable stories for yourself and find an up-to-date schedule on events happening this spring.

Elizabeth Terry Delano

Artist Elizabeth Terry Delano (1845-1938) was born in Fairhaven, the daughter of Jabez and Elizabeth Terry Delano. Her father was a first cousin of President Franklin Roosevelt’s grandfather, Captain Warren Delano, and they were both descendants of the French Huguenot Philippe de la Noye, who emigrated to America in 1621. Elizabeth began painting as a small child, and in school the other children would bring their paper dolls to her to have their faces “marked,” as it was called. Her instructor gave her a good background in drawing in black and white, and further instruction led to her mastery of color. She continued her studies at the New York Academy of Design, the Art Students League of New York, the Grosman Studios of Boston, and the studios of noted portrait painters William Merritt Chase, J. Alden Weir, and other famous artists.

Elizabeth spent the majority of her working years in her studio at 91 Pleasant Street, Fairhaven. Here she created her still-life paintings, her portraits of family and friends, and her landscapes. She worked primarily in oils, but also did some wood carving of flowers. She held exhibitions at her studio and also taught painting classes. Known as a quiet, self-effacing woman, her whole life was devoted to her painting.

She always painted subjects that were totally familiar to her. Among these were flowers and fruit herself had grown. An interview published in the Sunday Standard of January 4, 1925, quoted her as saying that “painting perishable flowers such as roses or peonies means working at top speed as long as hand and eye will obey the observing brain.” Her portraits were also mainly of people whom she knew well.

There were many works for which Elizabeth became noted locally. Two of the most ambitious were friezes painted for the homes of her cousin Warren Delano, Jr. One frieze for his home in East Orange, New Jersey, done in 1896, was 66 feet long by 2 feet wide with over 7,000 chrysanthemum blossoms on the canvas. In 1903, her cousin commissioned another even more grandiose work, a frieze 85 feet long and totaling 235 square feet, for the dining room of his house on Park Avenue, New York. The subject again was chrysanthemums in various colors and in large numbers with sky above them. The gardener for Henry Huttleston Rogers’s estate, James Garthley, assisted Miss Delano by regularly supplying fresh flowers as models for her work.

Elizabeth enjoyed creating portraits as well as still-life compositions. Among some of her noted portraits were those of Theodore Roosevelt and his son Quentin, John J. Bryant, Miss Melora Handy, and Mrs. John Coggeshall.

Although her art work took precedence, Miss Delano was also involved in the political issues of the day. She was a staunch supporter and admirer of Theodore Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover and an ardent enthusiast for Republican causes. In 1918, when her paintings were being exhibited in the rotunda of the New Bedford Free Public Library, she announced that all the money realized from the sale of her paintings would be used to purchase liberty bonds. Also in 1918 when Rebecca Hoarworth, national organizer for the National Woman’s Party, came to speak in Fairhaven, Miss Delano was chairman of the committee of arrangements. She later wrote an eloquent letter to the Fairhaven Star urging Congress to grant full suffrage to women. Throughout her life, she worked for causes that she felt were right. Just before Christmas in 1931, she obtained some 216 signatures for an international disarmament petition sponsored by the Women’s International League in Washington, D.C.

As Miss Delano aged her failing sight and health forced her to abandon her artistic work that was her love. She passed away in her 88th year while residing in Fairhaven’s King’s Daughters’ Home.

Visit www.whalingmuseum.org for up-to-date calendar listings.
New Bedford prepared physician and political activist Marie Equi (1872-1952) for a lifetime of social justice advocacy. Born here on April 7, 1872, in the family home at 185 South Second Street, Marie Diana Equi was one of 11 children of John and Sarah Mullins Equi. Marie’s father John, anglicized from Giovanni, arrived in America at the age of 12 in 1855 from Italy and joined an older brother in New Bedford. A stonemason, John laid the foundation for St. Lawrence Martyr Church, the family’s church for all Catholic sacraments. Marie’s mother Sarah arrived in New Bedford with her mother at the age of nine in 1858 from Ireland, where both parents opposed British rule. In a Catholic ceremony, John and Sarah were married in April 1866. Sarah would have her 11 children in 16 years, and Marie would help with childcare and household chores. The Equis and their neighbors on South Second Street were working class families whose children were not protected from harsh realities. Marie lost three siblings and three cousins to diseases prevalent at the time, including cold and diphtheria. Her father invited striking mill workers for dinner, where Marie learned about working conditions in the factories. Later in life, Marie traced her sense of social justice back to her Italian father and Irish mother, each with roots against oppression.

At the age of eight, Marie and her family moved to a new home at 60 James Street in New Bedford’s West End, up from the front and into a more diverse neighborhood that included the wealthy and the working class. Marie felt ostracized as both Italian, the city’s smallest immigrant population, and Irish, the city’s largest immigrant group. Marie’s biographer Michael Helquist points out that the Equis experienced anti-immigrant sentiment as both minority Italian and majority famine Irish. Nevertheless, at age 14, Marie graduated from Middle Street Grammar, an overcrowded school where she excelled in a progressive curriculum that focused on learning instead of traditional memorization and discipline. Marie next attended New Bedford High School, where she excelled. Unable to afford a second year at Northfield, Marie went to Tuscany to work on an uncle’s vineyards and olive groves. Meanwhile, Besie dropped out of Wellesley College and moved to an Oregon homestead in 1891. By 1892, at age 20, Marie returned from Italy and joined Besie on the Oregon homestead. Marie’s experiences in New Bedford had made her aware of the need for medical care for working class families. She had lived through her mother’s multiple pregnancies, her siblings’ deaths from infectious diseases, and her own respiratory problems from working in the textile mills. While Besie taught at a prestigious private school and Marie studied for medical school entrance examinations, their relationship grew in closeness and intimacy. Both New Bedford women were courageous enough to relocate 3,000 miles away and live openly as lovers while each pursued a meaningful profession.

In 1897, Marie and Besie left their Oregon homestead and moved to San Francisco. In 1899, ten years after dropping out of New Bedford High School, Marie enrolled at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in San Francisco as a first-year medical student. With women representing only 6% of U.S. physicians, Marie pushed through boundaries of class, gender, and sexual orientation on her way to becoming a medical doctor. In 1903, after two transfers and a move to Portland with new companion and fellow medical student Dr. Marie Equi

Dr. Marie Equi

Dr. Marie Equi

Mary Ellen Parker, Dr. Marie Equi graduated from the University of Oregon Medical Department. She would eventually set up a general practice in Portland with a focus on obstetrics, gynecology, and pediatrics. Biographer Michael Helquist notes that Marie’s New Bedford background facilitated her connection with Portland’s working-class and immigrants. Throughout her practice, Marie served men as well, especially as she became more politically active.

By 1905, as Marie began to practice medicine, the social reform movement of Progressivism was taking hold in Oregon. Progressivism proposed a new social order that protected workers, women and children from labor abuses and that extended voting rights to women. In this climate of Progressivism, Marie began her work as a political activist. She joined the Oregon Equal Suffrage Association and attended the National American Women Suffrage Association’s first convention in the West, held in Portland. In the spirit of Progressivism’s civic engagement, Marie volunteered on the Oregon relief mission to aid victims of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. As the only female doctor on the Oregon mission, Marie was put in charge of an obstetrics unit in a 300-bed San Francisco hospital. Countless Oregon and California newspapers detailed stories of Marie’s compassion and professionalism. The U.S. Army awarded her with a medal and citation for her relief work.

Later in 1906, Marie returned to New Bedford for six months to take care of her mother Sarah, who died in February 1907. Upon her return to Portland, Marie began her longest intimate relationship with wealthy heiress Harriet Speckart and eventually adopted an infant girl (as a single woman) with the help of a local judge. Marie balanced her successful medical practice for women and children with an increasing activism for access to birth control information and other causes. Committed to women’s reproductive rights at a time when distribution of birth control pamphlets was illegal, Marie was arrested in 1916, along with birth control advocate Margaret Sanger for distributing Sanger’s birth control booklet, revised by Marie to update medical information. With risk to her profession and standing, Marie believed that women should not be forced to bear children and she performed illegal, safe abortions regardless of ability to pay. Politically, Marie also worked for women’s suffrage, public funding for the University of Oregon, prison reform, and against capital punishment. Soon after her work with Sanger, Marie traveled to Seattle to treat injured members of the Industrial Workers of the World, “Wobblies,” who had been hurt at the dock on their way to support striking mill workers. The Industrial Workers of the World was a radical union that believed in one union for all, with all authority and management shifted to the workers. By this time, the unemployed were known as “her army” and striking workers were known as “her boys.”

Marie was radicalized after being clubbed by mounted police during her picketing with women canners workers in Portland in 1913. Eighteen, including Marie, were arrested after this cannery protest turned violent. Marie received bruises from the police, while a paper reported that she stabbed at the police with a pin. Strong women were often called “mad,” and an ultimatum was given to Marie to leave Oregon or be committed. She refused to leave, showed ad- ditional bruises, and was never brought to trial. Outraged at the brutality, Marie moved from moderate social reformer to hold and fearless radical.

In 1914, Marie traveled back East on a predominantly political trip that included a stop in New Bedford. She was the official representa- tive of Portland’s Unemployed League to the First National Confer- ence on Unemployment in New York. Marie also did postgraduate work at Massachusetts General Hospital with Richard Cabot, pio- neer in hospital social services. She spoke at a rally for the jobless at Boston Common. During her family visit to New Bedford, the New Bedford Standard called her “the little fighting doctor” who led a “one-woman fight . . . for the unemployed of Oregon and worse.”

By the time World War I preparedness rallies reached Portland, Marie would call on local men to not enlist. In 1918, with increas- ing suppression of dissent, Marie was indicted on charges under the Sedition Act, which included vowing allegiance to the red banner of industrial workers and attacking the character of U.S. soldiers. She was warned, her friends were followed, and an informant was planted in her inner circle. At her trial, she denied the charges and objected to excessive surveillance. The prosecution presented evidence of her lesbianism and anger issues. Marie affirmed her patriotism and stated that she took issue, not with the government, but with corporate profiteering. Marie was found guilty and sen- tenced to three years in federal prison on December 31, 1918. She earned early release for good behavior. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt pardoned Marie on December 24, 1933. In 1934, she supported the effective West Coast’s Longshoremen Strike as well as the Maritime Strike. During a hospital stay in 1950, longshoremen sent her red roses. Later, Marie’s daughter Mary cared for her in Oregon as her health declined. On July 13, 1952, at the age of 80, Marie died in Portland and was buried there. Oregon labor activist Julia Ruuttila remembered Marie as “a real friend of the have-nots of this world.”

Visit biographer Michael Helquist’s website at www.michaelhelquist.com for more information on Marie Equi and her times.
Cecil Clark Davis

Cecil was born in Chicago in 1877 to wealthy Chicago industrialist John Marshall Clark and his wife Louise, a concert pianist. The Clark family summered in Marion, staying first at the Sippican Hotel, then eventually building a 23-room cottage on 14 acres on Water Street. They named it “The House in the Lane.” In both Chicago and Marion, Cecil was surrounded by some of the period’s most brilliant artists, musicians, writers, and thinkers. During the Gilded Age, summer visitors to Marion included actress Ethel Barrymore, educator Booker T. Washington, novelists Henry James, President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland, and illustrator Charles Dana Gibson. During those summers, she would paint with other artists at the Old Stone Studio, play tennis at the Tennis Club, and golf at the Kirtan Club. At the Sippican Hotel and Casino, Cecil played billiards regularly and once beat Willie Hoopen, a billiards world champion.

Cecil attended the Art Institute of Chicago, where she remained active and connected for most of her life. She also attended the progressive Miss Porter’s School for Girls in Farmington, Connecticut. As a member of the class of 1895 at Miss Porter’s, Cecil studied the humanities, the sciences, and the arts. She also learned the importance of exercise, was very athletic, playing golf and tennis throughout much of her life. Cecil points to the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893 as the place where her dream to be a great portrait artist began. In the Art Pavilion, Cecil saw great paintings, including a Rembrandt. Cecil also visited the first ever Women’s Pavilion and heard speeches by suffragists about the rights of women, children, and factory workers. In her diaries, she reveals that she wants to be an “advanced” woman and not follow the traditional path of marriage and family. Nevertheless, her mother encouraged her to consider Richard Harding Davis, a handsome writer who summered in Marion as well.

In 1898, Richard asked Cecil to marry him twice and Cecil said no to both proposals. In 1899, Cecil finally said yes to Richard’s third proposal, delivered from London by his courier with an engagement ring and a bouquet of violets. They were married in Marion at St. Gabriel’s Episcopal Chapel with a reception on the lawn of the Clark home. Although Cecil and Richard agreed to a platonic marriage—and not follow the traditional path of marriage and family. Nevertheless, her mother encouraged her to consider Richard Harding Davis, a handsome writer who summered in Marion as well.

Cecil grew apart. In 1908, on the day after Christmas, Richard asked for a divorce in the midst of a scandal with a chorus girl. On June 17, 1912, the divorce was granted. Cecil and Richard remained close friends for years. After her separation from Richard, Cecil threw herself into her painting as well as the women’s movement. In 1910, her portraits were gaining recognition and she received her first major commission, from Town & Country magazine, for a series of portraits of influential people, including Puccini and Alexander Graham Bell. The subjects of her portraits ranged from society people and the historically important, to the unsung gardener and nurses. Cecil’s paintings won several awards, including the Portrait Prize of the Municipal Art League of Chicago in 1918, the Gold Medal of the Salon in Rio de Janeiro in 1920, the Gold Medal of the Philadelphia Art Club in 1925, the Portrait Prize of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors in 1926, the Popular Prize of the Newport Art Association in 1932, and the Portrait Prize of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1934. She was represented by Grand Central Galleries in New York, maintained studios worldwide, and “had more commissions than I could handle.” From 1911 through 1916, Cecil attended suffrage meetings, lectures on feminism, dinners for the suffrage cause, and suffrage parades. She worked on a suffrage cartoon, designed a poster for a suffrage parade, and called legislators to move into their dream house on 204 acres in Mt. Kisco, New York. At one point, Richard had four plays on Broadway all at once, while Cecil painted in her studio each day. As Richard enjoyed the night life in the city while Cecil preferred to stay home or in Marion, they

Continued on page 36

Cultural Connections

10th Anniversary of the Azorean Whalemen’s Gallery

In September, the New Bedford Whaling Museum will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Azorean Whalemen’s Gallery. This important addition—which is now an essential defining feature of the Museum—represents an example of the telling of history and representation of culture that is possible when institutions collaborate with communities. The exhibition, its objects, and its maintenance were established and are sustained by collaborating with the Museum’s Portuguese Advisory Committee. The Portuguese Advisory Committee is a group of individuals committed to Portuguese history and culture in the region. The committee guides, advises, and makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees with regard to exhibitions, programming, funding, and strategic planning.

The exhibition continues to be central to the Museum. The Azorean Whalemen’s Gallery features, among other things, the original watercolor illustrations by Yvon Le Corre that were used in the book Twice ’Round the Loggerhead, by Bruce Halbsky, which details the craft of Azorean whaleboat making. The gallery not only encompasses Azorean whaling and tradition in the Azores, but highlights the contributions of Azoreans to Yankee whaling and New Bedford.

The exhibit also reinforces the New Bedford Whaling Museum’s ties with Portugal and the Lusophone world. The Museum received a grant from the Foreign Ministry of Portugal to create the exhibition and it was visited by the President of Portugal in 2018. It has been visited by many dignitaries from mainland Portugal, the Azores, Madeira, and Cabo Verde. The New Bedford Whaling Museum also engages in programming that invites scholars and the community to explore the extent of the Lusophone diaspora and global Portuguese influence.

Many of the objects and documents in the Azorean Whalemen’s Gallery were gifted or loaned to the Museum by individuals in the Greater New Bedford Portuguese community. The Museum is proud to sustain these relationships and continue collaborating on projects involving Portuguese culture and history with our local Portuguese communities, the government of Portugal, the government of the Azores, and through the diligent work of our Portuguese Advisory Committee.

For up-to-date calendar listings visit www.whalingmuseum.org
After Conservation

In May 1931 the expanding Russell Memorial Library of Acushnet (commonly referred to as the Free Public Library of Acushnet) dedicated a new building at 88 Main Street after moving out of its original space in the Old Town Hall. This handsome new library was built of local fieldstones gathered from the fields of Acushnet farms and boasted an attractive columned portico, a pair of symmetrical entry staircases, diamond paneled leaded glass windows, and several important works of art decorating the reading room. Three paintings by Clement Nye Swift (1846-1918) were among these, presented to the library by its founder, Robert F. Swift, and others, during the 1870s, Seaweed Gatherers was one of several large works inspired by the work of noted animal painter Rosa Bonheur. The painting is said to have been exhibited at the Salon de Paris shortly thereafter.

Although Seaweed Gatherers remained striking and beautiful when it came to the Museum, 85 years of hanging untouched on the library’s wall lodged behind the lower stretcher member. This library wall now provides a prime example of the problems that can occur when works of art are exposed to years of neglect in storage. In 2013, in concert with the renovation of the Acushnet library, a renovation project was mounted to move the painting to the New Bedford Whaling Museum. This opportunity to conserve and display a major work of art inspired our conservation staff to rethink the ways in which they approached this project.

The works would remain in place until 2015 when the library relocated to a larger facility in town—but one that ultimately offered less wall space. Consequently, two of the Swift paintings were donated to the New Bedford Whaling Museum by the Library’s Board of Trustees at that time. One of these, Seaweed Gatherers, is a monumental oil-on-canvas in an ornate gilt frame that measures nearly 10 feet long. Painted during Swift’s time in Brittany, France — some time during the 1870s, Seaweed Gatherers was one of several large works inspired by the work of noted animal painter Rosa Bonheur. The painting is said to have been exhibited at the Salon de Paris shortly thereafter.

Although Seaweed Gatherers remained striking and beautiful when it came to the Museum, 85 years of hanging untouched on the library’s wall lodged behind the lower stretcher member. This caused pronounced surface deformations in the painting along the bottom. Adding to the problem, tacks around the edges had pulled the canvas more taut and flat. Also on the verso (reverse) side were water stains, evidence of mold, and glued-on patches that had been added over the years to stabilize tears. On the recto (face) side were a number of severe cracks in the paint, losses, and discolored varnish, as well as accumulated surface grime. The conservation of this large painting became an involved process.

First, the painting was removed completely from its frame and both were treated for mold using an alcohol solution. Then surface dirt was removed, followed by removal of the discolored varnish with acetone, and the cracks were consolidated. Afterward, the edges and surface deformations were flattened and tears were carefully mended. The entire canvas was relined onto two layers of stable, acrylic fabric that was then stretched over a brand-new, custom built frame and surface deformations were flattened and tears were carefully mended. The result is simply stunning as these mid and post treatment photos illustrate. The entire canvas was relined onto two layers of stable, acrylic fabric that was then stretched over a brand-new, custom built frame and surface deformations were flattened and tears were carefully mended. The result is simply stunning as these mid and post treatment photos illustrate.

We wish to thank The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts — William H. and Mary H. Woods Fund for Arts and Literacy for a major contribution to the conservation of Seaweed Gatherers. Without their generous financial support this important work could not have been completed.

For the purpose of this latest Bulletin, the “Out of the Collection” feature could be more aptly titled “The Collections Are Out.” For the past decade or more, a large volume of the Museum’s collections have been divided among several offsite locations. Some of these spaces were less than ideal for easily accessing the contents and have largely been off limits to visitors. Among the items kept off site are a collection of Yankee whaleboats and other small watercraft, Old Dartmouth furniture, a vast array of whaling artifacts (including those of its supporting industries), dozens of salvos’ sea chests, textile working equipment, architectural remnants, gigantic whalebones, several full-size trypots, farming implements, antique tools, sculpture, models, and so much more.

In November 2019, the Museum began a massive effort to consolidate all of its disparate long-term collections storage units into one bright, modern 7,500 square foot facility. Included in the space is a library of works where staff can better catalog, document, and field research inquiries regarding individual objects. For example, computers and photo equipment enable digital imaging of collections that will then be accessible to a worldwide audience. In cases where researchers require in-person visits, large worktables are now available to enable object examinations and study onsite.

Many of the pieces that have recently been brought back to light directly relate to a series of life-sized dioramas that were installed for many years along the mezzanine of the Bourne Building, right beside Lagoda. From the early 1920s until sometime during the late 1980s, visitors could peruse what the 1924 Whaling Museum guidebook described as “replicas of old-time shops such as were characteristic of New Bedford when the whaling industry was at its height.” These re-creations were planned and arranged by a team including then-curator Frank Wood, collector of marine antiques F. Gilbert Hinsdale, Edward T. Pierce Jr., and celebrated artist Clifford W. Ashley, among others. They created scenes of sail and rigging lofts, a cooperage, shipsmith’s shop, whaleboat shop, and a ship agent’s office. They were replete with groupings of furnishings and artifacts that, when combined, made for charmingly nostalgic, yet educational tableaus. Installed at a time when New Bedford’s whaling and supporting industries were quickly fading away, the dioramas were (perhaps like Lagoda herself) meant to serve as a testament and memorial to New Bedford’s bygone activities.

It is interesting to note how effectively the dioramas contextualized what were otherwise individually arcane and obscure relics. In their day, the displays were well photographically documented and the surviving images make it possible to physically group the artifacts back together again. The images also help to inform how the curious objects would have appeared and been used in their original context, despite how foreign some may appear to the modern eye. This is a tremendous aid to staff as they work to improve the informational value of catalog records, while ensuring that the meaning of these artifacts will continue to be preserved and conveyed well into the future.

By D. Jordan Berson, Director of Collections

CONSERVATION

Out of the Collection

Photo 1: The Rigger’s Loft, seen in the 1940’s photo above, features a collection of rare tools and implements donated by William R. Wing, whaling merchant and his daughter Mrs. Charles S. Hussey.

Photo 2: The early 1930’s photo shows the center of the Whaling Merchant’s Counting Room. The Museum still holds much of the contents of kits and the other dioramas.

Photo 3: The chest, featuring vessel names on its drawer (visible in period photos of the Whaling Merchant’s Counting Room) remains attractive today with a collection of company engravings upon it.

Photo 4: Most of the objects in this recent photo were once featured in the original Bourne Building exhibit.
The New Bedford Whaling Museum’s annual Sailors’ Series presents a wide variety of experiences and adventures by individuals with lifelong commitments to sailing, boats, and the sea. The 2020 Sailors’ Series is presented in honor of Llewellyn Howland III, and is supported in part, by The Samuel D. Rusitzky Lecture Fund.

Tickets: Members $15 | Non-members $25 | Reserve at 508-997-0046 or whalingmuseum.org

Tuesday, May 12
Yachting in Greenland
Reception 6 pm | Presentation 6:30 pm

Onne van der Wal is one of the most prolific and talented marine photographers in the world of sailing. Enjoy Onne’s photos and stories from his sailing trips to Greenland in 2018 and 2019.

Tuesday, June 2
Vendee Globe: Racing Solo Non-Stop Around the World
Reception 6 pm | Presentation 6:30 pm

Marvel at Rich Wilson’s stories about the toughest sailing race in the world. Fewer than 150 sailors have ever finished the non-stop, round-the-world Vendee Globe - Rich has done it twice.

This year’s series is presented in partnership with the Cruising Club of America, New Bedford Yacht Club, Beverly Yacht Club, and Tabor Academy.

Above: Photo courtesy Onne van der Wal

2020 Fall Members’ Trip
Exploring Madeira & Sao Miguel
September 11 – 20, 2020

Join us for the New Bedford Whaling Museum’s annual members’ trip and enjoy four nights in Madeira and four nights in the Azores. The rich culture, stunning beaches, and unique countryside featured in this trip will be enhanced by the deep knowledge and passion of the Museum’s Curator of Social History, Dr. Akeia de Barros Gomes, who will travel with the group.

Space is limited! Reserve your spot by calling Emily Mead, Director of Philanthropy, at (508) 717-3850 or email emead@whalingmuseum.org

* Trip includes round-trip airfare from Boston, transportation to and from the airport, 8-night accommodation, 14 meals, private tour guide, and tours with the Museum’s Curator of Social History, Dr. Akeia de Barros Gomes. A $500 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of booking to secure reservation. Final balance will be due by June 24, 2020.

SAILORS’ SERIES
SUPPORTED BY RUTH AND HOPE ATKINSON

Honoring Llewellyn Howland III

The Melville Society CULTURAL PROJECT

TEACHING MELVILLE
June 19 – July 2, 2020

An Institute for School Teachers on Herman Melville’s Moby-Dick and the World of Whaling in the Digital Age.

Education colleagues from across the country will gain insight into the art and context of Herman Melville’s iconic 19th-century American novel Moby-Dick, while learning new approaches to interpreting the book for 21st-century students.

Principal faculty from the Melville Society Cultural Project:
Timothy Marr (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Institute director
Jennifer Baker (New York University)
Mary K. Bercause Edwards (University of Connecticut)
Wyn Kelley (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
Chris Sten (George Washington University)
Robert K. Wallace (Northern Kentucky University)
Jeffrey Markham (New Trier High School)

The Teaching Melville Summer Institute for Teachers is funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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For up-to-date calendar listings visit www.whalingmuseum.org
Continued from page 30

Cecil Clark Davis continued

Cecil described herself as self-taught, and her diaries show that she constantly worked at improving herself. Her independent study included

For the last several years of her life, Cecil suffered from paralysis and debilitating pain. She hired Frederica Dibblee Poett, the daughter of a

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SAVE THE DATE
Friday, July 31, 2020

Summer Gala

The New Bedford Whaling Museum is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and is governed by the Old Dartmouth Historical Society.

Subscription to this publication is a benefit of membership. For more information about membership, call 508-717-6832 or visit www.whalingmuseum.org.

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