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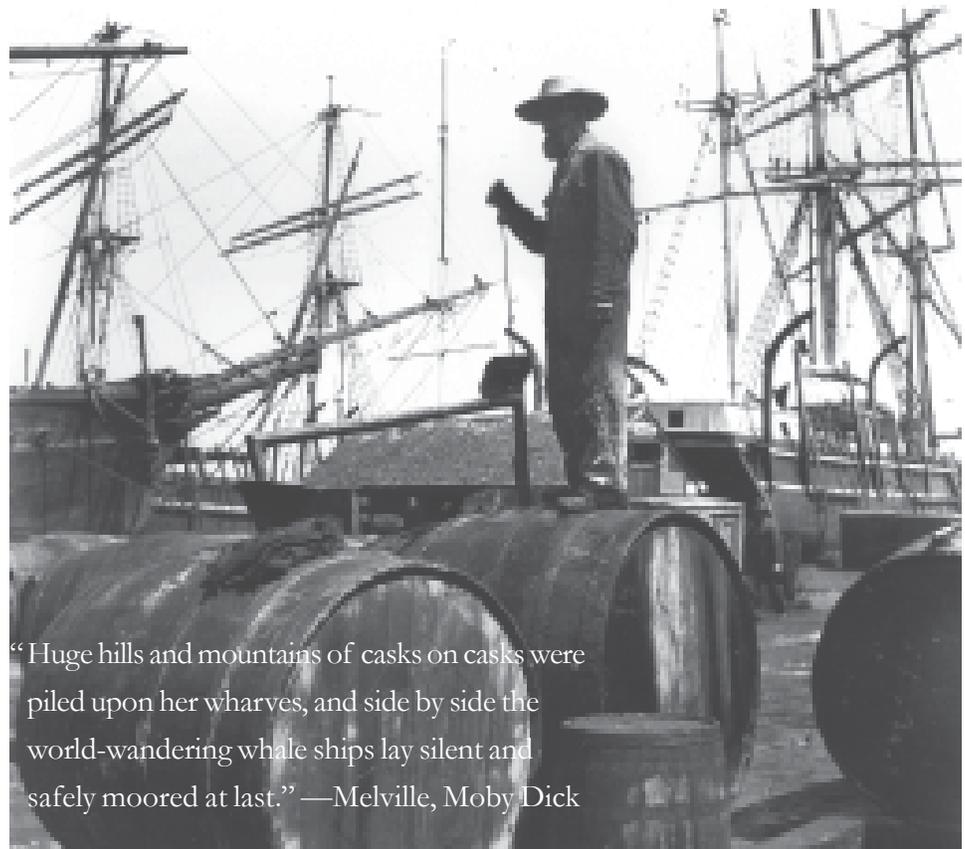
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SAFELY MOORED AT LAST:  
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR  
NEW BEDFORD WHALING  
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

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“Huge hills and mountains of casks on casks were piled upon her wharves, and side by side the world-wandering whale ships lay silent and safely moored at last.” —Melville, *Moby Dick*

# SAFELY MOORED AT LAST: CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR NEW BEDFORD WHALING NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

VOLUME 1:  
HISTORY  
EXISTING CONDITIONS  
ANALYSIS  
PRELIMINARY PRESERVATION ISSUES

BY CHRISTINE A. ARATO AND PATRICK L. ELEEY

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The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation promotes the preservation of significant landscapes through research, planning, stewardship, and education. The Center accomplishes its mission in collaboration with a network of partners including national parks, universities, government agencies and private nonprofit organizations.

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Hot soup and vinegar chips at Naughty Dawgs fortified us during our sojourns among New Bedford's winter streetscapes. Finally, our personal thanks are extended to Shirley Jones, who provoked much thought and comment during those long commutes to New Bedford.



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The establishment of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park at the end of 1996 was heralded as a symbol of the rebirth of the City of New Bedford. The park's dedication ceremony held in 1998 brought great celebration, expectation and hope in the city that for almost one hundred years had been the whaling capital of the world. The park's establishment was the culmination of the work of members of Congress, local and municipal organizations, and private citizens who had successfully joined together to preserve the city's whaling legacy.

It was intended that the unified approach to preservation leading to the park's establishment would be carried forward in the management of the historical park. The law establishing the park designated a 13-block, 34-acre section of the city to be administered according to "the provisions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park System." Although there are over 70 buildings within the park boundary, ownership of property by the National Park Service was limited to that which was "needed for essential visitor and contact facilities." The role of the National Park Service in New Bedford, therefore, will be to work with local partners in an effort to preserve and interpret all of the resources included in the park.

The Cultural Landscape Report prepared for New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park provided seminal guidance needed to develop a sustainable long-term preservation program based on well-grounded research, thoughtful analysis, useful recommendations, and significant public involvement. Even before the report was printed in its final form, we were using it as an important reference in an environment where recommendations must frequently be swift, change may sometimes be dynamic, and development inside and outside the park boundary has an impact on the overall visitor experience. The report has grounded us in preserving those features—critical view sheds, streetscapes, small-scale details—which holistically create the "real thing" that we are all striving to preserve, protect and celebrate in New Bedford.

I am pleased to add that this report was recognized with a merit award for research by the Boston Society for Landscape Architects. I congratulate the team responsible for producing the report, and hope that you will find it enjoyable and useful.

—John Piltzecker, Superintendent



The New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, designated in 1996, is one of the most recent additions to the National Park System. A maritime city located on Buzzard's Bay in southeastern Massachusetts, New Bedford served as home port to the largest American whaling fleet and the center of the nation's whaling industry during the nineteenth century. Despite the collapse of the whaling industry during the decades following the Civil War, New Bedford continues to symbolize whaling in the popular imagination. The park, a 34-acre tract that includes the New Bedford National Historic Landmark District established in 1966, encompasses the commercial core of the whaling community (Exhibit 1). As stated in the park's enabling legislation, New Bedford's historic resources provide unique opportunities for illustrating and interpreting the whaling industry's contribution to the economic, social, and environmental history of the United States.

Until 1765 settlement in the New Bedford area was limited to a small group of Plymouth Colony dissenters. In

that year Joseph Rotch, a Nantucket merchant and whaling agent, purchased a 10-acre plot of land—including much of what now comprises the national historical park—from Joseph Russell and transferred his Nantucket whaling operations to New Bedford. This would serve as the catalyst for the rapid expansion of the town's fledgling whaling industry. The town of New Bedford was incorporated in 1787. Despite physical depredations and major economic losses during the American War for Independence and the War of 1812, New Bedford overtook its rival port of Nantucket and served as the preeminent whaling port between roughly 1830 and 1860. The discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania in 1859 precipitated the decline of the whaling industry and spurred a new era of economic growth in textiles in the city of New Bedford, an industry that peaked in the 1920s and then itself experienced a period of rapid decline.

New Bedford's harbor continued to serve a large fishing fleet, but by the 1960s the city's decaying historic waterfront was threatened by a city-sponsored and federally-

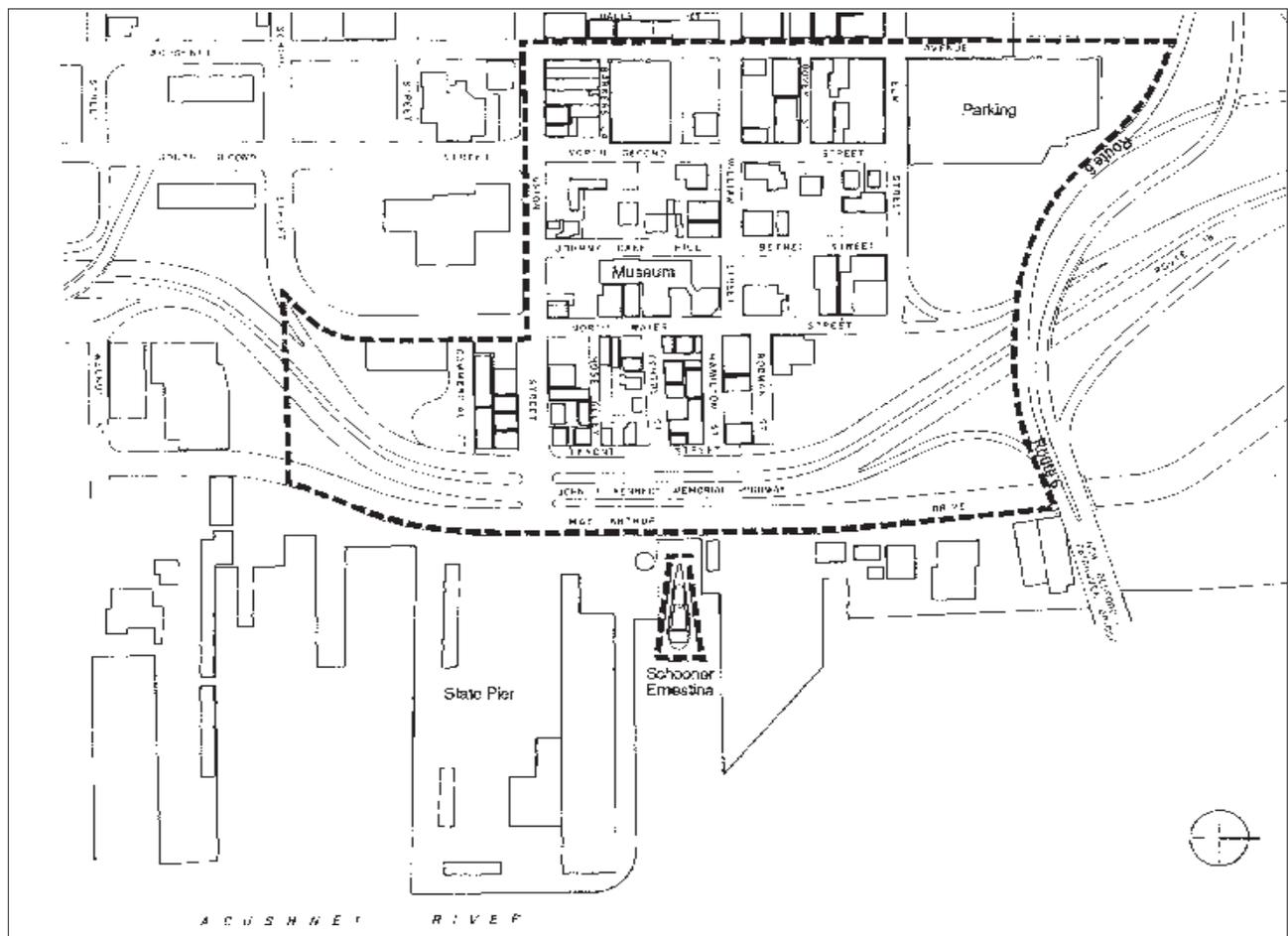


Exhibit 1. NPS Park Boundaries

funded urban renewal program. In 1962 the Waterfront Historic Area League, a local non-profit agency organized to preserve the buildings in the waterfront area, joined with the City of New Bedford and a number of other private organizations to develop a comprehensive plan for preserving, rehabilitating, and reusing architecturally and historically significant structures in the waterfront area. This public-private partnership helped establish the New Bedford National Historic Landmark District in 1966 and contributed to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management's 1988 Heritage State Park master plan. Conceived as a means to protect the city's historic resources and to contribute to the revitalization of the waterfront, the plan for an historical maritime park was stymied when the state cut funding for the Heritage State Park program.

In 1990 Congress, at the request of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, appropriated funds for a National Park Service Special Resource Study to consider the feasibility of creating a national park in New Bedford. The study, initiated in the fall of 1991 and completed in 1994, recommended New Bedford as the logical and most suitable location for the interpretation of whaling and the diversity of social and economic themes the industry embodies. Subsequently the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (PL 104-333) established the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park.

The purpose of this Cultural Landscape Report is to thoroughly document the physical history of the site and evaluate its significance and integrity as a basis for developing a management program for the landscape. It will aid the National Park Service and its partners in planning and developing the park's natural and cultural resources and in guiding future decisions regarding the property. The cultural landscape is urban in character, thus this study focuses on the streetscapes, views, plantings, and small-scale landscape features. While this report concentrates on the land within park boundaries, proximate areas—including the Central New Bedford, Merrill's Wharf, and County Street National Register Districts—are examined and analyzed to provide historic context and thematic continuity. Concurrent reports undertaken by the NPS Northeast Cultural Resources Center will provide an architectural inventory and conditions assessment of historic structures, as well as a functional plan of land-use activities and a preliminary survey of archeological resources. In combination, these reports will provide information on cultural resources to assist the park with developing a General Management Plan.

STUDY BOUNDARIES

The city of New Bedford is located on the southeastern coast of Massachusetts where the Acushnet River empties into Buzzards Bay (Exhibit 2). Situated in the heart of downtown New Bedford, the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park is bounded on the north by Kempton Street (Route 6), on the east by MacArthur Drive, on the south by School Street and Union Street, and on the west by Water Street and Acushnet Avenue. The waterfront is located to the east, just beyond MacArthur Drive where the fishing schooner Ernestina, a National Historic Landmark, is berthed at the New Bedford State Pier. Several National Register Districts are located in close proximity. The Merrill's Wharf National Register District is located to the southeast and contains the historic Bourne Counting House. The Central New Bedford National Register District, which contains many of the city's civic buildings, is located to the west. Further up the hill is the County Street National Register District, an area that once served as the residential seat of New Bedford's whaling elite. Located outside the study bound-

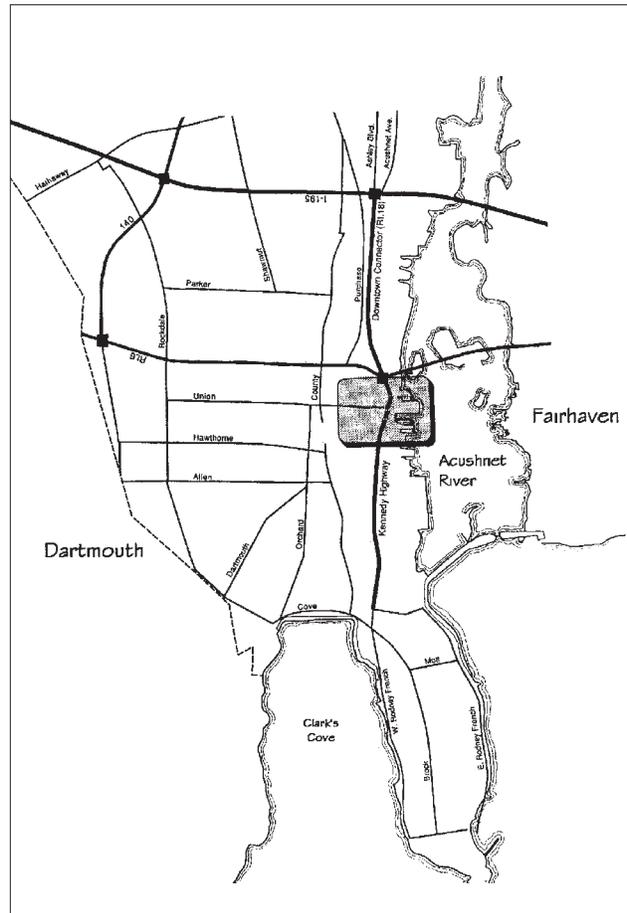


Exhibit 2. Study Area

aries, but frequently mentioned in the site history, are five properties listed in the park's enabling legislation in which the park may assist with interpretation and preservation: the southwest corner of the State Pier, Waterfront Park, the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum, the Wharfinger Building, and the Bourne Counting House (Exhibit 3).

#### METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

This cultural landscape report consists of four sections: a site history, documentation of existing conditions, an analysis of the site's historic significance and integrity, and a discussion of preliminary preservation issues. The site history is divided into chapters based on the periods of economic and social change in New Bedford. Research for this study, conducted between November 1997 and February 1998, consulted primary and secondary source materials from repositories in New Bedford and Boston. Information was gathered relating to the settlement, land ownership, and development of New Bedford, focusing on the rise and fall

of the lucrative whaling industry. The sources for the site history are listed in endnotes and in the bibliography. Sources and credits for illustrative materials are provided in a list of figures.

The existing appearance and condition of the landscape was examined between November 1997 and February 1998 and documented with photographs and text. In the analysis and evaluation section, the existing National Historic Landmark documentation prepared in 1975 is critiqued with respect to cultural landscape resources worthy of inclusion. This analysis focuses on the whaling era, recognizing that other periods of significance merit further investigation.

The final section of the report contains preliminary preservation issues relating to the integrity of the park's cultural landscape. Due to the short duration of the study, all themes and contexts could not be examined in depth. Further research and a more detailed analysis and understanding of the property is required before recommendations for treatment can be made. A list of topics meriting additional research is provided.

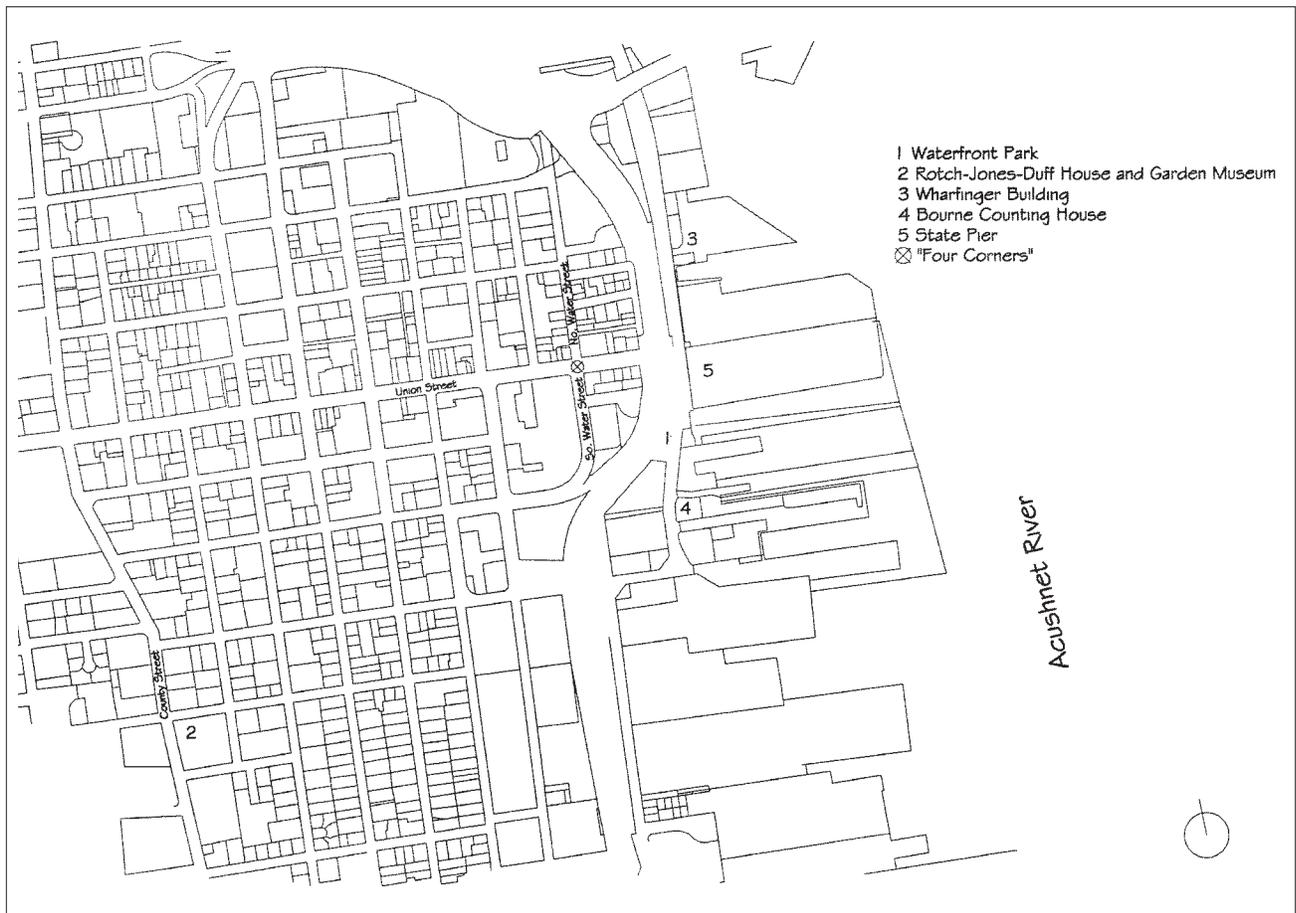


Exhibit 3. Additional Sites of Interest

## CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

1652	Wampanoag Federation conveyed land that included the area of New Bedford to 36 Plymouth Colony proprietors	1805	Three hundred dwelling houses in New Bedford
1662	Plymouth Colony listed seven men on its tax rolls for Old Dartmouth	1810	Rodman Candleworks established at William and Water Streets to produce spermaceti candles
1700s	Area sparsely settled, with series of large farms along waterfront; farmhouses built on crest of hill along the County road (now County Street)	1818	Catholic Mission established to minister to congregation mainly composed of Irish immigrants
1756	The Manufacture, first whaling vessel known to have been outfitted in New Bedford, sailed from Bedford village	1820	Construction began on Benjamin Rodman House on North Second Street
1760	Joseph Russell sold first village tract to shipwright John Louden	ca.1820	Sundial Building constructed at northwest corner of Union and Water Streets
1761	Louden built first house in Bedford village on the west side of South Water Street, at the head of Commercial Street	1821	Robeson Mansion built on William Street
1765	Seth Russell House constructed	1829	Marine Bank Building constructed at Second and Union Streets
1766	First schoolhouse in Bedford village built on Johnny Cake Hill	1830s	Portuguese immigration well underway
1767	Dartmouth, owned by Joseph Rotch and the first ship to be launched from Bedford village, embarked on its maiden voyage to London with a cargo of whale oil	1830-1	Superior Court House built at County and Court Streets
1778	British troops set fire to buildings and goods along the waterfront in retaliation for local privateering; four men were killed and losses estimated at \$500,000	1831	Double Bank Building constructed at William and Water Streets
1780	Slavery abolished in Massachusetts	1832	Seamen's Bethel dedicated by the New Bedford Port Society
1787	Charter granted for the incorporation of town of New Bedford William Rotch Jr. House (later known as the Mariner's Home) built at William and North Water Streets	1834	Construction began on United States Custom House at North Second and William Streets
1792	New Bedford [Quaker] Monthly Meeting separated from Dartmouth Monthly Meeting	1840	Railroad service to Taunton initiated
1795	First Congregational Church built in New Bedford in 1795 on the site of Merchants National Bank, at William and Purchase Streets	1844	Bourne Counting House constructed on Merrill's Wharf
1796	Toll bridge constructed between New Bedford and Fairhaven	1846	Charter granted to the New Bedford Steam Mill Company; production began at the mill at the foot of Hillman Street in November and discontinued after five years due to insufficient capital
1801	One hundred eighty five dwelling houses in New Bedford	1847	Acceptance of city charter and inauguration of New Bedford's first mayor, Abraham Hathaway Howland; city population was 16,000
1803	Bedford Bank incorporated and marine insurance companies formed shortly thereafter to protect whaling investments and maritime commerce	1849	Wamsutta Mills (incorporated April 1846) began producing cotton textiles
		1851	William Rotch Jr. Home moved to Johnny Cake Hill and Mariner's Home established as a boarding house for itinerant seamen
		1853	New Bedford Gas Company began distribution of illuminating gas New Bedford Institution for Savings constructed at the northeast corner of North Second and William Streets
		1857	Peak whaling year: 329 vessels engaged, representing a \$20,000,000 investment and a \$10,000,000 annual catch
		1859	Petroleum discovered in Pennsylvania Fire destroyed a large section of New Bedford's waterfront along Water Street

- 1861 United States Government purchased 24 idle New Bedford whaling vessels and scuttled the “Stone Fleet” in Charleston and Savannah harbor channels
- 1861-65 Several whaling vessels destroyed by Confederate cruisers during Civil War
- 1863 Fifty-two African American men enlist in the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Colored Infantry at the recruiting station on William Street
- 1867 Seamen’s Bethel rebuilt after fire
- 1869 City water system established
- 1871 Potomska mill constructed
- 1872 New Bedford and Fairhaven Street Railway Company incorporated  
Selmar Eggers Building constructed on the south side of William Street
- 1886 Electric lighting introduced in New Bedford
- 1890 Electric trolley cars replaced the horsecars of the New Bedford and Fairhaven Street Railway service
- 1894 Trolley system to Fall River established
- 1903 Old Dartmouth Historical Society organized
- 1910 Mill construction ceased
- 1916 Bourne Whaling Museum constructed with funds from Emily Howland Bourne on Johnny Cake Hill
- ca.1920 Twenty-eight textile establishments operated 70 cotton mills and employed more than 41,000 workers
- 1923 Zeitz Brothers opened the Zeiterion Theatre on Purchase Street
- 1924 The Wanderer embarks upon the last whaling expedition from New Bedford and sinks off the coast of Cuttyhunk Island
- 1925 John R. Manta returns with New Bedford’s last whaling catch  
Buses replaced trolley cars
- 1928 Textile workers strike shuts down New Bedford mills
- 1931 First commercial fish house established in New Bedford by Bill Eldridge
- 1933 Seven textile mills, including Whitman Mill, close
- 1937 Industrial Development Legion (IDL) formed to promote industrial expansion and adaptive reuse of commercial properties in New Bedford
- 1938 Hurricane causes more than \$5 million in damage, including damage to the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge, many fishing vessels, factories, and homes
- 1941 Goodyear Company plant on Orchard Street reopened for manufacture of pneumatic boats, bullet-sealing gas tanks, and barrage balloons.
- 1942 Long-time resident Alfred Joseph Gomes organized Cape Verdean Relief Fund to aid island residents during famine
- 1947 Replacement of trolley cars by motor buses completed
- 1952 Nashawena Mills liquidated and machinery sold to the Crescent Corporation of Fall River
- 1954 Hurricane Carol destroyed 15 fishing boats and damaged many more
- 1956 Greater New Bedford Industrial Foundation formed to encourage business relocation to the New Bedford area
- 1958 Wamsutta Mills relocated to South Carolina
- 1960 New Bedford Redevelopment Authority established  
Ferryboat service from New Bedford to Martha’s Vineyard discontinued
- 1961 New Bedford Industrial Park opened  
Bowsprit pulpit dedicated in Seaman’s Bethel
- 1962 Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) founded  
Construction of hurricane barrier begun by U.S. Army Corp of Engineers; completed in 1965
- 1965 WHALE and the New Bedford City Planning Department cosponsor an 18-month study for an historic and commercial revitalization plan in the Waterfront Historic District  
U.S. Immigration Act amended to remove barriers to immigration from southern and eastern Europe; nearly 500 immigrants, mostly from Portugal and the Cape Verde islands, entered New Bedford during the first three months after the amendment went into effect
- 1965-81 WHALE spent more than \$3 million to acquire, relocate and rehabilitate historic buildings
- 1966 Benjamin Rodman House restored
- 1971 Waterfront Historic District designated an Historic District
- 1972 Marine Bank Building and Rotch Counting House demolished as part of urban renewal and highway construction initiatives  
WHALE relocated Henry Beetle House to Centre Street
- 1975 WHALE purchased Andrew Robeson House and Bourne Warehouse  
Restoration of landscape features in the Waterfront Historic District begun
- 1976 Sidewalk reconstruction begun in the Waterfront Historic District

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|---|---|
| <p>1977 Gas explosion leveled the Macomber-Sylvia Building and O'Malley's Tavern on Union Street near Johnny Cake Hill; Sundial and Eggers Buildings were heavily damaged</p> <p>1978 WHALE relocated Andrew Robeson, Caleb Spooner, and Seth Russell Houses</p> <p>1979 Restored Rodman Candleworks reopened</p> <p>1981 Rotch-Jones-Duff House purchased by WHALE<br/>WHALE moved Haile Luther and Abijah Hathaway Houses to North Second Street</p> <p>1982 Republic of Cape Verde presented the schooner Ernestina to the American people<br/>Restored Zeiterion Theatre reopened</p> | <p>1984 Berkshire Hathaway, the last mill operating in New Bedford, closed its doors</p> <p>1985 Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum incorporated</p> <p>1986 Schooner Ernestina designated a National Historic Landmark</p> <p>1988 Massachusetts Heritage State Park created in New Bedford</p> <p>1996 New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park established</p> |
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Waterfront, mid-nineteenth century. Photograph courtesy of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society.

## I SITE HISTORY

EARLY SETTLEMENT, 1600 – 1755

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WHALING INDUSTRY, 1755 – 1778

THE WAR YEARS, 1778 – 1822

THE GOLDEN AGE OF WHALING, 1823 – 1857

THE INDUSTRIAL CITY, 1858 – 1914

THE WATERFRONT DISTRICT, 1915 – 1997



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## EARLY SETTLEMENT, 1600–1755

### NATIVE AMERICAN LAND USE

Before the arrival of Europeans in southern New England (current-day Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts) in the seventeenth century, an estimated population of 60,000 Native Americans lived in small villages throughout the area. Historical and archaeological evidence suggests that these early indigenous peoples were seasonally transient, alternating between coastal settlements during the summer seasons of food production and processing, and inland villages where forestlands afforded protection during harsh New England winters. Wampanoags (or Pokanokets), a federation of tribes that included the Acushnet, Apponeganset, and Acoaxset peoples, cultivated plots along the ocean coasts and estuaries for periods of eight to ten years, or until diminishing agricultural yields and soil nutrient depletion forced them to clear additional lands. The Wampanoags cleared land by slash-and-burn techniques and planted these fields with corn, squash, beans, and tobacco, building dwellings close to coastal fin- and shellfishing sites.<sup>1</sup> The extent of Native American cultivation and settlement in the New Bedford area is uncertain, although anecdotal historical evidence suggests that local deforestation was limited, creating “a patchwork pattern of cleared lands within forested lands” that was characterized by low population density and small-scale agricultural use.<sup>2</sup>

A network of Native American trails that crossed through the area would later serve as the basis for several colonial roads. One path, known to the colonists as the “Old Rhode Island Way” or “King’s Highway,” wound its way from Plymouth, passing the head of the river and following the line of Tarkiln Hill Road before continuing on through Westport to Newport. Smaller paths radiated from the main path and ran along the shore, connecting coastal waters with interior hunting grounds. When prospective European settlers visited the Acushnet watershed in the seventeenth century, they probably followed these trails to the highly desirable lands the Wampanoags had cleared along the shore.<sup>3</sup>

### EUROPEAN CONTACT AND COLONIAL SETTLEMENT

Known European visitation in southern New England dates to the early seventeenth century. In 1602 Bartholomew Gosnold set sail from Falmouth, England, in search of a more direct route to the colony of Virginia and to establish a plantation on the coast. Gosnold landed on the west end of an island he

called Elizabeth, later known as Cuttyhunk, where he built a fort and storehouse. From this settlement, Gosnold took several companies of men with him to explore the mainland. He was cordially received by the native peoples, who made him gifts of local products that included “skins of wild beasts, tobacco, sassafras roots, turtles, hemp...and such like things.” Gosnold favorably described the area as

the goodliest continent he had ever seen...replenished with fair fields and with fragrant flowers, also meadows, and hedged in with stately groves [and] furnished also with pleasant brooks and beautified with two main rivers.<sup>4</sup>

The charms of the area could not entice members of Gosnold’s company to remain at the Cuttyhunk settlement, as had been the original intent, and the crew set sail for England in June 1602. There is no direct evidence Gosnold visited the western banks of the Acushnet, yet the account of his exchange with the company of Wampanoags suggests there was some agricultural use of the area before European contact, though most of the land remained densely wooded.

The area called “Acushnet” or “Cushnea” by the Wampanoags was included within the boundaries of the Plymouth Colony, but remained free of European settlement for nearly 50 years after initial contact. In 1652 a group of Plymouth settlers purchased a large tract of land from Wesamequen (Massasoit), a Wampanoag chief, and his son Wamsutta (Alexander). The land, as described in the deed, included “the tracts of land lying three miles eastward from a river called Cushenagg, to a certain harbor called Acoaksett, to a flat rock on the westward side of the said harbor,” extending “from the sea upward to go so high that the English may not be annoyed by the hunting of the Indians, in any sort of their cattle.” In addition, Wesamequen and Wamsutta promised to remove all Native Americans “that do live in said tract” within a year. This agreement signaled the retreat of the local Wampanoag population into the wooded hinterland and the replacement of their seasonal settlements with the European colonists’ more permanent agricultural enclaves near the shore.<sup>5</sup>

Plymouth records of the 1652 conveyance show 34 shares divided among 36 owners, including such prominent figures as William Bradford and Captain Miles Standish, but John Cooke was the only original proprietor to settle his tract. The lands of Dartmouth, or Old Dartmouth, as the township incorporated in 1664 later came to be known, encompassed the

present towns of Dartmouth, Westport, New Bedford, and Fairhaven (Figure 1).

The first permanent white settlers in the area preceded the Wampanoag deed; Anthony Slocum, Ralph Russell, and his son John left Taunton in 1650 and built an iron forge and homes at Russell's Mills near the Pascamanset River.<sup>6</sup> The first settlement in the area was at the head of the Acushnet River, taking advantage of the current to power grist and saw mills. Thomas Pope built a grist mill on Sconticut Neck in 1652 and a log house near the "Forest path" that ran from Russell's garrison to the head of Clark's Cove in 1653.<sup>7</sup> The area along the west bank of the Acushnet River, though lacking the waterpower that had attracted early settlers to Smith's and Russell's Mills, lured colonists with farmland and a wooded slope.<sup>8</sup> There were probably one or two families living in the vicinity of what is now New Bedford 20 years after the Plymouth conveyance, but there is little evidence of further European settlement on the west side of the river before 1700. Growth in the New Bedford area was limited to the scattered farms and dwellings of 11 families who settled near the western shore of the inlet during the early 1700s.<sup>9</sup>

In the spring of 1675 antagonisms between the Wampanoags and the settlers from Plymouth devolved into a vicious conflict that came to be known as King Philip's War. Incensed by the settlers' disregard for the terms of the 1652 treaty and resentful of their loss of ancestral lands and hunting grounds, more than 1,000 Wampanoag warriors united under the leadership of Wesamequen's son Metacomet (Philip). Metacomet became sachem of the Wampanoags in 1662 and for many years maintained inviolate his father's treaty with the European colonists. The settlers' encroachment on Native American fishing and hunting grounds led many Narragansett and Nipmuck tribes to join with the Wampanoags. An attack on the Quaker settlement at Swansea, Rhode Island in July 1675 rapidly escalated into a conflict that embroiled central and southeastern New England. Some 52 of the 90 European settlements were attacked, 12 were completely destroyed, and close to 600 colonists were killed. The Native American alliance suffered even more heavily before the death of Metacomet brought a close to the war in August 1676. War parties destroyed farm and plantation dwellings, killing livestock and some inhabitants in the settlements at Middleborough, Taunton, Rehoboth, and Old Dartmouth. The sturdiest houses in Old Dartmouth township were chosen as garrisons and many settlers fled to John Russell's house at the head of the river, to John Cooke's house in Fairhaven, and to a third garrison on Palmer's Island.<sup>10</sup> A contemporaneous account

related that Dartmouth's "distresses required succour, [a] great part of the town being laid desolate and many of the inhabitants killed; the most of Plymouth forces were ordered thither."<sup>11</sup> There were 30 houses destroyed in Old Dartmouth and the extent of damage sustained during the conflict was sufficient to merit the suspension of taxes for three years. An order passed by the Plymouth Court in October 1675 required,

the rebuilding and resettlement thereof, that they so order it as to live compact together, at least in each village as they may be in a capacity both to defend themselves from the assault of an enemy, and the better to attend the public worship of God and the ministry of the word of God, whose carelessness to obtain and attend unto we fear may have been a provocation of God thus to chastise their contempt of his gospel.<sup>12</sup>

The court's instructions reflect not only the dispersion of dwellings within the early settlement, but also the lack of a meeting house or public place of assembly in the early township. Despite such invective, the colonial farms of Old Dartmouth remained scattered for the next 100 years.

As the Plymouth directive suggests, many of the early settlers in Old Dartmouth were from among the Colony's Non-Conformist population that included Quakers and Baptists. Plymouth's laws regarding the treatment of dissenters and obligatory contributions to the established Congregational church encouraged many Non-Conformists to migrate to the frontier communities of Duxbury, Middleborough, Taunton, and Old Dartmouth. By 1690 Old Dartmouth's population consisted largely of Quakers, who built the first Friends' meeting house in 1699 on the site of the present Apponegansett Meeting House. In the ensuing decade, this "frugal and industrious people, busily engaged in agriculture," began to settle along the shores of the Acushnet River.<sup>13</sup> The contentious relationship between the residents of Old Dartmouth and Plymouth Colony, evident in the 1675 directive and in subsequent disagreements regarding taxation for the maintenance of ministers, may have directed local orientation away from the Puritan settlement towards confraternal settlements at Providence and Nantucket.<sup>14</sup>

In 1711 Benjamin Crane surveyed the land of Old Dartmouth township and apportioned it into 800-acre tracts. Crane's survey map depicts approximately 30 tracts in the New Bedford area. The land between the "Cove" and the "Head of the River" was divided among seven families: Allen,

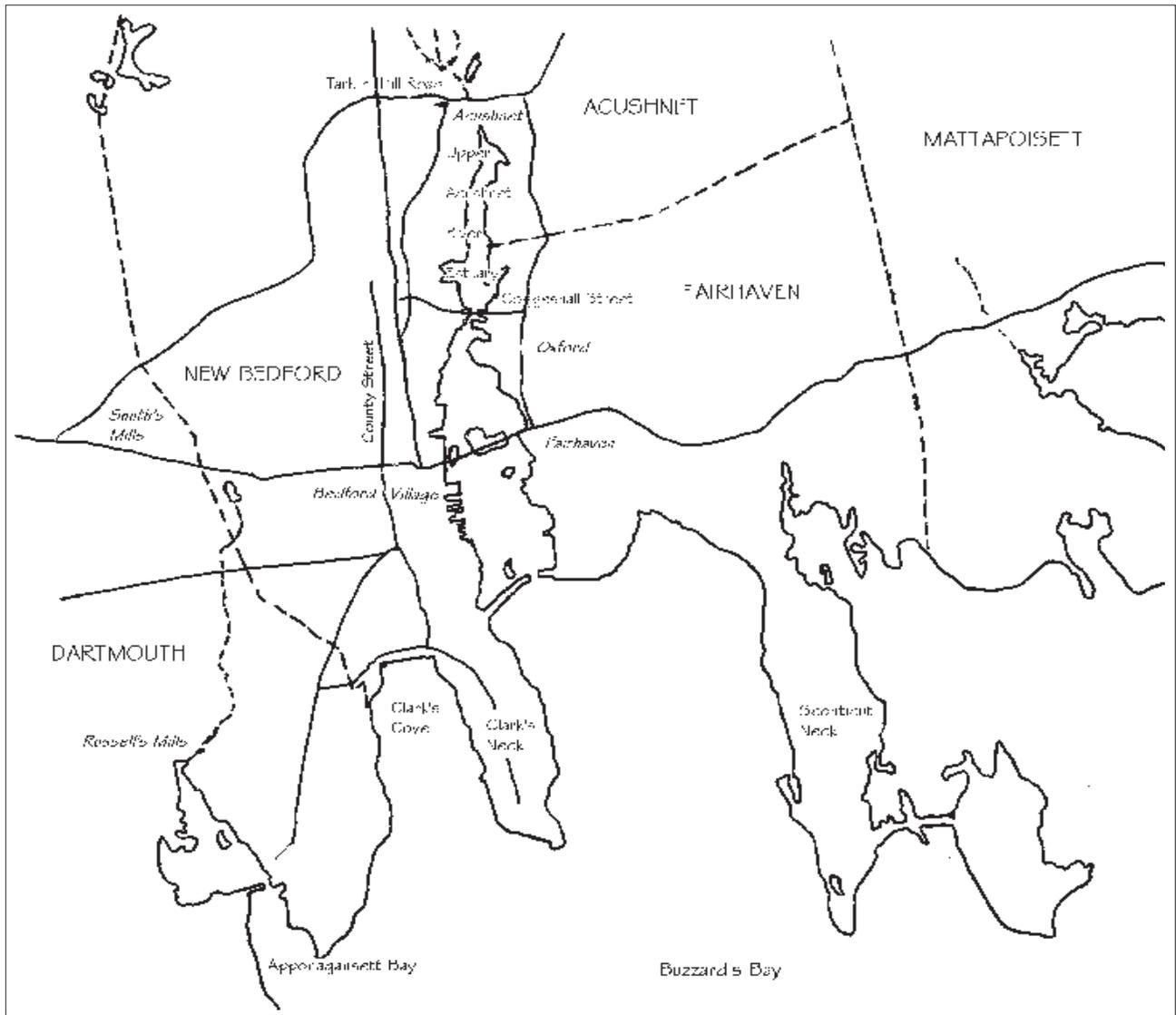


Figure 1: Map of New Bedford Harbor area. The approximate locations of early settlements, indicated in italics, are shown within current town and city boundaries.

Russell, Kempton, Willis, Peckham, Hathaway, and Wrightington. These families established productive farms with extensive fields, pastures, and woodlands bounded by stone walls. Their large farmhouses lined the west side of the "County road" and their farmlands extended eastward to the river (Figure 2).<sup>15</sup>

"County road," New Bedford's earliest road, passed through these farms and followed part of the "King's Highway" from Plymouth, circumventing the area that would become New Bedford's commercial center, and continuing along traces of a Native American path from the "Head of the River" to Clark's Cove before cutting westward towards Newport. County Street, as the road later came to be known, was from the outset a residential thoroughfare lined by the

gambrel-roofed homes of some of the earliest settlers.<sup>16</sup> As early as 1684, the town meeting had chosen Seth Pope to report to the court at Plymouth "concerning the manner of laying out of the roadway."<sup>17</sup> Additional paths, or "driftways," radiated from the main thoroughfare, linking lands that were cultivated and settled in the early eighteenth century. A 1704 account describes such a path:

laid out [as] a drift way to go down through the lots on the West side of Cushenit river, to turn out of the Country road a little to the westward of the first brook on the west side of the bridge over Cushenit river where is now and so in the old path till it comes



Figure 2: Map showing the property lines of early farms in the New Bedford area.

to a marked red oke bush and then to turn out on the west side of the old way and so to go along in the new path above the new fenced land till it comes to the land of Stephen Peckum, and then over the bridge in his pasture and then south-westerly till it comes into the path and thence along the path till it comes into the way that comes from Clark's Cove.<sup>18</sup>

Smaller paths traversed the tracts, sometimes leading towards the shore, but County Street anchored the scattered farms along the west bank of the estuary to the nearby enclaves at Acushnet village and Russell's Mills.

Among the residents who settled along County Street was Joseph Russell, son of the same John Russell who built the iron forge at Russell's Mills. Russell built a home at what is now the corner of County and South Streets and farmed the surrounding lands. His son Joseph settled nearby, building a house along the road near the present Walnut Street. In turn, his son, Joseph Russell III built a plain wooden house near the current intersection with William Street and cut a path that led from his gate to the shore and, more importantly, toward the founding of both the village of New Bedford and its early whaling industry.<sup>19</sup>

## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WHALING INDUSTRY, 1755–1778

### BEDFORD VILLAGE

At the middle of the eighteenth century, the township of Old Dartmouth remained an aggregate of small hamlets and scattered farmsteads. In 1755 the village of Acushnet at the mouth of the Acushnet River was the largest settlement in Bristol County; the lands now occupied by New Bedford were still largely forested and the few farmhouses in the area remained at some distance from the river.<sup>20</sup> Around 1760 Joseph Russell III drew up a plan for a village on the lower portion of his property near the shore of the Acushnet River. A cart path led from the red gate of Russell's farm on County Street to the waterfront, where Russell outfitted schooners destined for short whaling voyages in the Atlantic. This rough and stony road, originally called King Street and ultimately known as Union Street, served as the main thoroughfare in the village.<sup>21</sup> Spring, School, and Walnut Streets ran parallel to it and eight cross streets stretched westward from the river. Russell purportedly drew a formal map of the intended street system and divided the land into carefully surveyed plots.<sup>22</sup>

In 1760 John Loudon purchased the first acre-plot from Russell just south of the "Four Corners," the area at the intersection of Union and Water Streets that would become the center of village activity. Loudon, a caulker from Pembroke, had settled near the shore in order to establish himself as a shipbuilder.<sup>23</sup> On his lot, which extended from the "first street" (now Water Street) to the river, he erected a house during the following year. In the spring of 1761 Benjamin Taber purchased land near Centre Street and constructed a workshop for boat-building and block-making, where he crafted the first whaleboat built in the village. Four years later Taber purchased a nearby residence on Prospect Street built by Gideon Mosher (near the present intersection of Union and North Water). Carpenters, blacksmiths, and other maritime craftsmen began to join the small settlement, establishing workshops and residences in close proximity to the shore. John Allen, a house carpenter, built a house just south of the Mosher building in 1761 and Elnathan Sampson, a blacksmith from Wareham, purchased land south of Loudon's lot during the following year.

Land was left for "ways or streets" along Union and Water streets. The present configuration of streets between County Street and the river barely deviates from Russell's original grid of perpendicular intersections.<sup>24</sup> Along the waterfront were



Figure 3: Joseph Russell House, intersection of County and William Streets, ca. 1810. This simple farmhouse, built by Russell in 1790 and passed on to his son Abraham, was moved from the site to make way for the construction of the Morgan mansion in 1823.

situated a single wharf and tryhouse, a simple shed that housed the pots for rendering whale blubber into oil. Commercial and residential development followed and, by 1766, the land north of Union Street as far west as the present Acushnet Avenue had been parceled and sold. Houses were built and the primitive roads widened through use. However the small cluster of buildings along the western shore of the Acushnet barely encroached upon inland meadows and forests.<sup>25</sup> Russell's fledgling village was only tenuously linked to the scattered farmhouses along County Street where he and other farmers, including Caleb Russell, Ephraim Kempton, and Samuel Willis, had settled (Figure 3).

The catalyst for town development was, of course, the early whaling industry. New Englanders had engaged in coastal whaling since the last decade of the seventeenth century and Nantucket emerged as an early leader in the nascent industry. The first organized whaling from Nantucket was shore-whaling, using techniques probably learned from Long Island whalers. A crew of six or more rowed out in a whaleboat upon sighting a whale and threw a harpoon to secure it to the boat. When the whale tired, the crew rowed abreast, killed it with sharpened wrought iron lances, and towed the carcass ashore. Processing took place on shore, where the blubber was "tried" into oil and bones were cleaned. Whale products were then sold locally or marketed more broadly by commissioned and speculative agents.<sup>26</sup>

The amount of oil a whale produced varied according to species, size, and season. Early New England whalers pursued the Biscay or "right" whale, but turned to the sperm whale, a notoriously ornery yet highly valued prey,



Figure 4: Early map showing original purchasers of lots in New Bedford. Joseph Rotch's "Ten Acre Lot" figures prominently in the center. Russell's tryhouse was located near the shore, at the foot of the long row of buildings to the south (left) of Burial Point. The map lists the three other names by which Russell's cart path was known before the town settled upon the current Union Street. The Four Corners are located at the intersection of Union and Water Streets, the first street in from the river.

in the early eighteenth century. Sperm oil was superior to all others, burning cleanly and brightly and needing relatively little refining. Spermaceti, a light liquid wax contained within the sperm whale's head cavity, was used to make fine candles and mechanical lubricants. The pursuit of sperm whales brought a transition in whaling methods. Sloops ventured forth on longer voyages, whaling in the "deep" for four to six weeks, or until two whales were killed and sectioned. While "cutting-in," the process by which blubber was removed from the carcasses, occurred at sea, oil was tried out on shore until mid-century, when trypots were increasingly installed on board. By the time New Bedford whaling began, most shore whaling had ceased.<sup>27</sup>

New Bedford whaling, following Nantucket's early example, was limited to Atlantic expeditions along the coast and rarely proceeded beyond Cape Hatteras. Russell had engaged

in whaling as early as 1755. Within a decade, he partly owned four whaling sloops of 40 to 60 tons that sailed along the Atlantic coast on short expeditions.<sup>28</sup> Voyages were made during warm weather and rarely endured beyond six to eight weeks. Little processing occurred onboard; the bodies were either towed back to shore or blubber was removed from the whale carcass and stored in hogshead casks.<sup>29</sup> Returning ships were brought to the Centre Street landing and the whale blubber was drawn by teams of oxen to a tryhouse that Russell had established nearby.<sup>30</sup> When Russell joined with Isaac Howland to establish the village's first candle manufactory in 1768 near the present corner of Centre and Front Streets, the as-yet-unnamed settlement began to distinguish itself with the processing facilities necessary to succeed in New England's thriving and competitive whale-fishery. While the first whaling vessel known to have been fitted out in New Bedford, the *Manufacture*, sailed in April 1756 and returned with its catch three weeks later, the majority of New

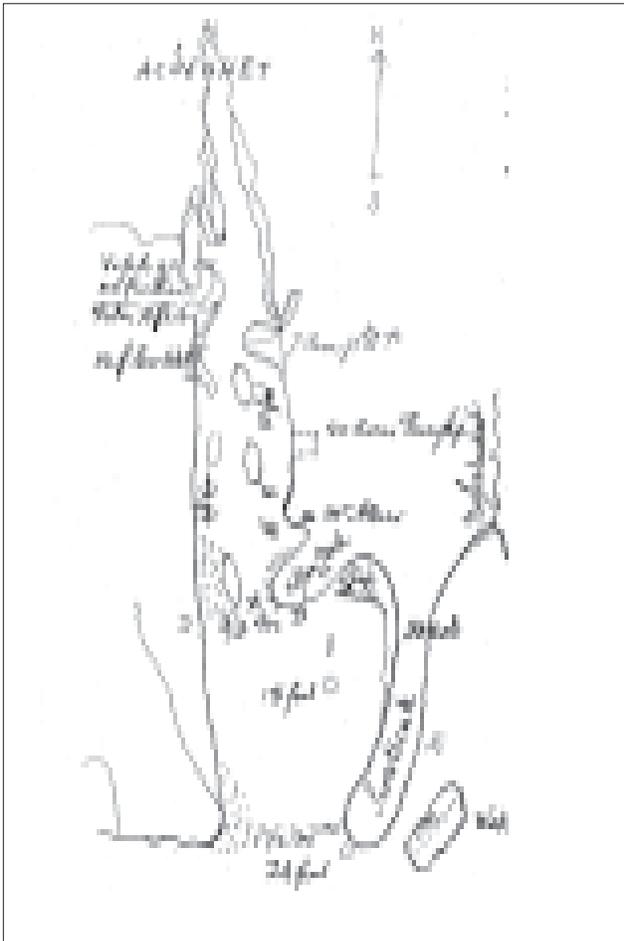


Figure 5: Sketch of Acushnet estuary made by Ezra Stiles in June 1762. Only one structure is pictured in the area of Bedford village.



Figure 6: Topographical map of Bedford harbor with handwritten notes by Major John André, 1778. Early development in Bedford village is depicted along Union and Water Streets. George Claghorn's wharf is depicted near the Kempton settlement, a small cluster of buildings to the north.

Bedford whalers were fitted out in Nantucket, the leading American whaling port during the colonial era.<sup>31</sup>

In May 1765 Joseph Rotch, a prominent Nantucket whaling merchant, purchased a large plot from Russell and began the gradual transfer of his family's holdings to Old Dartmouth over the next three years (Figure 4). Rotch, whose "Ten Acre Lot" extended from the river nearly to the present Pleasant Street, made this initial purchase following the division of the family firm in 1764, a move "dictated by sound business judgment" and calculated to increase the family's already preeminent position in the whaling industry.<sup>32</sup> The settlement on the west bank of the Acushnet offered a deep and well-protected harbor, an advantage over Nantucket's shallow harbor as longer voyages and onboard processing demanded larger whaling vessels. By August 1765 Rotch had purchased from Russell an additional 19 plots, six of which were "water lots" with harbor frontage.<sup>33</sup>

To Joseph Rotch is credited the capital and expertise that led to the rapid development and remarkable success of the whaling industry and, consequently, the burgeoning growth of the village:

Under the mighty impetus given by this energetic business man, with his abundant means and skillful methods, the wheels of industry began to move. Houses and shops multiplied, highways were opened, wharves were built, the population increased, and the river front became the center of an active business.<sup>34</sup>

Many craftsmen, tradesmen, and mariners had accompanied the transfer of the firm of Joseph Rotch & Son to the shores of the Acushnet in 1769.<sup>35</sup> Bedford village, named by Rotch as a compliment to Joseph Russell (who shared



Figure 7: The Birth of the Whaling Industry, by William Wall, 1853.

the surname of the Duke of Bedford), grew with this influx of Nantucket whalemens.<sup>36</sup> Rotch launched the first locally built whaling vessel from Fairhaven in 1767, introducing a fleet of larger vessels that ranged further offshore for longer periods of time and initiating a lucrative ship-building industry to complement Bedford's whale-fishery. By 1771 the valuation list of the fledgling village listed a candleworks, warehouses, a ropeworks, several wharves, and various support industries, including blacksmith shops, cooperages, and a sail loft.<sup>37</sup> The local fleet consisted of more than 50 whaling vessels in 1774 and by 1775 there were close to 75 vessels and 1,000 seamen engaged in the town's flourishing maritime industries.<sup>38</sup> In 1777 Bedford's whaling expeditions reached the West Indies, the Bay of Mexico, and the northeastern coast of South America.<sup>39</sup> By 1780 there were at least six wharves along the Bedford shoreline.<sup>40</sup>

The rapid rate of development following the Rotches' settling in Bedford village is evident through a compar-

ison of two early maps of the village. A crude map drawn by the Reverend Ezra Stiles during his visit to the area in 1762 reveals a single structure, most likely Russell's tryhouse, along the western shore of the Acushnet (Figure 5).<sup>41</sup> The topographical map of Major John André, an officer in the British expedition of 1778, depicts extensive development in the intervening 12 years (Figure 6). More than two dozen buildings line Union and Water Streets, six more are clustered just north of the village core, and more than two dozen structures, including Joseph Russell's grist mill at the head of Union Street, are scattered along County Street. The clustering of buildings near the shore and the three wharves projecting into the estuary reflect the importance of the maritime industries and its impact upon the eighteenth-century built environment along the Acushnet.

André's map also provides insight into the spatial relations of Bedford village's early inhabitants. The concentra-

tion of structures along Russell's roads depicts the increasing importance of the waterfront in the local economy, while the competing axis of development along County Street suggests the maritime industries had not yet completely eclipsed agricultural production. The northern cluster of buildings along the shore probably represents the rival settlement that developed on Kempton farmland with the sale of the first parcel of land near what would become the corner of Maxfield and Second Streets in 1772. George Claghorn, builder of the USS Constitution, established a shipyard near the present intersection of North and Second Streets shortly thereafter. The line between Kempton and Russell properties served as an effective boundary between the two hamlets, delineating limits of a largely Congregational community of shipwrights to the north and of the village dominated by Quaker whaling and maritime agents to the south.<sup>42</sup> These patterns of settlement reveal distinct, yet interrelated, populations; along with the growth of Bedford village and the whaling industry, their civic, social, and economic integration would be mirrored in the extended network of streets radiating from the "Four Corners" area.

Though painted in 1853, William Wall's *The Birth of the Whaling Industry* provides both a nostalgic image of the early settlement and a metaphoric portrait of the growing community (Figure 7). Depicted are the operations at Joseph Russell's tryhouse, a rather simple shed situated along a relatively unimproved and rocky, forested shore. A number of men labor around the tryhouse, processing the blubber, coopering a barrel, and repairing a whaleboat. In the center foreground, a Native American is seated with finished goods for sale or barter, while "further on, seated upon the frame of a grindstone, and giving directions to a colored man...is seen in his broad-brimmed hat and Friendly coat, the founder of New Bedford and the father of her whale-fishery, Joseph Russell."<sup>43</sup> In the coming decades, under the "Friendly" leadership of a Quaker merchant elite, the whaling industry would draw an increasingly numerous and diverse population to a town whose physical development and character mirrored the complexities and contradictions of a wealthy maritime society.

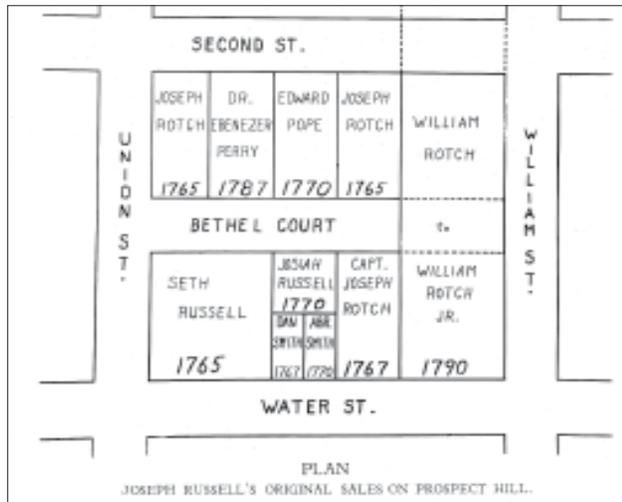


Figure 8: Diagram of early proprietors on Rotch's Hill. Joseph Rotch's first home in New Bedford was located on the plot conveyed to his grandson, William Rotch Jr., in 1790. Seth Russell's second house, constructed on his southeastern corner plot, was the only building on the hill that survived the British invasion of 1778.

## THE WAR YEARS, 1778–1822

### WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

In 1765 five houses, a blockmaker's shop, and a cordwainer's shed lined Water Street, a tryhouse stood on Centre Street, and a few other shops and buildings rounded out the settlement on the western shore of the Acushnet. At the beginning of the American War for Independence nearly a decade later, Bedford remained a small village of primarily low wooden structures. Commercial and residential buildings were intermingled along Union Street, although whaling-related industries and commerce were located closer to the waterfront and along Water Street within one-quarter mile of Union Street. Residences, surrounded by gardens and outbuildings, lined the street as it crept westward up the hill.

There was little social segregation within the village; early disparities in wealth were evident in the relative size of residences, rather than their location. Joseph Rotch, the most prominent member of the community, built his first dwelling house at the northwest corner of Union and First (later Bethel) Streets, but moved to a more substantial structure nearby within a few years. This three-story home, considered "the most stately structure in Bedford village," stood at the southwest corner of the present Water and William Streets in close proximity to the waterfront. From his home on "Rotch's Hill," as the promontory came to be known during the eighteenth



Figure 9: Captain Cornelius Grinnell House, ca. 1900. Built by Grinnell in 1769, this brick house was one of the few structures left standing on Water Street after the destruction of the business district by the British in 1778. The house is no longer standing.

century, Rotch could monitor operations along his wharf at the end of Hamilton Street.<sup>44</sup> Fifteen additional houses lined Water Street, including the comparatively simple gambrel-roofed homes of his nephew, Captain Joseph Rotch, the blacksmith Abraham Smith, and other artisans engaged in whaling and its support industries (Figure 8). In 1778, when a company of British soldiers marched down Union Street to take revenge on the village for the crimes of local privateers, they found "a hive of industry, a store-house of treasure" on these streets lined with dwellings, shops, and warehouses.<sup>45</sup>

From the outset of the American colonies' struggle for independence, Bedford village suffered enormous financial losses. In 1773 two Rotch-owned ships, the *Dartmouth* and the *Beaver*, were embroiled in the controversy over Parliamentary actions.<sup>46</sup> After discharging cargoes of whale and sperm oil in London, the Rotch ships were among the vessels recommended to and selected by the East India Company to transport tea to Boston, a cargo jettisoned by "Indians" during the Tea Party on 16 December 1773.<sup>47</sup> While the Rotch ships escaped from Boston Harbor unharmed, the Continental Congress' approval of a non-importation policy and the escalation of the conflict during the following year further curtailed Bedford village's role in both mercantile shipping and whale-fishery.

Bedford's maritime economy languished during the war years, but the devastation of both the village and the whaling industry by the British invasion on 5 September 1778 was catastrophic. While the strong Quaker discipline of Bedford's

leading merchant families limited local engagement in privateering, Bedford harbor had served as a port of call for privateering fleets from Boston and Providence. In retaliation for the village's role in storing seized goods and the artillery and ammunition dispatched by the Massachusetts government, an expeditionary force of close to 5,000 men under the command of Major General Gray landed near Clark's Cove. The troops marched up County Street and then along Union Street to the waterfront, laid waste to most of the town and 70 ships in the harbor, and then proceeded to the abandoned garrison at Sconticut Neck, where they camped before embarking for Martha's Vineyard.<sup>48</sup> Although their intent had been to cripple the port and put an end to privateering, the fire, once ignited, spread indiscriminately among the town's wooden commercial and residential structures. In all, 11 houses, 20 shops, and one ropewalk were reduced to ashes (Figure 9). Damage, estimated at 105,000 pounds, included the destruction of vessels, wharves, and storehouses—in short, many of the resources necessary to whaling. No whaling vessels left New Bedford for the next seven years.<sup>49</sup> This abrupt end to the town's prosperity would come to characterize a series of crises in the single-industry economies that pervaded much of New Bedford's history.

#### THE INTERWAR YEARS

At the end of the War for Independence in 1783, Bedford village had barely begun to recover from its catastrophic wartime losses. Yet with peace came the rapid rebuilding of the village. The town of New Bedford was established as an independent municipality upon its severance from Old Dartmouth in 1787.<sup>50</sup> During the first year of incorporation the town assessed both property and poll taxes for the "repair and amendment of highways." In the following year sections of North Water Street, Middle Street, and North Second Street were added to the public road system.<sup>51</sup> Shops, warehouses, and wharves were again active in outfitting vessels for merchant and whaling voyages, although only one ship and a few brigs sailed from New Bedford during its first year of incorporation.<sup>52</sup>

The whaling industry underwent substantial changes, due mostly to the exigencies of war, before attaining a stable and formidable place in the American maritime economy. Within 50 years of American independence, whaling became an almost exclusively American industry, largely through the efforts of New Bedford agents and, in particular, those of Joseph and William Rotch Sr. The Rotches, who were known and respected in the international centers of maritime com-

merce, launched an effort to control the whaling industry in the decades immediately following the British surrender at Yorktown in 1781.<sup>53</sup> The *Rebecca*, a 175-ton whaling vessel built in New Bedford in 1785 and partially financed by the Rotches, was the first American ship to round Cape Horn. She set sail in September 1791 and returned in February 1793 with a full cargo of oil, initiating the regular departure of New Bedford whaling vessels bound for the fishing grounds of the Pacific.<sup>54</sup> By 1800 New Bedford whaling had recovered from the effects of the war and challenged Nantucket for the lead in the industry.

Despite this early and promising recovery, the future of New Bedford's whaling industries remained uncertain and both the physical and financial growth of the town were somewhat curtailed during the first three decades of American independence. The expansion of the New Bedford fleet between 1793 and 1807 coincided with a drastically increased demand for whale oil and bone: Anglo-French hostilities during France's Directorate and Napoleonic eras had reduced the number of European vessels employed in the industry and thus constricted supply of whale products. This supply shortage, together with an increasing American demand for whale products—including state and federal contracts to supply sperm oil for lighthouses—engendered a highly profitable market for American whalers. New Bedford vessels also flourished as neutral carriers. Though the deterioration of Franco-American relations grounded most of the New Bedford fleet by 1797, the Rotch firms continued to operate, producing candles using stored oil and hemp cordage at their ropewalks. The industry began to revive with the temporary cessation of European hostilities after 1801, but was again threatened by the French and British blockade declarations in 1806 and the confiscation of American ships. The Embargo Act of 1807, which prohibited American shipping to foreign ports and severely restricted coastal trade, crippled New Bedford's maritime economy.<sup>55</sup>

While a decade of conflict had restricted access to lucrative French and English markets, the reconstruction of the town continued and New Bedford grew steadily. The *Medley* (or *New Bedford Marine Journal*), New Bedford's first newspaper, was issued in November 1792 from the printing offices of John Spooner near Rotch's wharf. Beginning in 1798, Abraham Shearman Jr. issued the weekly *Columbia Courier* from his office at the Four Corners.<sup>56</sup> Among the commercial establishments listed in early advertisements were purveyors of fine imported and domestic goods, dry goods and cloths, books and stationery, and maritime merchandise. In 1785 the Society of Friends constructed a meeting house, New



Figure 10: Corner of Water and William Streets, 1805. In the center, behind the hill of Burial Point, stand the Rotch and Rodman mansions. The latter, flanked by two large trees, is situated at the head of Rodman Street. Located eastward along the line of the street are two buildings belonging to William Rotch, the easternmost being the warehouse at the corner of Rodman and Front Streets. The building with three stacks, on the left, is Joseph Russell's oil works. Gilbert Russell's first homestead is just west of this structure. Rotch's home, moved to Bethel Street and remodeled as the Mariner's Home in 1851, is the only building pictured that is still standing.

Bedford's first house of worship, on the east side of Acushnet Avenue between School and Water Streets. Two years later Abraham Russell established a stagecoach line to Boston. New Bedford's first bank, the Bedford Bank, was established on Water Street in 1803. All but four lots along Union Street as far west as Eighth Street had been conveyed by 1800 and by 1815, only six parcels remained in the area bounded by Union, Walnut, and County Streets and the river. The Medley informed the public that "the street beginning at the four corners and running west is distinguished and known by the name Union street, the street running north from said four corners, North Street, the street running east, Prospect street, and that running south, Water street."<sup>57</sup> Such formalized nomenclature perhaps reflected a need shared by New Bedford's inhabitants to recognize and clarify the public spaces and thoroughways along the increasingly frequented waterfront.

Among the growing numbers of residents in New Bedford during its first decade of incorporation was William Rotch Sr., the eldest son of Joseph Rotch (Appendix 1). William Rotch had acquired the family property upon his father's death in 1784, but relocated his residence and operations to the town only after the events of the French Revolution had forced him to transfer his business interests from France back to the United States in 1795.<sup>58</sup> Rotch built the "Mansion House," a two-story, Federal-style brick structure near the Four Corners, at the northeast corner of Union and Second Streets, with gar-

dens extending north to Market (later William) Street.<sup>59</sup> His father Joseph had occupied a house at the corner of Union and First Streets until his death, and other members of the family erected homes nearby on "Rotch's Hill." Around 1787 William Rotch Jr. constructed a house at the southeast corner of William and Water Streets on the foundations of the Joseph Rotch home destroyed by the British in 1778. His three-story mansion offered an unobstructed view of the harbor and boasted gardens that extended westward to North Second Street.<sup>60</sup> Samuel Rodman, who married the sister of William Rotch Jr., built an equally imposing residence just north of his brother-in-law's property. Rodman left Nantucket in 1798 to take over the affairs of William Rotch & Sons at the firm's counting house near the corner of Front and Hamilton Streets, a short walk from his home at the top of the hill. These two Water Street mansions dominated early viewsheds of the harbor (Figure 10).

The proximity of the Rotch-Rodman homes, New Bedford's three most prominent estates, to the waterfront district is a telling example of the nature of the town's development at the turn of the century, illustrating a certain character and image that is most graphically revealed in William Wall's painting *New Bedford in 1810* (Figure 11). In the foreground, at the northwest corner of Union and Water Streets, stands a large commercial building housing a cobbler's shop, a general merchandise store, and, on the Water Street side, as



Figure 11: The Four Corners, at Union and Water Street, 1810.

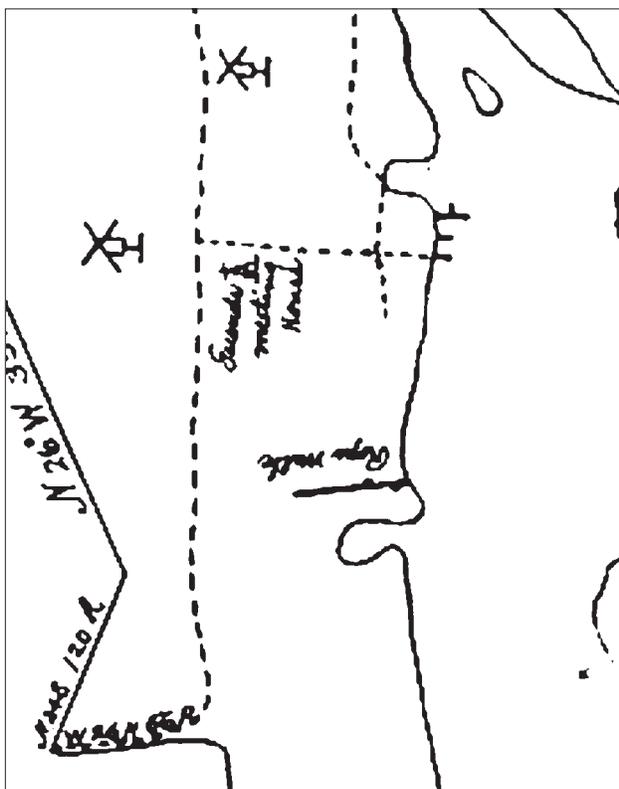


Figure 12: Map of New Bedford, 1795. Abraham Russell's windmill stood at the corner of County and Union Streets, while a second mill is pictured to the north, on Kempton land.

indicated by the striped pole, a barber's shop.<sup>61</sup> Barnabas Russell built the single-story market shed to the west in 1795. Further along the road are a one-story shoe shop, a dwelling house, and a grocery store in the three-story building at the corner of Union and Bethel Streets.

Rotch's Mansion House stands behind a row of Lombardy poplars along the north side of Union Street and a wooden fence that surrounds the property. In the background, extending northward along Rotch's Hill, are more dwelling

houses and the Friends' school. At the right edge are pictured the various businesses that lined Water Street northward towards the estates of William Rotch Jr. and Rodman. Viewed from the vantage of the Nash Hotel, the painting's foreground presents a portrait of New Bedford society: Quaker merchants, dressed in their traditional garb of wide-brim hats, knee breeches, and long coats share the streets with artisans, African American residents, and a farmer and his team.<sup>62</sup> At the very center of the Four Corners, the town's financial nexus, sits William Rotch in his "leathern conveniency," an imported chaise that may have been the only private carriage in the town at the time.<sup>63</sup>

Abraham Shearman contributes to the image of a compact, well-ordered, largely pedestrian community with his description of the town in 1802:

The village of New Bedford stands in a pleasant situation...it lies north and south, upon a gradual ascent from the water, and exhibits a pleasing view of the harbor. The streets (three running north and south, and twelve east and west) are of good width, and cross each other at right angles. The houses, which are with few exceptions built of wood, are in general well finished, and possess an air of neatness.<sup>64</sup>

Yet neither Wall's nostalgic portrait nor Sherman's contemporaneous praise convey the vigor of daily life and the rapid growth in New Bedford during the first decade of the nineteenth century. In 1801 the town included 185 dwelling houses, two meeting houses and two schoolhouses (one of each for the Society of Friends and the Congregational community), an almshouse, a small market house, a candleworks, two cordage manufactories, and various shops housing maritime industries. In less than five years, New Bedford boasted 300 homes, three ropewalks, seven wharves, and nearly 100 ships, 12 of which were whaling vessels.<sup>65</sup> New Bedford's population had doubled from 500 to 1,000 residents between 1775 and 1795. By 1800 a four-fold increase in the town's population reflected the substantial growth of whaling and its support industries.<sup>66</sup>

The rate of growth in New Bedford is best illustrated in the expansion of the street system. Development in the town generated an increasing demand for new thoroughfares, the extension of accepted roads, and connections to adjoining villages.<sup>67</sup> A 1795 map of New Bedford shows buildings lining Union Street from the shore to County Street (Figure 12). The two small spurs set perpendicular to the main thoroughfare comprise Water Street. Intermittent rows of buildings line

both sides of the street, which extends northward beyond the Kempton settlement and southward toward William Rotch's ropewalks.<sup>68</sup>

By 1800 First and Second Avenues had crossed the three parallel thoroughfares of Spring, School, and Walnut Streets.<sup>69</sup> Acushnet Avenue, which originally was established at "the Fourth street from the river" by Russell in 1764 and later renamed Third Street, ran from Main to Spring Streets in 1796. By 1815 the street extended south beyond the Job Eddy estate to the present intersection at Madison Street.<sup>70</sup> An arch was constructed in 1807 to bridge the obstruction of William Rotch's ropeworks and the street then extended as far as South Street. Just north of the Four Corners, William Rotch directed the construction of the first bridge between New Bedford and Fairhaven in 1796. The lower spur of Bridge Street soon linked the Fairhaven bridge to Water Street and Middle Street, the path that had originally bisected the Kempton farmlands.<sup>71</sup>

On the eve of the war with England in 1812, New Bedford was a thriving maritime town that had still retained much of the character of a village. Daniel Ricketson described New Bedford during the first decade of the nineteenth century as a "little more than a village" with old houses that:

stood at respectful distances apart, upon what was then and should now be known as Main street, with their front yards, the rows of the now despised but then thrifty and admired Lombardy poplars that graced either side for most of the way, the stately mansion of Abraham Russell at its head, and the mansion of the venerable Friend Rotch, then possessing ample grounds, with extensive out-buildings, stables, carriage-houses, &c...The buildings of that day, not only the houses, but the old shops with their bow windows in the best of them, and the warehouses where the old merchants had their counting-rooms, were far more graceful in their outlines than those of a later date.<sup>72</sup>

Many of the "substantial and pleasant residences" and fine expansive gardens of New Bedford's leading merchant families stood within blocks of the waterfront, among shops and artisans' dwellings and an emerging financial district centered at the Four Corners.<sup>73</sup> In 1800 the three individuals estimated to have a net worth in excess of \$100,000—William Rotch, his son William, and son-in-law Samuel Rodman—resided in mansions that clearly proclaimed the social differentiation

of New Bedford's political economy. This image stands in contrast to the settlement barely 50 years earlier, in which the only traces of wealth were to be found in the occasional mention of bonds, notes, and a few household luxuries among the town's probate records. Yet despite this early amassing of wealth, New Bedford's "then little business community, [whose]...simple habits...quaint costumes [and] open and unceremonious manners, growing out of a large admixture of the principles of the Society of Friends," allowed cows to roam through the village over the very streets their sturdy shoes would traverse on their daily walks to the counting houses.<sup>74</sup>

#### THE WAR OF 1812 AND RECOVERY

Many vessels of the New Bedford whaling fleet were at sea when the United States declared war on England in 1812. By October 1812, nine vessels had been captured, representing a loss in excess of \$200,000. The war effectively closed the whale oil market and New Bedford's maritime industries idled, ending most employment opportunities for the town's artisan and seaman population. British patrols closed the port to seagoing traffic, but the town, unlike the nation's capital, averted a repeat of the British depredations of 1778 through a series of resolutions aimed at the privateers who would have rendered the port vulnerable to enemy aggression. However the war had a lasting affect on New Bedford. Fairhaven and New Bedford separated in 1812, one of many unresolved issues being the division between the former's support for the Jeffersonian embargo and New Bedford's allegiance to the Federalists' anti-war stance.

While New Bedford's economic crisis and bleak prospects for improvement prompted several families to leave the city or mortgage their properties, the Rotches managed to increase their holdings and expand their influence within the whaling industry.<sup>75</sup> Although the Rotches began to diversify their assets around 1815, the family's primary investments remained in whaling and in the properties and ventures that were vital to the industry, including wharves, warehouses, ropewalks, candleworks, stores, and refineries.<sup>76</sup> For the Rotches and many others of New Bedford's whaling elite, the declaration of peace on 13 February 1815 ushered in a period of unbridled growth under a new generation of family leadership. The revival of New Bedford whaling benefited from American and European industrial growth, as well as from new Asian and Pacific markets. Within weeks of the truce, vessels departed for whaling grounds and European ports. Between 1813 and 1815, seven vessels arrived in port with returns from whaling; the same num-



Figure 13: Map of New Bedford, 1815. From a plan drawn by Gilbert Russell.

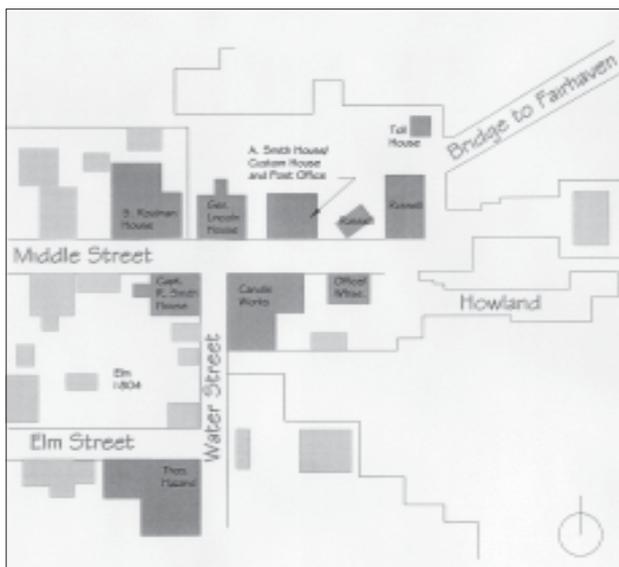


Figure 14: Approximate location of buildings in vicinity of the bridge to Fairhaven, 1815 (drawing not to scale). None of the buildings and wharves remains in the current landscape.

ber returned within the following year, and by 1820 the annual return had quadrupled.<sup>77</sup>

Though the long idle waterfront teemed with activity, New Bedford's precipitous recovery was temporarily interrupted by a violent hurricane in September 1815. Known as the "Great Gale," the storm battered the waterfront with tides that rose ten feet above the high water mark, threw 16 moored



Figure 15: North Second Street, looking north to William Street, 1815. William Rotch's barn and two small fire engine sheds occupied the southwest corner of the intersection, where the Custom House now stands. The watch-house stood at the northeast corner and the Brotherson house was located further west on William Street.

vessels ashore, washed away the bridge to Fairhaven, and caused more than \$100,000 in damage to the New Bedford waterfront, including the ruin of stores and structural damage to all the wharves. The rapid recovery of New Bedford's whaling industry is illustrated in the establishment of the Bedford Commercial Bank in 1816, as well as in the manifold increase in whaling expeditions. Ten whalers had sailed from New Bedford in 1815, most on voyages to the Pacific and South Atlantic that lasted about two years. By 1818, 25 vessels set sail from the harbor. A major fire in the commercial district along Centre Street in 1820 scarcely deterred the industry's phe-

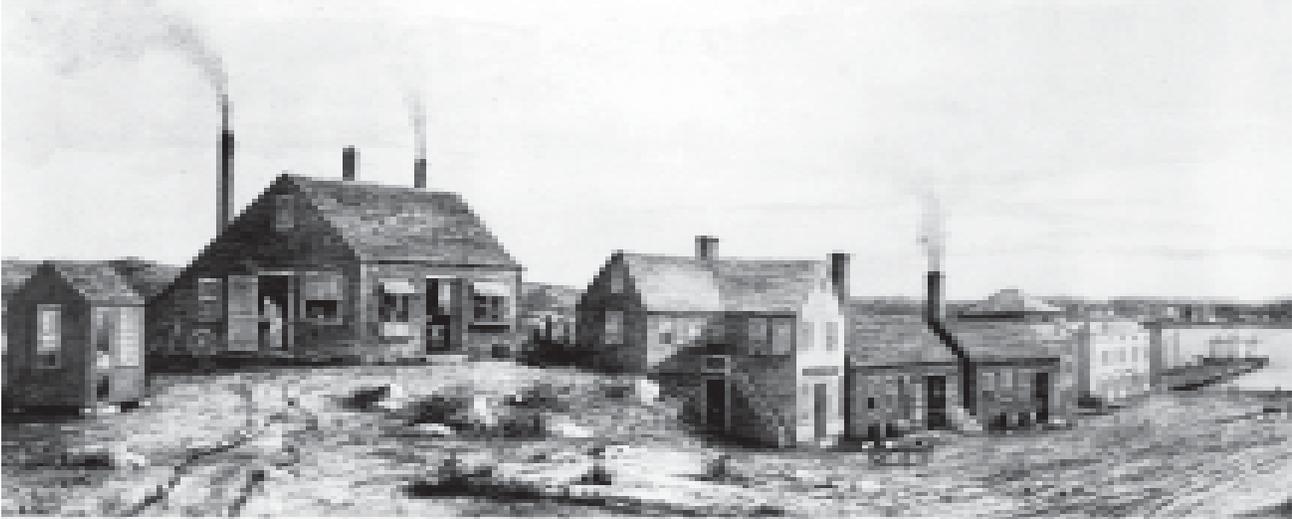


Figure 16: Centre Street, 1815. Most of the wooden buildings that lined the north side of the street, including the blacksmith shop at Water Street in the foreground, were destroyed in the 1820 fire. The stone warehouse at the lower end of the street still stands at the northwest corner of Front and Centre Streets.

nomenal growth.<sup>78</sup> Within three years, New Bedford would enter its “golden age” of whaling and enjoy nearly four decades of relatively uninterrupted growth.<sup>79</sup>

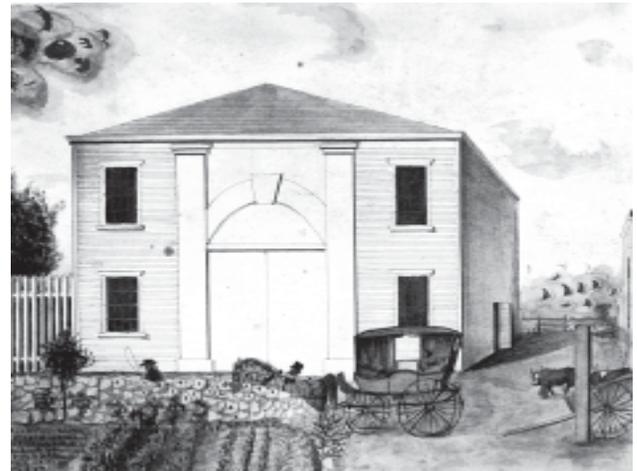
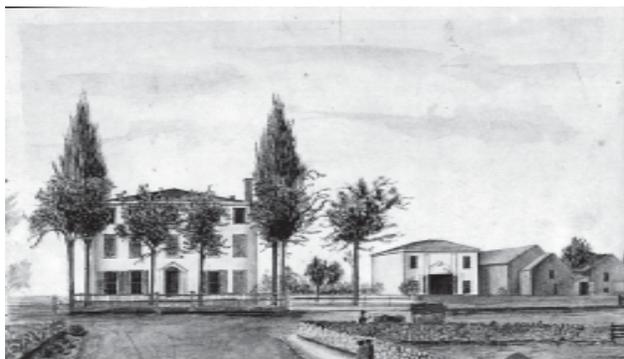
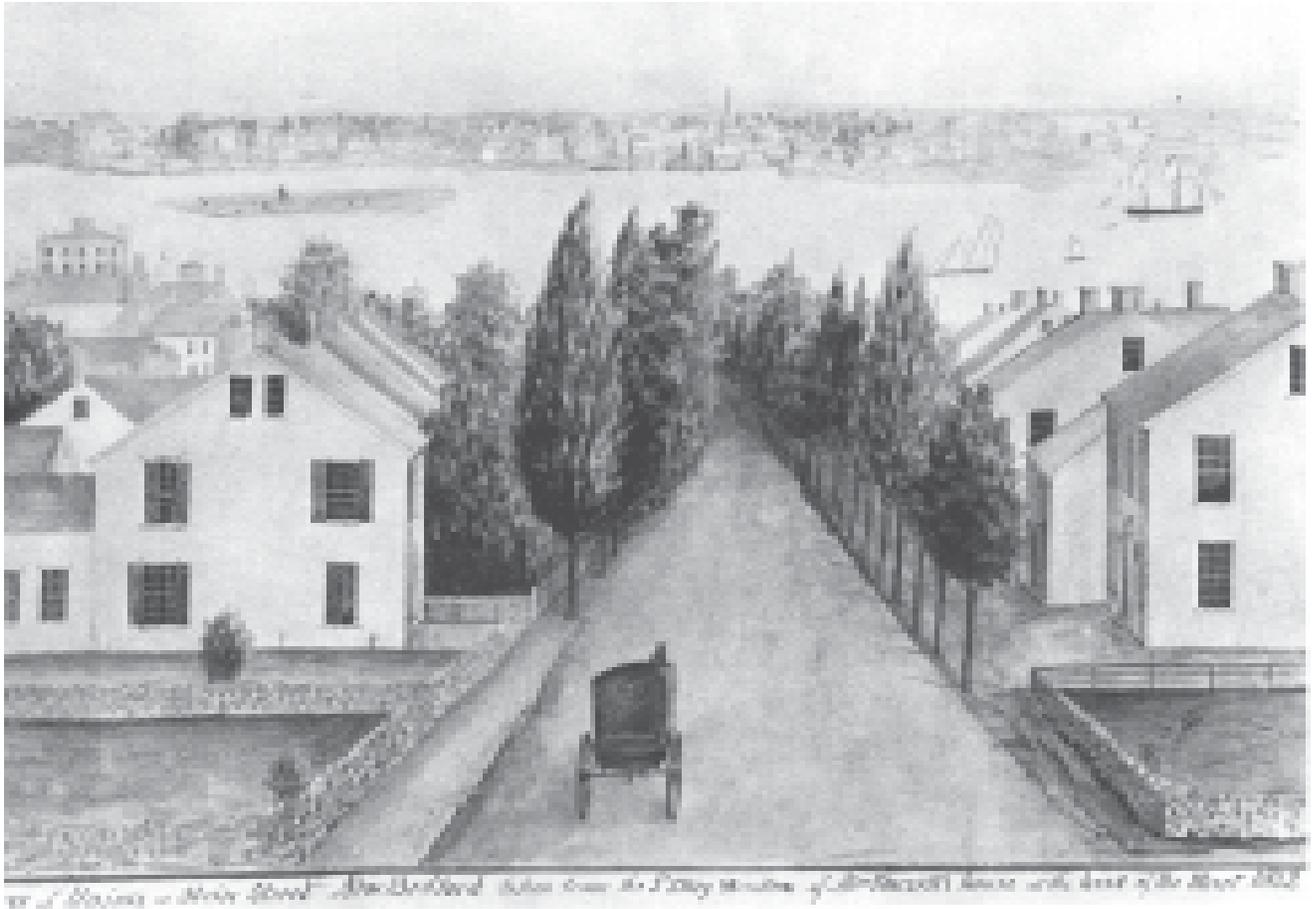
A retrospective glance at New Bedford as it appeared in 1815 reveals a fairly compact settlement (Figure 13). In the area bounded by Purchase, Middle, and Union Streets, there were 160 stores, shops, and dwellings, among which were “located the homes of many of the well-to-do citizens.”<sup>80</sup> An open square at the foot of the bridge to Fairhaven gave way to the first block of Bridge Street and a line of commercial and residential buildings (Figure 14). A two-story building in which the Russells kept a store stood near the base of the street. The office and warehouse of J. & J. Howland, the building that served as both post office and custom-house, two small dwelling houses, and the residence of war hero General Benjamin Lincoln lined the block east toward Water Street. The home and gardens of Samuel Rodman Jr. were situated at the northwest intersection, diagonally across from the granite building that housed Howland’s candleworks. Among the substantial homes that lined the west side of Water Street southward just beyond William Street were those of Thomas Hazard, Samuel Rodman Sr., and William Rotch Jr.

At the northwestern edge of the town, only the watch-house, the North Congregational Church, and three other small buildings occupied the region bounded by North Second, Elm, Purchase, and William Streets, while nine houses, including the imposing house and spacious gardens of John Avery Parker, occupied the square-block to the north (Figure 15). With the exception of houses that faced Purchase and Union Street, the

land to the west was all open field and pasture where local farmers cultivated crops and harvested wild huckleberries.

Buildings lined both sides of Centre Street to the river, and stores and establishments relating to the maritime industry were scattered along the wharves (Figure 16).<sup>81</sup> At the Four Corners, “the stock exchange of the day...business men congregated for political and social gossip.” They could quench their thirst with two very different types of drink from the spring along Rose Alley or at Deborah Doubleday’s tavern just to the north. The eighteenth-century home of Benjamin Taber stood at the corner of Union and Water Streets and the homes of nearly two dozen of New Bedford’s prominent citizens, including William Rotch’s Mansion House, lined both sides of Union Street, the town’s tree-lined main thoroughfare, to its end at County Street. The Nelson Hotel at the southeastern corner of Fourth and Union housed a tavern that was the scene of many “public festivities” and the gardens of the Ricketson and Russell estates occupied the whole square block to the east. In the most densely settled portion of the town, houses extended south of Union Street to Madison Street, while only a few scattered homes occupied the blocks to the town’s southern boundary at Walnut Street. Only three houses and the Friends’ Academy along County Street interrupted the dense woods that stood to the south and west (Figures 17, 18, and 19).<sup>82</sup>

In all, more than 500 houses covered approximately half a square mile in the area of New Bedford bounded by County, South, and Maxfield Streets and the waterfront. Some 22 wharves and piers lined the waterfront, but the center of mari-



Figures 17 (top), 18 (above) and 19 (right): Abraham Russell House and gardens, corner of County and Union Streets, ca. 1812. Russell inherited this extensive estate from his father, Joseph, the founder of New Bedford. His gardens were typical of the time, combining vegetable and ornamental plantings. The view from the house stretched along the tree-lined Union Street to the waterfront (Figure 17). Notice the stone walls that surround the lots in the foreground and William Rotch Jr.'s house, the prominent building in the distance



Figure 20: Purchase Street, looking north from Union Street, ca. 1812. In the left foreground is the William Tobey House, the building that served as the town post office from 1792 to 1806. The steepled church to the north is the First Congregational Church. Two dwelling houses and the Kempton school are located beyond the fenced gardens of Benjamin Russell at the northeast corner of the intersection. John A. Parker's mansion, later part of the Parker House Hotel, can be seen in the distance.

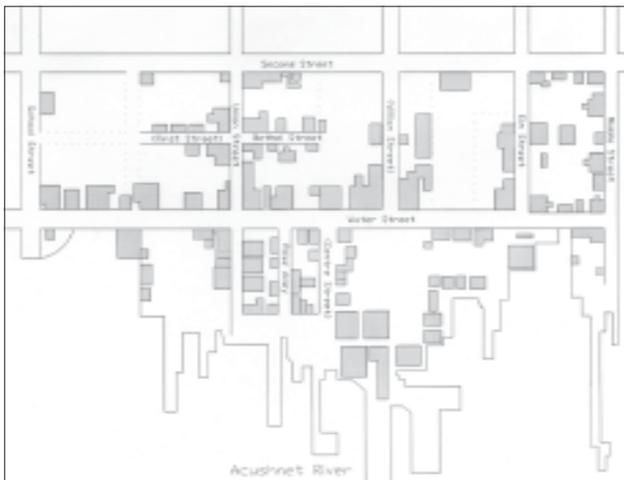


Figure 21: Detail of the waterfront area, ca. 1815. In the area bounded by Middle, School and Second Streets and the river, open space prevailed. The area surrounding the Four Corners at the intersection of Union and Water Streets was early New Bedford's commercial center and now comprises roughly two-thirds of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park.

time activity remained within three square blocks of the Four Corners.<sup>83</sup> While Centre Street contained the highest concentration of commercial buildings in the city, the remainder of the blocks within the waterfront district displayed a combination of commercial and residential structures, a pattern that prevailed throughout most of the town (Figure 20).

Above all, the most prominent feature in the New Bedford landscape at this time was the vast amount of open space, even in the town's commercial core (Figure 21). The grounds of the Rotch, Rodman, and Hazard estates, which together occupied nearly two large square blocks between Water and North Second Streets, represented not only the characteristically high proportion of green space within the town, but also—and perhaps more importantly—a relative lack of spatial differentiation among New Bedford's increasingly visible hierarchy of wealth.

Within a decade, New Bedford's whaling fleet would race towards national prominence, overtaking its rival from Nantucket in 1823. In time its merchant elite retreated up the hill, abandoning their opulent homes and the waterfront to "the cheap boarding houses, shops, and the stilling malodorous abodes of hordes of chattering Brava sailors and their appendages."<sup>84</sup> The face of New Bedford's waterfront would change irrevocably during the early decades of whaling's "Golden Age."

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF WHALING, 1823–1857

### PURSUIT OF THE LEVIATHAN

In 1823 New Bedford's whaling fleet equaled that of her closest competitor in tonnage. By 1830 her fleet of 120 square-rigged ships was nearly twice the size of Nantucket's whaling flotilla, imported nearly 85,000 barrels of sperm and whale oil, and supported ten local spermaceti factories.<sup>85</sup> At the close of the decade New Bedford had replaced Nantucket as the nation's preeminent whaling center, employing nearly 10,000 men in an industry capitalized at more than \$12 million. As the chief source of illuminants to federal lighthouses, New Bedford's whale products were in use up and down the East Coast. At the peak of New Bedford whaling in 1857, the city's harbor was home to half of the American whaling fleet and launched more whaling expeditions than all other American ports combined (Table 1).<sup>86</sup>

Table 1. Total vessels in New Bedford fleet, 1839-56<sup>87</sup>

Year	Total Vessels
1839	177
1844	239
1852	311
1856	329

Such a flourishing business carried with it prosperity for the town's inhabitants. The population of New Bedford increased more than sevenfold between 1800 and 1830, growing from 1,000 to 7,695 people and doubled again by 1845.<sup>88</sup> Every branch of the maritime industries connected with the fitting out of whaling ships was in full operation along the waterfront; support industries included outfitters, shipyards for building and repairing whalers, bakers of hardtack, coopers to make barrels for oil, oil refineries, caulkers, ropewalks, carpenters, sailmakers, riggers, shipwrights, marine insurance companies, and banks.

The growing number of whaling expeditions contributed to the over-exploitation of Atlantic and, eventually, global whale populations. American whalers killed close

to 300,000 whales between 1835 and 1872 and depleted the sperm whale population through nonselective whaling practices that included killing females and their young.<sup>89</sup> By 1850 the scarcity of whales was evident. Voyages were increasingly longer and less productive, with most successful voyages lasting an exhausting three to four years. To take better advantage of the relatively unexploited Pacific hunting grounds, New Bedford whalers were first outfitted in Honolulu in 1832. The first bowhead whales were taken in the northern Pacific near Kamchatka in 1843. Following the passage of the *Superior*, a Sag Harbor whaler, through the Bering Strait in 1848, the New Bedford whaling fleet made a highly significant transition to Arctic whaling. At the industry's apex in 1856, New Bedford's wharves were teeming with activity:

The returning ships, laden with full cargoes, kept them busy in refitting for new voyages. The streets were alive with sailors, their purses filled with ready money that was soon expended. Officers of ships, who had husbanded their hard-earned gains, bought or built homes, in which to enjoy their rest after long service on the seas. Prosperity reigned triumphant for a time, the rich agents and owners grew more wealthy, and even those in humble station shared in the general good fortune. The high prices of oil were maintained, and it seemed as if there could be no limit to the onward progress of the whaling business.<sup>90</sup>

Yet the decline in the number of barrels of oil per voyage began as early as 1850. In 1857, the year the size of the fleet reached its peak, the average take was only half of what it had been seven years before. The panic of 1857 caused a temporary decline in the price of whale oil, but market fluctuations obscured a more troublesome portent: within a decade, the price of whale and sperm oils plummeted, due largely to the increasing availability of petroleum-based alternatives. While the growing demand for baleen buoyed sagging markets during the late nineteenth century, the prospects for the long-term recovery of the whaling industry were increasingly bleak. After nearly four decades of unbridled expansion, New Bedford would come to discover a limit to the onward progress of whaling (Table 2).

Table 2. Returns from whaling for the New Bedford fleet, 1815-70<sup>91</sup>

Year	Vessels Returning	Sperm Oil (brls.)	Whale Oil (brls.)	Whale Bone (lbs.)
1815	2	620	—	—
1816	7	1,350	1,500	—
1820	28	8,680	21,280	17,045
1824	38	29,100	32,969	9,314
1830	40	40,513	35,271	280,438
1840	82	63,465	75,411	—
1850	64	39,298	91,627	1,081,500
1860	83	43,716	90,450	1,112,600
1870	59	42,886	49,563	569,861

#### “FRIENDLY” INFLUENCE AND THE EROSION OF A QUAKER HEGEMONY

While much of the success of New Bedford’s whaling industry can be attributed to its central location in the northeastern maritime nexus, its excellent harbor, and the enormous demand for whale products during the first half of the nineteenth century, it would be difficult to overestimate the vital contributions of the town’s merchant elite. Samuel Eliot Morison attributed “the secret of New Bedford’s success” to “her persistent specialization in whaling alone. Other small seaports of New England hugged the delusion that foreign trade would return; New Bedford hugged her oil casks.”<sup>92</sup> The enterprising nature of this mostly Quaker elite, whose entrepreneurial spirit so firmly embraced the whaling industry, directed the early development of New Bedford.

From the outset, a large number of the early European settlers in Old Dartmouth were Quakers who exercised a predominating influence over the affairs of the township. This is especially true for New Bedford, where Quakers were the founding and controlling spirit of the town’s industries and growth. Quakers comprised a considerable portion of New Bedford’s early population, although the number of meeting members was in decline as early as the first decade of the nineteenth century. Religious, marital, and corporate bonds united three wealthy Quaker families—the Russells, Rotches, and Rodmans—who collectively exercised an inordinate influence over the affairs of the town. As committed members of the Society of Friends, “a closed. . . self-righteous, self-supporting conventicle,” they adhered to rigid standards of speech, dress, and deportment and effected a complex sense of social cohe-

sion that balanced a tradition of independence and freedom of conscience with the strictures of the Society’s Discipline.<sup>93</sup>

As Daniel Ricketson observed in 1858, the development of New Bedford was not typical of New England towns:

From the early influence of the Quaker principles, New Bedford has been, until within a few years at least, a peculiar place, while our neighbor across the river [Fairhaven] resembled more other New England towns along the seaboard.<sup>94</sup>

While it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the connections between Quaker culture and New Bedford’s early deviation from typical New England settlement patterns, the town’s history illustrates the extent of the Friends’ influence.<sup>95</sup>

When the Rebecca slid from the ways of George Claghorn’s shipyard in 1785, the handsome figurehead that had adorned her prow before launching had been removed after objections by her Quaker owners, Joseph Russell and Cornelius Howland.<sup>96</sup> If the Quaker elders frowned on the figurehead’s mock funeral, a party that included Russell’s sons among its rowdy participants, there is no record of their dismay. However the Society’s contempt for singing, dancing, music, and other public frivolities influenced early reform and educational movements.<sup>97</sup>

At the turn of the century, the Rotch family, in particular, dominated nearly every dimension of town life. Their entrepreneurial success and business renown were paralleled by civic reputations built upon active involvement in political, social, and moral movements. The names of William Rotch Jr. and Samuel Rodman appear on lists of jurors, health and school committees, fire wardens, building committees, and library subscriptions, as well as among the members of anti-slavery, temperance, and charitable associations.<sup>98</sup> The established reputation of New Bedford’s wealthiest and most influential pillars of the community was graphically depicted not only in the sartorial distinction of their stately bearing, but also in their large, unadorned dwellings and counting houses that dominated the local landscape. The family’s Federal-style mansions along Water and Union Streets were among the most formidable structures in the town.

The precipitous growth of the whaling industry in New Bedford following the War of 1812 created an increased concentration of wealth among the prominent Quaker families and a growing rift between the merchant and working classes. This emerging hierarchy of wealth took geographic form in a new spatial configuration of class difference. Quaker historians have suggested that “the accumulation of large sums of



Figure 22: Joseph Rotch House, corner of William and County Streets, ca. 1830. A post and rail fence lined the front of Rotch's property on William Street. Extensive gardens and a broad lawn surround the Greek Revival house.

money posed the problem of how to dispose of it in a theologically sound manner. And so the simple Quaker community slowly moved up the hill into the grand style of living on County Street."<sup>99</sup>

In 1821 Joseph Rotch initiated the whaling aristocracy's westward exodus to the "country" when he built one of the first Greek Revival mansions in New Bedford at the corner of County and William Streets (Figure 22). In turn, the majority of the town's elite constructed large brick and stone mansions along County Street, commanding a pleasing and comfortably distant view of the harbor and the bustling industries that lay at the foundation of their fortunes. Within a decade almost all of the fourth generation of New Bedford Rotches had abandoned the waterfront. Even William Rotch Jr., influenced by his second wife, Lydia Scott, moved to a stately mansion on County Street in 1834 (Figures 23 and 24).<sup>100</sup> Mary Rotch described the home her brother William constructed as:

one of the finest our Village affords, the grounds are elevated, of course, it commands extensive prospects—on one side you have all the retirement and charm of a country life, while on the other, the full view of the town, river, etc. is presented. Thus combining sources of gratification to the taste, in either rural, or more busy scenes...<sup>101</sup>

Rotch's praise not only reveals the emergence of two distinct, interconnected enclaves—a contrast between residential and commercial scenes—but also suggests certain social tensions made manifest in the landscape.



Figure 23: Rotch-Jones-Duff House, late nineteenth century. William Rotch Jr. built this Greek Revival mansion at the corner of County and Madison Streets in 1834.



Figure 24: Formal gardens of the Rotch-Jones-Duff House, ca. 1990s. The estate today retains the rose parterre boxwood garden, maze and pergola designed by Rotch's son-in-law, James Arnold.

Along County Street "the charm of a country life" suffused the shaded lanes and elegant estates in a vista that proclaimed the affluence of its elite residents, yet intimated their close connection to the activities along the waterfront. Like many of the grand homes in New Bedford, Samuel Rodman Jr.'s house at County and Spring Streets was surmounted by a cupola that served as an observation turret, offering a view of the harbor and of "the coming and the going of ships that bore fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, future husbands, and often the whole of the family fortune."<sup>102</sup>

The mansion of John Avery Parker, designed by Russell Warren and constructed between 1833 and 1834, was one of the grandest structures along the avenue; its Greek Revival façade bore a telling resemblance to Warren's Double Bank Building on Water Street, the building that housed the Merchants National Bank in which Parker served as president (Figures 25 and 26). Joseph Rotch's Classical Revival mansion, a "large and substantial brick house" with semicircular driveway fenced in to



Figure 25: John Avery Parker House, ca. 1900. Russell Warren's grand design cost \$100,000 and took nearly two years to realize. The portico at the eastern entrance overlooks Parker's elaborate gardens and greenhouse.

accommodate stylishly extensive lawns and gardens, shared Warren's aesthetic vocabulary: monumentality in design and material combined with an austerity of detail, a marriage of emerging class aspirations and persistent religious and cultural traditions. Along County Street, as one commentator noted of Rodman's estate, "the severity of its architecture conformed to the mandate of the Friends that there must be avoidance of ostentation in all things," yet the grand scale of both home and garden belied these pretensions toward Quaker simplicity.<sup>103</sup> Herman Melville would later bring the street national and enduring renown when he proclaimed that:

...nowhere in all America will you find more patrician-like houses, parks and gardens more opulent, than in New Bedford. Whence came they? How planted upon this once scraggy scoria of a country? Go and gaze upon the iron emblematical harpoons round yonder lofty mansion, and your question will be answered. Yes, all these brave houses and flowery gardens came from the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. One and all, they were harpooned and dragged up hither from the bottom of the sea.<sup>104</sup>

Melville's often quoted passage underlines the intimate and tenacious connection between County Street society and the teeming life at the harborside (Figure 27).

Given the influence of this largely Quaker merchant elite, these changes along County Street should be seen as evidence of sociological and, moreover, theological trends of broader social import. The very affluence of the district upon which New Bedford built its reputation abroad represented

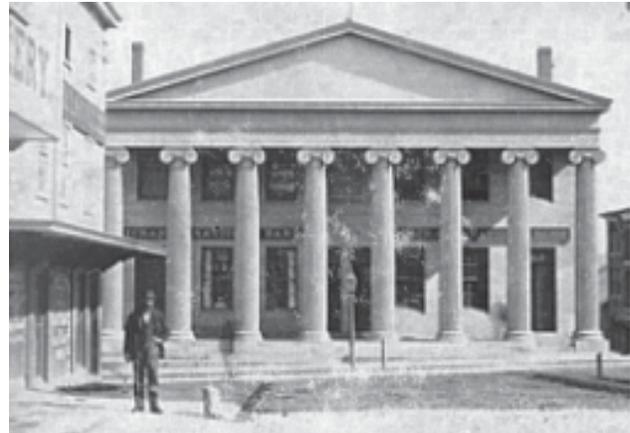


Figure 26: "Double Bank" Building, ca. 1870. Constructed in 1831, Warren's Double Bank Building housed the Mechanics and Merchants National Banks at the intersection of Water and William Streets. The Fisherman's Pension Fund now occupies the building.



Figure 27: Humphrey H. Nye Estate, ca. 1860. Though built in 1851, several years after Melville embarked upon the *Acushnet* and his first whaling voyage, the Nye estate epitomizes the "lofty mansions" and opulent gardens that awed the young author. The house still stands at the southwest corner of County and Sycamore Streets, though the barn, cupola, iron fence, and formal garden have since been removed.

a lifestyle inconsistent with Quaker theology and depicted the rapid erosion of the Friends' hegemonic influence within the community. During the 1820s the "New Light," or Hicksite, schism within the Society of Friends drove many of New Bedford's Quaker families into the Congregational and Unitarian Churches, removing "the constraints on luxurious living which the Friends' Discipline had imposed" and opening the way toward ostentatious display.<sup>105</sup> The schism probably accelerated a more gradual dissipation resulting from the inevitable challenges of religious alternatives and cultural exchange within the diverse and cosmopolitan community of a maritime society.<sup>106</sup>

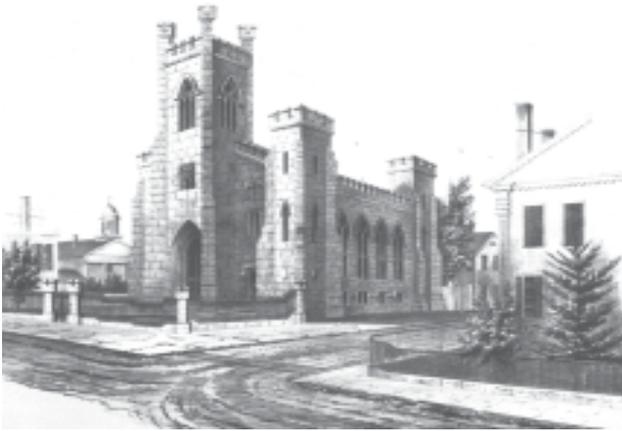


Figure 28: Unitarian Church, corner of Union and Eighth Streets, ca. 1838. This Gothic Revival church stood as a romantic symbol of New Bedford's growing fortunes.

By 1850 there were fewer than 500 orthodox Quakers who attended the meetinghouse on Spring Street.<sup>107</sup> Many of their former cohort trod a weekly path to the Unitarian Church at the corner of County and Union Streets, where their Gothic-style stone church, later embellished with a Tiffany mosaic window, stood as a graphic and daily reminder of the rift within elite society (Figure 28).<sup>108</sup> A second church, the Seaman's Bethel, further symbolized the shifting nature of social cohesion and the evolving instruments of coherence and control.

Organized on 2 June 1830, the New Bedford Port Society for the Moral Improvement of Seamen dedicated the Seaman's Bethel on Johnny Cake Hill nearly two years later as a place of worship for transient seamen and the more permanent inhabitants in the waterfront area. The founding members resolved that "as the society is composed of different denominations, the form of worship in the seamen's chapel...shall not be exclusively under the control of any sect."<sup>109</sup> An observatory surmounted the tower of this two-story, wood frame meeting house; its austere lap-sided façade offered a quiet haven to the sailor, "free from the demoralizing influences to which sailors are too often exposed," and "a temple of worship peculiarly his own...where he can listen to the words of the blessed gospel without money and without price" (Figure 29).<sup>110</sup> This simple ecumenical chapel, surrounded by a picket fence, represented the reassertive presence of the merchant elite into the waterfront area that they were in the very process of abandoning to "some of the lowest elements of the whole city."<sup>111</sup>

The Seamen's Bethel, one of the most prominent structures on the harbor's horizon, may be seen as evidence of significant demographic trends that had begun to leave their mark



Figure 29: Seamen's Bethel, ca. 1860s. A plain picket fence serves as the sole "ornament" to the austere façade of this chapel. An 1866 fire destroyed the outer walls and tower, but the chapel was repaired and reopened during the following year. The Mariner's Home has stood just north of the Seamen's Bethel since 1851.

on the waterfront landscape. New Bedford's rapid increase in population during the first three decades of the nineteenth century contributed to a growing body of skilled craftsmen in support industries, as well as clerks and operatives in administrative and processing operations, that comprised the majority of the city's working class. While the merchant families who controlled the whaling trade and much of the affiliated processing industries held most of the wealth, contemporaries noted that "there was no lower class of any size [and that] the great bulk of the people were all well to do," living in "neat, modest, and convenient dwellings which are spreading themselves over the beautiful hill upon which the town is situate[sic]."

However, this orderly portrait, like Melville's much evoked description, ignores the presence of the more colorful neighborhoods that hosted the growing number of transient seamen employed in the whaling industry. Measured by per capita valuation, New Bedford was the second wealthiest city in the state at mid-century. Yet the city's relative prosperity was based upon the exploitation of a class of nonresident seamen whose perceptions and experiences of the waterfront streetscapes often led to clashes with the conservative Quaker townspeople.<sup>112</sup>

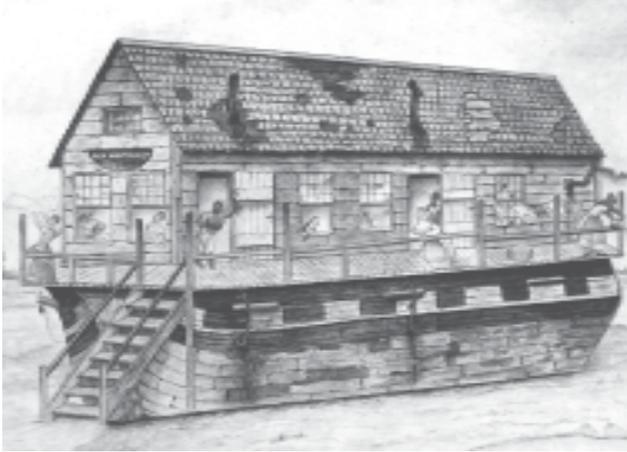


Figure 30: The Ark, ca. 1826. This notorious brothel, destroyed by vigilantes, stood near the northern boundary of the park.

As early as the 1820s, several small but squalid districts offered the services that seamen on their short stays in New Bedford desired. In these neighborhoods lurked

the sailors and those who preyed upon them, the saloons, where delirium and death were sold, the boarding houses, the dance halls and houses where female harpies reigned and vice and violence were rampant.<sup>113</sup>

The “Marsh” on Howland Street, “Hard-Dig” on Kempton Street, and “Chepachet” in the West End, near what is now Buttonwood Park, contained the boardinghouses, saloons, dance halls, and brothels frequented by the “vicious, lawless characters who resorted to the disreputable sections for unrestrained dissipation.” While “respectability was barred from these districts and the constabulary let them alone,” the townspeople took matters into their own hands on several occasions. In 1826, in the first of what came to be known as the “Ark riots,” several prominent citizens were among the vigilance committee that demolished a brothel housed in the hull of an old whaler at the foot of High Street and chased its inhabitants from the neighborhood (Figure 30). Two years later another Ark established within 50 feet of its predecessor met a similar fate. Twice again, in 1840 and 1856, mobs torched buildings, but “vice” continued to flourish in New Bedford’s infamous service quarters.<sup>114</sup>

Where vigilantism failed, neither could Christian persuasion prevail. In 1837 the Ladies’ Branch of the Port Society opened a clothing store near the waterfront, offering clothing to visiting seamen at fair prices and respectable employment to the wives and daughters of New Bedford’s resident seamen. If these

good ladies had intended to keep the sailor with money in his pocket away from the disreputable quarters where he frittered away “his earnings of the long years of toil and hardship,” much of their effort seems to have been in vain.

In 1851 the Port Society acquired the Water Street mansion of the late William Rotch Jr. and transplanted it to the lot just north of the Seaman’s Bethel. The Mariners’ Home, as this boardinghouse for seamen came to be known, together with the Society’s placement of thousands of bibles aboard New Bedford’s whaling and merchant ships, effected only limited success. City watch records repeatedly detail the bawdy nocturnal activities “such as is common with that class of people.”<sup>115</sup> The litany of nightly disturbances includes episodes of domestic abuse, arson, parental neglect, vagrancy, prostitution, and, above all, disorderly conduct and intoxication, particularly among the Irish on First Street and the seamen in a tavern known as the “Subterranean.”<sup>116</sup> As one New Bedford historian noted:

Certain sections of our town [remained] infested with a dangerous class of citizens, occupying dwellings that were moral pest-houses, and with surroundings that were detrimental to the dignity and good order of our community...They abounded in dance-halls, saloons, gambling dens, and brothels. When our ships came in from their long voyages, these abodes of iniquity were in high carnival, fights and brawls were of frequent occurrence, and it was dangerous to pass through this section after nightfall. It was no uncommon circumstance for persons to be knocked down and robbed.<sup>117</sup>

That other “class of people,” which included a growing number of Irish, African American, and other “foreign” artisans, laborers, and seamen, must have sorely tested the limits of Friendly tolerance. Between 1809 and 1850 the black population of New Bedford grew to nearly 700 residents, among whom Frederick Douglass lived from 1838 to 1841. Anti-slavery sentiments ran strong in the community, particularly among the Quakers. Friends William Taber and Joseph Ricketson brought Douglass, a fugitive slave in Newport, to the safe haven of New Bedford. In the 1830s the town was one of the most important stops in the Underground Railroad, serving as a way station—and often the final destination—in the network that harbored and transported runaway slaves. Henry “Box” Brown, who made his daring escape in a box shipped from Richmond to Philadelphia, ar-

rived via Boston to a celebrity's reception at the Parker mansion on County Street.

Maritime employment was virtually the only industry open to free black labor and whaling, in particular, was looked upon as an industry of opportunity and advancement. Despite New Bedford's reputation as a "bastion of abolitionism and refuge for runaway slaves," episodes of racial tension and the large number of out-of-work black whalers listed among the waterfront's destitute population provide a more telling description of the waterfront as the site of economic, ethnic, and racial marginality and, more importantly, of the intimate connection between the accumulation of capital and the mechanisms of moral discipline. The boundaries of the neighborhoods that even the constabulary chose not to enter, including the seamy districts along the periphery of what is now the National Historical Park, marked the limits of Quaker scrutiny and control over a growing population of "others" and signaled an irremediable transition in the spatial relations of New Bedford society.<sup>118</sup> By mid-century most of the "city's best families" had taken residence further up the hill, leaving the streets along the waterfront to two very different sets of commercial activity during the day and night.<sup>119</sup>

#### "LUCEM DIFFUNDO"—BUILDING THE CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

If New Bedford's scions had agreed tacitly to cede much of the nighttime streetscape along the waterfront to this bawdy cast of "strangers," their own daytime activities revealed little sense of surrender.<sup>120</sup> For most of the town's elite, affiliation with the waterfront was inescapable; for here were located the counting houses and oil and candle manufactories, as well as the warehouses and stores for outfitting ships and provisioning seamen, from which the local economy reaped millions of dollars of profit each year. To their organized attempts at moral reform were added parallel campaigns for civic improvement that underlay much of the town's commercial infrastructure. In 1847 New Bedford's residents recognized the untenability of town government because of the chronic absence of one-fifth of the town's legal voters, and adopted a city charter. The new municipality's motto, *Lucem Diffundo* ("We light the world"), gave evidence of the heady enthusiasm with which New Bedford's residents had already pursued the building of a prosperous and attractive city.

Some of the earliest acts of civic improvement resulted from concerns regarding the waterfront streets. Reacting to the Ark riots, one commentator wrote:

We are glad to learn that energetic measures are now in train for the suppression of other establishments of a like odious and degraded class of population brought within our borders, which can only be kept within the bounds of decency by vigorous police regulations. As the navigations of the port increase, the necessity for such regulations becomes the more apparent. . .<sup>121</sup>

A Committee of Vigilance was formed in June 1830 to prevent vigilante actions and maintain civil order. In 1841 the police force established a disciplinary presence in the waterfront district, occupying the "town-house" where the old market once stood at the corner of South Second and Spring Streets.<sup>122</sup> Attempts, with little success, were also made to limit the number of retail dealers of alcohol to five who had been "qualified by their character for integrity, discretion, and firmness."<sup>123</sup>

A more lasting contribution to the landscape came with the standardization of the streets. Most of New Bedford's early streets were short and varied in width.<sup>124</sup> In 1829 the town appointed a committee to establish and clearly mark more accurate street lines. The committee found that fences, stone walls, and buildings extended into town roads, but recommended that these illegal protrusions be allowed to persist.<sup>125</sup> Forty feet was established as the legal width for town streets and a definitive system of granite markers, with "tops squared and a cross cut or drilled hole marking precisely the line of intersection of the streets," put into place in 1830.<sup>126</sup> The standard width, later found to prohibit aesthetic improvement and additional commercial development, was no doubt a practical measure to facilitate expansion. Ironically, this standard preserved the town's early utilitarian streetscapes as the port soared to the apex of the whaling industry. Converted wooden residential structures continued to line the narrow streets, giving the waterfront district the air of a bustling maritime village.<sup>127</sup>

The town government continued to dedicate funds and "special attention" to improving streets and highways (Table 3). In 1831 the council of selectmen approved \$1250 to provide and maintain "lanthorns," particularly in the business district along the waterfront.<sup>128</sup> As would be expected, the town elected to use sperm oil, the only fuel "suitable to give a clear and bright light." The first sidewalks were flagged at public expense during the following year. An experiment in paving a small portion of Water Street met with the general "approbation of the citizens" in 1838. During the following year the town's selectmen continued the operation, extending the cobblestone paving further along Water Street and on Purchase Street and reporting that:



Figure 31: William Street, looking west from Purchase Street, ca. 1852. The cobblestone paving and bluestone sidewalks were probably installed in the mid-1840s. The entire block was cleared by 1856, when construction of the Free Public Library (now City Hall) began. Some buildings, including the one at center that now stands at the southwest corner of Eighth and William Streets, were relocated.



Figure 32: William Street, looking east from Purchase Street, ca. 1870. This section of the street, now within the park, was paved and flagged in the 1840s. The lanterns mounted on posts and suspended from buildings along the south side of the street are probably gas fixtures.

this mode of repairs will prove more economical than any heretofore adopted. It is the only remedy that can be applied to those streets which are so situated as to be almost impassable with mud at certain seasons of the year.<sup>129</sup>

Due to heavy commercial traffic, the streets along the waterfront were among the earliest to be paved. In 1842 Union Street was graded and paved from Water Street to its eastern termination, First Street was graded and paved between Union and School Streets, and gravel was applied to Third, Sixth, William, County, Middle, Purchase, North Second, North Water, and the remainder of Union Streets.<sup>130</sup> Though the town provided generously to keep apace with development, the selectmen reported in 1843 that:

It is supposed to be the settled policy of the town to grade, curb and flag all the streets enclosed within the limits of what is usually called the village; and the number of such streets having increased much faster than the appropriations of the town have furnished the means of finishing them, in accordance, a large number of our town ways are still in the condition of highways, and many of the inhabitants have been disappointed at the delay. . . The number of streets upon which the operation of grading, curbing, and flagging is yet to be performed is very great.<sup>131</sup>

The committee, however, persevered. In 1848 the city of New Bedford boasted 30 miles of streets, 20 of which were graded, curbed, and flagged (Figures 31 and 32).<sup>132</sup> By mid-century granite runners spanned the cobblestoned intersections to facilitate the movement of large casks of oil from the harbor to the various processing centers along the waterfront (Figure 33).

Table 3. Public expenditures for street improvement, 1839-43<sup>133</sup>

Year	Flagging	Lighting	Street		
			Repair	Curbing	Paving
1839	\$3066	\$1645	\$6075	\$1298	\$410
1840		1563	5274	697	
1841	3597	1876	6343	520	
1842		1477	5257	206	966
1843	579	1490	6557	643	70

The city's motto ("We light the world") was no idle boast, for New Bedford's whaling products brought the city renown and, consequently, a growing number of prospective workers. Transportation improvements during the first half of the nineteenth century increased New Bedford's daily contact with the northeastern seaboard and brought additional passenger traffic to the harbor. A stageline to Providence, established in 1820 and the 1840 railroad connection to Boston via Taunton deposited passengers north of New Bedford's financial core at



Figure 33: Waterfront, mid-nineteenth century. The granite runners in the foreground facilitated moving large casks of oil from the whaling ships at the docks to local processing plants.

the Four Corners, while ferry service to Fairhaven brought passengers directly to the central waterfront. Beginning in 1853, steamer service provided direct shipping from New Bedford's wharves to the whale oil market in New York City.<sup>134</sup> Between 1840 and 1845 the area's population had increased from 12,000 to 16,000 and, in 1854, New Bedford was home to 20,000 residents.<sup>135</sup>

New Bedford's growing population posed some serious health concerns. Perhaps in response to an outbreak of Asiatic cholera in 1849, the city installed sewers through portions of Union and Middle Streets in 1852, extending the system to School, Kempton, and Spring Streets in 1853 and along William and Maxfield Streets during the following year.<sup>136</sup> City ordinances prohibited the stacking of fish and cordwood along the streets, regulated commercial signage and the construction of awnings, and required proprietors to clear snow from the newly installed sidewalks.<sup>137</sup> Such regulations probably reflected the fact that the waterfront district, aside from harboring an unsavory cast of night-time characters, continued to serve as the financial center of New Bedford and the daytime destination of some of the city's more "respectable" citizens.

The town's prosperity and the citizenry's tenacious claim to the waterfront were reflected in new public structures. Fashioned in Greek-Revival style and constructed mostly of stone, New Bedford's public buildings were calculated expressions of austere monumentality and permanence. Nationally prominent architect Robert Mills designed the elegant Custom House constructed at the southwest corner of William and North Second streets between 1834 and 1836 (Figure 34). Its granite façade and fireproof construction housed both federal customs operations and the city's post office, replacing the outgrown, converted wooden dwelling on Middle Street that had served as an important clearinghouse for the maritime trades since 1806.<sup>138</sup> Captains seeking to clear their ships through customs, seamen wishing to file their registration papers, and townspeople claiming mail mounted the stately, shaded steps of this simple granite structure adorned with Doric columns.<sup>139</sup>

Among the public and commercial buildings constructed during New Bedford's period of civic improvement were also a courthouse, ten schools, 20 oil and spermaceti processing plants, and four banks.<sup>140</sup> Russell Warren, the architect responsible for at least a half dozen of the city's Greek Revival mansions, also supervised the design of several of New Bedford's more promi-

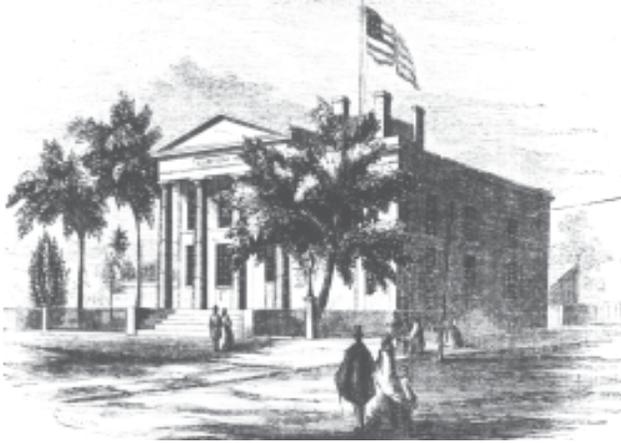


Figure 34: Custom House, ca. 1850. This Greek Revival building at the southwest corner of William and North Second Streets housed both postal and customs operations until 1888, when a new post office was constructed on the lot just to the west.

nent nonresidential buildings. The Merchants and Mechanics Bank occupied Warren's "Double Bank" building at the corner of William and Water Streets. Situated at a busy commercial intersection in close proximity to the harbor, the Double Bank's granite façade, fluted Ionic columns, and simple roofline gave "an impression of working class solidity without a trace of ostentation." Just to the west, at the corner of William and Purchase Streets, sat Warren's New Bedford Town Hall, a Greek Revival building now occupied by the New Bedford Free Public Library (Figure 35). Constructed between 1838 and 1839 at a cost of \$60,000, the Town Hall enjoyed the reputation among many residents as the "handsomest building in New England devoted to civic purpose." The hall was constructed of Fall River granite and stood three stories high; steep stone steps led to an entrance portico flanked by massive Doric columns and looking out upon a tree-lined public square whose shaded, wrought iron park benches beckoned to the leisurely pedestrian.<sup>141</sup> In the New Bedford of the mid-nineteenth century, the bounds of decency and reputability ebbed westward from the waterfront.

One resident extolled "the exceeding neatness and beauty of the dwellings in the more elevated portions of the town," but was quick to point out "the aspect of freshness," everywhere presented in the "large number of newly-erected buildings...[as] evidence of rapid growth." He continued:

No one will undertake to say that a fair proportion has not been devoted to the gratification of a taste for the beautiful in village architecture and its accessories, the comfortable walk, the over-shadowing tree, the green enclosure, and the blooming flower garden.<sup>142</sup>

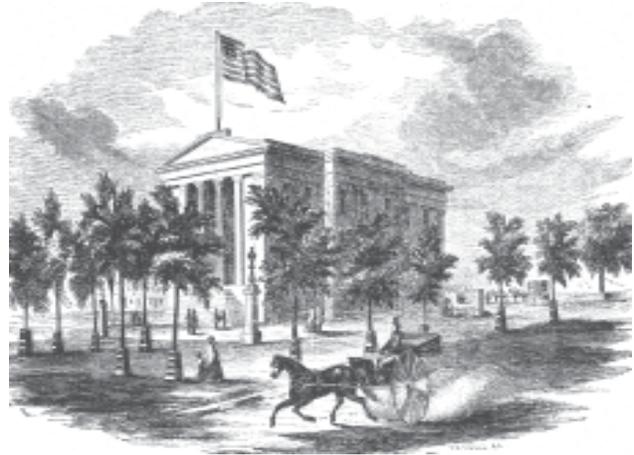


Figure 35: New Bedford Town Hall, ca. 1850. Constructed at the corner of William and Pleasant Streets in 1838-39, the Town Hall housed a public market in its lower level. Elm trees lined the surrounding park. The New Bedford Free Public Library occupied the building after a 1906 fire necessitated major renovations to the interior.

As such praise suggests, evidence of the city's "taste" and prosperity was not limited to the fine public and private buildings lining its neatly paved streets. The city fathers, no doubt in response to the demands of its constituents as well as in accordance with their own proclivities, provided generously for tree-planting programs and other public improvements.<sup>143</sup> In 1851 appropriations were authorized to plant elms on the Market Square near the corner of William and Pleasant Streets. The "long open, unimproved and unadorned" city lot, near the railroad depot at Pearl Street, received similar attention in an effort to develop a "favorite resort for pedestrians."<sup>144</sup> However, the greening of public space seems to have been limited to the "elevated portions" of the city and the streets took on a starker, more utilitarian aspect as they descended toward the waterfront (Figures 36 and 37).

Despite the emerging geographic and aesthetic differentiation of status within New Bedford society, the city remained a fairly centralized settlement whose streets were traversed largely by pedestrian and carriage traffic. At the western edge of the central settlement stood County Street, the center of social life for most of New Bedford's elite, while the waterfront, the city's eastern boundary, served as the site of production and exchange. Union Street, still the main commercial thoroughfare, linked these two parallel districts and integrated the increasingly disparate worlds of business and leisure.

At mid-century, one would have paused at the intersection of County and Union Streets, resting in the shade of the elm, maple, and horse chestnut trees planted at regular intervals along the boulevard, before turning eastward towards the harbor. The large brick mansion of James Arnold, son-in-law



Figure 36: Union Street, looking west from Pleasant Street, ca. 1865. Storefronts became less frequent as Union Street stretched westward up the hill. Shade trees lined the predominantly residential blocks.



Figure 37: Union Street, looking east from Acushnet Avenue, ca. 1870. Small shops lined the blocks approaching the harbor and the street, free of tree planting, took on a decidedly more utilitarian aspect.



Figure 38: Corner of County and Court Streets, ca. 1860. The tree-lined County Street invited leisurely strolls.



Figure 39: James Arnold mansion (intersection of County and Spring Streets), 1821. The house, surrounded by trees and shrubs at mid-century, currently houses the Wamsutta Club.



Figure 40: Grotto in the garden of James Arnold, mid-nineteenth century. A.J. Downing included this illustration in *Landscape Gardening and Rural Architecture*.

and partner of William Rotch Jr., graced the crossroads' southwest corner (Figures 38 and 39). Arnold's 11-acre estate, landscaped with many exotic trees and shrubs he had gathered during his travels, was the horticultural showplace of New Bedford; his formal gardens, which welcomed public promenading every Sunday, no doubt contributed to the citizenry's reputation for "tree-loving propensities" and New Bedford's renown.<sup>145</sup> A stone wall, 11 feet in height, surrounded two graperies, a greenhouse, and a boxwood-bordered parterre. The branches of espaliered peach trees ran along the high wall of a fruit garden that extended along the west side of the present Orchard Street. A mosaic of shells decorated the ceiling of a plaster grotto that concealed a rustic set of tables and chairs among the foliage (Figure 40).



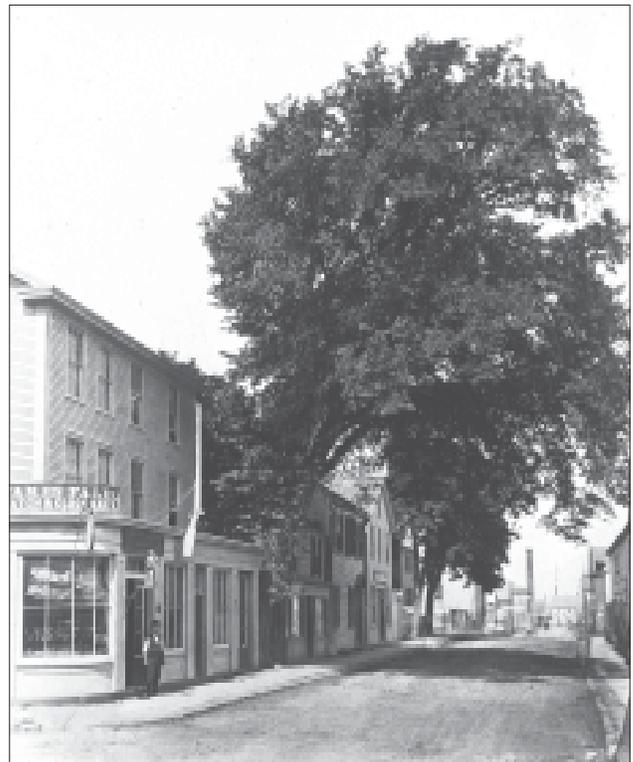
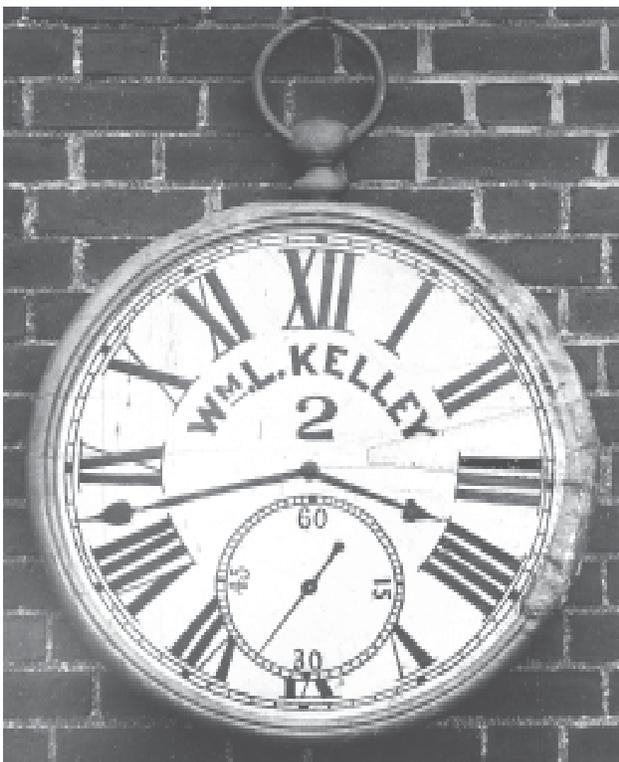
Figure 41: Corner of Union and North Second Streets, looking east towards the waterfront, 1849. Fixed wooden awnings protect the entrances of Union Street's retail shops, including those of the Mansion House, the three-story building with Ionic columns at center. The "young mountain rock" is to the east.

While many of the prosperous merchants of nineteenth-century New Bedford laid out formal gardens among the more practical grounds of their "working farmsteads," the extraordinary infrastructure and plant material of the Arnold gardens enjoyed widespread renown, including recognition by landscape designer Andrew Jackson Downing.<sup>146</sup> Many a visitor would have tarried among the vernal diversions of "peaceful Arnold's garden, the antithesis of roaring storm and breaking wave," before plunging into the teeming activity along the waterfront.<sup>147</sup>

During the week one would have joined the lively foot and carriage traffic, passing in front of the Unitarian and First Congregational Churches along Union Street and within two blocks of the Center Chapel, the Friends Meeting House, and the municipal market to the north and south of the thoroughfare. Continuing eastward down the hill, the tree-lined residential neighborhood gave way to an increasingly commercial district. Just past the Eagle Hotel and the American House at the Purchase Street intersection, from what was Third Street (now Acushnet Avenue and the western boundary of the park), was "a regular beehive of industry."<sup>148</sup> All the lead-

ing retail businesses, as well as many of the city's most elegant accommodations, were located here.

The sheer vitality of the neighborhood merits close analysis. Under the wooden awnings that covered Union Street's sidewalks thronged a lively crowd, including many of women of the town who came to purchase household staples at the grocery and dry goods shops lining the street (Figure 41). Three principal dealers in Tallman's block, the dry goods center of the town, occupied one of the six brick buildings then on the street.<sup>149</sup> Trade signs advertised the goods and services of local artisans and proprietors, including the watch shop of Allen and Zeno Kelley at the northwest corner of Water Street, and Elisha Thornton's apothecary shop to the west (Figures 42 through 45). A barber pole in front of Perry and West's shop east of Front Street distinguished the establishment of these "fashion plates in tonsorial arts." Cupolas atop many of the building served as watchtowers for "sharks," or outfitter runners, who would hasten to the harbor to ply their wares among the incoming whalers (Figure 46).<sup>150</sup> The Merchants' Block, the brick building at the southeast corner of Front Street housing flour, grain, grocery, and oil merchants as well as a



Figures 42 (top) and 43 (above): Ax-blade trade sign, ca. 1845 and pocket watch trade sign, ca. 1880. Trade signs, hung perpendicular to the building, advertised the goods and services offered by New Bedford's merchants and artisans. The ax-blade hung above the waterfront shop of blacksmith Braddock Hathaway. William Kelley suspended the pocket watch sign from a bracket shaped in the form of old spectacles above the entrance of his watch and jewelry shop at Union and Purchase Streets.

Figures 44 (top) and 45 (above): Little Navigator and James Fales Watch Shop, looking north along North Water Street, ca. 1878. This painted white pine carving stood above the door of James Fales Jr.'s watch shop. Notice the trade signs that advertise the services of the watch and gunsmiths occupying this building. The elm trees, planted when mansions lined the street earlier in the century, were later removed.



Figure 46: Union Street, looking east from Purchase Street, ca. 1870. The watchtower atop the fourth building on the north side of the street is probably a relic of the days of New Bedford's whaling glory, when "sharks" would watch for incoming whalers.



Figure 47: Merchants Block, late nineteenth century. A sail loft was located on the top floor of this brick block at the corner of Union and Front Streets. Merchants occupied the lower floors. The building is no longer standing.



Figures 48 (above) and 49 (right): Sundial Building, ca. 1890 and Marine Bank Building, ca. 1869. Constructed during the 1820s, these low buildings were among the six brick structures on the lower part of Union Street at mid-century. The Sundial Building still stands at the northwest corner of Union and North Water Streets. The bank was demolished in 1972.

sail loft on the top floor, was within two blocks of one of the most fashionable hotels of the day (Figure 47). The Mansion House, the former home of the late William Rotch Sr., had been converted to a hotel upon his death in 1828 and hosted such distinguished guests as John Quincy Adams.<sup>151</sup> The poplars once gracing the edge of the property had been cut down upon its conversion to commercial use in conformance with the utilitarian streetscape that prevailed close to the waterfront, but the neighborhood offered alternative diversions. In the Sundial Building, a three-story brick structure constructed by Charles and Seth Russell around 1820, the Evening Standard installed New Bedford's first plate glass window in 1850, from which they displayed a popular series of local "curiosities" (Figures 48 and 49).<sup>152</sup>

Empty lots, including one near northeast corner of Bethel Street upon which stood the great rock "where many a boy spoiled his trousers," were under development.<sup>153</sup> The open spaces and residential gardens that had characterized Union Street in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century gave way to a dense cluster of commercial establishments. In 1845 the 150 merchants and professionals who did business on the five blocks of Union Street east of Purchase Street included silversmiths, watchmakers, daguerreotype artists, tailors, hatters, architects, auctioneers, painters, dentists, physicians, railroad offices, ship chandlers, miniature artists, carvers, gilders, retail salesmen, and restaurant proprietors (Appendix 3).<sup>154</sup>

Shopping was not the only activity that drew County Street residents to the waterfront. Parades often initiated pub-



Figure 50: North Water Street, looking north from Union Street, mid-1860s. Excavations during the installation of the municipal water system temporarily interrupted traffic along New Bedford's "Wall Street." Many typical elements of the waterfront streetscape, including granite runners, hitching posts, and gas lamps, are visible. The elm for which Elm Street is named, seen at center, was one of the few street tree plantings in the Four Corners area.



Figure 52: Andrew Robeson House, corner of North Second and William Streets, mid-nineteenth century. Robeson built his two-story brick home, surrounded by elms, gardens, and a white picket fence, in 1821. The solarium was removed and the house's front façade obscured by a brick warehouse in the 1880s.

lic festivities, beginning their route on the grounds of the Arnold mansion and passing the crowds lining Union Street before winding up Water Street and across the bridge to Fairhaven. Most of the men of New Bedford's "aristocracy" beat a daily path to the counting houses along the wharves and to the financial institutions and insurance agencies that had grown along Water Street in conjunction with the profits of the whaling industry (Figure 50 and 51). Hitching posts and mounting blocks placed in front of elegant façades gave evidence of the district's traffic of respectable propri-



Figure 51: North Water Street, looking south from William Street, ca. 1870. The National Bank of Commerce, which occupied the A-frame building pictured at center for 50 years beginning in 1833, stood diagonally across the street from the Double Bank Building. With the exception of the horse font, added following the completion of a public water system in 1869, this scene portrays the features of this lively waterfront neighborhood at mid-century.



Figure 53: Benjamin Rodman House, ca. 1870. Rodman built this house on North Second Street in 1821. His mother, Elizabeth Rotch Rodman, lived here from 1836 until 1856. The family sold the property in 1872. The house stands on its original foundations, though the northern addition, foyer, balustrade, and fence have been removed.

etors and their clientele. The Mozart Society, the Athenaeum, and the New Bedford Reading Room were among the establishments catering to a gentleman's leisurely pursuits in the business district. Moreover, the whaling elite had not wholly abandoned the district to business. The families of Andrew Robeson and Benjamin Rodman maintained their stately homes and gardens along North Second Street through the middle of the century, preserving the last vestiges of a once elegant neighborhood inhabited by "the better class of the time" (Figures 52 and 53).<sup>155</sup>



Figure 54: Corner of Centre and Front Streets, ca. 1879. Without the awnings and picture windows of Union Street's retail shops, the buildings that lined the streets of the working waterfront presented rather austere façades. Simple signs advertised William Watkins's offices in the Tallman Building, a 1790 brick warehouse that is still standing,



Figure 55: Front Street shops, ca. 1890. Many artisans employed in whaling-related industries kept shops on Front Street. Most of the low wooden buildings constructed along the waterfront during the nineteenth century were razed when Route 18 was constructed in the 1970s. Notice the granite runners that ran the length of the street.



Figure 56: New Bedford waterfront, 1867. Spars, casks, and piles of wood and bricks are the sole ornamentation in this utilitarian landscape. The ship cruising in the middle of the harbor is the USS Constitution.

The view from the financial institutions along Water Street stretched eastward downhill to the waterfront, giving way to an almost unobstructed view of the harbor. Little of the finery that characterized many of the streets in New Bedford's commercial and residential districts could be found along Rodman, Hamilton, Centre, and Front Streets. The cobbled streets of the working waterfront plainly demonstrated their utility: flagged sidewalks for pedestrian traffic lined one side of the street, while granite runners often extended along the opposite side to accommodate the possibly more important movement of cargo.

Despite the damage sustained during several devastating fires, these streets maintained a characteristic line of low-lying wooden structures housing the workshops of maritime artisans.<sup>156</sup> Several three- and four-story brick and stone structures interrupted the streetscape, but there was little in design or detailing that proclaimed the prosperity found elsewhere in the city (Figure 54, 55 and 56). Unlike County and Union Streets, the narrow, often grungy streets at the edge of the waterfront lacked the landscaping and storefronts that encouraged visitors to tarry.<sup>157</sup> While the city's elite sought recreation



Figures 57 (top), 58 (middle), and 59 (above): Scenes along the Point Road. A wide road was laid out in the well-wooded area at the city's southern end, affording a pleasure drive to New Bedford's elite. Private carriages transported County Street residents to shaded paths and bathing pavilions near Clark's Point.

Figures 60 (top), 61 (middle), and 62 (above): Scenes along the waterfront, mid-nineteenth century. The harborfront, the source of the city's prosperity, provided an alternative view of city life. Workers moved through the sea of oil casks that covered the wharves. Seaweed protected the precious cargo from sunlight until processing.



Figure 63: Central Wharf, ca. 1870. The Taber Block, which housed sailmakers, chandleries, counting rooms, and other maritime trades, prevailed over a sea of whale-oil casks.

in the pavilions and sweet-smelling meadows along the Point Road near Clark's Point, the astute observer discerned a more telling scene in the drama of New Bedford's rise to wealth and renown.<sup>158</sup> There, ornament was limited to the means of production and did little to detract from the awe-inspiring scene of a vast expanse of seaweed-covered oil casks extending along the wharves towards New Bedford's whaling fleet (Figures 57 through 62). As one commentator noted, the products of New Bedford's labor:

saturated the soil, and the air was redolent with the heavy odor. After a century in which it was the dis-

tinctive New Bedford smell it has vanished excepting from this little spot where, in the only place on earth, is exhaled the odor of the industry which produced great fortunes and made the New Bedford of old the richest city in the country in proportion to its population.<sup>159</sup>

There, among the enormous casks at the edge of the harbor, before a skyline dominated by ships' masts and church steeples, one found the very essence of New Bedford's Golden Age of Whaling. It was, perhaps, portentous that the view stretched westward (Figure 63).

THE INDUSTRIAL CITY, 1858–1914

A PYRRHIC VICTORY: THE “ONWARD PROGRESS OF THE WHALING BUSINESS”

New Bedford’s meteoric rise to the forefront of the whaling industry brought its own tragic harbingers of doom. The panic of 1857 cut short prosperity’s triumphant reign and the high prices of oil, once viewed as evidence of “no limit to the onward progress of the whaling business,” began a steady decline. In part, the very success of New Bedford’s whaling endeavors carried the seeds of its demise: the high prices of whale products spurred the search for alternative fuels and lubricants. In a June 1852 edition of the *Whaleman’s Shipping List and Merchants’ Transcript*, an editorial Cassandra decried the substitution of natural gas for whale oil as an illuminant in the city’s street lamps:

Gas—gas in New Bedford, the oil market of the earth! What an example to set the world! What a caving in! What a ridiculous concession to ridiculous fashion! Who will buy our commodity after this? You may flare and flout your gas-lights ever so bravely—they will only light our city to the tomb. In five years we predict, she will be a bigger ruin than Carthage. The ships will all be gone, the inhabitants all dead, the whales will fresh and start at their leisure...and what good we should stop to ask will your gas-lights do you then?<sup>160</sup>

The commentator’s histrionic statement foretold the industry’s near future. Seven years later, the discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania signaled the beginning of the end.<sup>161</sup> Kerosene quickly replaced whale oil as an affordable fuel, further depressing the sperm oil market. The replacement of whale-oil lubricants with petroleum alternatives contributed to the industry’s decline; between 1859 and 1896, the price of sperm oil plummeted from \$1.28 to \$.40 per gallon.

During the last three decades of the century, a growing demand for whalebone, or baleen, kept New Bedford’s whalers afloat.<sup>162</sup> Little used before 1830, by century’s end baleen had become the most important source of revenue for the American whaling industry. Due to its strength and flexibility, baleen was used in manufacturing of a wide array of consumer products, including whips, umbrellas, probangs, tongue scrapers, divining rods, shoehorns, billiard cushion springs, policeman’s clubs, painters’ graining combs, and, most importantly, corset



Figure 64: Wasp-waisted Abbie Gifford Rogers, of nearby Fairhaven, ca. 1880.

**The Comfort Corset**  
 FOR LADIES AND CHILDREN.  
 A SKIRT and Stocking Supporter.

**Comfort Corset.**

**For the Child's Shoulder Water; also the "Fairy Waist."**

**LIBERAL DISCOUNTS TO AGENTS AND THE TRADE.**

**Boston Comfort Corset Company,**  
 78 Chumney Street, Boston, Mass.

Figure 65: Advertisement for ladies corsets, ca. 1910. The Comfort Corset’s replacement of baleen with stiff cord offered “ease and comfort” to fashion-conscious women and contributed to the final collapse of the whaling markets.

stays. It was the wasp-waisted fashions of the time that buttressed the market (Figure 64). Baleen prices continued to rise long after the demand for the industry's other products had declined. Between 1866 and 1903 the price of one pound of baleen rose from \$.79 to \$6.03. However the development of alternative materials, coupled with a change in consumer tastes, led to the collapse of the baleen market in the early decades of the twentieth century (Figure 65).<sup>163</sup>

While the vagaries of fashion sustained the industry between 1875 and 1895, New Bedford's industrial landscape was perhaps a more revealing assessment of whaling's future. In 1860 there was already one kerosene distillery in New Bedford, as well as two companies that refined petroleum into a practical and highly profitable illuminant. When the United States government chose lard oil as an alternative fuel for its lighthouses in 1871, the ruin of New Bedford whaling seemed inevitable.<sup>164</sup>

Another western discovery further contributed to the industry's downward spiral. Opportunities for easy wealth during the California gold rush induced adventurous seamen to neglect their duties and abandon whaling expeditions when the ships docked in California. The heavy advances needed to attract qualified crews, in addition to the rising costs of insurance for Arctic hunting, added to the merchants' financial woes. Job opportunities in other industries, often offering a safer work environment and steadier wages, also reduced the labor pool of skilled seamen. Despite such technological advances as the whaling gun, profits continued to decline as skilled labor and the industry's elusive prey became increasingly scarce.<sup>165</sup>

Further technological innovations added to New Bedford's litany of troubles. The completion of a transcontinental railroad in 1869 not only expedited the distribution of whaling products, but also obviated the need for the return of the Arctic fleet to New Bedford. Whaling vessels made repeated voyages to fertile northern Pacific whaling grounds, using San Francisco as a home port for processing and refitting. Steam-powered vessels put competitive pressure on wind-driven whalers, and factory ships, huge vessels that allowed crews to refine raw resources at sea, reduced the fleet's dependence on its home port. Moreover, the frugal proprietors of New Bedford's counting houses were reluctant to embrace new technologies. Perhaps discouraged by high construction and operating costs, the sullen owners of New Bedford's aging fleet continued to "hug her oil casks."

While the number of New Bedford whaling vessels had begun to decline around 1860, the destruction of a substan-

tial portion of the fleet in a series of disasters over the next two decades dealt the industry a blow from which it would never recover (Table 5). During the Civil War, 40 ships left New Bedford as part of the "stone fleet" and were scuttled in the Charleston and Savannah harbors in a failed attempt to blockade the ports. The whaling fleet also fell victim to Confederate privateers, who destroyed 28 New Bedford ships. The threats from the rebel cruisers, together with rising insurance costs, encouraged a number of merchants to sell their ships to the federal government. Another 22 ships were lost in September 1871, when crews were forced to abandon the ice-bound Arctic fleet. A similar disaster in 1876 claimed 13 more ships and 50 lives. One commentator remarked, after the loss of three more New Bedford ships in a gale off of Point Barrow, that "scarcely a season goes by without some similar disaster, and the whole life of an Arctic whaler is crowded with danger and suffering."<sup>166</sup> While the *Mary & Helen*, a steam-powered whaler, was the first of five such vessels added to the New Bedford fleet beginning in 1880, the city's merchants already had chosen not to rebuild the ravaged fleet. By 1897 New Bedford's whaling fleet had dwindled to 19 ships and barks, one brig, and 12 schooners.<sup>167</sup>

Table 5. New Bedford whaling fleet and value of catch, 1855-85<sup>168</sup>

Year	Vessels	Value of Catch
1855	314	\$5,283,120
1860	301	4,216,696
1865	175	2,870,838
1870	176	2,981,012
1875	107	2,382,456
1880	125	2,014,688
1885	85	1,429,544

In 1874 most whaling vessels owned by New Bedford interests were based in San Francisco. This wholesale transition to Pacific whaling represented a tremendous loss to New Bedford's maritime support industries, since local provisioners and artisans no longer serviced and outfitted the city's fleet. One observer noted that the wharves were idle and:

fringed with dismantled ships. Cargoes of oil covered with seaweed were stowed in the ships along the waterfront, waiting for a satisfactory market that never came. Every returning whaler increased the depression.<sup>169</sup>

When the *Wanderer*, the last whaling ship to be fitted out in New Bedford, sank off the coast of Cuttyhunk Island in August 1924, the industry's lingering denouement was brought to a fittingly dramatic conclusion.

#### WEAVING A NEW FABRIC OF WEALTH: THE RISE OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

While New Bedford may have hugged her oil casks, the foundations for a new economy had been laid well before the old one came crashing down. In 1814 Captain Whelden, a retired sea captain who had served as a boatsteerer on the *Rebecca* when she made her first voyage around Cape Horn, built what is reputed to have been the first cotton textile factory in Massachusetts. Like many of the small fulling, carding, and cotton mills along the Acushnet River during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, the unsuccessful Whelden Mill ceased operations shortly after its establishment. Samuel Rodman's New Bedford Steam Mill Company, established on Rodman's Wharf in 1845 for the manufacture of "cotton goods and the grinding of corn," met a similar fate, ceasing operations in 1852. However Wamsutta Mills, which incorporated during the same year and began operations in 1849, represented the successful beginning of New Bedford's economic and industrial transition.<sup>170</sup>

Wamsutta Mills proved highly profitable and paid dividends of more than 300 percent during its first 25 years of operation.<sup>171</sup> Despite its success, no other mills were established until the founding of Potomska Mill in 1871. The Wamsutta Mills buildings remained relatively alone at the northern edge of the city (Figures 66 and 67). However the marked decline of the whaling industry following the Civil War, together with the creation of a public water works in December 1869, encouraged investments in the fledgling industry. The two Arctic disasters redirected most of New Bedford's whaling capital and many of New Bedford's merchant families, overcoming their initial reluctance to invest in textile production, took the fortuitous step that allowed them to continue to dominate local finance and commerce.

By 1882 Wamsutta Mills employed more than 2,600 operatives in its four buildings and Potomska Mills engaged more than 1,000 operatives in its two mills along South Water Street.<sup>172</sup> Fourteen mills opened by the close of the nineteenth century, followed by a dozen more new mill complexes in the next ten years. The 32 cotton manufacturing companies incorporated between 1881 and 1914 were worth over \$100 million and employed more than 30,000 workers (Table 6). In



Figure 66: Detail map of New Bedford, 1851. In 1848, when Thomas Bennett Jr. and Joseph Grinnell built the first Wamsutta Mill at the northern edge of the city, New Bedford's commercial center remained near the Four Corners.

the last decade of the century, New Bedford ranked third in the number of spindles in operation for cotton manufacturing in the United States, trailing behind only Fall River and Lowell.<sup>173</sup>

By 1890 surplus capital in the city funded operations in several other industries including the American Bobbin Spool & Shuttle Company, the New Bedford Copper Company, and the Turkham & Gifford shoe factory. Hathaway, Soule, and Harrington's shoe factory and the Morse Twist Drill and Machine Company were among the six businesses that employed more than 100 employees. The opening of the Mount

Table 6. Top Cotton Manufacturers in New Bedford, 1892<sup>174</sup>

Corporation	Year Est.	Capital (\$1000)	Spindles (1000)	Looms	Product
Acushnet Mills	1882	800	108	2,700	Fine goods
Bennet Mfg. Co.	1889	700	100	—	Fine goods, yarn
City Mfg. Corp.	1888	600	64	—	Cotton yarn
Grinnell Mfg. Corp.	1882	800	70	1,837	Fine goods
Hathaway Mfg. Corp.	1888	400	45	1,000	Fine goods
Howland Mills Corp.	1888	1,000	78	—	Cotton yarn
New Bedford Mfg. Co.	1883	500	37	—	Cotton yarn
Potomska Mills	1871	1,200	108	2,734	Fine & coarse cloth
Wamsutta Mills	1846	3,000	220	4,200	Fine cloth, sheeting
Oneko Mills	1882	210	4.5	63	Woolens



Figure 67: Wamsutta Mills, ca 1850. Wamsutta's first mill building was portrayed in a pastoral setting, reflecting the fact that the site was well north of the settled parts of the city.

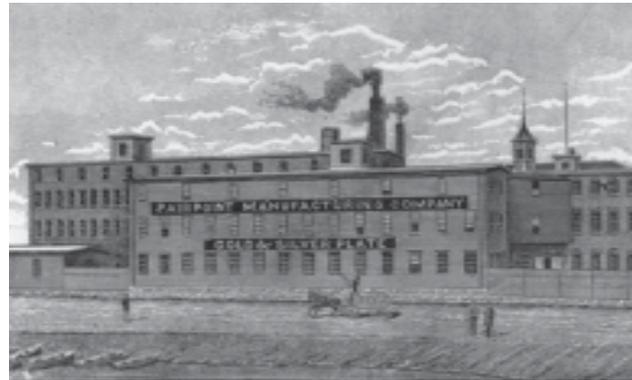


Figure 68: Pairpoint Manufacturing Company, ca. 1880. Pairpoint's facilities, constructed at the corner of Prospect and Howland Streets in 1880, reflected the increased scale of buildings along the waterfront. The needs of most of the city's industry in the second half of the nineteenth century led investors to vacant sites outside the boundaries of the current National Historical Park.



Figure 69: Smith Brothers decorative glass shop, ca. 1890. The Smith Brothers workshop and retail store were located in this wood frame building on William Street, between Water and North Second Streets.

Washington Glass Works and the Pairpoint Manufacturing Company, in 1869 and 1880 respectively, gave prominence to the city as a glass manufacturing center (Figure 68).<sup>175</sup>

Within the current park, set among the remnants of the faltering whaling industry, could be found evidence of New Bedford's industrial renewal. Pierce & Bushnell, established in 1870, manufactured picture frames, photographs, and art novelties at their facilities on North Water Street. Not far from there, the Smith Brothers established the showroom of their decorative glass works at 28-30 William Street around 1884 (Figure 69). In New Bedford's industrial boom, even some of the skeletons of the whaling era received a new lease on life; J.C. Rhodes Company, the nation's largest manufacturer of eyelets, washers, and fasteners, moved into the Thayer and Judd Paraffine Works in Rotch's Square, near the corner of Front and Rodman Streets, in 1891 (Figure 70).<sup>176</sup>

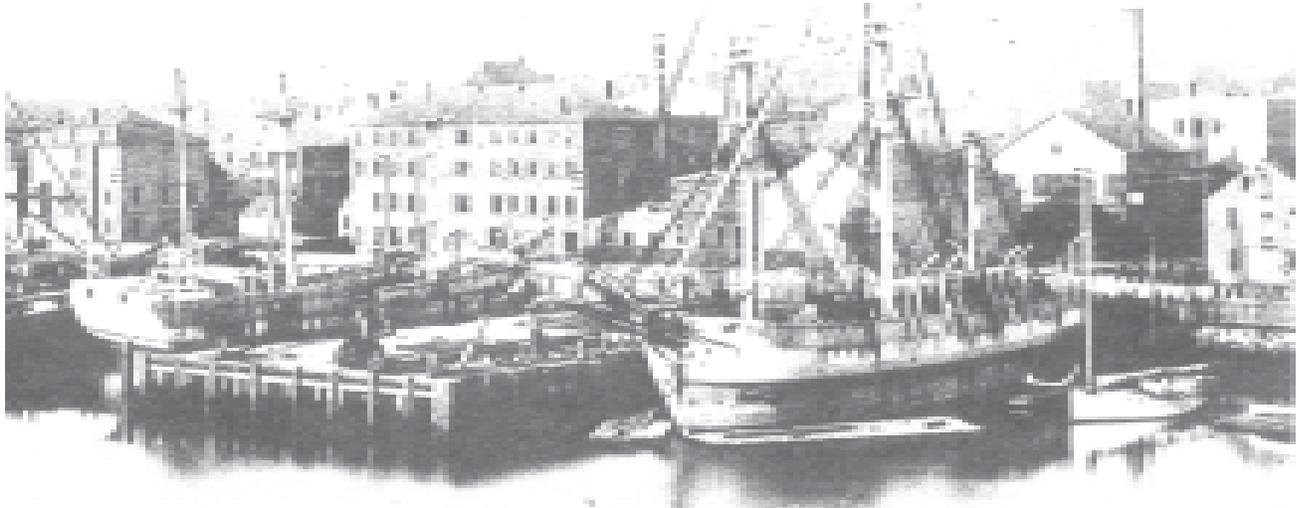


Figure 70: Rotch's Wharves, 1892. J.C. Rhodes Company occupied the Old Thayer and Judd Paraffine Works, the four-story building at center. The building to the left belonged to the New Bedford Cordage Company. Further up Front Street, Gifford and Allen Brass Foundry operated in the building with the square chimney. One of the old whalers moored beside the wharf had been partially demasted, further evidence of the waterfront's change of fortune.

#### THE CHANGING FACE OF NEW BEDFORD: A DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION

At the turn of the century, New Bedford's waterfront was increasingly silent and neglected, except at the docks where coal and cotton were unloaded. The tremendous profits realized in the textile industry encouraged rapid expansion and the industry reached its peak, employing more than 35,000 workers in 1924. As one historian has noted, the industrialization of New Bedford was not "simply an economic process; it drastically transformed the social fabric of the community."<sup>177</sup>

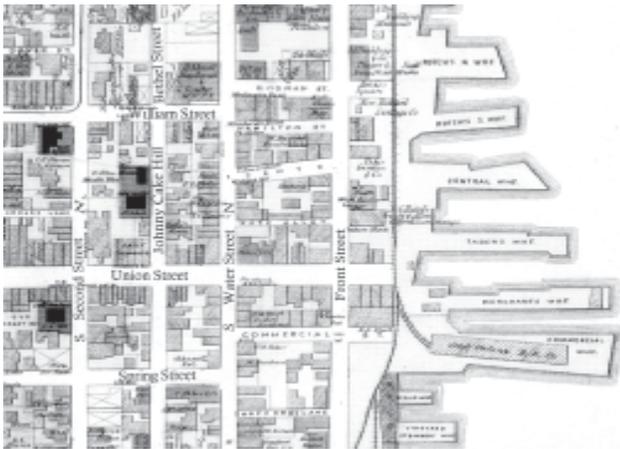
Between 1870 and 1880 New Bedford's population increased by 26 percent, largely due to the influx of immigrants who came to work in textile mills. In this first wave of immigration, the majority of mill workers came from Ireland or the Lancashire region of England, with a small, but significant French-Canadian presence. As growth in the textile industry continued, the city's population doubled, from 26,840 to 62,442 between 1880 and 1900, and then grew to 120,000 residents by 1920. At the time, 50 percent of jobs in the city were in the mills, and nine out of ten of these jobs were held by first- or second-generation Americans. French-Canadians comprised 40 percent of the mill employees, while a large number of Portuguese families began to arrive at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>178</sup> In 1890 the Portuguese community accounted for 14 percent of the immigrant population, growing to 19 percent within a decade. By 1920 the Portuguese constituted New Bedford's dominant ethnic group.<sup>179</sup>



Figure 71: Grinnell Mill housing, early twentieth century. Mill operations brought growing numbers of employees and their families to New Bedford's North and South Ends. This view of Grinnell Mill housing along the North End's Ashley Boulevard depicts the standardized construction and Belgian block streets that characterized the city's newer neighborhoods, a scene of uniformity and order that stood in contrast to the Four Corners area.

This drastic increase in population spurred much new construction, including mills and worker housing, municipal and public buildings, schools, churches, and commercial properties, as well as a new bridge to Fairhaven. Densely populated working class neighborhoods surrounded the mill complexes at the northern and southern ends of the city. One historian noted that:

the city's structure changed dramatically because the city's workers lived in town rather than on the whaling ships and were paid a weekly wage rather than a share



Figures 72 (top) and 73 (above): Views of the waterfront, 1876 and 1881. The New Bedford Railroad extended its tracks in 1876 to capitalize on the increasing traffic at the steamship wharf. The tracks whisked bales of cotton to the mills at the city's North and South Ends. Also note that the trolley line to Fairhaven, depicted above, bypasses Union Street and the Four Corners.



Figure 74: Steamship Wharf, ca. 1888. Aging whalers shared the harbor with steamships beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. The vessel at the end of the wharf, Tamerlane, was built in 1824. In 1888 she joined the New Bedford fleet in San Francisco and was wrecked off the coast of Hawaii four years later, yet another ghost of the city's once impressive fleet.



Figure 75: New Bedford skyline, looking east from Purchase Street, ca. 1890. The dwindling number of ships along the wharves near the once vibrant Four Corners signaled the demise of New Bedford whaling.

of the catch at the end of three- to five-year voyages. Stores sprung up, selling food, clothing and other essentials to the city's rapidly growing population.<sup>180</sup>

New streets were laid out to keep pace with the growing demand for housing, particularly at the edges of the city, where mill owners built tenement housing for their employees. The Wamsutta, Potomska, and Grinnell corporations provided basic tenements in an attempt to attract skilled workers during the early decades of production, while the Howland Manufacturing Company constructed single family, Dutch colonial cottages, with yards and gardens, to a similar end (Figure 71).<sup>181</sup>

Ethnic groups coalesced in these mill neighborhoods. Seventy-five percent of the immigrant population in the last decade of the nineteenth century lived in Wards One and Six. In the city's South End (Ward Six), near the former playground for the wealthy at Clark's Cove, lived most of New Bedford's English, Irish, Portuguese, and Cape Verdean population, while



Poles and a second Portuguese community inhabited the North End (Ward One).<sup>182</sup> By the turn of the century, New Bedford had overgrown its earlier, more compact boundaries and covered an area of more than 19 square miles. Perhaps ironically, the social elite remained in neighborhoods relatively close to the city's financial neighborhood and to its mostly silent and deserted waterfront streets.<sup>183</sup>

New Bedford's harbor remained vital to the city's economic life, but bales of cotton had replaced the mighty casks of whale oil that had once crowded the wharves. As industrial docks for the raw materials and finished goods of the textile industry, the city's wharves endured a lively cargo traffic. In 1876, the New Bedford Railroad extended its tracks to the steamboat wharf to connect the city's mills to a the new steamship line that had departed regularly for New York since 1874. In addition, the introduction of ferry service to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket brought a diverse and continual stream of passengers to the area, but the appearance of the waterfront had changed greatly. Streetcar service whisked debarking passengers to the city's new retail and residential centers, while the local railroad depot offered eight daily trains to Taunton, with connections to Boston (Figures 72 and 73). Steamships replaced New Bedford's



Figure 76: New Bedford skyline, looking southeast from Pleasant Street, ca. 1910. This view of the city's South End provides a symbolic contrast to earlier harbor vistas. The smokestacks in the distance, most of which belonged to the textile mills, replaced ships' masts as the most graphic representation of the city's wealth.

old whaling fleet at the docks, and railroad spurs rendered the granite runners along the waterfront streets obsolete in the land transport of cargo. Along the waterfront, factory chimneys had replaced ships' masts as the dominant element in the New Bedford skyline (Figures 74 through 76).



Figure 77: Corner of Union and Purchase Streets, ca. 1890. Cloth awnings shaded the sidewalks that ran along brick blocks of retail stores in New Bedford's new downtown. Professional offices, including those of a dentist above a ladies dress shop, followed retail migration westward, toward Purchase Street. Belgian block replaced the cobblestone between the trolley tracks on these increasingly frequented streets.



Figure 79: Shops along Union Street, ca. 1890. Businesses along Union Street, including J.B. Baylie's auction rooms and Lysander Howland's cabinetmaking shop near Acushnet Avenue, catered to a largely male clientele. The closing decade of the nineteenth century clearly marked a gendering of space, with most women avoiding the harborfront altogether.

The diminishing importance of the waterfront in the daily lives of New Bedford's residents was reflected in the content and character of its commercial neighborhoods. With the exception of secondary business operations related to the maritime trades, most of the city's retail shops had migrated westward from the waterfront to the brick blocks of commercial buildings along Purchase Street (Figure 77). Professional offices followed the general westward migration of public and business establishments.

The rise of a new downtown parallel to the waterfront pointed to a significant transition in the institutional, commercial, and social life of the city. Purchase Street's north-south orientation reflected the increasing importance of New Bedford's



Figure 78: Union Street, looking east from Acushnet Avenue, ca. 1880s. The westward migration, though rapid, was not immediate. Small shops continued to line Union Street, although the Four Corners was rapidly losing even its daytime veneer of fashion and respectability.



Figure 80: Selmar Eggers Building, ca. 1885. Retail business did not wholly desert the waterfront area. Eggers built the wood frame building on the southeastern end of William Street that housed his gun and locksmith shop from 1872 until 1925. The shop was damaged in a 1977 gas explosion and moved to the corner of Union Street and Johnny Cake Hill after its restoration during the following year.

industrial poles. By the turn of the century, Union Street, formerly the city's main thoroughfare and the vital connection between New Bedford's most important commercial and residential districts, had ceased to be the axis of influence and power (Figures 78 through 80). During the first decades of the twentieth century, the Four Corners appeared increasingly neglected (Figures 81 and 82). Johnny Cake Hill, the site of New Bedford's first Quaker school and the former home to the city's premier whaling family, hosted a growing number of "seamen's services." Tawdry boardinghouses and flophouses stood in the shadow of the Seamen's Bethel. The Mansion House, once a fine hotel that catered to the local literati and visiting New England dignitaries, gave way to a host of more unsavory accommodations.



Figures 81 (above) and 82 (right): Two views from the intersection of Union and Water Streets, early twentieth century. The dilapidated shops in the Four Corners area gave this former commercial center a decidedly neglected air.



Figure 83: Johnny Cake Hill, looking north from Union Street, 1907. The worn buildings that ascended the hill, then known as Bethel Street, catered to a dwindling seaman population. The Avery Parker house and the fountain that stands before it were removed by mid-century.



Figure 84: View of Johnny Cake Hill from the Seamen's Bethel, ca. 1910. These buildings, located across from the Bethel on the former site of New Bedford's first Quaker school, were demolished to make way for the New Bedford Whaling Museum in 1916.

When fire damaged this former home of William Rotch Sr. in 1928, the building was demolished, signaling the end of an era and erasing one of the finest examples of the district's early grandeur (Figures 83 through 85).

Traces of New Bedford's industrial transition were recorded in the waterfront streetscapes. In 1875 the wharves extending from Howland to Maxfield Streets were the site of industrial development that included iron and gas works, glass works, coal houses, a wood-planing company, and lumber yards (Figure 86).<sup>184</sup> Newly constructed buildings housed various manufacturing and processing facilities along the central waterfront (Figures 87 and 88). The Four Corners area remained a mix of businesses and services. Charles Taber & Company maintained a lively art trade, manufacturing ambrotypes, picture frames,

and moldings, and reproducing engravings and photographs in five buildings near the intersection of Union and Water Streets.<sup>185</sup> In a small shop next to David Russell's cabinetmaking studio on Rodman Street, Luscomb & Corey began manufacturing special machinery in 1885 (Figure 89). David Snell transferred the operations of his patent bakery to the converted Rodman mansion at William and Water Streets, where he produced plain and fancy biscuits. The Robeson and Benjamin Rodman mansions on North Second Street were also converted to commercial use, housing a combination of retail shops, a billiard hall, and warehouse storage (Figure 90).<sup>186</sup> Tinkham, Reed, & Gifford manufactured boots and shoes nearby in a three-story building located next to the Germania Hotel and across Barker's Lane from the Sheridan Hotel.<sup>187</sup>



Figure 85: Union Street, looking east toward Taber's Wharf, ca. 1900. The Mansion House, the recessed building on the north side of the street, is pictured as it appeared during its final decades of business. The wooden awnings of the first floor shops are long gone. The carbon arc light suspended above the Second Street intersection and the steamship in the distance represent major changes in the late-nineteenth-century landscape.



Figure 86: Middle Street, looking east toward North Water Street, early twentieth century. The tall chimneys of the Corson Coal Company dominated the view down Market Street toward the waterfront. The facilities of the Bay State Chair Company replaced the sail lofts that had once occupied the upper floors of the Parker Block, the three-story building at the end of the street.



Figure 87: Corner of Union and Front Streets, ca. 1897. Stephen Brownell, the New Bedford agent for Armour and Company, constructed the building beside the Taber Block in 1887. The Taber Block, at the head of Taber's Wharf, had housed sailmakers, chandleries, agents, and other maritime trades and services since the middle of the nineteenth century. Hitching posts and granite runners were reminders among the new construction of a bygone era.



Figure 88: Central Wharf, ca. 1900. This view from Central Wharf looks past the whaling schooner Pedro Varela toward Front and Centre Streets. J.C. Rhodes constructed the four-story brick building at right, leaving its facilities in the old Thayer and Judd Paraffine Works at Rotch's Square at the turn of the century. The company transferred its manufacturing operations to the Industrial Park when the building was demolished in 1976.



Figure 89: Rodman Street, ca. 1900. Luscomb & Corey began manufacturing special machinery in the building at center in 1885.



Figure 90: Benjamin Rodman House, 1960. The Rodman House appears here much as it did in 1890, when storefronts completely enclosed the granite Federal-style mansion.



Figures 91 (above left), 92 (left) and 93 (above): Three views of the U.S. Custom House, ca. 1860, 1880, and 1890. The tree and iron fence that stood at the southwest corner of William and North Second Streets at mid-century were removed within 20 years. By 1890 a utility pole replaced the gas fixture on the corner and cobblestone streets had been repaved with Belgian block. The arc lamp suspended in the upper right foreground of the later photo was typical of electric fixtures that illuminated nonresidential districts.



Figure 94: William Street, looking west from North Second Street, ca. 1890. A network of wires linked business and financial institutions near the waterfront to offices and services located outside the current boundaries of the park.

As in the earlier decades of the century, alterations to the late-nineteenth-century streetscape were largely practical modifications. The introduction of horse-drawn street cars in 1872 required the repaving of some sections of William, North Second, and Middle Streets along which the tracks were laid. Belgian blocks gradually replaced the worn cobblestones of many of the city's streets, providing a smoother ride for the carriage and, after 1900, automobile traffic that had taken over the streets. Most of the trees disappeared from the waterfront district, the victims of disease, natural deterioration, and industrial development (Figures 91 through 93). The graceful trunks and arching branches of the few trees that had adorned the streetscape at mid-century were replaced by the rigid regularity of utility poles and the tangle of wires that linked commerce and industry with the modern conveniences of electric lighting and telephone service. Carbon arc lamps, suspended on adjustable arms that overhung intersections, replaced gaslights on many of the main streets (Figures 94).<sup>188</sup>

During the last two decades of the century, commercial brick structures replaced many of the wooden buildings that had been converted to retail use along the stretch of Union Street closest to the waterfront. In addition, three new bank buildings were erected in the district. In 1883 the National



Figure 95: National Bank of Commerce, North Water Street, ca. 1890. The bank erected the three-story brick and brownstone structure at center on the site its old banking house had occupied since 1833. Its front façade was unusually ornamented with terra-cotta details. The Ionic pilasters and balustrade along the roofline have since been removed. Stock auctioneers Sanford and Kelly occupied the low building next door.



Figure 96: William Street, looking west toward Acushnet Avenue, 1888. The New Bedford Safe Deposit and Trust Company occupied a section of the brick building in the foreground. The structure was typical of late nineteenth century construction in the area that comprises the park.

Bank of Commerce erected a three-story brick and brownstone building on the site of its old banking house on Water Street (Figure 95). Four years later the New Bedford Safe Deposit and Trust Company moved into a section of the three-story brick block that had been constructed on the site of the Robeson gardens in 1877 (Figure 96). Shortly thereafter, in 1891, the Citizen's National Bank moved from its quarters near the intersection of Water and Centre Streets to the Romanesque-style sandstone and brick building at the northwest corner of William and North Second Streets (Figures 97 and 98). While the New Bedford Institution for Savings moved from the brown freestone building located across the street in 1897, many of the financial institutions and insurance agencies remained within the boundaries of the park.

The neighborhood's institutional presence included the offices of the Southern Massachusetts Telephone Company, which constructed a three-story brick and stone building at the corner of North Second and Dover Streets in 1893, as well as all three of the telegraph companies serving the city.<sup>189</sup> Federal customs operations remained centered in Warren's Greek-Revival Custom House, but the Post Office moved to an imposing Romanesque building built at the corner of William Street and Acushnet Avenue (Figure 99). Construction of the new



Figures 97 (top) and 98 (above): Citizen's National Bank, old and new buildings, ca. 1890s. Citizen's moved westward from its old quarters on North Water Street to a new brick and sandstone building across from the Custom House. The bank and the other brick buildings at the corner of William and North Second Streets surrounded the Andrew Robeson house.



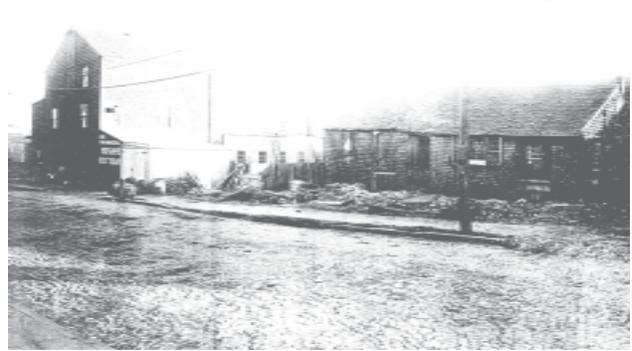
Figure 99: Post Office, ca. 1890. The Romanesque structure at the corner of Acushnet Avenue and William Street provided symbolic contrast to the classicism of the Custom House, the building that formerly housed New Bedford's postal operations. The carved brownstone eagle that adorned the roofline faced northward, a fitting substitute for the cupola atop the older building that had directed one's gaze toward the harbor. The eagle, known colloquially as "Mr. Steadfast," now stands watch at the northern end of North Water Street.



Figures 100 (top) and 101 (above): Centre Street, ca. 1910. With the demise of the whaling industry, the waterfront and its adjacent streets showed telling signs of neglect: dilapidated buildings lined streets marred with potholes and strewn with rubbish.



Figure 102: Parade route on North Water Street, ca. 1890. Members of a fraternal order followed the traditional parade route down Union and across North Water Streets toward Fairhaven. David Snell's bakery occupied the converted Rodman residence, the building with the mansard roof in the background.



Figures 103 (top) and 104 (above): W.H. Crook's shop, 22 Commercial Street, ca. 1900, and detail. The remains of New Bedford's golden age of whaling, including a 13-foot carved pine eagle from the bark Atlantic, were visible along the waterfront streets at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Post Office building replaced a number of commercial buildings on William Street, including an A-frame building just west of the Custom house that had housed the new Bedford recruiting station for the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Colored Infantry in 1863. Forty-two African American residents of New Bedford, known as the "Morgan Guards," enlisted in the 54<sup>th</sup>'s Company C.<sup>190</sup>

While neglected, the waterfront area retained its romantic, if somewhat tattered, connections to the nineteenth-century whaling era (Figures 100 and 101). Parades continued to bring holiday revelers to these once vibrant streets, although the majority of the crowds lined the downtown route along Purchase Street (Figure 102). The scale of the landscape, determined by short blocks, relatively narrow streets, and low buildings, preserved many of the experiential values associated with the period (Figures 103 and 104). Yet hulks of rotting whaling ships served as a reminder that the hand of labor was at work elsewhere along the waterfront. The tall chimneys of the cotton mills had assumed the place of a once conspicuous forest of whaleship masts along the harborside horizon, telling of the decline of whaling and of New Bedford's industrial rebirth.

## THE WATERFRONT DISTRICT, 1915-1997

### THE LANDSCAPE OF MEMORY: THE FOUNDING OF THE WHALING MUSEUM

The years 1924 and 1925 witnessed the end of whaling in New Bedford. The last active whaleship, the *Wanderer*, left New Bedford on 15 August 1924, never to return. She was wrecked the following day on rocks off Cuttyhunk Island, almost within sight of New Bedford, and broke up that night in a storm (Figure 105). In 1925 the whaling schooner *John R. Manta* returned from her final voyage with a disappointing catch, an anticlimactic conclusion to the dramatic demise of New Bedford whaling. During the preceding two decades, there were only a few old whalers, many of which were converted vessels, engaged in the whaling industry. Combining whaling with hunting fur seals and sea elephants, these aging ships were increasingly displaced from New Bedford's wharves by a fleet of sloops, small schooners, and other sail-powered fishing vessels. In addition, a flotilla of packet ships that supported a thriving business between New Bedford and the Cape Verde Islands competed for wharfage between 1900 and 1920.<sup>191</sup>

Yet, even before the shipwreck of the *Wanderer* and the disheartening return of the *Manta*, the people of New Bedford had relegated whaling to the mythic past. The Whaling Mu-



seum, established in 1903 by the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, quickly outgrew its rooms in the Masonic Building at Pleasant and Union Streets. In 1907 the museum moved into the Bank of Commerce, the first of what is now a six-building complex, on Water Street. In 1916 Emily Howland Bourne presented the Bourne Building to the Society. Named in honor of her father Jonathan Bourne, one of New Bedford's most successful whaling merchants, the large, central building was built to house a half-scale model of Bourne's favorite ship, the *Lagoda*, and other whaling artifacts (Figures 106 and 107).<sup>192</sup> Sited across the street from the Seaman's Bethel, the museum's new building displaced brothels and taprooms on the eastern side of Johnny Cake Hill and overlooked littered streetscapes toward the harbor (Figure 108). Three years earlier, Captain George O. Baker, New Bedford's oldest living whaling master, had unveiled *The Whaleman*, a bronze figure of a boatsteerer throwing a harpoon, on the steps of the New Bedford Free Public Library. Dedicated to the whalemens who "brought fame and fortune to New Bedford and made its name known to every seaport in the globe," this static figure relegated the whalemens' brave feats to the annals of history.<sup>193</sup> "A Dead Whale or a Stove Boat," the phrase carved into the monument that had once motivated scores of New Bedford whalemens, passed from the lips of seamen to the landscape of memory.

Figure 105 (left): The whaling ship *Wanderer* founders on the rocks near New Bedford, 16 August 1924.

Figure 106 (below): Bourne Whaling Museum, ca. 1920s. Presented by Emily Bourne to the Old Dartmouth Historical Society in 1916, the massive Georgian Revival building towered above surrounding wooden residential structures on Johnny Cake Hill.





Figure 107: Half-scale model of the whaling ship Lagoda, displayed in the Whaling Museum. The Lagoda is among the artifacts that have memorialized New Bedford's whaling past since 1916.



Figure 108: Centre Street, looking east from North Water Street, ca. 1920s. The blight along this once busy street reveals the obsolescence of New Bedford's waterfront district during the early twentieth century. The buildings closest to the waterfront and those lining the south side of Centre Street are no longer standing.



Figure 109: State Pier, 1918. Even this new pier, which allowed large ships to transport goods directly to New Bedford, offered insufficient platform space to handle all the city's maritime traffic.

#### REMAKING THE HARBOR: INDUSTRIAL ADAPTATION ALONG THE WATERFRONT

While New Bedford whaling faded into the past, many changes occurred along the waterfront. Wharves and other structures, particularly warehouses, were constructed and the harbor was dredged to maintain shipping lanes. The majority of harborside activity was related to New Bedford's textile industries, which flourished during the early decades of the twentieth century. A large increase in the production of automobiles created a highly profitable market for tire yarn, which required a combining process associated with the equipment and skilled labor of New Bedford's fine cotton mills. In addition, government contracts for cotton goods such as airplane cloth, gas masks, bandages and uniforms encouraged many of New Bedford's mills to convert to coarse goods production during World War I.

The wild success of the textile industries during the war years spurred further development along the waterfront. In 1916 the city built the State Pier to relieve railway congestion and expedite the delivery of cotton goods to New Bedford's mill complexes. The new pier, which provided 1,700 feet of berthing space for large ships previously unable to dock in New Bedford, still could not accommodate the two million bales of cotton the industry consumed annually (Figure 109).<sup>194</sup> Tremendous profits were realized and the industry reached its peak number of workers in 1924, followed by a precipitous decline.

By 1925 Southern mills prevailed in the coarse goods market and were making steady inroads into the market for fine cotton goods. Wages fell throughout the decade; in 1927 New Bedford's average mill wage was less than half the



Figure 110: Aerial view of waterfront between Elm and Spring Streets, 1967. Urban development displaced many of the remaining manufacturers from the core of the old whaling district. J.C. Rhodes moved its manufacturing operations from Front Street, at center, when six lanes of highway ripped through the area in connection with the South Terminal Project.

minimum government standard. A prolonged strike in 1928, called in response to proposed ten percent wage reductions, dealt a crippling blow to an industry already weakened by poor management and inadequate accounting practices. The Depression of the 1930s dealt many of the mills their final blow.<sup>195</sup> Nine mills survived the decade, due largely to conversion to the production of rayon and silk products. New Bedford's textile industry continued to struggle until 1984, when the final mill, Berkshire Hathaway, closed its doors.<sup>196</sup>

With the collapse of the textile industry, the city of New Bedford attempted to attract and retain other types of manufacturing in the area. The Industrial Development Legion (IDL) was formed in 1937 to promote industrial expansion, assist jeopardized businesses, and induce outside manufacturing industries to move into the nearly ten million square feet of available floor space. Together with tax incentives, the city's large low-wage labor force lured the garment industry and other light industries to vacant textile buildings, including manufacturers of shoes, toys, and electronic equipment. In 1938 the IDL brought Aerovox Company, a leading producer of electronic capacitors, to the Nashawena Mill Building. While the city's efforts to attract new tenants to New Bedford focused on the abandoned mill complexes in the North and South Ends, many of these buildings were razed for housing and other projects.<sup>197</sup>

The New Bedford industrial community enjoyed a brief period of prosperity during World War II. The closure of addi-



Figure 111: Fishing boat Bernice docked at Pier 4, mid-1930s. The Bernice, part of New Bedford's fishing fleet until the 1960s, is pictured in front of two fish houses owned by L.S. Eldridge. Eldridge also built a complex on the north side of the wharf to cater to the scallop industry.

tional mills during the postwar years prompted the nonprofit Greater New Bedford Industrial Foundation to raise funds to build an industrial park at the northern edge of the city. The Industrial Park, opened in 1961, was fully occupied by 1982. Four major urban revitalization projects, initiated by the New Bedford Redevelopment Authority in 1960, evicted many of the remaining manufacturing ventures, including the J.C. Rhodes Company, from the central waterfront (Figure 110).

While many of the buildings that had housed the various processes of whaling and its related industries suffered abandonment and neglect, the city's wharves received a new lease on life. In 1909 a small fleet outfitted for trawling gave birth to commercial fishing as a viable industry in New Bedford. Although the city's lack of a fish house capable of handling a large catch limited the fledgling industry's growth, by 1925 New Bedford's fishing fleet consisted of 14 large vessels, each valued at more than \$25,000, and many smaller vessels. The introduction of diesel-powered vessels during the 1920s allowed more fishermen to harvest the productive waters off Georges Bank more frequently. Boat repair facilities, including the Hathaway Machinery Company on Pier 3, expanded to meet the industry's increasing needs.

In 1931 the first fish house with modern refrigeration was established in New Bedford, providing the ability to process and ship large quantities of fish. Within five years New Bedford's fleet brought in a catch worth more than \$1 million. More than 300 boats docked in New Bedford for repairs



Figure 112: City Pier No. 3, 1936. Daily fish and scallop auctions were held on New Bedford's principal fishing pier. The Wharfinger Building, pictured in the foreground, now houses the New Bedford Waterfront Visitors Center.



Figure 113: Union Street, during Hurricane Carol, 1954. State Pier, seen in the distance, was covered with five to seven feet of water during the storm. Gale force winds and high tides destroyed 15 fishing boats and tossed others onto the wharves and into the Fairhaven Bridge.

and fueling, and the city's principal fish house on Pier 3 hosted daily fish and scallop auctions (Figures 111 and 112). By 1948, 13 companies were handling fish on New Bedford's wharves and 27 filleting companies employed more than 550 people. New Bedford's waterfront boasted six refrigeration plants, three canneries, four ice plants, eight chandlers, five shipyards, and six machine shops.<sup>198</sup>

The waterfront was severely damaged by the hurricane of 1938 and Hurricane Carol of 1954 (Figure 113). New Bedford's fishing fleet dwindled from 168 to 120 vessels, due

to either hurricane damage or relocation.<sup>199</sup> In response to this last devastating hurricane, the Army Corps of Engineers constructed a hurricane barrier at the entrance to the harbor between 1962 and 1965. Additional improvements to the harbor in the 1960s made New Bedford the premier fishing port on the East Coast. Finfishing and scalloping grew rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s, aided by the imposition of the 200-mile wide Federal Conservation Zone. Scallops accounted for the majority of the fishing catch in New Bedford, making it the scallop capital of the United States during the 1980s.<sup>200</sup>

Ironically, some of the improvements that facilitated the growth of commercial fishing adversely affected the industry. Beginning in 1971, shellfish beds were closed in portions of New Bedford Harbor and nearby Clarks Cove because of bacterial contamination, and all commercial fishing in the Inner Harbor has been closed since 1977 because of elevated PCBs in the fish and shellfish resources. By impeding tidal circulation, the hurricane barrier contributed to increased pollutant concentrations. In addition, severe declines in groundfish (e.g., flounder and other bottom feeders) populations, due primarily to over harvesting, led the National Marine Fisheries Service to close fisheries on Georges Bank and other federal waters, significantly restricting New Bedford's fishing industry.<sup>201</sup> Many trawlers remain idle along New Bedford's waterfront, a vista eerily reminiscent of the city's whaling past.

## RESCUING THE WATERFRONT: THE CREATION OF NEW BEDFORD'S WATERFRONT HISTORIC DISTRICT

At mid-century, New Bedford's Whaling Museum presided over a neighborhood that had already suffered decades of neglect. While many of the buildings that had once housed the financial and industrial operations of New Bedford whaling served the city's thriving fishing industry, the old waterfront district showed signs of disintegration. The eyesore of dilapidated buildings and litter-strewn streets graphically portrayed the fading fortunes of New Bedford's whaling past (Figures 114 and 115).

In 1958 the Museum Committee of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society commissioned a feasibility study on restoring the neighborhood. While the museum chose to pursue its current course in collecting and preserving whaling artifacts, the report's affirmation of the district's revitalization laid the foundations of the local preservation community. In 1962 a number of committee members formed the Waterfront Historic Area League, or WHALE, a nonprofit corporation dedicated to the preserving historic sites, buildings, and wharves of New Bedford and restoring a living, working waterfront.<sup>202</sup>

In September 1963 WHALE joined with city planner Richard Wengraf to promote a plan of "private enterprise renewal," commissioning a redevelopment study for the waterfront area.<sup>203</sup> The resulting Reconnaissance Report covered 39 properties and proposed a joint effort between the city and private preservation interests.<sup>204</sup> The New Bedford Redevelopment Authority (NBRA), a federally-mandated task force, was charged with administering the renewal plan and applying for a Demonstration Grant to develop the plan further. In 1965, awards from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the New Bedford City Planning Department, and the Old Dominion Foundation funded the anticipated study. Known as the "Orange Book," the report represented a major shift in urban renewal policy, emphasizing rehabilitation instead of demolition. The report stated that:

the aim was certainly not to create an urban museum, or simply to preserve a relic of the past... but to develop workable procedures which would allow the city to integrate the preservation of a historic commercial area into the process of its growth and change: to find ways of guiding new development in such a way as to be compatible with, and actually enhance, the historic and architectural qualities of an area and to develop specific techniques and standards for the evaluation, design and development of



Figures 114 (top) and 115 (above): Views from the Four Corners, 1965. The Whaling Museum, whose cupola towers above a dilapidated row of nineteenth-century buildings along the west side of North Water Street, presided over New Bedford's old waterfront historic district. The long-neglected Driscoll Building, a three-story brick building that housed a nineteenth-century wholesale grocery at the southeast corner of Union and South First Streets, was demolished in the early 1970s.

economically feasible rehabilitation programs for historic commercial districts.<sup>205</sup>

The project emphasized the need to preserve the overall historic and architectural character of the Waterfront Historic Area, to diversify local activities, and to encourage the priorities of pedestrian traffic within the area.<sup>206</sup> The report's recommendation that all but seven of the evaluated properties be acquired through eminent domain as the most cost-effective strategy incurred strong opposition from WHALE.<sup>207</sup> While



Figure 116: Construction of Route 18 and MacArthur Drive, 1973. Six lanes of highway disrupted New Bedford's Waterfront Historic District as part of urban renewal. The original path (dotted line) would have eliminated many historic structures along North Second Street.



Figure 117: New Bedford waterfront, late 1960s. Much of the waterfront area between Middle and Walnut Streets was razed at the end of the decade during the construction of Route 18.

the project stalled, WHALE joined with the City of New Bedford in founding a Historic District Study Committee that led to the formal recognition of the Bedford Landing Waterfront Historic District in 1971.<sup>208</sup> The District's 40C designation mandated review and approval of proposed changes to building exteriors, allowing WHALE to redirect its efforts toward protecting many of New Bedford's cultural resources from the immediate threats of the NBRA's urban renewal plans.

In March 1966 a home at South Water and Potomska Streets fell in the first of a series of demolitions for the NBRA's \$40 million South Terminal Project. Through rapid action, WHALE managed to redirect the agency's plan for a highway connecting Route 195 and the city's South End. Originally slated to cut a wide swath through North Second Street, Route 18 was diverted along Front Street, sparing the Benjamin Rodman and Custom Houses (Figure 116). However WHALE's success was a mixed blessing; while the reposi-



Figure 118: Rotch Counting House, corner of Front and Hamilton Streets, 1972. This eighteenth-century remnant of New Bedford's whaling past soon met the fate of its neighboring buildings and structures.



Figure 119: Johnny Cake Hill, looking north from South First Street, ca. 1970. An entire block on the south side of Union Street was leveled to make space for a new YMCA building.



Figure 120: Benjamin Rodman House, North Second Street, ca. 1966. Restoration in progress on the Rodman House, the only one of three remaining waterfront mansions still standing on its original foundation.



Figure 121: Aerial view of the Waterfront Historic District, 1978. WHALE moved the Henry Beetle and Caleb Spooner Houses, pictured at the center, to Centre Street when highway construction threatened these historic structures with demolition. The empty lot at the northwest corner of Union Street and Route 18, near the intersection pictured in the foreground, stands ready for the Seth Russell House.

tioning of the road saved the historic core of the central waterfront from “renewal,” the highway separated the Waterfront Historic District from the waterfront and destroyed much of the infrastructure of New Bedford’s whaling past (Figure 117).

The Rotch Counting House, one of New Bedford’s oldest buildings, could not escape the maw of urban renewal. Constructed around 1785 by William Rotch Jr. at the northeast corner of Centre and Front Streets and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, this worn symbol of New Bedford’s whaling empire was erased from the path of progress (Figure 118). The Marine Bank Building, a Federal-style brick building built by George Baker and Samuel Goddard at the corner of Union and Second Streets in 1829, met a similar fate. WHALE could not raise funds quickly enough to renovate and move this building, as well as other historic structures, before the wreckers moved in (Figure 119).<sup>209</sup>

Such devastating losses spurred WHALE toward a more aggressive preservation program to acquire, renovate and sell endangered buildings. WHALE initiated its experiment by purchasing the Reynolds Building, the Dutch cap-roofed building at the southeast corner of William and North Second Streets that once housed the New Bedford Mercury.<sup>210</sup> The organization also contributed funds for restoring the nearby Benjamin Rodman House, removing wooden storefronts and commercial additions and locating matching granite to return the façade to its early appearance (Figure 120).

When construction of Route 18 threatened two historic homes in the area north of the district, WHALE moved the Caleb Spooner and Henry Beetle Houses to Centre Street, restored the exteriors, and resold the buildings to residential owners (Figure 121).<sup>211</sup> In January 1978 the Andrew Robeson House began its four-month journey from its original location near Dover Street nearly 400 feet to the southeast corner



Figures 122 (top) and 123 (above): Andrew Robeson House, 1978 and Seth Russell House, 1979. Following a precedent that dates to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, WHALE moved these two structures to allow for new construction.

Figures 124 (top) and 125 (above): The McCullough Building, Front and Centre Streets, 1978 and 1994. Severely damaged in a 1940 fire, the McCullough Building was restored to its original four-story structure and adapted to combined residential and commercial use.

of William and North Second Streets. Later that year WHALE moved the Seth Russell House from Water Street, across from Rose Alley, to the northwest corner of Front and Union Streets to provide the Whaling Museum with the space it required to construct a library building (Figures 122 and 123).<sup>213</sup>

In 1979 the Haile Luther and Abijah Hathaway Houses were moved from the highway's path in the South Terminal area and placed next to each other on North Second Street.<sup>214</sup> In addition to the rescue and relocation of architecturally and historically significant buildings, WHALE worked to restore such important structures as the Double Bank Building and Rodman Candleworks on North Water Street and the McCullough Building on Front Street (Figures 124 through 127).

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Act of 1974 provided New Bedford's preservation community with much needed funding. The agency's Community Development Block Grants, targeted specifically at aging, economically depressed cities, provided nearly \$1.3 million to rehabilitation projects within

the Waterfront Historic District. Between 1975 and 1978, WHALE and Thomas Hauk of the City Office of Historical Preservation oversaw the city's improvements to the district. Many of the streets were repaved with Belgian blocks, flowers and trees planted, utilities lines buried and period light fixtures installed, and a patchwork of brick and cobbled sidewalks added to the historic landscape in order to draw private development to the district (Figures 128 through 130).<sup>215</sup>

After nearly a decade of upheaval and renewal, WHALE's revitalization efforts were cause for optimism: restaurants and shops, together with businesses catering to the maritime trades, attracted a growing and diverse clientele to the waterfront's historic core. On 18 January 1977, four days after WHALE had completed restoring the Macomber-Sylvia Building at the corner of Union Street and Johnny Cake Hill, "a series of explosions shook the Historic District to its foundations." The initial explosion, fueled by a cracked gas main, leveled the Macomber-Sylvia Building and the neighboring O'Malley's Tavern (Figures



Figures 126 (left) and 127 (right): Rodman Candleworks, North Water Street 1977 and 1983. The candleworks, built by Samuel Rodman around 1810, housed one of New Bedford's earliest candlemaking business until 1890 and a variety of other businesses until a fire damaged the structure in the late 1960s. WHALE carried out the restoration of the candleworks from 1976 to 1979. The building now houses a restaurant and professional offices.



Figure 128: Repaving North Second Street, 1978. A Community Development Block Grant enabled the reinstallation of Belgian block paving on the streets of the Waterfront Historic District between 1975 and 1978.



Figure 129: Sidewalk reconstruction on Centre Street, ca. 1976. Working with WHALE, architect Tom Hauck designed a patchwork of brick and cobblestone sidewalks to reflect the character of individual buildings within the district.

131 and 132). The ensuing fire reduced the Sundial Building to a shell and a subsequent explosion damaged the Eggers Building on William Street.

When city building inspectors threatened to raze the Sundial Building as a public hazard, WHALE raced to purchase the building and stave off its demolition. Using a combination of Community Development funding and an emergency grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, WHALE restored the Federal-style building to its 1850 appearance (Figures 133 and 134). The fire-damaged Eggers Building, deemed a threat to the Whaling Museum's auditorium, was moved to the northwest corner of Union Street and Johnny Cake Hill, where the Union Tobacco Company stood before the fire, and restored by Seaport Trust.<sup>216</sup>

WHALE's preservation campaign extended beyond the boundaries of the Waterfront Historic District. A combination of public and private funding also rescued the old State Theater, the last remaining theater in downtown New Bedford. Restored to its historic 1923 appearance and renamed to reflect its vaudevillian origins, the Zeiterion Theatre opened in 1982 with Shirley Jones in concert. Elsewhere in the city, WHALE purchased threatened properties in residential neighborhoods, including seven Gothic, Greek Revival, and Federal-style houses in the North Bedford Historic District, and the 1820 William Tallman Russell House in the County Street Historic District. WHALE acquired the Rotch-Jones-Duff House in 1981 and, six years later, joined with the Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford to de-



Figure 130: Lantern reproductions, North Water Street. During the 1970s, WHALE's John Bullard had modern incandescent reproductions of nineteenth-century gas lamps cast from two period posts.

velop the Joseph Grinnell Congregate Home in a Greek Revival mansion designed by Russell Warren in 1831.<sup>217</sup>

Since 1962 WHALE's preservation effort has led a highly effective private-public partnership, generated more than \$3.7 million in public investment and \$2.7 million in private investment, rehabilitated more than three dozen buildings, and encouraged the creation and expansion of new businesses in New Bedford. Most importantly, as one of the first groups in the nation to mount a systematic and successful effort to preserve and adaptively reuse an entire historic district, WHALE restored a broad array of commercial and residential structures and activities to the waterfront. Through projects within New Bedford's three historic

districts, the group has recognized the significant aesthetic, economic, and cultural links between the city's mixed-use waterfront district and residential neighborhoods. Moreover, led by WHALE, New Bedford's preservation efforts have encouraged a lively foot traffic amongst the dwellings, shops, and warehouses of the Waterfront Historic District and reintroduced an "aspect of freshness" and vitality that had been extolled by nineteenth-century commentators during the height of New Bedford' whaling age.<sup>218</sup>

#### TOWARDS PUBLIC STEWARDSHIP: THE NEW BEDFORD WHALING NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

While local private and public efforts worked to restore New Bedford's historic waterfront, the city's preservation community searched for institutional support for the continued rehabilitation and management of the Waterfront Historic District. Diverse historic and cultural resources, including the Schooner Ernestina, taxed the community's financial and organizational powers.<sup>219</sup> In 1988 the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management's statement of its intention to add New Bedford to the Heritage State Park System met with local approval. More than 100 volunteers contributed to the park's master plan. When an economic recession stalled park development during the early 1990s, WHALE and the Citizens Advisory Committee mobilized volunteers to lobby for the establishment of a national park in New Bedford.<sup>220</sup>

In 1990 Congress, at the request of Senator Edward Kennedy and with support from Senator John F. Kerry and Congressmen Gerry Studds and Barney Frank, appropriated funds for a National Park Service Special Resource Study to consider the feasibility of creating a national park in New Bedford. The study, initiated in 1991 and completed in 1994, concluded that no other site in the United States possessed better or more comprehensive resources to interpret the whaling era than does New Bedford.<sup>221</sup> When an Act of Congress established the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park in 1996, the National Park Service joined the collective effort to preserve, protect, and interpret New Bedford's whaling heritage.



Figure 131: Four Corners, 1968. A gas explosion on 18 January 1977 leveled the Macomber-Sylvia Building, left, and O'Malley's Tavern, center. The Sundial Building, right, was severely damaged. This photograph was taken before WHALE began a \$40,000 restoration of the Macomber-Sylvia Building.



Figure 132: Aerial view of the fire, 1977. Only the shell of the Sundial Building, pictured in the foreground, remained after an explosion ripped through the north side of Union Street between North Water Street and Johnny Cake Hill.



Figures 133 (left) and 134 (right): The Sundial Building, Union and North Water Streets, 1977 and 1980. WHALE restored the Federal-style building to its 1850 appearance after fire destroyed the roof and a portion of the walls.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Early archaeological evidence located Native American settlements on the bank of the Apponagansett River, less than a mile from the mouth, at Heath's Neck and near Oxford Village in Fairhaven. A mid-nineteenth century excavation of a 17-foot burial mound unearthed a number of skeletons, including "one in sitting posture, with elbows on the knees, wampum wound about the wrists, and a brass kettle over the head." Leonard B. Ellis, *History of New Bedford and its Vicinity, 1602-1892* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Co., 1892), 25. Recent archaeological studies have identified several early Native American occupational areas near Clarks Neck, Coggeshall Street, and a strip of land along Acushnet Avenue in New Bedford. New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council (NBHTC), *New Bedford Harbor: Historic Overview of Natural Resources Uses Status Report*, 13, and Massachusetts Historical Commission, *MHC Reconnaissance Survey Report: Community, New Bedford* (1981).
- <sup>2</sup> NBHTC, 12. The 1652 deed to land along the Acushnet, as recorded in Plymouth Colony records, as well as an 1834 map of New Bedford suggest that broad forestlands were still present throughout much of the town during the early part of the nineteenth century. Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 19-20; and, *Map of New Bedford, surveyed and drawn by J. Congdon* (Boston: Pendleton, 1834).
- <sup>3</sup> Elmore P. Haskins, "Some of the Streets of the Town of New Bedford," *Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches*, no. 15 (New Bedford: Old Dartmouth Society, 1906), 7 and NBHTC, 13.
- <sup>4</sup> Ellis, 18.
- <sup>5</sup> Despite Wesamequen's assurances, a number of Native Americans could not be persuaded to leave the "water where clams were plenty." In the mid-nineteenth century, Daniel Ricketson recorded the reminiscences of octagenarian Pamela Willis, who recalled that a number of Native Americans had "huts" near Purchase Street and many others lived along the northern end of County Street in what is now the First Ward. William Emery, "The Epic of New Bedford," *Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches*, no. 63, (New Bedford: Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1934), 26-27 and Ellis, 20-21.
- <sup>6</sup> Zephaniah W. Pease and George A. Hough, *New Bedford, Massachusetts: Its History, Industries, Institutions, and Attractions* (New Bedford: Mercury Publishing Company, 1889), 12.
- <sup>7</sup> NBHTC, 10.
- <sup>8</sup> Settlers began arriving from Newport in 1657. In 1662 Plymouth colony listed seven men on its tax rolls for Old Dartmouth. Henry B. Worth, "The First Settlers of Dartmouth and Where They Located," *Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches*, no. 39 (New Bedford, Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1914), 10-11.
- <sup>9</sup> Judith Boss and Joseph D. Thomas, *New Bedford: A Pictorial History* (Virginia Beach: The Donning Company, 1983), 14, Henry H. Crapo, "The Society's Real Estate," *Old Dartmouth Society Historical Sketches*, no. 64 (New Bedford: Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1934), 6, Frank Walcott Hutt, *A History of Bristol County, Massachusetts, Volume 2* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1924), 532, and NBHTC, 10.
- <sup>10</sup> Boss and Thomas, 18.
- <sup>11</sup> Pease and Hough, 17.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 (emphasis added).
- <sup>13</sup> Daniel Ricketson, *The History of New Bedford, Bristol County, Massachusetts* (New Bedford: Private publishing, 1858), 30.
- <sup>14</sup> The antagonisms between the Plymouth court and Old Dartmouth settlers may have encouraged early financial ties to other communities of Dissenters in southern New England.
- <sup>15</sup> Ricketson, 34 and 47-48 and NBHTC, 10.
- <sup>16</sup> County Street, the highroad from Clark's Cove to the head of the Acushnet River, remained an important residential thoroughfare throughout New Bedford's history. During King Philip's War, Captain Church's forces traversed the road toward Russell's garrison, where a number of Native American captives—including Metacomet's wife and son—awaited their fateful march to Plymouth and slavery. Following the destruction of the waterfront in 1778, British marched toward Acushnet past the farmhouses lining the road. Cleared to a width of four rods in 1800 and formerly accepted in 1830 as a street extending from South to Kempton Streets, County Street became a fashionable avenue along which stood the Greek Revival mansions and the walled gardens and boxwood-bordered beds that surrounded the estates of many of New Bedford's whaling magnates. When Charles Francis Adams visited the street in 1835, he found an avenue "which has risen like magic, and which presents more noble looking mansions than any other in the country." Haskins, 8.
- <sup>17</sup> Ellis, 46.
- <sup>18</sup> Haskins, 7.
- <sup>19</sup> Joseph Russell III's residence, or the "old Russell" house as it came to be known, was moved to Emerson Street following the bankruptcy of his grandson, Abraham Russell, and the subsequent acquisition of the property by Samuel Rodman in 1823. The relocation of the building and its adaptive reuse as a tenement presages local preservation efforts that would save many historic New Bedford structures from destruction in the twentieth century. Pease and Hough, 17.
- <sup>20</sup> NBHTC, 15.

- <sup>21</sup> Sections of Russell's path were known as Prospect and King Street until the War for Independence, when villagers began to refer to the main thoroughfare as Main Street. A second wave of patriotism during the War of 1812 bestowed Union Street with its current name. Ricketson, 23.
- <sup>22</sup> There are no extant copies of this plan. Emery, 31.
- <sup>23</sup> Pease and Hough, 17.
- <sup>24</sup> Union Street was recognized as a public path as early as 1764, when William Macomber secured the "privilege of passing at any time" along the path that ran close to the river at Commercial Street and then wound over Prospect Hill. Water Street, the early waterfront pathway stretching from north of Union to Madison Streets, served as a throughway for all the property owners in the settlement. In March 1769 the town of Old Dartmouth accepted both as public highways. Haskins, 8-9.
- <sup>25</sup> Contemporary accounts described the village as a rustic settlement with little formal "improvement." Following his visit to Old Dartmouth in 1761, Paul Coffin wrote that "rocks and oaks are over the whole town. Whortlebushes and rocks in this and two former towns are the sad comfort of the weary traveller." Emery, 32.
- <sup>26</sup> Communities in New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts were shore whaling prior to Nantucket's settlement in 1659. Many whaling historians believe Native Americans attempted some form of shore whaling before the contact period, although there is little conclusive evidence. Joseph L. McDevitt, *The House of Rotch, Massachusetts Whaling Merchants, 1734-1828* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986), 10-12.
- <sup>27</sup> McDevitt, 27.
- <sup>28</sup> Ellis, 58.
- <sup>29</sup> Boss and Thomas, 23.
- <sup>30</sup> Ricketson, 59.
- <sup>31</sup> Boss and Thomas, 24.
- <sup>32</sup> The area of Rotch's purchase, then known as Prospect Hill, comprises most of the northern half of the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park.
- <sup>33</sup> John M. Bullard, *The Rotches* (New Bedford: W.B. and A.B. Rotch, 1947), 11.
- <sup>34</sup> Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 58-59.
- <sup>35</sup> McDevitt, 144.
- <sup>36</sup> The name was changed to New Bedford upon the town's incorporation in 1787 to reflect the earlier incorporation of a town with the same name in Middlesex County.
- <sup>37</sup> The valuation list reveals the enormous influence the Rotches commanded in the local economy. Joseph Rotch & Sons held the most property and the largest trading stock, valued at 4,000 pounds. Rotch's youngest son Francis attained majority in 1771 and joined his father and elder brother Joseph Rotch Jr. in the Bedford firm of Joseph Rotch & Sons. William Rotch, the eldest of Joseph Rotch's three sons, maintained the Nantucket family firm, which owned more than one-quarter of the island's vessels, exercised control over a substantial portion of the remainder of the fleet, and purchased a large portion of Nantucket's whale products. The Rotches, who endured no serious rival in the supply, production, and marketing of whale products in the Nantucket industry, employed similar tactics in an effort to control the New Bedford industry. The Rotches' early preeminence in New Bedford is evident in the fact that they owned three times as many warehouses and wharfage, as well as two times as much shipping tonnage, as the next six wealthiest individuals combined. McDevitt, 142-51.
- <sup>38</sup> Boss and Thomas, 26.
- <sup>39</sup> NBHTC, 16 and Ricketson, 106.
- <sup>40</sup> NBHTC, 14.
- <sup>41</sup> The few houses and shops constructed on Russell's recently conveyed lots are not depicted and may not have been visible from Stiles' vantage across the harbor. Ellis, 58 and 405.
- <sup>42</sup> While Purchase Street connected Union and Maxfield in 1795, the boundary remained palpable well into the nineteenth century, even in nomenclature. (eg. Fifth and Pleasant Streets, Fourth and Purchase Streets) Haskins, 9.
- <sup>43</sup> Ricketson, 67.
- <sup>44</sup> This rocky spur, about which Bedford village clustered, was formally designated Prospect Hill, yet known colloquially as "Rotch's Hill" in deference to its illustrious residents. Between 1820 and 1825, the name "Johnny Cake Hill" entered common parlance. In his 1934 address to the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, Henry Crapo speculated that the name derived from the culinary habits of the successors to the Rotch clan on the hill; johnny cake, a cornmeal pancake, may have been the standard fare served to the transient seaman who stayed in the hotels and boarding houses that proliferated in the area. As Crapo suggests, the name became somewhat of a misnomer after the city began leveling the hill in 1852. Bullard, 13 and Crapo, "The Society's Real Estate," 7-19.
- <sup>45</sup> Haskins, 9.

- <sup>46</sup> The keel of the Dartmouth, the first locally constructed whaling vessel, was laid near a grove of buttonwood trees along the river bank (Hazard's wharf); she carried the first load of New Bedford oil to London in 1767. A plaque on the façade of the Tallman Building, at the corner of Centre and Front Streets, commemorates the occasion.
- <sup>47</sup> Like most Newport and Nantucket merchants, the Rotches largely ignored the strict non importation policies to which Boston and Providence merchants adhered during the colonial disputes over Parliamentary actions. Rotch family correspondence does not mention the controversy, but rather concentrates on maintaining normal business ties to London. In 1774, after the British had closed the Port of Boston and imposed the Intolerable Acts, the American colonists, following the leadership of Massachusetts, retaliated with the convocation of the First Continental Congress and the cessation of importing British goods. Francis Rotch openly supported the Crown. His brother William Rotch Sr. labored to maintain trade with the English, but avoided statements of political allegiance. McDevitt, 170-71 and 184-87.
- <sup>48</sup> Pease and Hough, 18-19 and Ricketson, 74.
- <sup>49</sup> Although English records document the continuation of whaling expeditions under Crown protection between 1777 and 1782, suggesting the migration of American vessels into "safe" areas and the assistance of experienced New England whalers in the "British" industry, the destruction of the harbor enervated the hamlet's support industries and halted growth in the town. McDevitt, 230-31.
- <sup>50</sup> The township of New Bedford included the settlements at Bedford village, Fairhaven, and Acushnet. However even before the formal incorporation, Bedford village had attained a separate corporate identity. Old Dartmouth records indicate that a sum of 87 pounds was raised in 1773 to help defray the costs of a workhouse (located on the east side of South Sixth Street, between Spring and School Streets) in Bedford village. This early reference suggests recognition of the settlement as a distinct entity within the township, as well as some of the social costs of a growing population. Pease and Hough, 19 and 61.
- <sup>51</sup> Ellis, 144-45.
- <sup>52</sup> Boss and Thomas, 26.
- <sup>53</sup> McDevitt, 1-3.
- <sup>54</sup> Boss and Thomas, 35 and 49.
- <sup>55</sup> McDevitt, 415-19, 438.
- <sup>56</sup> Ricketson, 146.
- <sup>57</sup> Ellis, 146-47.
- <sup>58</sup> Rotch had begun the transfer of the family's Nantucket operations to the seaport town of Dunkirk in northern France in 1786 in an effort to evade French restrictions on American trade. While negotiations for similar concessions from the English government stalled, Benjamin Rotch took up residence in France and supervised the firm's lucrative European trade. In 1790 William Rotch brought his wife and daughters to Dunkirk, but was forced to return to the United States three years later. McDevitt, 340-43, 358-60, and 367-85.
- <sup>59</sup> William Street was presented to the town for acceptance in 1795 from Water Street to 200 feet beyond where the Merchant's Bank now stands. Renamed for William Rotch in 1830, the street was originally called Market Street and planned as a great marketplace extending 80 feet in width between Second Street and Acushnet Avenue. When the plan for a central square was abandoned and the street narrowed to the municipal limit of 40 feet, the town exchanged the land on either side for Rotch's lot on Purchase Street. Haskins, 13.
- <sup>60</sup> Ellis, 236.
- <sup>61</sup> This building, which housed the West India Goods Store of Uriah Rea & Co. as early as 1785, was replaced by the Sun Dial Building around 1820. See H. S. Hutchinson, "New Bedford in 1810: From a Painting by William A. Wall," (New Bedford: H.S. Hutchinson & Co., 1897), n.p.
- <sup>62</sup> A number of proprietors operated a tavern and hotel under the sign of the Golden Ball at the corner of Union and William Streets. Opened in 1810, by 1824 the hotel was known as the Washington House.
- <sup>63</sup> The establishment of a stagecoach line from New Bedford to Boston in 1787 required the pruning of branches that overhung County Street, as the use of the road had previously been limited to pedestrians and travelers on horseback. Local legend maintains that New Bedford residents were so unaccustomed to carriage travel at the end of the eighteenth century that Abraham Russell's wife resorted to instructing the coachman in the arranging of the harnesses by laying them out on her kitchen floor. Ricketson, 164, Hutchinson, n.p., Boss and Thomas, 32, and Hutt, 534.
- <sup>64</sup> Quoted in James Freeman, "Notes on New Bedford, 1815," Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Second series, Volume 3, 18-19.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>66</sup> NBHTC, 18.

- <sup>67</sup> According to a contemporary observer, the conditions of the roads were still a troublesome matter. In a letter printed in *The Medley* in 1793, the correspondent suggested “to the surveyors of roads in the town of Newbedford the necessity of attending to some considerable repairs thereon...and since it is universally agreed that the roads of Newbedford are inferior in point of goodness to any in New England, he hopes this seasonable word will not pass unnoticed.” Ida A. McAfee, “New Bedford One Hundred and Twenty Years Ago, as Glimpsed through *The Medley*,” *Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches*, no. 37 (New Bedford, MA: Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1913), 21.
- <sup>68</sup> Manuscript plan taken by the Selectmen of New Bedford in February, 1795 in the collection of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, copied from the original in the Massachusetts State Archives, Vol. 2, 16, 1794.
- <sup>69</sup> Haskins, 8.
- <sup>70</sup> A Map of New Bedford Drawn August 1815 (New Bedford: Charles Taber & Co, 1880), photocopy in Vertical File (New Bedford—Maps), Old Dartmouth Historical Society.
- <sup>71</sup> The bridge was said to have altered the river’s current so drastically as to silt the channel to the north of the barrier and undermine the rival whaling outfits in Oxford village. Severe gales destroyed the first bridge in 1807 and its replacement in 1815. When a third bridge was constructed in 1819, New Bedford had clearly surpassed its rival across the Acushnet. Haskins, 12 and Ricketson, 79.
- <sup>72</sup> Ricketson, 112-113.
- <sup>73</sup> Bedford Bank inhabited the “old bank” building, “a quaint, substantial-looking affair [whose] foundation, or first story . . . was of stone, and laid in solid masonry; above this arose two more stories of brick, painted a dark red and the lines of brick obliterated by the paint; the windows were fortified with heavy cased shutters. A flight of substantial stone steps at the north and the south mounted to a wooden portico, within which was a huge heavy iron-cased door.” In contrast to this highly specialized structure whose architectural design and detailing probably were intended to convey the necessary confidence in modern financial institutions, the Bedford Marine Insurance Company, established in 1805, occupied the “two south rooms” of an old house at the corner of Elm and Water Streets; the remainder of the house and property, including the barn and gardens, were let to Asa Russell. Ricketson, 83-84 and Ellis, 509-10.
- <sup>74</sup> The townsmen allowed cows to run at large, except at night, until 1824. Ricketson, 86-87 and Ellis, 264.
- <sup>75</sup> Abraham Russell was forced to take out a five-year mortgage on much of his property and, unable to meet his debt when the loan came to term, lost his holdings through foreclosure to William Rotch Sr. Boss and Thomas, 34 and McDevitt, 473-75.
- <sup>76</sup> McDevitt, 509-11.
- <sup>77</sup> Ellis, *New Bedford, Illustrated*. . .Published in 12 Parts (New Bedford: W.H. Parish Publishing Company, 1892), n.p.
- <sup>78</sup> The fire originated in Enoch Horton’s bakehouse on the south side of Centre Street on 8 September 1820 and quickly spread to the surrounding wooden structures. The damage, estimated at \$12,000, included the destruction of Horton’s bakehouse, four retail stores, a shoe shop, and a blacksmith’s shed. Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 241-42.
- <sup>79</sup> Boss and Thomas, 35.
- <sup>80</sup> Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 234.
- <sup>81</sup> The New Bedford shoreline experienced rapid development during the early decades of the nineteenth century. By 1815 at least 22 wharves and associated landfill altered the shoreline near the core of the whaling district. NBHTC, 21 and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *History of New Bedford Harbor: Ecological Consequences of Urbanization and Implications for Remediation* (Narragansett, RI: USEPA, 1996).
- <sup>82</sup> USEPA., 231-39.
- <sup>83</sup> NBHTC, 19-21.
- <sup>84</sup> “Contrast,” *New Bedford Evening Standard* (hereafter *Standard*), 12 October 1897, 2-3.
- <sup>85</sup> Boss and Thomas, 40.
- <sup>86</sup> NBHTC, 17.
- <sup>87</sup> Ellis, *New Bedford, Illustrated*, n.p.
- <sup>88</sup> Boss and Thomas, 40.
- <sup>89</sup> Boss and Thomas, 41 and 69, National Park Service (NPS), *Special Resource Study for New Bedford, Massachusetts* (Boston, 1994), 14.
- <sup>90</sup> Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 417-20 (emphasis added).
- <sup>91</sup> Ellis, *New Bedford, Illustrated*, n.p.
- <sup>92</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison quoted in NPS, *Special Resource Study*, 12.
- <sup>93</sup> Everett S. Allen, *Children of the Light* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1973), 76 and *The Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum, The Historic Structure Report of the Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum*, (New Bedford: Private printing, 1985), 3-10.
- <sup>94</sup> Ricketson, *History of New Bedford*, 98.

- <sup>95</sup> Unlike the organization of many New England towns around a meeting house and common, New Bedford lacked a public greenspace until the mid-nineteenth century. The city common, established across from the Pearl Street depot of the New Bedford & Taunton Rail Road, lay at the periphery of the commercial, industrial, and residential life of the city.
- <sup>96</sup> Ricketson, 59-61.
- <sup>97</sup> Many Congregationalists and Baptists joined New Bedford's Quakers in opposition to theatrical productions, viewing such entertainment as low and degrading. Later, they allowed lectures, concerts, and curiosity shows to take place in the Town Hall, but frowned upon the circus building that opened at the corner of County and Elm Streets in 1828. As late as 1840, the question of granting theatrical licenses was a "vexed topic." The presentation of a concert and an "exhibition of comic songs and narrations" at the Mechanic's Hall required the convocation of a special town meeting. Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 280 and Hutt, 592-93.
- <sup>98</sup> McDevitt, 419-21.
- <sup>99</sup> Boss and Thomas, 42.
- <sup>100</sup> Rotch's wood frame house, now the Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum, was simple in comparison to the more ostentatious mansions built of brick and stone along County Street. Bullard, 78-79.
- <sup>101</sup> New Bedford, 6th mo 24, 1820, MS., "Letters to Caroline Stockton Rotch, 1819-1838," Vault A, Box 35, folder 6, item 374, Newport Historical Society, as quoted in McDevitt, 525.
- <sup>102</sup> *The Diary of Samuel Rodman: A New Bedford Chronicle of Thirty-Seven Years, 1821-1859*, edited by Zephaniah W. Pease, (New Bedford: Reynolds Printing Co., 1927), 10.
- <sup>103</sup> *The Diary of Samuel Rodman*, 8.
- <sup>104</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1967), 38.
- <sup>105</sup> "New Light" Quakers adhered to the views of Stephen Grellet, an evangelical bent that stressed theological doctrine, the infallibility of scripture, and the centrality of Christ's mission. "Old Lights" followed Elias Hicks and an "inner light" of religious experience. Beginning in 1820 the New Bedford meeting was rife with discord, culminating with the defection of many prominent members following the removal of Mary Rotch and Elizabeth Rodman Rotch in April 1824. More than a dozen members of the Rotch-Rodman family were disowned by the New Bedford Monthly Meeting between 1824 and 1828. McDevitt, 500 and Boss and Thomas, 42.
- <sup>106</sup> These tendencies toward extravagance among the younger generations of whaling magnates may be chalked up to experience. Enjoying a worldlier upbringing than that of their parents, they could have developed an initial taste for wealth and property during the expatriate years of William Rotch & Sons in France and Wales. Josiah Quincy noted such a generational distinction in 1825, when he recorded in his journal "the picture presented by the venerable William Rotch...standing in between his son and his grandson, the elder gentlemen being in their Quaker dresses and the youngest in the fashionable costume of the day." Zephaniah Pease, "The Arnold Mansion and its Traditions," *Old Dartmouth Society Historical Sketches*, no 52, 7.
- <sup>107</sup> In 1821 there were 700 members in New Bedford Friends Meeting, necessitating the construction of a larger meeting-house on the site of the old building. Membership peaked in the 1820s and began declining, even as the population of New Bedford increased during the mid-nineteenth century. Boss and Thomas, 42.
- <sup>108</sup> As late as 1854, Abraham Hathaway Howland counseled against moving to County Street because "inborn Quakerism might be contaminated by those wicked Unitarians." *Ibid.*, 59.
- <sup>109</sup> Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 599.
- <sup>110</sup> The Bethel's fanciful prow-shaped pulpit was a figment of Melville's imagination that was realized later in the twentieth century. Similarly, the memorial garden now on the southern edge of the property was dedicated on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Reverend Enoch Mudge, the Bethel's first chaplain. Apparently this setting for the improvement of the moral and religious character of the seamen stood in bleak contrast to the building that served the "spiritual" needs of many of the Society's Unitarian members. Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 601-02.
- <sup>111</sup> Standard, 12 October 1897, 2.
- <sup>112</sup> Following the Nantucket "lay" system, each participant had a share, or "lay," in the returns of the venture, thereby distributing risks and profits. The average whaleman received only a minor share of the net profit at the end of the voyage, usually one-hundred-seventy-fifth of the catch, compared to the tenth or twelfth to which the captain laid claim. Monetary advances and goods received on credit were deducted from these fractional shares at a steep rate of interest. Thus, even onboard the ships, the whaling industry employed an increasingly stratified labor force: "Professional mariners" comprised a class of relatively well-paid officers drawn from the white, native-born, Protestant population, while the remainder of the crew derived from a diverse body of seamen. Thomas A. McMullin, *Industrialization and Social Change in a Nineteenth-Century Port City: New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1865-1900* (The University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ph.D., 1976), 8-11; McDevitt, 22; and, Lisa Norling, "Ahab's Wife: Women and the American Whaling Industry, 1820-

- 1870," in *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 72-73.
- <sup>113</sup> Diary of Samuel Rodman, 37.
- <sup>114</sup> Diary of Samuel Rodman, 38-41; Leonard B. Ellis, *History of the Fire Department of the City of New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1772-1890* (New Bedford: E. Anthony & Sons, 1890), 25-34; and, Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 246-49.
- <sup>115</sup> A nightly watch assisted the town police force. In 1834, a special action by the Massachusetts Legislature established a police court in New Bedford with jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases. Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 644 and 709.
- <sup>116</sup> *New Bedford City Watch, Daily Record Book, 1 June 1848-24 March 1850*, Special Collections, New Bedford Free Public Library.
- <sup>117</sup> Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 307-08.
- <sup>118</sup> *Standard*, 12 October 1897, 2; Boss and Thomas, 49-51, and, McMullin, 9-12.
- <sup>119</sup> In *Moby Dick*, Melville describes Ishmael's first night in New Bedford among the "dreary streets" and "blocks of blackness. . .like a candle moving about in a tomb." Not far from the docks, heralded by the forlorn creaking of the swinging sign about its doorway, stood the Spouter Inn. Many seamen found such dismal lodgings as typified in Melville's waterfront boardinghouse, a very different sort of abode than the city's lofty mansions "dragged from the deep" to County Street. Melville, 18-21.
- <sup>120</sup> The transition in street nomenclature at this time reflected the County Street elite's tenacious hold on the waterfront, as well as a significant shift in the factors guiding cultural production. During the early years of settlement Quaker discipline probably discouraged the individual aggrandizement and public recognition brought with commemorative street names. Most of the streets bore austere descriptive titles that underlined the humble economic and, moreover, theological origins of the settlement along the waterfront. In the 1840s these simple street names gave way to a rather "un-Disciplined" trend: William, Rodman, and Grinnell Streets joined Union, Water, and First Streets on the town's roster. It is perhaps no coincidence that the names of New Bedford's prominent whaling families were invoked along the waterfront, while the streets laid out in the fashionable western end of the city bore such pastoral names as Sycamore, Orchard, and Cottage Streets. See Appendix 2.
- <sup>121</sup> Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 251-53 (emphasis added).
- <sup>122</sup> The refitted town-house that housed the armory, as well as the police courts, had anterooms that were "elegantly furnished with carpets, mirrors, and tables" and served as a hall for public events, including a fashionable ball there in 1841. Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 281.
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.
- <sup>124</sup> For example, Water Street was 30 feet wide, Fourth 38 feet, Union 46 feet, and County "four rods" (64 feet). Haskins, 10.
- <sup>125</sup> Among these protrusions were William Rotch Jr.'s house, carriage shed, and barn, which projected from five to nine inches beyond the south line of William Street. Report of the Committee Appointed to Ascertain the Lines of the Streets and Highways of the Town of New Bedford, May 12, 1829 (New Bedford: Benjamin T. Congdon, 1830).
- <sup>126</sup> Haskins, 10.
- <sup>127</sup> One twentieth-century observer lamented the limits to street plantings and city beautification that standardization imposed: "We wish that the fathers could have allowed us a few more feet of side walk for trunks of our splendid elms, a few more feet of roadway for their spreading branches, and a few more feet for a sunlight and a broader view. But utility was the watchword of that laborious, accumulating time. It was many years before the prejudice against any change could be overcome, and the desirability of wider thoroughfares acknowledged by the citizens and their officials." Haskins, 10-11 (emphasis added).
- <sup>128</sup> There seems to be no regular pattern of light installation, save that the majority of whale-oil lanterns were concentrated in the business district along Union Street and the streets that paralleled the waterfront. Town records reveal that nine new lamps were installed and two more planned in 1841, but there is no mention of placement. Report of the Selectmen, on the Financial Concerns of the Town of New-Bedford, For the Year Ending March 31, 18—, 13, Pamphlet Collection, Old Dartmouth Historical Society.
- <sup>129</sup> Report of the Selectmen, 13 (emphasis added).
- <sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>131</sup> Report of the Selectmen, 17.
- <sup>132</sup> Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 303.
- <sup>133</sup> Compiled from Report of the Selectmen (data incomplete).
- <sup>134</sup> Boss and Thomas, 40 and NBHTC, 17.
- <sup>135</sup> NBHTC, 18.
- <sup>136</sup> Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 304.
- <sup>137</sup> In 1835 the town ordinance regarding signs decried the unsightly appearance and potential dangers posed by "the practice of projecting signs over the streets, and also platforms for the exhibition of furniture and other articles from the upper stories of windows." With the exception of licensed tavern keepers, commercial proprietors were prohibited from

- hanging signs or erecting any other projections over the line of the town's streets. Within ten years these prohibitions had changed, restricting signs to less than one foot beyond the front of the building and allowing the construction of fixed awnings that conformed to the outer line of the sidewalk and remained less than seven feet above the sidewalk. By Laws and Ordinances of the Town of New-Bedford, Published by Order of the Selectmen (New Bedford: Benjamin T. Congdon, 1835) and By-Laws and Ordinances of the Town of New-Bedford with Certain Municipal Regulations of Police. . .(New Bedford: Benjamin Lindsey, 1845).
- <sup>138</sup> The building on Middle Street had itself replaced the two-story wooden building at the corner of Union and Purchase Streets that had functioned as the town's first post office between 1794 and 1806. The relocation of federal operations to a more central location within the waterfront business district may have reflected the increasing demand for space along the working waterfront, as well as New Bedford's rising fortunes and influence over Fairhaven's support industries. Ricketson, 98 and Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 232.
- <sup>139</sup> Historic Structure Report of the Rotch-Jones-Duff House, 16-17 and Boss and Thomas, 50.
- <sup>140</sup> NBHTC, 16.
- <sup>141</sup> Historic Structure Report of the Rotch-Jones-Duff House, 17.
- <sup>142</sup> James Bunker Congdon, *New Bedford, Massachusetts*, (Pamphlet, 1845), Special Collections, New Bedford Free Public Library, 6-7.
- <sup>143</sup> Many of New Bedford's leading citizens, including James Arnold, Henry Crapo, and William Rotch Jr., were listed among the membership of the New Bedford Horticultural Society. Organized in 1846, the Society held its first public exhibition at City Hall in July 1847. New Bedford gardeners exhibited an extensive variety of fruits, vegetables, and flowers, but took special pride in a vast collection of pear specimens. Historic Structure Report of the Rotch-Jones-Duff House, 22-24.
- <sup>144</sup> McMullin, 9 and Standard, 16 May 1850, 1 and 10 April 1851, 1.
- <sup>145</sup> In 1821, Arnold acquired the County Street tract and constructed a two-story brick mansion, leaving his former house at the southwest corner of Water and Madison Streets for an area covered with elms and lindens, as well as some swamp land. Arnold retained much of the larger indigenous plant material, but devoted his creative talents to collecting specimen plants for his formal garden. Boss and Thomas, 44, McMullin, 9, and Pease, "The Arnold Mansion and Its Traditions," 5-13.
- <sup>146</sup> In his 1852 study of landscape gardening, A. J. Downing portrayed Arnold's garden as a place "where the pleasure grounds are so full of variety, and in such perfect order and keeping . . . and its winding walks open bits of lawn, shrubs, plants grouped on turf, shady bowers, and rustic seats, all most agreeably combined render this a very interesting and instructive suburban seat." During the first half of the nineteenth century, the grounds of the County Street estates served both practical and ornamental purposes. Records of the New Bedford Horticultural Society catalogue fruits, vegetables, and flowers grown to meet the needs of William Rotch Jr.'s household on his one-acre plot. In Samuel Rodman's 37-year chronicle of New Bedford life, slaughtering hogs, gardening, and harvesting produce at his County Street estate occasionally interrupt the merchant's daily travails at the counting house. See Pease, "The Arnold Mansion and Its Traditions," *Historic Structure Report of the Rotch-Jones-Duff House*, 21-23 and *The Diary of Samuel Rodman*, (passim).
- <sup>147</sup> Maud Mendall Nelson, *New Bedford Fifty Years Ago: Recollections by Mendall Nelson*, Special Collections, New Bedford Free Public Library, 8.
- <sup>148</sup> William G. Kirschbaum, "Union Street in 1845: Centre of Trade," *Standard*, 27 September 1902.
- <sup>149</sup> The other five brick buildings included the Merchants' Block at the southeast corner of Water Street, the Sundial Building diagonally across from it, the Marine Bank and the Mansion House at the opposite corners of North Second Street, and the Barker building at northeast corner of Acushnet Avenue. Kirschbaum, n.p.
- <sup>150</sup> Boss and Thomas, 63.
- <sup>151</sup> Adams stayed at the Mansion House during his first visit to New Bedford in 1835. Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 296.
- <sup>152</sup> Paul Cyr, interview with the authors, 16 December 1997.
- <sup>153</sup> In 1851 one commentator confided that "there is now a prospect of removing the 'young mountain rock' on Union Street. We hope before long to see in its stead, a large and useful edifice." Such admissions suggest that New Bedford's residents enthusiastically embraced commercial growth and the utilitarian changes it wrought on the vernacular landscape. Standard, 20 February 1851, 1 and Kirschbaum, n.p.
- <sup>154</sup> Boss and Thomas, 58.
- <sup>155</sup> Standard, 12 October 1897, 1.

- <sup>156</sup> In addition to the 1820 fire, two major conflagrations raged through the nineteenth-century waterfront. In November 1834 a fire that began in the boot and shoe store of James Wady destroyed a number of residential and commercial properties near the corner of Water and First Streets. On 24 August 1859, a third fire began in the engine room of William Wilcox's planing mill on Water Street, near Middle Street, and spread rapidly toward North and Second Streets. The wharf and cargo of Richmond & Wilcox caught fire and the oil "as it ran from the wharf into the dock, took fire, and at one time the water for some distance out into the dock was covered with burning oil, forming literally a sea of fire." The 1859 fire destroyed close to 20 buildings and 8,000 barrels of oil, representing a loss of \$254,575. Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 270 and 311-12.
- <sup>157</sup> Aside from a single reference to "the rose garden of Benjamin Taber," there is little evidence to substantiate anecdotal accounts of a rose garden along Rose Alley during the nineteenth century. Daniel Ricketson quipped that Rose Alley was "a narrow street running from Water to Front [that] derived its name from its peculiar odor." Despite the fragrant expectations conjured by the street's name, Ricketson confessed that whenever he had occasion to pass through it, "it was generally on a run." Daniel Ricketson, *New Bedford of the Past* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1903), 67 and Haskins, 18.
- <sup>158</sup> Before the city's southward expansion with the growth of the textile industry in the 1870s, Clark's Point remained a wooded, rural area of little development. In 1854 the city laid out and graded the Point Road, a pleasure drive later known as French Avenue that became the destination of many fashionable Sunday afternoon outings. In fine weather, New Bedford's well-shod probably took their promenades in close proximity to the city's poor farm. Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 305 and Richard Kugler, *New Bedford and Old Dartmouth: A Portrait of a Region's Past* (New Bedford: Trustees of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1975), 134.
- <sup>159</sup> Zephaniah Pease, *History of New Bedford*, quoted in Boss and Thomas, 65.
- <sup>160</sup> Boss and Thomas, 63.
- <sup>161</sup> The discovery of petroleum, with its quick increase in productivity and rapid advancements in refining processes, helped put an end to the heyday of whaling. On average, one whaling voyage of three to four years duration returned 4,000 barrels of oil, while in just one day a single Pennsylvania well pumped 3,000 barrels of oil. In the industry's first six years of production, crude oil production surpassed whaling's total output of sperm and whale oil from 1816 and 1905. By 1870 the whaling industry had lost control of the illuminant market. Advances in refining processes during the next decade produced high quality, petroleum-based lubricants, robbing whaling of one more lucrative market. Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, and Karin Gleiter, *In Pursuit of Leviathan: Technology, Institutions, Productivity, and Profits in American Whaling, 1816-1906* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 356-63.
- <sup>162</sup> Whalebone is not true bone, but rather the fringed sieve of cartilage through which the whale screens seawater and separates food.
- <sup>163</sup> Steel and celluloid substituted for baleen in most consumer goods. Davis et al., 515.
- <sup>164</sup> Boss and Thomas, 41, 81, and 115; Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 420-22 and McMullin, 12.
- <sup>165</sup> Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 419.
- <sup>166</sup> Pease, *New Bedford*, 31.
- <sup>167</sup> Boss and Thomas, 115; Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 431-34, and McMullin, 13.
- <sup>168</sup> *New Bedford, Massachusetts: Its History, Industries, and Attraction*, quoted in McMullin, 13.
- <sup>169</sup> Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 374.
- <sup>170</sup> Boss and Thomas, 35 and 42 and McMullin, 14.
- <sup>171</sup> Boss and Thomas, 56.
- <sup>172</sup> The mills had certain locational needs, including proximity to land and water transportation and expansive floor space. Wamsutta Mills was built on cheap open land on the bank of the Acushnet River, at the northern edge of the settled section of the city, and the Potomska Corporation followed suit at New Bedford's southern edge. Each factory served as the nucleus for the two major mill sections, the North End (Ward One) and the South End (Ward Six), that framed the waterfront district. McMullin, 40.
- <sup>173</sup> Pease, *History of New Bedford*, 145-54 and Daniel Georgianna with Roberta Hazen Aaronson, *The Strike of '28* (New Bedford: Spinner Publications, Inc., 1993), 20-21.
- <sup>174</sup> Ellis, *New Bedford, Illustrated*, n.p.
- <sup>175</sup> Pairpoint Manufacturing Company built a complex of brick and wooden structures on Prospect Street in New Bedford's South End, where it manufactured household and ornamental glassware and silver-plated objects. At its peak, the company employed 2,000 workers, but closed operations in 1956. Pairpoint returned to New Bedford in 1977, leasing the Bourne Warehouse on North Second Street.
- <sup>176</sup> McMullin, 20-22, Boss and Thomas, 155, and Ellis, *History of New Bedford*, 193-209 and 263-67.
- <sup>177</sup> McMullin, 23.

- <sup>178</sup> New Bedford's Portuguese community originated before industrialization, but was limited largely to transients from the Azores and Cape Verde islands who were employed in whaling and the maritime industries. By the middle of the nineteenth century, some Azorean seamen had settled with their families at the southern end of the city in a section the city's residents called Fayal, after the home island of many of these Portuguese immigrants. McMullin, 37.
- <sup>179</sup> Boss, 81, 98, 150 and 161 and Georgianna, 21.
- <sup>180</sup> Georgianna, 21.
- <sup>181</sup> The construction of company housing reflected the fact that mill owners had located their factories on undeveloped and relatively remote tracts of land. These early examples of welfare capitalism may also mirror the previous attempts by New Bedford's elite to control the city's population of "strangers."
- <sup>182</sup> Pease, 146-65 and Georgianna, 24-25.
- <sup>183</sup> Discrimination excluded all but a very small percentage of New Bedford's African American population from mill employment, forcing them to seek wages in such industries as construction, agriculture, and the struggling maritime trades. In 1889 most of the black community lived in Wards Three, Four, and Five. While the number of black employees in the textile industry increased during the first two decades of the twentieth century, they continued to live in the central wards of the city and to frequent their own commercial areas, particularly along Kempton Street between Summer and Summit Streets. Boss and Thomas, 145.
- <sup>184</sup> NBHTC, 30.
- <sup>185</sup> Taber & Company occupied the three-story brick building at the northwest corner of the intersection (the Sundial Building), a two-story structure to the north on Water Street, a three-story building at the northeast corner of Union and Water Streets, as well as another one stretching along the south side of Spring Street from Water to First Streets, and the Taber building, a large wooden building dating from 1763, on Union Street. Pease, New Bedford, 193.
- <sup>186</sup> Elizabeth Rotch Rodman lived in the Rodman house from 1836 until her death in 1856. Benjamin Rodman repurchased the house in 1864 and the property remained in family ownership until its sale in 1872. By 1890 the Federal-style façade of cut and dressed granite was surrounded by a commercial storefront. Andrew Robeson built his two-story Federal-style brick house in 1821. Within 20 years of his death in 1862, the front façade was covered by a brick warehouse.
- <sup>187</sup> The Germania House, just south of the Custom House on North Second Street, was built by George T. Baker, one of the city's wealthiest oil refiners, and later occupied by "merchant prince" Edward Mott Robinson, the father of the notorious Hetty Green. The building housed a German beer garden at the turn of the century, but a parking structure now occupies the lot. "Contrast," Standard, 2.
- <sup>188</sup> Gaslights first illuminated the city of New Bedford on 14 February 1853. Edison Electric Illuminating Company was organized in 1884 and began to offer its services two years later from its brick station on Middle Street. In 1892 New Bedford had 270,504 feet of wire for incandescent lighting, 63,224 feet for trolley cars, 106,082 feet for Edison lights, and 272,740 feet for carbon arc lights; in all, a total of 712,650 feet of wire covered 170,000 feet of streets. In 1897, 525 gas lamps, primarily in the residential districts, and 200 arc lamps illuminated the city streets. Pease, New Bedford, 287-88 and Boss and Thomas, 130.
- <sup>189</sup> The Southern Massachusetts Telephone Company commenced operations in 1880 and was bought out by New England Telephone and Telegraph Company in 1898, after which it underwent a period of rapid growth. In 1907 the lines that connected more than 4,000 subscribers extended over the city streets. Mutual Union Telegraph Company and Postal Cable Telegraph Company were located nearby on North Second Street, while the offices of Western Union Telegraph Company occupied the three-story wooden building at the intersection of Water and Centre Streets. Boss and Thomas, 161 and Pease, New Bedford, 311.
- <sup>190</sup> Carl J. Cruz, New Bedford Historical Society, memo to Mayor Kalisz, 14 April 1998.
- <sup>191</sup> New Bedford was one of the chief ports of entry for immigrants arriving from Portugal, the Azores, and the Cape Verde Islands. In 1903 the city appropriated \$30,000 to construct an immigrant shed at the head of City Wharf. European immigration, which provided a relatively compliant labor pool for New Bedford's textile industries, dwindled in 1920 with the enactment of restrictive immigration laws. Boss and Thomas, 160.
- <sup>192</sup> The Lagoda was named after a Russian lake called Ladoga. The builder reversed the letters 'd' and 'g' in its name, and the error was perpetuated. Boss and Thomas, 170 and Barbara Clayton and Kathleen Whitley, Guide to New Bedford (Montpelier, VT: Capital City Press, 1979), 47-50.
- <sup>193</sup> Boss and Thomas, 169.
- <sup>194</sup> Boss and Thomas, 173.
- <sup>195</sup> Seymour L. Wolfbein, *The Decline of a Cotton Textile City: A Study of New Bedford* (New York: AMS Press, 1968). 11.
- <sup>196</sup> The development of the textile industry in New Bedford transformed the city's natural, as well as cultural, resources. Unlike the series of stresses and resultant growth placed on New Bedford's infrastructure, the region's natural habitats were taxed beyond relief. Wetlands were drained for mill construction, portions of the shoreline were filled, and sewage was dumped directly into the Acushnet River estuary, necessitating the closure of shellfish beds. Boss and Thomas, 184-85, NBHTC, 32-35 and Georgianna, 44-45.
- <sup>197</sup> Boss and Thomas, 185 and NBHTC, 36-37.

- <sup>198</sup> Boss and Thomas, 150 and NBHTC, 38.
- <sup>199</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>200</sup> Boss and Thomas, 207.
- <sup>201</sup> NBHTC, 39.
- <sup>202</sup> Marsha McCabe and Joseph D. Thomas, *Not Just Anywhere: The Story of WHALE and the Rescue of New Bedford's Waterfront Historic District* (New Bedford: Spinner Publications, Inc., 1995), 12-19 and Boss and Thomas, 216.
- <sup>203</sup> The Historic Area Committee, WHALE's antecedent organization, had already funded an architectural survey of the area by historic preservationist Antoinette Downing. See Downing, *Report on the Historical and Architectural Merit of the Buildings on or Near the Area Between Union, William, and Hamilton Streets and Acushnet Avenue and the Waterfront* (New Bedford; 1960).
- <sup>204</sup> See Robert J. Kerr, *Reconnaissance Report—Waterfront Historic Area, New Bedford, Mass.: Phase I, Summary* (New Bedford, 1964).
- <sup>205</sup> New Bedford Redevelopment Authority (NBRA), *Preservation and Rehabilitation of a Historic Commercial Area: A Demonstration Study of the Waterfront Historic District, New Bedford, Massachusetts* (New Bedford: Urban Design Group, 1973), 9.
- <sup>206</sup> NBRA, 12-13.
- <sup>207</sup> Publication of the "Orange Book" was delayed until 1974. McCabe and Thomas, 34.
- <sup>208</sup> The Bedford Landing Waterfront Historic District was established by the City of New Bedford in 1971 under authority of the Massachusetts Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws. In November 1966 the New Bedford Historic District had been designated a National Historic Landmark, but the nomination form was not completed until 1976. The two identical districts comprise roughly two-thirds of the New Bedford Whaling NHP (Exhibit 4).
- <sup>209</sup> The demolition proceeded despite the city's recognition of Waterfront Historic District as an official 40C District in June 1971, since this designation limited protections to such measures as prohibiting alterations to the façades of buildings without prior municipal approval. A 20-acre mixed-use district bounded by Elm, Water, Rodman, Front, Commercial, and Union Streets, known as the New Bedford Historic District, was designated as a National Historic Landmark District in 1966. In 1975 the NHL boundaries were adjusted to correspond to those of the Waterfront Historic (40C) District. McCabe and Thomas, 43-48 & 58 and NPS, 6.
- <sup>210</sup> The building was demolished in 1970 following a fire of suspicious origin.
- <sup>211</sup> New Bedford's tradition of relocating buildings dates at least to 1823, when the "old Russell" house was moved from the intersection of County and William Streets to Emerson Street in order to allow the construction of a more fashionable residence by the property's new owner, Samuel Rodman. The Henry Beetle House, built in 1804 at the corner of North Second and High Streets, was the home of three generations of shipwrights. WHALE moved the Beetle House to its current location at 24 Centre Street in 1972. Six years later the organization edged the Caleb Spooner onto its new foundations next door. Spooner built this one-and-one-half story Federal-style structure at the corner of North and Pleasant Streets in 1806. McCabe and Thomas, 78.
- <sup>212</sup> WHALE decided to move the 550-ton mansion from behind the Old Bourne Warehouse, the site intended for the Pairpoint Glass Works. A fire had destroyed the plant on Prospect Street nine years after the company ceased production in New Bedford. The glassworks' return to the city and to its new quarters on North Second Street required additional space to construct its furnace. Boss and Thomas, 225.
- <sup>213</sup> Built in 1765, the Seth Russell house is the only known structure in New Bedford to predate the great fire of 1778. McCabe and Thomas, 70.
- <sup>214</sup> Stone mason Haile Luther built his two-story Greek Revival home at the corner of Acushnet Avenue and Grinnell Street in 1841. The building now houses the offices of the Bristol County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Abijah Hathaway's Greek Revival home was constructed on South Front Street in 1846. McCabe and Thomas, 69.
- <sup>215</sup> McCabe and Thomas, 65-68.
- <sup>216</sup> Ibid., 84-90.
- <sup>217</sup> The Rotch-Jones-Duff House, constructed by William Rotch Jr. in 1834 and later owned by Edward Coffin Jones and Mark Duff, chronicles a shift in local wealth and industry and in the broader market for natural resources. Following the death of Rotch, the property passed into the hands of another whaling magnate before the Duffs, whose fortunes derived from the coal trade, acquired this stately mansion and its surrounding formal gardens in 1935. The estate was incorporated as the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum in 1985. *Historic Structure Report of the Rotch-Jones-Duff House*, 24-25 and 30-32.
- <sup>218</sup> See Congdon, 6-7.

<sup>219</sup> Originally commissioned as the Effie M. Morrissey, the Ernestina was built in 1894 in Essex, Massachusetts, and served as a fishing schooner off Newfoundland's Grand Banks, an Arctic explorer, and a packet that brought Cape Verdeans to the United States. In 1982 the Republic of Cape Verde presented the Ernestina as a gift to the American people in the care of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The restored vessel, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1986, is equipped to provide educational and recreational programs under the auspices of the Schooner Ernestina Commission. Moored at the city's State Pier, the Schooner Ernestina links New Bedford's waterfront to the city's early twentieth-century maritime and immigration history. NPS, Special Resource Study, 16-17.

<sup>220</sup> McCabe and Thomas, 122.

<sup>221</sup> NPS, Special Resource Study, 30.



Centre Street, 1997.  
Photograph by OCLP.

## II. EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION  
GENERAL DESCRIPTION  
NORTH/SOUTH STREETS  
EAST/WEST STREETS



## INTRODUCTION

The current field conditions of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (NHP) represent a process of accretion and deletion that has been occurring for more than 350 years. This section presents an overview of existing conditions of the cultural landscape of New Bedford Whaling NHP recorded with photographs and text from November 1997 through February 1998.

The first section of the Existing Conditions describes and documents the overall landscape characteristics common to the park as a whole. This is accomplished by using a system of landscape characteristics designed to document the landscape's processes and physical forms. These attributes have been adapted from the NPS' A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports, Draft 1997, and include:

- ◆ Spatial Organization/Topography
- ◆ Structures
- ◆ Vegetation
- ◆ Views and Vistas
- ◆ Small-scale Features
- ◆ Surface Materials
- ◆ Circulation

The final section of Existing Conditions presents these conditions in more detail as they occur on the individual streets within the park. Organized first by those streets travelling north/south and beginning near the waterfront, followed by those running east/west and beginning at the northern end, this final section describes specific conditions.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The site occupies approximately 34 acres in downtown New Bedford (Exhibit 1, page xiii). It is comprised of more than 13 full city blocks. It has the following components:

- ◆ land on the east side of the National Historic Landmark District over to the east side of MacArthur Drive along the waterfront from the Route 6 overpass (ramps to

New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge to an extension of School Street);

- ◆ land north of Elm Street bounded by Acushnet Avenue, Route 6, John F. Kennedy Memorial Highway (Route 18), and Elm Street; and
- ◆ the Schooner Ernestina, currently berthed at the New Bedford State Pier.

## SPATIAL ORGANIZATION/TOPOGRAPHY

The primary factor in defining the spatial organization of the park is the street pattern, coupled with the structures lining each street. The existing street pattern is an orthogonal grid that evolved in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The earliest roads were Water, County, Union, and Commercial Streets. Subsequent roads inserted into the grid added to the density of buildings and people. The blocks in the center of the park are smaller, providing an intimate scale to the streetscape. This scale is violated in many instances by the intrusion of large twentieth-century commercial buildings. Several openings in the wall of façades occur scattered throughout the park where buildings have been moved or demolished. Some of these now serve as surface parking lots and some, planted with ornamental plant material, serve as small, contemporary pocket parks.

Most of the urban core of New Bedford is situated on an eastern-facing hillside overlooking the Acushnet River. The NHP is situated near the base of this broad slope, facing the river. Smaller hills punctuate the slope. Within the park the highest point is the crest of Johnny Cake Hill, the site of the Seaman's Bethel and Old Dartmouth Historical Museum Whaling Museum. From here the land slopes away in all directions, most noticeably to the Acushnet River on the east.

## STRUCTURES

The consideration of structures is beyond the scope of this report and will be addressed separately in the Historic Architecture Inventory and Conditions Assessment Report prepared by the NPS Cultural Resource Center. However, two elements have a direct impact on the landscape of New Bedford Whaling NHP: a pedestrian overpass above Route 18 in the northeast corner of the park, and an awning projecting from the building at the southeast corner of Union and Water Streets.



Figure 135: Sidewalk bench, 1997.

The concrete overpass is supported on either side by a stair tower. Access can be up several flights of steps, or via a winding ramp around the stairs, which conforms to the Americans with Disabilities Act. The metal awning over the sidewalk is supported on posts at the curb. Though awnings were a major element of the merchant blocks during the period of significance, this one is not historic.

#### VEGETATION

Vegetation in the park consists of street tree plantings, ornamental material on institutional and civic property, and occasional sidewalk planters. Preliminary research suggests that the mostly deciduous material does not accurately reflect the park's historic character, but result from contemporary plantings done in a patchwork manner.

Street trees, when they occur in multiples, tend to be planted every 60 feet on center (o.c.). Within tree pits varying in size from 4 by 6 feet to 5 by 8 feet, they are usually located along the curb edge of the sidewalk, with the pit's longest side parallel to the street. Common street trees used in the park include honeylocust, linden, maple, oak, ornamental, pear, sycamore, and zelkova.

#### VIEWS AND VISTAS

Key viewsheds in the park remain in some locations. Those east to the river from Water Street are some of the most important, and though compromised by Route 18, still suggest the waterfront's importance to New Bedford. Vegetation alters the views down many of the streets in the park. Historically, views of the streetscape were mostly unobstructed, as the current planting did not exist.



Figure 136: Interpretive sign in front of the Robeson House, 1997.



Figure 137: Historic building marker, 1997.

#### SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

Several small-scale fixtures, usually associated with the streetscape, are located within the park including benches, parking meters, signs, and streetlights.

There are only a few benches in the park, with cast iron sides supporting wooden seats and backs (Figure 135). Parking meters are doubleheaded and are placed on the left side of one-way streets. A variety of signage exists in the park, including interpretive signs with historical information, various street signs, and traffic signs. There are specific locations in the park that have interpretive signage placed along the pedestrian's path for easy viewing and reading. These signs contain text and historic information calling a reader's attention to some unique feature at the location, usually an historic building (Figure 136). Historic buildings in the park are noted by the placement, on their facades, of simple green plaques with yellow lettering that supply the names of the buildings. (Figure 137).

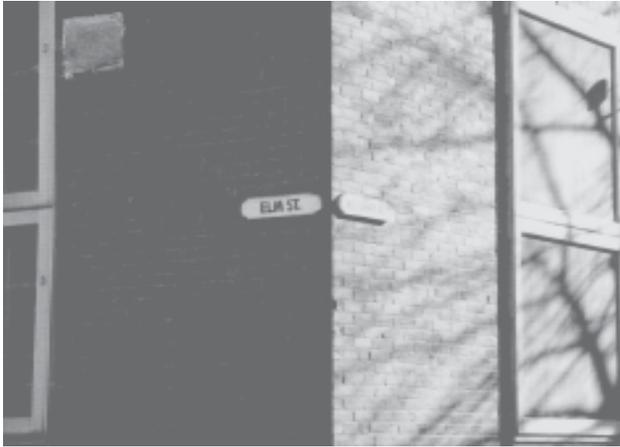


Figure 138: Street signs attached to the side of the NYNEX Building at Elm and William Streets, 1997.



Figure 140: Typical roadbed paving pattern in the park, using Belgian block, 1997.

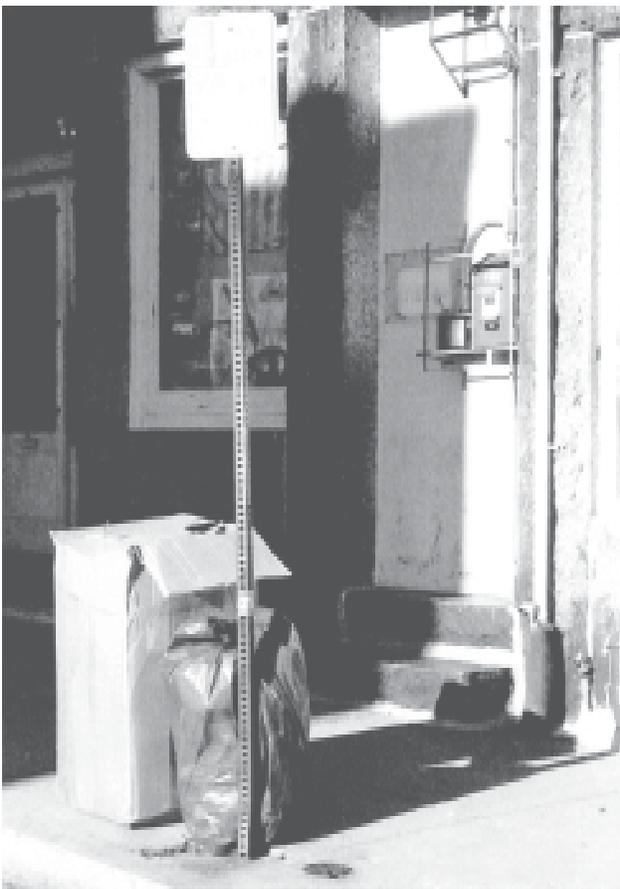


Figure 139: Traffic sign attached to pole, 1997.

The names of most of the city streets in the park are marked by signs tacked onto a building's corner, whether it is historic or contemporary, at approximately a ten-foot height (Figures 138). In a few instances, signs are located on top of traditional sign poles. Signs directing the flow of traffic or indicating parking restrictions can be found attached to

streetlights at approximately 61/2 feet above ground, or to poles 71/2 feet high (Figure 139). They may be attached directly to buildings in some instances. Electric streetlights in the park consist of glass and metal lamps on top of cast iron poles. Lamps sit on poles at approximately 8 feet high, housed in four-sided containers that are wider at the center than the top or bottom. The bottom portions of the containers have glass sides and metal tops. Decorative metal finials cap the lamps, bringing the total height to 101/2 feet.

#### SURFACE MATERIALS

Within the New Bedford Whaling NHP, the streets and sidewalks are constructed with a limited variety of materials. These include granite, brick, flagstone, cobble, and asphalt.

Granite Belgian blocks, cut to a dimension approximately 4 by 10 by 6 inches and originally used as ballast on merchant ships returning to the New World from Belgium, constitute the surface paving for most streets in the park. The blocks differ in size, color, and spacing. The variances in their appearance range from small sharp-edged blue granite to larger rounded-edge granite with a high iron content, resulting in a warmer, browner color. These warmer-colored stones tend to be slightly larger than the blue ones. Blocks that had been used previously as paving material in the nineteenth century have been reused, wherever possible, when roads were repaved. These previously-used stones were cleaned before being re-laid. The age of the pavers is quite obvious when compared to the contemporary stones; their smoother edges show more signs of weathering.

Belgian blocks serve a variety of uses in the park. Most streets are paved with Belgian block in a running bond pattern, as are curb cuts for parking lot and driveway entrances



Figure 141: Typical curb cut for driveway and parking lot entrances paved in Belgian block, 1997.



Figure 144: Granite runners on Centre Street sidewalk, 1997.



Figure 142: Belgian block used as paving over tree pits, 1997.



Figure 145: Flagstone panels used in sidewalk paving, 1997.



Figure 143: Typical granite curbing, 1997.



Figure 146: Flagstone panels used in crosswalk, 1997.



Figure 147: Concrete formed to resemble flagstone paving, 1997.

(Figures 140-141). Where the paving pattern from perpendicular roads intersect without crosswalks, the joint is tapered to a point in the middle of the intersection. Belgian blocks are also used to pave tree pits (Figure 142). All curbstone is granite and provides an edge to the sidewalk that is both 6 inches wide and 6 inches high above the roadbed (Figure 143).

In some locations oblong granite blocks are set into the surface of the sidewalk or roadbed in specific locations in the park. The surface dimension of these blocks range from 14 to 17 inches wide and from 20 to 30 inches long. These granite runners provided a smoother surface for moving goods between the waterfront and the storage and business facilities in town (Figure 144).

The flagstone panels constituting the majority of paving material used in the park's sidewalks and crosswalks are of Kentucky bluestone and have a flaked, sedimentary appearance. There are some 7 by 7-foot panels that likely date to the 1800s, used as sidewalk paving in front of the Double Bank building on Water, between Hamilton and Rodman Streets. However, most flagstones in the park have been laid in the twentieth century. These panels are 4 feet wide with lengths ranging from 2 to 4 feet and tend to be about 2 inches thick (Figures 145-146). The thickness for crosswalks



Figure 148: Cobblestones used as sidewalk border, 1997. Note patches of exposed bedrock.

ranges from 1 1/2 to 2 inches. This thickness is too thin to support vehicular traffic and many panels are cracked or missing. In the core of the historic district, concrete has been used to repair sections of damaged or broken flagstone in both sidewalks and crosswalks. Most repairs are for crosswalks where the concrete has been formed and colored to resemble adjacent flagstone (Figure 147). On the edge of the park there are some aggregate, scored concrete sidewalks that extend from the building edge to the street's curb.

Bricks are used primarily as ornamental paving material for sidewalks. Not intended as a walking surface, they frequently form borders for the flagstone panels. They are of red clay, with a standard dimension of 2 by 4 by 8 inches, and are laid with the 2 by 8 inch surface facing up. They occur in a variety of paving patterns such as herringbone, basket weave, concentric square and rectangular panels, running bond, and plain grid. They are most frequently laid in conjunction with Belgian block.

“Cobble” is a geological term describing a rounded stone between the size of an apple and a basketball. Some of the cobbles are derived from bedrock, but the majority are rounded by wave action.<sup>222</sup> Within the park, cobbles are used primarily on sidewalks as a border, occurring on either the street side or building side of the main paving material, and they are usually set in a mortared bed. Occasionally they occur on both sides (Figure 148). The shapes and sizes vary, but are generally ovals and rounds, with an average surface area of 5 to 6 inches in diameter. The setting beds have deteriorated in some instances, to the point that weeds have taken hold and obscure the stones.

## CIRCULATION

The circulation elements common throughout the park include the grid pattern road system and abutting sidewalks. The roads range from a large four-lane highway to narrow one-lane alleys. Sidewalks exist along many, but not all, of these roads. Most roadbeds are paved in Belgian block, though some are paved with asphalt. Asphalt is used to pave surface parking lots and some of the streets along the edge of the park. Both one-way and two-way streets are approximately 24 feet wide. The few alleys are only one block long. The widths of sidewalks from building line to street edge (including curb) range from 31/2 feet to 91/2 feet, with the average about 8 feet wide. Paving materials used are Belgian block, brick, cobbles, concrete, and flagstone, often in combination. Flagstone panels or concrete provide the main walking surface and Belgian block, brick, and cobbles are frequently used in borders.

## NORTH/SOUTH STREETS

## ROUTE 18/MACARTHUR DRIVE

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots Grade change
Vegetation	Ornamental Street trees
Structures	Pedestrian overpass
Views and Vistas	Compromised view between waterfront/park
Small-scale Features	Signs
Surface Materials	Asphalt
Circulation	Heavy vehicular Treacherous to pedestrians



Figure 149: Pedestrian bridge in the distance crossing Route 18/MacArthur Drive, 1997. Union Street crosses the intersection in the foreground.



Figure 150: View down Centre Street to the Schooner Ernestina, 1997. Note the sycamore tree that will block the view when it is in leaf.

The four-lane Route 18 and the two-lane MacArthur Drive bound the eastern edge of the park. The width of these roads and the speed of traffic on them create a visual and physical barrier between the park and the waterfront. Pedestrians can cross either via a weighty concrete overpass at the foot of Hamilton Street, or at a traffic light at Union Street.

The parcel between Route 18 and North Water Street consists of a surface parking lot, buffered by a turf strip. A pedestrian bridge crosses both roads at this point (Figure 149). Sycamore trees are planted along the median, south of the footbridge at the foot of Centre Street. The trees disrupt the view from the park down the street to the waterfront, including, in the summer, the view to the Schooner Ernestina (Figure 150).



Figure 151: Bank showing the grade change between Route 18 and Mac Arthur Drive, 1997.



Figure 153: Detail of wooden fence separating Front Street from Route 18/MacArthur Drive, 1997.



Figure 152: View across parking lot Route 18/MacArthur Drive, 1997.

There is a grade change of approximately five feet between MacArthur Drive and Route 18 that adds to the physical and visual separation (Figure 151). The metal guardrail dividing the northbound and southbound lanes of Route 18 also disrupts the view of the waterfront.

A traffic light marks the intersection of Route 18 with Union Street. Here the median strip separating Route 18 from MacArthur Drive begins to widen again, with the parcel becoming largest at its southern terminus, roughly parallel to Spring Street. This southern parcel also contains a surface parking lot, bounded on the north by Commercial Street. The parking lot is buffered from Route 18 by a smaller turf strip planted with Chinese arborvitae (Figure 152). Over time the plantings will mature until the view to the water is cut off.

FRONT STREET

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Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots
Structures	Wooden fence
Views and Vistas	Compromised view to waterfront
Small-scale Features	Streetlights
Surface Materials	Flagstone Brick
Circulation	One-way

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The flow of traffic on Front Street is restricted because of the constraints imposed by the close proximity of Route 18. Originally travelling for several blocks along the city's waterfront, the street now only runs between Hamilton and a point just north of Union Streets. A 4 1/2-foot-high grey wooden fence divides Front Street from Route 18 (Figure 153). It was probably intended to help shut out the sight of high-speed traffic passing so closely. Its intention may have been good, but it, too, adds another layer to the barrier between the park and the waterfront. Eight streetlights, but no trees, line the flagstone and brick sidewalk, running along the west side of the street.

WATER STREET

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots Grade change
Vegetation	Street trees
Views and Vistas	View to waterfront
Small-scale Features	Streetlight
Surface Materials	Asphalt Brick Cobble Concrete Flagstone Granite

Running between Elm Street on the north and its intersections with Route 18 on the south, Water Street is the longest street in the park and has two-way traffic. The sidewalk on the west side, between Elm and Rodman Streets, has a central run of flagstone, bordered by a cobblestone strip on the street side and a bricked strip along the property line. This same pattern is repeated between Hamilton and Centre Streets. Between Rodman and Hamilton Streets (in front of the Double Bank Building), the sidewalk is split evenly with flags and brick. Here 4-foot-square concentric brick panels border the street side, and the flagstone consists of enormous old pieces measuring 7-foot-square. They are the only old flagstone pieces found in the park.

The Double Bank Building sits on a plinth, highlighting the drop in grade of 16 inches from Hamilton to Rodman Streets (Figure 154). Between Centre Street and Rose Alley, the paving is split with flags and cobbles. Two streetlights and one callery pear line this short stretch of sidewalk. Cobblestone strips border both sides of the central flagstone from Rose Alley to Union Street. Two trees and one streetlight are set in the streetside cobbles.

On the west side of Water Street, between Union and William Streets, are one tree (near Union) and six streetlights. A brick herringbone pattern separates the flags from the roadbed between Union Street and the old Commerce Bank. The

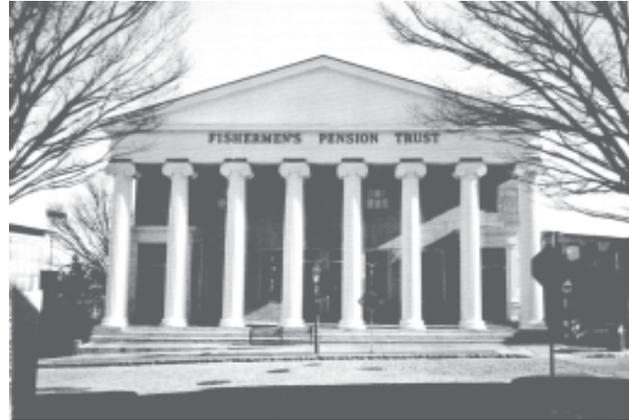


Figure 154: Grade change in front of the Double Bank Building on the south side of Water Street, between Rodman and Hamilton Streets, 1997.

sidewalk is exclusively flagstone in front of this building. The herringbone pattern picks up again between this point and William Street. Between William and Rodman Streets, the brick pattern changes to a simple grid. Between Rodman and Elm Streets, the flagstone sidewalk has a cobbled border.

The stretch of Water Street north of Elm connects with the southbound lanes of Route 18 and is the eastern border for the parcel containing the New Bedford Standard Times Building. The newest trees are ailanthus and sycamore. The strip south of Union marks the western edge of the park's small parcel that is south of Union Street and west of Route 18. The surface of the road is asphalt and the sidewalks are concrete, along the piece below Union Street.

BETHEL STREET/JOHNNY CAKE HILL

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots Steepest grade change
Vegetation	Ornamental Street trees Turf
Surface Materials	Cobble Flagstone
Circulation	One-way

Traffic moves south in a one-way direction on Johnny Cake Hill. This street crests the hill, which was originally known as Prospect Hill. Most of the sidewalk, on both east and west sides, is bordered with turf. These borders are different on the southern portion of both sidewalks where the turf changes to cobble. There are flagstone crosswalks at the usual street intersections, with a notable exception. One crosswalk is set mid-block, between the Seamen's Bethel and the Whaling Museum.

The street is lined with ash, red maple, and red oak trees. One of the largest trees in the park can be found standing to the southwest of the Seamen's Bethel; a large Norway maple overlooks a memorial garden terraced with granite blocks. The garden contains a bluestone walk and a central turf parcel surrounded by ornamental shrubs and groundcover. Trees found in this space include honeylocust, cherry, and dogwood. The front of the Seamen's Bethel, facing Johnny Cake Hill, is landscaped with a nonhistoric planting of ornamental shrubs that include boxwood, variegated emerald euonymous, sweetbells rhododendron, yew, azalea, juniper, and andromeda.

Traffic also travels one-way for the block north of Johnny Cake Hill known as Bethel Street. The southern half of the western sidewalk is currently obscured by rubble from a recent fire in the building at the northwest corner of William and Bethel Streets. Sycamores, red maples, and ginkgo line this block.

## SECOND STREET

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots
Vegetation	Ornamental Street trees
Structures	Chain link fence
Small-scale Features	Carved gutter Signs
Surface Materials	Brick Cobble
Circulation	One-way

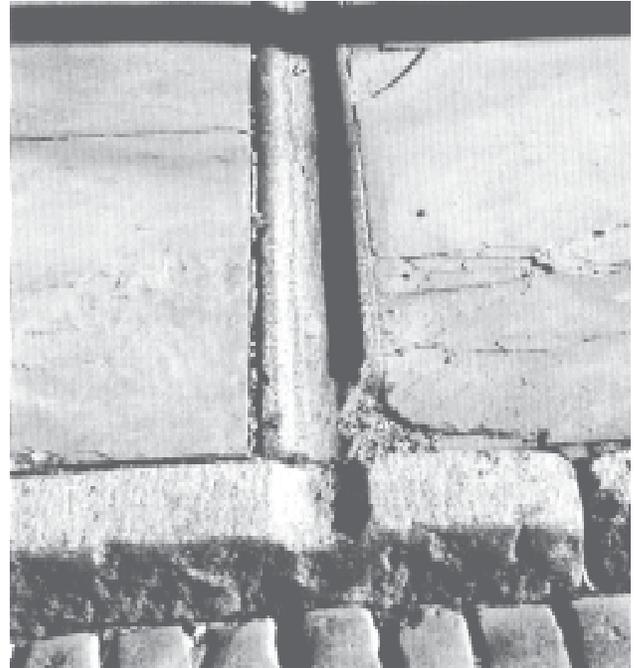


Figure 155: Carved gutter, 1997.

This is a one-way street where traffic travels northbound. On the block between Elm and William Streets, the sidewalks are bordered by both cobble and brick, though not at the same places. A carved gutter crosses the flagstone sidewalk, running through a drainpipe from the roof of the Visitor's Center to the street. The curbstone has also been carved to accommodate the flow of water (Figure 155).

Plant material consists of callery pear, hawthorn, honeylocust, linden, red maple, and Japanese pagoda tree. Compared to the Seamen's Bethel, the non-historic planting around the Benjamin Rodman House is quite simple. Two boxwoods flank the front steps, a honeylocust is found on the north side, and a linden is on the south side. A yew hedge on the southeast corner shields a drop to a terrace formed by a small retaining wall. At the intersection of Second and William Streets is the Andrew Robeson House. Based on historic photo documentation, it, like the Seamen's Bethel on Johnny Cake Hill is overly landscaped with ornamental trees and shrubs.

Except for a run of sidewalk on the east side (approximately from Barker's Lane to Union Street), which is bordered with cobblestone, the flagstones are bordered with brick. There is a surface parking lot at the northeast corner of Union and Second Streets and a chain link fence separates the adjacent property, north of the parking lot, from the sidewalk. On the west side a surface parking lot separates the parking garage at Barker's Lane to its south, from the Custom House at William Street to its north.

ACUSHNET AVENUE

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots
Vegetation	Street trees
Structures	Pedestrian overpass
Small-scale Features	Signs
Surface Materials	Asphalt Concrete Granite
Circulation	One-way

Acushnet Avenue is a one-way street that forms a western boundary of the park. On the block north of Elm Street, adjacent to the Elm Street garage, the roadbed is paved with asphalt and the sidewalks are of an aggregate concrete. The remainder of the roadbed is paved with Belgian block.

There is a surface parking lot at the southeast corner of Acushnet and William Streets with a parking garage filling up the rest of the block south to Barker's Lane. Trees on this street are ash, callery pear, linden, and Japanese pagoda.

EAST/WEST STREETS

ROUTE 6/NEW BEDFORD-FAIRHAVEN BRIDGE  
APPROACH

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots
Surface Materials	Asphalt
Circulation	Heavy vehicular Treacherous to pedestrians

Forming the northern boundary of the park, this highway curves around the Elm Street Garage and the New Bedford Standard Times Building before it crosses Route 18, the eastern boundary of the park.

ELM STREET

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots Grade change
Vegetation	Ornamental Street trees
Structures	Pedestrian overpass
Small-scale Features	Benches Parking meters "Mr. Steadfast" Signs Streetlights
Surface Materials	Asphalt Brick Cobble Concrete Flagstone
Circulation	Heavy vehicular Wide sidewalks

Traffic travels in both directions on this asphalt-paved street. Between Acushnet Avenue and North Second Street, the Elm Street Garage occupies the north side of the block and the NYNEX building occupies the south side. Trees, in 5 by 8-foot pits, and streetlights occupy the concrete sidewalks on both sides. Parking meters line the street on the south side and a bench is located at the northeast corner of Acushnet Avenue and Elm Street. The park's sidewalks are the widest here, on the north side, at 91/2 feet. On the south side, from Second Street to Water Street, the sidewalk is paved with flagstone-bordered cobblestone on either side. On the north side, along the New Bedford Standard Times Building, the concrete sidewalk is bordered on either side with bricks in a basket weave pattern.

At the northeast corner of the park there is a large parking lot that services the Candleworks Building. Recently landscaped with ornamental trees and shrubs, the plantings have been surfaced with bark mulch.

A triangular plaza at the intersection of Elm and North Water Street contains a statue of a stone eagle, locally referred to as "Mr. Steadfast," on a fluted concrete pedestal. The base is a granite and marble terrazzo-like platform set in a gravel bed surrounded by mulch. Two concrete benches are nearby, one on either side, with ornamental cherries and honeylocusts used as plant material. Originally part of the Post Office building that stood west of the Custom House on William Street (Figure 99), the statue had been located at various sites downtown and was rescued from several years storage for this installation (Figure 156).



Figure 156: Mr. Steadfast, 1997.



Figure 157: View up Dover Street, 1997.

#### DOVER STREET

Small-scale Features	Fire escapes Streetlights Signs
Surface Materials	Concrete Flagstone Granite
Circulation	One-way Smallest sidewalks

This small street, with one-way traffic moving east, runs from Acushnet Avenue on the west to Second Street on the east, parallel and between Elm and William Streets. The smallest sidewalks in the park, at 31/2-feet wide, are here. They are concrete on the north side and flagstone on the south, and are usually obscured by parked cars (Figure 157). There is a fire escape on the south side and one streetlight on the north side near Acushnet Avenue.



Figure 158: Zelkova trees lining William Street, 1997.

WILLIAM STREET

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots
Vegetation	Ornamental Street trees
Views and Vistas	View to Double Bank Street trees compromise view
Small-scale Features	Parking meters Signs
Surface Materials	Flagstone Granite
Circulation	One-way

Traffic on William Street flows one way, with parking permitted on both sides of the street. The street is paved with Belgian block from Acushnet Avenue to its eastern terminus at the intersection with Water Street. Several zelkova trees line the block on both sides (Figure 158). Flagstone paving is used on the sidewalks. On the south side, a brick border runs along the street side.

Interpretive signs give visitors information at a few locations along William Street. The intersection of William and North Second Street contains two: one on the southwest corner discusses the Custom House, while the other on the southeast corner describes the Robeson House. At the southwest corner of William and North Water Streets, a sign directs one's attention to the Double Bank Building across the street.



Figure 159: View of Barker's Lane showing parking garage, 1997.

BARKER'S LANE

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots
Vegetation	Street trees
Structures	Garage
Small-scale Features	Parking meters
Circulation	Narrow roadbed

Connecting Acushnet Avenue with North Second Street, Barker's Lane runs for only one block, parallel with and between Union and William Streets (Figure 159). Though it has a narrower roadbed, traffic moves in both directions. Flagstone sidewalks are on both sides of the street. On the north side, a single Belgian block course along the parking garage travels the entire block. Parking meters and trees are located here and a surface parking lot stands on the south side of the street at the eastern end.



Figure 160: Tree pit paved with bricks on Union Street, 1997.



Figure 161: Intersection of Union and William Streets, 1997. The crosswalk is a painted one, not made of flagstone.

UNION STREET

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots
Vegetation	Ornamental Street trees
Structures	Awning Pedestrian overpass
Views and Vistas	View to waterfront Sidewalk awning
Small-scale Features	Signs
Surface Materials	Asphalt Brick Flagstone Granite
Circulation	Heavy vehicular Wide roadbed

Union Street is a wide main thoroughfare through downtown New Bedford, connecting downtown with the western part of the city. The blocks from Acushnet Avenue to Water Street form the southern edge of the park. From there, Union Street continues east to its intersection with Route18/MacArthur Drive. It is paved in asphalt for its entire length and is a two-way, four-lane road with parking along either both sides.

The sidewalk along the north side, from Acushnet Avenue to Second Street, is brick. The tree pits that hold honeylocust are also paved with brick, rather than the usual Belgian block (Figure 160). The block from Second Street to Johnny Cake Hill is mostly concrete. Flagstone is used as paving in front of the property on the northwest corner of Union Street and Johnny Cake Hill. A combination of flagstone and brick is used on the portion between Johnny Cake Hill and Water Street. Between Water and Front Streets, the flags are used with Belgian block. As the Belgian block paving on the intersecting street stops short of their intersection with Union Street, crosswalks are painted in white on asphalt paving (Figure 161). An awning projects over the sidewalk from the building at the southeast corner of Union and Water Streets.

There is a small park at the northeast corner of Union Street and Johnny Cake Hill commemorating the gas explosion January 1977, which levelled two buildings on the site and seriously damaged a third. This post-fire memorial garden was designed and installed by the Buzzard's Bay Garden Club, Old Dartmouth Historical Society, and WHALE. Groundcover and ornamental shrubs include crabapple, cypress, euonymous, forsythia, and juniper. Placed among the vegetation is a National Historic Landmark plaque dated 1966, and interpretive historic photos. In the northwest corner of the space is a block with the date 1878 carved into it. It rests atop a fragment of a building foundation.



Figure 162: Belgian block 'square' at the foot of Rodman Street, 1997.



Figure 163: Paving at the foot of the western stair tower to the pedestrian bridge, 1997.

RODMAN STREET

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots Grade change
Vegetation	Street tree
Structures	Pedestrian overpass
Views and Vistas	Compromised view between waterfront/park
Small-scale Features	Signs
Surface Materials	Flagstone Granite
Circulation	Heavy vehicular Treacherous to pedestrians

A small street running for one block between North Water and Front Streets, Rodman slopes down to the harbor. The Belgian block used to pave the western half of Rodman Street is of a buff/honey color and flagstone crosswalks separate it from the grey Belgian block used on the eastern portion of the street and intersecting Water Street. The paving pattern on the eastern portion of Rodman Street is of two large, concentric, approximately square shapes that are separated by flagstone crosswalks (Figure 162).

On the north side of the street, a surface parking lot is sited mid-block, adjacent to the stair/ramp tower at the eastern end of the street that provides access to the pedestrian overpass for Route 18/MacArthur Drive. Between Water Street and the stair tower, the sidewalk is configured with a cobble border on the street side, flagstone in the center, and a Belgian block border along the property line. Two streetlights are located on this side, as well. There is no curb between the stair tower and Front Street; here the flagstone paving is simply surrounded by Belgian block (Figure 163). On the south sidewalk, flagstone is separated from the street by concentric brick panels approximately 3 1/2 by 5-feet. There are two trees in 4 by 6 foot pits and five streetlights. Mid-block there is a black wooden fence with a 4-foot opening that screens a surface parking lot. This lot also borders the north side of Hamilton Street.



Figure 164: Loading docks on Hamilton Street

HAMILTON STREET

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots Grade change
Vegetation	Street trees
Structures	Loading docks
Views and Vistas	Compromised view between waterfront/park
Small-scale Features	Signs Streetlights
Surface Materials	Brick Cobble Flagstone

Hamilton is another small street south of and parallel to Rodman Street. On the north side, the sidewalk at its western edge is flagstone and brick, with the brick arranged in concentric panels, 4 foot square. Toward the eastern edge, cobblestone on the outside, and bricks on the inside border the flags. There are four nonhistoric zelkova trees and three streetlights on this side, each streetlight with one traffic sign posted on it. The south side of the sidewalk contains several curb cuts and there is an absence of granite curbing mid-block. Two loading docks project onto the sidewalk at the eastern end (Figure 164).

CENTRE STREET

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots Grade change
Vegetation	Ornamental
Views and Vistas	Compromised view to waterfront
Small-scale Features	Exposed bedrock Granite runners Streetlights Signs
Surface Materials	Brick Cobble Flagstone Granite

Running slightly off parallel with the rest of the streets downtown, Centre Street is a two-way street travelling for one block between North Water and Front Streets (Figure 150). The sidewalk on the north side has six streetlights set in the cobbled strip running closest to the roadbed. On the other side of the flagstone, closest to the buildings, are four courses of brick paralleling the street.

There is a surface parking lot on the southeast corner of Centre and North Water Street. The sidewalk on the south side is flag and cobble, set with five streetlights. Two patches of exposed bedrock are located at the western end (Figure 148). Granite runners are set into the paving on the eastern portion. A privet hedge borders the property line at the eastern edge as well. Next to the hedge is a cobbled strip between 24 and 30 inches wide. Another about 20 inches wide borders the street. In between the runners is a bricked strip of four courses set in a grid pattern (Figure 144). Nonhistoric shrubs are located in front of the Beetle and Spooner Houses, and a privet hedge borders the granite runners

## ROSE ALLEY

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots Grade change
Views and Vistas	Compromised view between waterfront/ park
Small-scale Features	Carved gutter
Surface Materials	Granite
Circulation	One-way

A very narrow street south of Centre Street, Rose Alley connects North Water and Front Streets. The roadbed is paved with Belgian block and a gutter marks the center also of Belgian block set perpendicularly, four courses wide. The edges of the roadbed are bordered by two courses of Belgian block, also set perpendicularly (Figure 165). Mid-block, on the south side, is an ailanthus tree with a fragmented historic gutter at its base.

There are no sidewalks on Rose Alley. There is a surface parking lot on the north side, in the middle of the block, and another one on the south side, from the middle of the block to its intersection with North Water Street, on the western end. There is no view to the water from Rose Alley, as a warehouse on the State Pier blocks any visual access.



Figure 165: View down Rose Alley, 1997.

## COMMERCIAL STREET

Spatial Organization/ Topography	Surface parking lots Grade change
Vegetation	Ornamental
Small-scale Features	Parking meters Signs
Surface Materials	Asphalt

Traffic moves in both directions on this small stretch of Commercial Street. Paved in asphalt, it connects South Water Street with a remaining fragment of Front Street. It is separated from Route 18/MacArthur Drive by a guardrail and ends in a circular surface parking lot (Figure 152). This space is buffered from Route 18 slightly by a vegetated strip planted with *arborvitae orientalis*. Though the waterfront is visible from the head of the street where it intersects with Water Street, the view becomes obscured by the highway when one reaches its foot. There are several honeylocust trees flanking the condominium building fronting on the parking area. Sidewalks on both north and south sides are concrete.

## ENDNOTE

<sup>222</sup>Tammis Coffin, ed. *The Rusticator's Journal: A Collection of Articles From the Journal of the Friends of Acadia*. Bar Harbor, ME: Friends of Acadia, 1993.



Double Bank Building, 1997.  
Photograph by OCLP.

### III. ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES  
EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY



## NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS

The National Register of Historic Places Program determines an historic property's significance in American history through a process of identification and evaluation. Historic significance may be present in districts, site, buildings, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association, and that meet at least one of the following National Register criteria:

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

- D. that has yielded or may be likely to yield information in prehistory or history.

A large portion of the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park was designated a National Historic Landmark and concurrently listed on the National Register in November 1966 as the New Bedford Historic District. The boundaries of this district, as documented in the 1976 Register nomination, coincide with those of the Bedford Landing Waterfront Historic District, a Massachusetts Historic (40C) District established in 1971. The district, bounded by portions of Acushnet Avenue and of Elm, Water, Rodman, Front, Commercial, and Union Streets, is comprised of more than 11 city blocks, totaling approximately 19.6 acres (Exhibit 4). Some 20 buildings, most of which were constructed between 1810 and 1855, are located within the New Bedford Historic District and are cited as significant examples of the architectural types to be found in the commercial district of a major New England seaport of that period. Documentation for the district lists a period of significance between 1810 and 1855 and recognizes the associated themes of commerce and industry as the primary areas of significance (Appendix A).



Exhibit 4. Existing New Bedford National Register Districts

The boundaries of the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, established in the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-333), include the area within the New Bedford National Historic Landmark District (or, as named by a local ordinance, the Bedford Landing Waterfront Historic District), as well as two contiguous parcels: the land along the eastern boundary of the New Bedford NHL District over the east side of MacArthur Drive from the Route 6 overpass on the north to an extension of School Street on the south; and the land north of Elm Street, bounded by Acushnet Avenue on the west, Route 6 (ramps) on the north, MacArthur Drive on the east, and Elm Street on the south. In addition, the Schooner Ernestina, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1986 and berthed at the State Pier at the foot of Union Street, is included within the boundaries of the park (Appendix E).<sup>223</sup> The enabling legislation also lists five additional properties in which the park may assist with interpretation and preservation: the southwest corner of the State Pier, Waterfront Park, the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum, the Wharfinger Building, and the Bourne Counting House (Exhibit 3).<sup>224</sup>

Taken together, the National Historic Landmark District, the National Historic Landmark Schooner Ernestina, and other historic resources present in related properties support the theme of whaling and clearly meet the criteria of national significance for inclusion in the National Park Service. Moreover, antecedent National Historic Landmark status precludes further analysis of the national significance of the property with regard to building elements. While the National Register documentation provides a relatively detailed analysis of the significant buildings within the NHL District, the current documentation has the following shortcomings regarding the newly designated National Historical Park. Specifically, the documentation does not:

- w address the entire area within the adjusted boundaries of the park;
- w fully describe significant landscape characteristics and features that should be recognized as contributing features within the park;<sup>225</sup>
- w examine the site-specific information about contributing features within the vernacular landscape and, more importantly, those associated with the eight properties recognized as “of primary interest” in the New Bedford Historic District nomination;<sup>226</sup>
- w address potential archeological sites in the waterfront vicinity, including the filled regions underlying MacArthur Drive;
- w address the significance and historical relationships to the related properties listed in the park’s enabling legislation, including the southwest corner of the State Pier, Waterfront Park, the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum, the Wharfinger Building, and the Bourne Counting House; and
- w consider the potential significance of the area as a major New England fishing port of the twentieth century.

All these issues cannot be resolved in this report. However this section of the report attempts to analyze the landscape characteristics within the park boundaries, focusing on the characteristics of the nineteenth-century whaling landscape. Because of the number of outstanding issues listed above, the following analysis of significance and integrity, the description of contributing and noncontributing features, and the preservation issues listed in this report should be considered preliminary.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES

This section focuses on New Bedford’s nineteenth-century whaling landscape and identifies landscape characteristics that have historical significance based on National Register criteria. These standards define landscape characteristics as the “tangible evidence of the activities and habits of the people who occupied, developed, used, and shaped the landscape” and provide a basic analytical framework of themes within the broader categories of processes and physical forms. Landscape characteristics and features include spatial organization, land use, cultural traditions, hydrology, topography, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, drainage and utilities, mechanical engineering systems, views and vistas, small-scale features, and archeological sites.<sup>227</sup> A brief statement for each applicable category traces the introduction, alteration, and elimination of individual and collective features in the landscape and states the existing conditions for each landscape characteristic. An analysis of the significance and historic integrity of contributing and noncontributing characteristics is summarized in the chart at the end of this section.

## PROCESSES

## Spatial Organization

During much of its early history, the area comprising the New Bedford Whaling NHP was characterized by a high proportion of open space. Joseph Russell initially surveyed and parceled his property and imposed a grid of intersecting streets that radiated from the Four Corners intersection of Union and Water Streets, thus largely determining patterns of development and functional relationships of space. Mixed residential, commercial, and industrial use characterized the area during the first century of settlement. While the streets closest to the waterfront, including Centre, Front, and Rodman Streets, displayed a relatively dense massing of single- and two-story wooden buildings and structures, the wharves offered vast open space for storing the raw and finished goods of the whaling industry.

Before the exodus of the city's fashionable elite westward to County Street beginning in the 1820s, a number of spacious estates and gardens occupied lots in close proximity to the waterfront. Wooden fences and hedges often delineated the boundaries of these residential properties, and mansions two or three stories high were the key vertical elements in the landscape. By the mid-nineteenth century, the open spaces and residential gardens characterizing the area earlier in the century gave way to a dense cluster of commercial establishments and a number of three- and four-story brick buildings. However the area remained a relatively compact, well-ordered, and largely pedestrian neighborhood.

By the turn of the century, traces of New Bedford's industrial transition were evident in the newly constructed buildings that housed various manufacturing and processing facilities along the central waterfront. While much of the whaling infrastructure was adapted to service the twentieth-century fishing industry, a series of demolitions and highway construction beginning in the 1960s destroyed much of this infrastructure and separated the historic core of the whaling landscape from the working waterfront.

Russell's original circulation grid still imposes a certain spatial order upon the landscape, but twentieth-century highway construction interrupts significant vertical planes and visual associations with the waterfront. The reintroduction of late nineteenth-century materials such as Belgian block street paving concentrated in the designated NHL district bounded by Union, Elm, and Front Streets and Acushnet Avenue creates a sense of spatial coherence within the district. However, the partial inclusion and treatment of the Four Corners

intersection of Union and Water Streets undermines the traditional spatial relationships centered at this historic origin of New Bedford.

## Land Use

In the mid-eighteenth century, the catalyst for town development was the early whaling industry. Settlement centered near the Four Corners area in close proximity to the harbor, and attracted artisans engaged in the maritime trades. These artisans' shops lined the easternmost streets along the waterfront and were intermixed with residential buildings and processing facilities, including tryhouses and candleworks. During the peak years of New Bedford whaling, most residential property had been ceded to further industrial and commercial development. Secondary industries and retail and service establishments related to whaling, including bakeries and provisioners, chandleries, and boardinghouses, flourished in the area, occupying many of the former residences of the local whaling nabobs. Banks, insurance agents, and public utilities were established within the boundaries of the property and continued to maintain an institutional presence throughout the decline of the whaling industry in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Beginning in the second decade of the twentieth century, buildings that had been abandoned or neglected during the transition of the local economy toward the textile industry later served the commercial fishing industry. Recent urban renewal initiatives cleared many historic buildings and structures adjacent to the waterfront that had housed commercial operations related to both the whaling and fishing industries.

New Bedford Whaling NHP currently includes an array of business, residential, and institutional buildings that exemplify the Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian, and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century styles of commercial architecture and reflect historic patterns of mixed land use near the waterfront. A number of businesses east of Water Street cater to the fishing industries, although the majority of businesses to the west serve the tourist trade and the local service and retail market. While a number of residential buildings were moved from sites outside the property's boundaries, their presence reflects modern adaptive reuse of both space and structures, in keeping with historic practices.

## Cultural Traditions

One of the key cultural influences that shaped early development in New Bedford was Quakerism. From the early decades of settlement, a considerable proportion of the popula-

tion belonged to the Society of Friends. Quakers, including Joseph Russell and three generations of the Rotch family, whose religious principles informed much of the town's political and cultural traditions, were the founding and controlling spirit of the whaling industry. Quaker cultural traditions may have contributed to New Bedford's early deviation from typical New England settlement patterns and was certainly reflected in the austere architectural character of many of the town's early buildings. In 1812, the Friends' commitment to peaceful, non-aggressive behavior redrew the boundaries of political jurisdiction with New Bedford's legal separation from pro-Madison enclaves in Fairhaven. Furthermore, their strict standards of public deportment are evident in land use patterns and legal restrictions that precluded theatrical productions and entertainment venues until the 1820s.

Though declining membership during the first two decades of the nineteenth century eroded Quaker influence, a trend accelerated by the Hicksite schism of the 1820s, mid-century building practices continued to reflect the sobering influences of the Friends' religious traditions. While the construction of Greek Revival residential and public buildings was well within the stylistic milieu of Jacksonian America, this design vocabulary reflected a marriage of emerging class aspirations and persistent religious and cultural traditions. Russell Warren's Double Bank building and Robert Mills' Custom House mirror New Bedford's trend toward monumentality without ostentation in both building design and materials.

The dramatic growth of the whaling industry during the middle decades of the nineteenth century brought further demographic and cultural changes to New Bedford society that were made manifest in the landscape. A patchwork of architectural styles within the Four Corners area reflected the growing class, racial, and ethnic diversity in New Bedford and the dissipation of the early Quaker hegemony. Moreover, the unbridled proliferation of "seamen's services" in the city's historic core signaled New Bedford's transition toward a community with competing points of social cohesion during the second half of the nineteenth century. During the first half of the twentieth century, the waterfront's neglected appearance reflected the diminishing importance of the harbor and downturns in the local economy. Since the 1960s, the emergence of a preservation community and ensuing rehabilitation efforts within the New Bedford Historic District reveal a resurgent sense of community based in New Bedford's whaling heritage.

While early Quaker influence has dissipated and tourism accounts for a large portion of the traffic within the NHL

district, portions of the property still sustain uses linked with the local maritime culture. A number of commercial establishments catering to the fishing industry occupy buildings east of Water Street, particularly along Front and Union Streets. The New Bedford Port Society continues to offer lodging to itinerant seamen in the Mariner's Home and ecumenical services at the Seamen's Bethel. Further ethnographic research may elucidate the nature and degree of cultural continuity and change within the waterfront landscape.

### Hydrology

The hydrology of the property consisted of an overall easterly drainage pattern toward the harbor. Two natural springs crossed the property. The first, pictured in an early map of the town, wended its way through Joseph Rotch's Ten Acre Lot, crossing Union Street between North Second Street and Acushnet Avenue, and followed the line of Spring Street before emptying into the harbor at the southern edge of John Louden's property near Water Street. A second spring along Rose Alley is mentioned in early nineteenth-century descriptions of the Four Corners area, though there is little textual or graphic evidence to substantiate anecdotal accounts. Early maps depict broad expanses of tidal marsh and sandflats in New Bedford harbor prior to extensive shoreline development, although growth along the waterfront during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries resulted in a loss of wetlands.

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century development has erased most surficial hydrology characteristics dating from the historical period from the current landscape. The construction of three bridges, including the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge just north of the park, and a hurricane barrier has undoubtedly reduced tidal exchange and altered estuarine hydrology.

## PHYSICAL FORMS

### Topography

Until the mid-eighteenth century, the topography of the area within the New Bedford Whaling NHP consisted of flats interrupted by the central promontory known successively as Prospect Hill, Rotch's Hill, and ultimately Johnny Cake Hill. The estuarine terrace had a gentle westerly slope that ascended from the waterfront toward the cleared farmlands along County Street. Before European settlement, Native American land clearing and agricultural practices may have caused small-scale erosion and localized sedimentation impacts to the Acushnet River and estuarine waters. During the 1760s relatively rapid residential and commercial development

occurred in the area centered at the intersection of Union and Water Streets, resulting in ditches that drained into the New Bedford harbor. Construction of wharves and shoreline structures began around this time.

By 1834 at least seven of New Bedford's 22 wharves and piers were located directly east of the park boundary. Fill extended the shoreline into the harbor, pushing beyond the area's easternmost boundary near the intersection of Centre and Water Streets. During the second half of the nineteenth century, additional construction and demolition further altered the coastline. The City of New Bedford began leveling Johnny Cake Hill, the rocky spur around which the core of the whaling industry clustered, in 1852, while the grading and paving of streets continued throughout the century.

Major highway construction that effectively severed the New Bedford Historic (NHL) District from the waterfront cleared a wide swath of land, necessitated regrading, and probably increased the elevation of the land along the roadbed. Continued industrial and commercial development within the boundaries of the New Bedford Whaling NHP has significantly altered the overall topography and the historic character of the property. The highest point on the property remains at the crest of Johnny Cake Hill, from which the land slopes away in all directions.

### Vegetation

Before European settlement, New Bedford suffered limited deforestation and probably displayed a patchwork of cleared lands devoted to Native American agricultural use within predominantly oak forests. Development during the second half of the eighteenth century cleared many stands of oak trees. During the early decades of the nineteenth century, street plantings seem to have been limited to the Lombardy poplars that lined the southern boundary of William Rotch's property on Union Street, the eponymous elm at the northwest corner of Elm and Water Streets, and a few scattered trees that flanked residential properties. Substantial gardens surrounded most of the major estates in the area and included both vegetable gardens and ornamental beds.

By mid-century much of the area's vegetation had been displaced by additional construction and street improvements. By 1890 commercial structures covered the grounds of the Robeson and Rodman estates on North Second Street, the only remnants of green space in the area. There is little evidence of vegetation in the waterfront's utilitarian landscape until the 1970s, when preservation efforts introduced regular street plantings along the sidewalks of Union, William, Elm, and Water Streets.

Existing vegetation within the New Bedford Whaling NHP dates largely to the late twentieth century. Street trees, when present in multiples, are usually planted at regular intervals in tree wells between sidewalks and curbing. Ash, red maple, and red oak are among a variety of species that were introduced into the landscape. The gardens adjacent to the Seamen's Bethel and the Visitor Center, as well as many of the foundation plantings throughout the park, contain ornamental shrubs. Within the park there is no vegetation that dates to the nineteenth century.

### Circulation and Surface Materials

Street patterns date to the establishment of Bedford village in the 1760s, when Joseph Russell surveyed houseplots and laid out driftways, starting with the present Union and Water Streets. Additional streets expanded the circulation grid during subsequent decades of development in the eighteenth century. By 1834 most of the current street network had been established. During the 1830s municipal regulations determined the standard street widths to which most of the roadways still conform. Highway construction during the second half of the twentieth century eliminated large sections of Front and Middle Streets from the property.

Street paving, begun in the 1830s and completed within two decades, employed cobblestones. Granite curbing and flagged sidewalks served a largely pedestrian traffic, while granite runners spanned many of the intersections in order to facilitate moving large casks from the harbor to the various processing centers in the area. The introduction of horse-drawn street cars in 1872 required repaving some sections of William, North Second, and Middle Streets along which the tracks were laid. Belgian blocks subsequently replaced the worn cobblestones of many streets, providing a smoother ride for carriage and, after 1900, automobile traffic.

During the 1970s preservation efforts restored a running bond pattern of Belgian blocks to streets that had been paved with asphalt during the early decades of the twentieth century. Flagstone panels constitute the majority of paving materials installed in the property's sidewalks and crosswalks. Ornamental borders consisting of various combinations of cobblestone, Belgian block, and brick bracket the sidewalk flagging. Extant circulation features that probably date to the period of significance are limited to the overall street pattern, a series of bluestone panels in the sidewalk that fronts the Double Bank building on Water Street, and the eastern section of the granite runners lining the southern side of Centre Street.

## Buildings and Structures

During the first five decades that followed the settlement of New Bedford in 1760, the village remained an aggregate of low-lying buildings and structures. The majority of homes were wood-framed and gambrel-roofed, although the two- and three-story Federal-style brick residences of the Rotch-Rodman families prevailed over Johnny Cake Hill by the end of the eighteenth century. Commercial and retail establishments occupied buildings of similar massing and materials, while early manufacturing processes and warehouses were located in two- and three-story brick and stone buildings. Barns, stables, and other wooden outbuildings were present in many residential and commercial yards, reflecting the broader, agricultural context of the settlement. Most of these structures, including a small street bridge that spanned a brook on Union Street, were removed as development progressed in the next century.

A number of three- and four-story brick buildings and a wood-frame chapel, the Seamen's Bethel, were constructed during the early decades of the nineteenth century and several specialized institutional structures, including the Double Bank building and the United States Custom House, began to subtly transform the character of the landscape. Mid-century construction reflected the growing fortunes of the city; new and converted buildings housed various manufacturing and processing facilities, as well as utility offices along the central waterfront. Fenestration was modified in many commercial buildings along Union Street, including the Sundial building, to accommodate such new materials as plate glass.

Decades of neglect encouraged the demolition of several historically significant buildings and structures, including William Rotch's Mansion House. This allowed for the construction of the brick buildings that housed many of the services for the fishing industry during the first half of the twentieth century. The building of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society Whaling Museum, in 1916, a large, neo-Georgian brick building, represents a major addition to the historic landscape. Urban renewal initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the loss of many buildings related to both the whaling and fishing industries, including the historic Rotch Counting House and Marine Bank. A number of intrusive elements, including two parking structures, were constructed at this time.

Within the New Bedford Whaling NHP are roughly 20 buildings, most of them constructed between 1810 and 1855, that are considered significant examples of the architectural types to be found in the commercial district of a major New

England seaport of that period. Eight buildings are listed specifically in the New Bedford Historic District NHL nomination form (1978): United States Custom House, New Bedford Institution for Savings, Benjamin Rodman House, Mariner's Home, Seamen's Bethel, Whaling Museum, Mechanics Bank and Merchants Bank (Double Bank), and Samuel Rodman Candlehouse. In addition, the property contains a number of smaller Federal and Greek Revival buildings constructed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including a number of residential buildings that were moved to the property following NHL documentation and require further attention (Exhibit 5). The National Park Service's Northeast Cultural Resource Center has prepared an Historic Architecture Inventory and Conditions Assessment Report for many of the park's historic buildings.

## Drainage and Utilities

A system of pipes made from hollowed logs conveyed water from the "aqueduct fountain" near Purchase Street to the wharves during the early decades of the nineteenth century, but seems to have been rendered obsolete by mid-century. In the decade preceding the Civil War, the City of New Bedford pursued an ambitious program of civic improvements that included installing a sewer system along Union, Middle, School, Kempton, and Spring Streets. Gas mains were also installed around this time, bringing gaslight to the waterfront streets. By 1869 a municipal water system was completed, adding hydrants and water troughs for horses to the streetscape. The introduction of electric power and lighting, as well as telephone and telegraph service, brought a forest of utility poles and a tangle of wires to the property. In addition, the advent of automobile traffic in the early decades of the twentieth century brought traffic lights and carbon arc lamps suspended over major intersections.

During the 1970s federally-funded rehabilitation projects buried most of the utility lines within the property, removing an intrusive element from the post-whaling period. Hydrants and troughs dating to the period of significance are absent from the landscape.

## Views and Vistas

Beginning in the eighteenth century, historic accounts emphasize visual connections to the waterfront. From their Water Street residences, Samuel Rodman and William Rotch Jr. enjoyed unobstructed views down the short, narrow waterfront streets. Even with increased development of the property during the decades of peak whaling activity, the vantage

from most of the financial institutions along Water Street stretched eastward and downhill to the waterfront, giving way to an almost unobstructed view of the harbor along Rodman, Hamilton, and Centre Streets. While rubbish heaps and steamships replaced the enormous casks and wind-driven whalers as key elements in the waterfront vistas, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographs still depict a relatively clear, eastward view of the harbor framed by low-lying buildings.

Highway construction and the introduction of intrusive landscape elements, including guardrails, street signs, and median tree plantings, compromise critical viewsheds along Rodman, Centre, and Hamilton Streets and Rose Alley. However, the well-preserved scale of buildings along these waterfront streets frame a view that may be considered a contributing feature. Though the Schooner Ernestina is of a later period, its masts are reminiscent of those that defined the harbor view during the whaling era.

#### Small-Scale Features

During the early decades of settlement in New Bedford, economic and cultural factors conspired to impose a utilitarian character upon the waterfront landscape that persisted through much of the city's history. Beginning the 1830s, street im-

provements put into place a definitive system of granite street markers and curbing. Picket and, later, wrought iron fences bordered the sidewalks of many of the residential properties until the 1880s, when land use in the area tended primarily toward industrial and commercial processes.

During the nineteenth century, hitching posts were regularly placed before commercial and institutional buildings and, following completion of the municipal water system in 1869, at least two fountains were installed at street intersections within the current boundaries of the New Bedford Whaling NHP. The fountains, located at the northeast corner of Union and Bethel Streets and near the southwest corner of Water and Elm Streets, reflected the prevailing mode of transportation at the time and were documented with photographic evidence until the early decades of the twentieth century. Cast-iron gas fixtures replaced whale oil lanterns at mid-century and were, in turn, supplanted by electric lights and carbon arc lamps at the end of the decade.

Throughout the nineteenth century, retail establishments advertised goods and services with textual signs mounted flush with the buildings or three-dimensional representations protruding perpendicularly from just above the doorways. Historic photographs reveal the widespread use of fixed wooden awnings in front of many businesses along Union



Exhibit 5. Moved Buildings (footprints approximate)

	CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE/FEATURE	NONCONTRIBUTING
SPATIAL ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• size, density, and orthogonal configuration of the street blocks</li> <li>• orientation of lower street blocks towards the waterfront</li> <li>• pedestrian scale of the streetscape and buildings where clusters remain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paved parking lots</li> <li>• Route 18 and MacArthur Drive</li> </ul>
LAND USE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mixed use: business, residential, and institutional</li> <li>• adaptive reuse of space and structures in keeping with historic practices</li> </ul>	
CULTURAL TRADITIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greek Revival Architecture</li> <li>• continued use of Seamen's Bethel and Mariner's Home</li> </ul>	
TOPOGRAPHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Johnny Cake Hill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regraded land supporting Route 18/MacArthur Drive</li> </ul>
VEGETATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• occasional street trees, particularly in parts of the park associated with the early residential properties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• street trees in the utilitarian streetscapes</li> <li>• uniformity and widespread use of street trees planted at regular intervals</li> <li>• lush and colorful plantings of ornamental shrubs around structures that historically were unadorned</li> </ul>
CIRCULATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• street patterns</li> <li>• flagstone sidewalk in front of the Double Bank Building on William Street</li> <li>• granite runners set into the sidewalk on the south side of Centre Street's eastern edge (exposed bedrock on the same side, at the western end may have served the same purpose)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route 18/MacArthur Drive</li> </ul>
BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States Custom House, New Bedford Institution for Savings, Benjamin Rodman House, Mariner's Home, Seamen's Bethel, Whaling Museum, Mechanics Bank and Merchants Bank (Double Bank), and Samuel Rodman and other nineteenth-century buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• off-street parking facilities (garages, surface parking lots)</li> <li>• Route 18 pedestrian overpass</li> <li>• twentieth-century architecture</li> </ul>
DRAINAGE AND UTILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• carved granite gutter, south side of Rose Alley, mid-block</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• twentieth-century utility boxes (CATV, electric)</li> </ul>

	CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE/FEATURE	NONCONTRIBUTING
VIEWS AND VISTAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>views to the waterfront from Hamilton, Rodman, and Centre Streets from Water Street</li> <li>views of the Schooner Ernestina</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>highway construction</li> <li>intrusive landscape elements, including guard rails, street signs, and median tree plantings</li> </ul>
SMALL-SCALE FEATURES		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>benches</li> <li>traffic lights</li> <li>parking meters</li> <li>mailboxes</li> <li>historic building markers</li> <li>regularly placed modern incandescent reproductions of gas lamps</li> <li>sculpted sandstone eagle at eye-level</li> </ul>
ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pier and wharf remnants</li> <li>portions of the “aqueduct fountain” water system</li> <li>foundations of buildings destroyed during the British invasion of 1778</li> </ul>	

Street from the 1840s until the 1870s, after which cloth awnings were installed along the facades of the dwindling number of retail establishments remaining in the area. During the twentieth century, automobile traffic led to the removal of many landscape features associated with earlier horse-and-carriage traffic and to the reorientation of signage.

Existing small-scale elements reflect current and anticipated use of the New Bedford Whaling NHP landscapes. Parking meters, traffic signals and signs, and guardrails cater to automobile traffic. A few benches, with cast iron sides and wooden slats, combine with interpretive placards to encourage pedestrian and tourist traffic. Historic building markers identify many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings within the park. Recent rehabilitation efforts installed modern incandescent reproductions of gas lamps that were cast from remnants of nineteenth-century posts and placed at regular intervals along the waterfront streets. The sculpted sandstone eagle, known colloquially as “Mr. Steadfast,” that once surmounted the post office, now perches upon a granite and marble base set in the gravel-bed plaza at the intersection of Elm and North Water Streets. Most of the historic small-scale features are no longer extant and the streetscape is lacking key elements, including first-story signage and awnings.

#### Archeological Sites

Given the extensive alterations to New Bedford’s shoreline throughout the nineteenth century, it is likely a number of archeological sites exist within the New Bedford Whaling NHP, particularly within the filled regions below Route 18 and MacArthur Drive. Potentially significant features may include, but certainly are not limited to, remnants of piers and wharves, portions of the “aqueduct fountain” water system, and foundations of buildings destroyed during the British invasion of 1778. Archeologists from the NPS Northeast Cultural Resources Center are concurrently developing a functional land use plan and investigating archeological sites.

#### EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance according to seven criteria as listed in National Register Bulletin 15: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. All seven qualities of integrity need not be present to convey a sense of past time and place. This report considers the integrity of the nineteenth-century whaling landscape, recognizing that additional periods of significance merit further study. An assessment of existing conditions in terms of the Register’s seven aspects of integrity suggests that the New Bedford Whaling NHP appears to have retained a moderate degree of integrity as a whaling landscape. In spite of many changes to the historic landscape during the course of two centuries of industrial development and neglect, portions of the New Bedford Whaling NHP successfully convey a sense of past time and place. In particular, the waterfront area maintains its romantic connection to the nineteenth-century whaling industry. This aesthetic and sensory feeling with the park’s primary historical theme constitutes the essential element of the property’s historic significance as a whole.

While the park contains many architecturally significant buildings, there are limited landscape features that date to the whaling period of significance. Noncontributing features within the park’s boundaries, including twentieth-century commercial structures and two municipal parking structures, further compromise the property’s overall integrity. The park’s setting has changed little. The modern city continues to develop, maintaining the dynamism of its Four Corners heritage. However, the street system, with the exception of twentieth-century highway construction that serves as the park’s northern and eastern boundaries, maintains late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century planning guidelines regarding width and, consequently, preserves essential design features reflecting patterns of spatial organization and land use and evoking a certain sense of place within the historic landscape. Given the alteration of both the natural and cultural environment that whaling engendered, locational continuity for the industry’s genesis, growth, and decline within the park further contributes to the property’s overall integrity. In particular, the streetscapes east of the Johnny Cake Hill and the Whaling Museum satisfy, to some degree, the criteria of location, design, setting, and, above all, feeling that convey the property’s historic integrity and communicate the core experience of New Bedford’s whaling era.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>223</sup> The Schooner Ernestina was determined to be of national significance under Criteria A and C, in the following areas and periods: naval architecture (1894-1940), maritime history (1894-1940), fishing industry (1894-1914), and exploration (1925-1940). Her direct affiliation to New Bedford dates only to the mid-twentieth century, when Captain Henrique Medes purchased the schooner, brought her to New Bedford, and outfitted her to serve as an immigrant vessel between 1948 and 1965. During these years the Ernestina carried passengers and cargo between the Cape Verde Islands and the United States, serving as a link between the long-established Cape Verdean community in New Bedford and the home islands.

<sup>224</sup> Three additional National Historic Districts subsequently established in New Bedford were examined in the National Park Service's Special Resource Study, but have received only perfunctory treatment in this study. The Central New Bedford National Register District encompasses the downtown and many current and historic civic buildings. The County Street National Register District includes many residential buildings associated with New Bedford's nineteenth-century whaling elite, one of which is the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum. The Bourne Counting House is among the historic buildings and pier structures that comprise the one-acre Merrill's Wharf National Register District along the waterfront. While the cultural resources within these adjacent National Register Districts contribute to a broad understanding of city's development during the whaling era, analysis of these areas was necessarily limited to issues that bore a direct relationship to the social, cultural, and economic trends that shaped the landscape within the New Bedford Whaling NHP.

<sup>225</sup> A contributing feature, as defined by the NPS Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports, is a building, site, structure, or object that adds to the historic significance of a property. Landscape features or characteristics can also be described as contributing resources if they are considered, in National Register terms, as "independent cultural resources and contribute to the significance of the landscape, or...are independently eligible for National Register listing." National Register criteria recognize a building, site, structure, or object as a con-

tributing resource if it "adds to the historic associations, historical architectural qualities, or archaeological values for which a property is significant because of the following: it was present during the period of significance; it relates to the documented significance of the property; it possesses historic integrity or is capable of revealing information about the period; or it independently meets the National Register criteria." Conversely, a noncontributing feature is defined as a biotic or abiotic feature associated with a landscape characteristic that does not contribute to the significance of the cultural landscape. Noncontributing resources are those characteristics that do not contribute to the significance of the landscape or are not independently eligible for listing on the National Register. National Register criteria recognize a noncontributing resource as a building, site, structure, or object that does not add to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations, or archaeological values for which a property is significant, because: it was not present during the period of significance or does not relate to the documented period of significance of the property; due to alterations, disturbances, additions, or other changes, it no longer possesses historic integrity or is capable of yielding important information about the period; or it does not independently meet the National Register criteria. NPS, "Landscape Lines: Landscape Characteristics," *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports* (Draft, 1997), 3-4.

<sup>226</sup> The eight "buildings of primary interest," as cited in the NRHP nomination form for the New Bedford Historic District are as follows: United States Custom House (1834-36), New Bedford Institution for Savings (1853), Benjamin Rodman House (1831), Mariner's Home (c. 1790), Seamen's Bethel (1832), Whaling Museum (1916), Mechanics Bank and Merchants Bank (1831), and Samuel Rodman Candlehouse (1810).

<sup>227</sup> *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process and Techniques*





Corner of Union and North  
Second Streets, looking east,  
1849. Photograph courtesy of  
the Old Dartmouth Historical  
Society.

#### IV. PRELIMINARY PRESERVATION ISSUES



New Bedford Whaling NHP is predominantly on historic vernacular landscapes that reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, or values in an interdependent relationship of design and use within a community over time. Physical features, including patterns of spatial organization, land use, circulation, and vegetation, express patterns of social behavior and individual action. This landscape not only illustrates historical themes, but also preserves key experiential values that encourage a more profound understanding of aspects of our national heritage.

The National Park Service recognizes the importance of cultural landscapes and the need to minimize the loss of significant landscape characteristics, features, materials, and qualities. The site history included within this report provides a narrative description of New Bedford's physical development and of the salient features, people, and cultural and natural events that influenced the design and character of the waterfront landscape. Subsequent sections examine existing conditions within the New Bedford Whaling NHP and identify landscape characteristics and features. The purpose of this section is to suggest preliminary preservation issues that will not only facilitate preservation planning, but also contribute to a coherent development vision that both reinforces and enriches the park's mission to interpret issues of historical and contemporary significance. Preservation and interpretation goals would be best served through creative rehabilitation aimed at evoking a sense of place. Further research and an exploration of treatment alternatives is required. As a preliminary to treatment, several preservation issues for consideration have been outlined below.

#### REVEALING LAYERS OF THE LANDSCAPE

The city's history presents a narrative of dynamism and resiliency, of exploitation and renewal. The influx of wealth, including industrial, cultural, and human capital, during New Bedford's meteoric rise to the forefront of nineteenth-century whaling created a society of unusual vibrancy and diversity. Beginning with the destruction of the early settlement during our nation's War for Independence, New Bedford sustained a cosmopolitan community inured to adversity and change, traits made manifest in a dynamic landscape and in a tradition of adaptive reuse. Many of the changes imposed on the waterfront during the twentieth century were in response to a languishing economy. However these enterprising, if at times misdirected, revitalization and urban renewal efforts are in character with New Bedford's entrepreneurial spirit. The same tenacious spirit informed countervailing forces dedicated to

preserving New Bedford's whaling heritage. In recognition of the community's resiliency and of the preservation efforts of private and public institutions, the NPS should incorporate existing natural and cultural assets into a comprehensive design that rehabilitates layers of the cultural landscape, restores key elements of experiential value, and renders comprehensible the processes of natural and cultural renewal.

The park includes an array of business, residential, and institutional buildings that exemplify the Federal, Greek Revival, and Victorian styles of architecture and reflect historic patterns of mixed land use near the waterfront. For the eight buildings that have been moved in the park, interpretive signs will help visitors understand the processes of change and renewal. When possible, these signs should include historic photographs of each building in its original setting and explain when and why it was moved; the sign for the Robeson House is a good example.

Similarly, the vitality of these historically pedestrian streets could be brought back in part by encouraging small businesses to reuse existing structures or construct new buildings, at the same scale, where nineteenth century buildings have been lost. The resulting additions and modifications of streetscape features, including fenestration, signage, paint colors, materials, and choice of vegetation, should be carefully considered with regard to how these features both preserve the historic feeling of the area and affect the visitor's ability to comprehend the layering of history. For example, the age, design, and use of the structure should be reflected in visual clues such as the location of signs, use of icons, and choice of lettering. Complete restoration of the streetscape to the nineteenth century would oversimplify the history of the site.

#### RESTORING LINKS TO THE WORKING WATERFRONT

The imbrication of natural and cultural history points to another prevailing theme in the history of New Bedford whaling, namely the impact of human actions on our environments and related ideas about their continued use and conservation. The efforts of the local group WHALE (Waterfront Historic Area League) highlight the sustained and systematic effort within the broader preservation community to preserve and adaptively reuse historic structures and districts. The presence of a contemporary fishing industry along wharves contiguous to the eastern boundary of the New Bedford Whaling NHP further emphasizes the overlapping themes of continuity and change along the waterfront.

NPS treatment should emphasize New Bedford's intimate connection to the waterfront and its historic dependence on maritime resources. The construction of Route 18 and MacArthur Drive not only eliminated blocks of the community's historic urban fabric, but also severed a vital link between the harbor and the historic core of the whaling industry. Every attempt should be made to mitigate the physical gap between the New Bedford Historic District and the waterfront, since creating and restoring visual and interpretive links to New Bedford's working wharves is essential to understanding nineteenth-century whaling and to appreciating the potential educational, cultural, and recreational resources of New Bedford Whaling NHP.

#### PRESERVING VIEWSHEDS

Given the persistent connection between the District and the waterfront, the greatest effort should be expended to restore critical viewsheds. Historic accounts, beginning in the eighteenth century, emphasize visual connections to the waterfront. From their Water Street residences, Samuel Rodman and William Rotch Jr. enjoyed unobstructed views down the short, narrow waterfront streets. Similarly, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographs depicted a clear, eastward view to a harbor framed by low-lying buildings. Given the relevance of Water Street to the whaling industry, the relatively well-preserved scale and massing of buildings along Centre and Rodman Streets, and the historic significance of the Whaling Museum's Bourne building, restoring a visual link to the harbor along Centre and Rodman Streets and Rose Alley is encouraged.

One planning alternative that should be explored is creating a management zone east of the Whaling Museum, defining boundaries that allow for coordinating adaptive and varied development while preserving key view corridors. Consultation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission may be of value when considering this concept.

Treatment alternatives might include removing intrusive noncontributing elements that block critical viewsheds. Additionally, the pedestrian overpass at the northern end of the park is a visual barrier. Redeveloping Route 18 and MacArthur Drive might include mitigating this structure. Could the roadway be made more 'pedestrian friendly,' eliminating the need for an elevated crosswalk?

#### REHABILITATING OPEN SPACES

During much of New Bedford's early history, the waterfront area was characterized by a high proportion of open space. Before the exodus of the city's fashionable elite to County Street during the 1820s, many spacious estates and gardens occupied lots in close proximity to the waterfront. While the streets closest to the wharves, including Centre, Front, and Rodman streets, were characterized by a relatively dense massing of single- or two-story wooden structures, the wharves offered vast open space for storing casks of whale oil waiting to be processed.

Even as the streets of the Waterfront District gave way to mixed commercial and industrial use, the Rodman and Robeson families maintained elegant homes situated among spacious gardens along North Second Street. Elaborately planned gardens surrounded the mansions of New Bedford's whaling scions along County Street. Exotic plant materials, brought from abroad by New Bedford's whaling fleet, ornamented the elite's verdant retreats. Together with several extensive nurseries, New Bedford's gardens, including those of the Rotch-Jones-Duff House, established the city's horticultural reputation and brought its residents national renown. While buildings and structures have supplanted most of the gardens within the boundaries of the park, there are several surface parking areas and open spaces outside critical viewsheds that could be investigated for horticultural rehabilitation. Deriving inspiration from documented landscape and garden designs for New Bedford residences, these green spaces would reinforce the intimate economic, social, and aesthetic connections between the waterfront and the residential districts of the city during New Bedford's golden age of whaling.

Rehabilitation of open spaces should respect site-specific land use patterns. While ornamental gardens may be appropriate for some open spaces, utilitarian and commercial areas should remain unadorned. For example, ornamental vegetation is inappropriate by the Seaman's Bethel, which was historically set in an austere landscape.

Similarly, planning alternatives should be explored to encourage pedestrian traffic and social congregation, incorporating the visitor into the vibrant street life that once characterized the waterfront streets. Such spaces could accommodate many of the city's cultural events, as well as the park's interpretive activities. Artistic and interpretive installations could include media that incorporate the products, resources, and technologies of the whaling industry. Such auditory and

visual art would not only reintroduce an important sensory element to the core experience, but also focus attention upon the natural resources that were integral to whaling.

#### PRESERVING SCALE

The District's street grid, designed by Joseph Russell and established more than two centuries ago, has undergone relatively minor alterations. Narrow streets and short blocks attest to a pedestrian, pre-automotive period, and the relatively short buildings belong to an age when materials and technologies limited structural height. It is important to maintain the historic sense of scale when proposing new development in the park. The intrusion of buildings and structures taller than four stories, particularly along the streets in the suggested management zone east of Water Street, would greatly impair historically significant view corridors and the property's character-defining scale.

#### RESPECTING MATERIALS

Granite, flagstone, brick, and wood were all readily available and used as paving, curbing, and building materials in the nineteenth century. Streets were paved largely with cobblestones during most of the nineteenth century. While there is no evidence of the use of Belgian blocks in street paving before 1870, this material represents a practical rehabilitation alternative that integrates late nineteenth-century paving materials into a contemporary working streetscape. Flagstones were used in the nineteenth century for sidewalks while granite was used for street crossings, as evidenced by historic photographs and the remnants on Centre Street. In many places the flagstone crosswalks have broken under the pressure of automobile traffic. Street crossings require thicker slabs, with a minimum width of four inches. During winter the use of salt should be avoided as it causes flagstone to flake and crack. The use of concrete for repairs should also be avoided. Historic photographs and nineteenth-century city documents indicate brick was not used extensively in the study area. Further investigation is warranted to determine exactly when brick came into widespread use on the city's sidewalks.

#### REINTRODUCING SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

Nineteenth-century municipal light standards left little room for street plantings along the sidewalks. These were not in keeping with the commercial and utilitarian aesthetic that characterized the waterfront streetscapes during this period. Historic photographs illustrate tree plantings primarily contained within institutional plots and residential yards and gardens. Whale oil lamps atop posts provided lighting for the street. The specific lighting of trees is inappropriate and should be discouraged. Wrought iron or picket fences bordered the sidewalks of many residential properties. Hitching posts were regularly placed before commercial and institutional buildings. Retail establishments advertised goods and services with two types of signage: lettered signs were mounted flush with the building, often just above the entrance, and graphic signs protruded perpendicularly from above the doorway. These and other small-scale features, such as carriage steps, should be further researched and considered for reintroduction into the landscape.

In addition, historic photographs reveal the widespread use of wooden awnings in front of many business interests on the bustling commercial streets in the district. Useful in inclement weather, the awnings were also helpful in reducing the amount of solar gain during summer months. As the street system is ordered closely to the cardinal directions, even north-facing shops receive direct exposure during midsummer. When one looks down these same streets today, there is a noticeable absence of this horizontal element. The sense of shelter and semi-enclosure these awnings conveyed could be returned. Authentic reproduction is discouraged, since the originals were not of a uniform design and were fixed structures with posts anchored near street curbing that may present a modern safety concern.

#### PROTECTING EXTANT CONTRIBUTING FEATURES

While conducting a survey of existing conditions, several historic features were noted, including gutter sections in Rose Alley and in the sidewalk on North Second Street, portions of runners on Centre Street, and sections of flagstone sidewalk in front of the Double Bank Building. These features should be protected. A more detailed survey may reveal additional historic features.





Rotch-Jones-Duff House, late nineteenth century. Photograph courtesy of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society.

## V. TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH



## PLANTINGS

- ◆ Making site-specific studies of individual properties within the boundaries of the park, particularly those that belonged to the Rotch and Rodman families. Given the enormous financial and social influence of these families and in light of several references to their spacious gardens, a more thorough investigation of family sources should be undertaken in an attempt to locate documentary evidence of garden plans. Archeological evidence should also inform this investigation. In addition, the families' residential history, as prime examples of key phases in the city's social history and cultural geography, would enrich interpretations of the landscape in NPS programming.
- ◆ Conducting a more thorough and detailed investigation of New Bedford's horticultural history and the influence of the whaling and maritime industries on local landscape and garden design. Issues of interest include the introduction of ornamental and exotic species and the employment of early design professionals.
- ◆ Investigating primary source material for specific references to Rose Alley in an attempt to substantiate or reject anecdotal accounts of rose plantings along the alley.

## SMALL-SCALE LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

- ◆ Investigating primary resources for information regarding the materials, design, and frequency of placement of typical elements in New Bedford's nineteenth-century streetscapes, including hitching posts and waterfountains.
- ◆ Conducting additional research regarding street light fixtures. Issues to be examined include scale, placement, variations in design, and conversion of fixtures with fuel substitutions.
- ◆ Searching for additional evidence of variations in curbing patterns and materials. Several reports of the city's selectmen cite expenses incurred from "individual curbing," suggesting that the responsibility for constructing and maintaining curbs and sidewalks may have been delegated to individual property owners, thereby introducing variations to the streetscapes.

## HISTORICAL STUDIES

- ◆ Further exploring the connection between the accumulation of capital and the mechanisms of moral reform and social discipline, focusing on physical evidence of an emerging and transitional social order imposed on the landscape. Evidence of measures of control, including commercial ordinances and disciplinary agencies, and instruments of charity and coercion (e.g., the Mariner's Home, clothing store of the Ladies Branch of the New Bedford Port Society) may provide insight into how contemporaries viewed the waterfront district.
- ◆ Analyzing residence and mobility patterns among transient maritime populations. Transience compromised a seaman's ability to meet familial and communal responsibilities, some of the basic components of nineteenth-century notions of masculinity. Nineteenth-century gender conventions supported an ideal of virile adventure and encouraged representing the maritime industries and, concomitantly, the waterfront, as exclusively male domains. While many families were rendered objects of charity, public scrutiny, and moral discipline, women often sustained interdependent communities that precluded public intervention. A thorough investigation and gender analysis of residence patterns, business opportunities, and women's whaling experiences will provide a more accurate representation of women in the whaling community and their impact upon the landscape.
- ◆ Researching the influence of Quaker theology and practice in the development of settlement patterns and the waterfront landscape. Areas for exploration include patterns of residential, commercial, and recreational land use and resource use, the emergence of a Quaker aesthetic, and the impact of their notions of community and corporate identity on perceptions of public space.
- ◆ Investigating racial relations along the waterfront and their impact upon urban spatial relations. Although the whaling industries were racially integrated, the labor force was highly stratified and, as more lucrative work alternatives emerged during the industrial period, abandoned by white workers to people of color. Marcus Rediker's characterization of maritime labor as an occupation of wage insecurity and institutional servitude suggests an overlap of class and racial identities which, in turn, in-

fluenced residential and commercial land-use patterns. City directories, which indicated the race of residents until 1845, may provide useful information in this area. In addition, a work in progress by Kathryn Grover will investigate occupational and residence patterns among New Bedford's residents of African descent.

- ◆ Examining Native American contributions to the whaling industry and the local community. The cultural influences and economic contributions of New England and Arctic indigenous peoples should be examined and accurately portrayed and interpreted within the landscape.
- ◆ Looking into New Bedford's immigration and ethnic history, particularly that of people from Portugal and the dependent Azores and the Cape Verdes Islands, and their impact upon the landscape. The contacts and immigration initiated by whaling contributed to the cosmopolitan character of New Bedford. Moreover, the schooner *Ernestina*, which transported Cape Verdean immigrants to New Bedford, represents a transitional phase in the city's economic history and may serve as an interpretive link between the periods of whaling and fishing.
- ◆ Making an ethnographic study of the twentieth-century maritime community. The continued use and contemporary relevance of buildings with the New Bedford Whaling NHP, including New Bedford Port Society services in the Seaman's Bethel and Mariner's Home, merits a closer study of traditions and practices that reflect and shape the historic landscape.
- ◆ Surveying literary and artistic representations of whaling and the waterfront and the place of New Bedford in the popular imagination. Many artists and authors resided and worked in New Bedford, portraying different features of the region's natural and cultural landscapes. Many of these representations, including Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, continue to attract visitors and shape romantic expectations of the waterfront.

#### CONTIGUOUS AND RELATED AREAS

- ◆ Documenting changes to the shoreline and the construction of wharfage in the New Bedford harbor, with special attention directed toward potential archeological sites. A concurrent report undertaken by the NPS Northeast Cultural Resources Center will provide a preliminary survey of archeological resources.
- ◆ Reviewing source materials pertaining to the anti-slavery movement, its meeting places, and sites associated with the Underground Railroad, including the Old Friends Meeting House on Seventh Street. Richard Waldbauer and Kathryn Grover currently are investigating ties between the Underground Railroad and the maritime community.
- ◆ Conducting a landscape study of the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Gardens Museum that builds upon the research already undertaken and compiled in the property's Historic Structures Report.
- ◆ Studying the Bourne Counting House and the relatively unaltered section of the waterfront that comprises the Merrill's Wharf Historic District. The building, which once housed the offices of whaling and textile magnate Jonathan Bourne, symbolizes the transfer of whaling-derived wealth to alternative industrial investment and serves as a direct link to the waterfront of New Bedford's golden age of whaling.
- ◆ Studying the three other properties listed in the enabling legislation in which the park may assist with interpretation and preservation: namely, the southwest corner of the State Pier, Waterfront Park, and the Wharfinger Building.



Humphrey H. Nye estate,  
ca.1860s. Photograph courtesy  
of the Old Dartmouth Historical  
Society.

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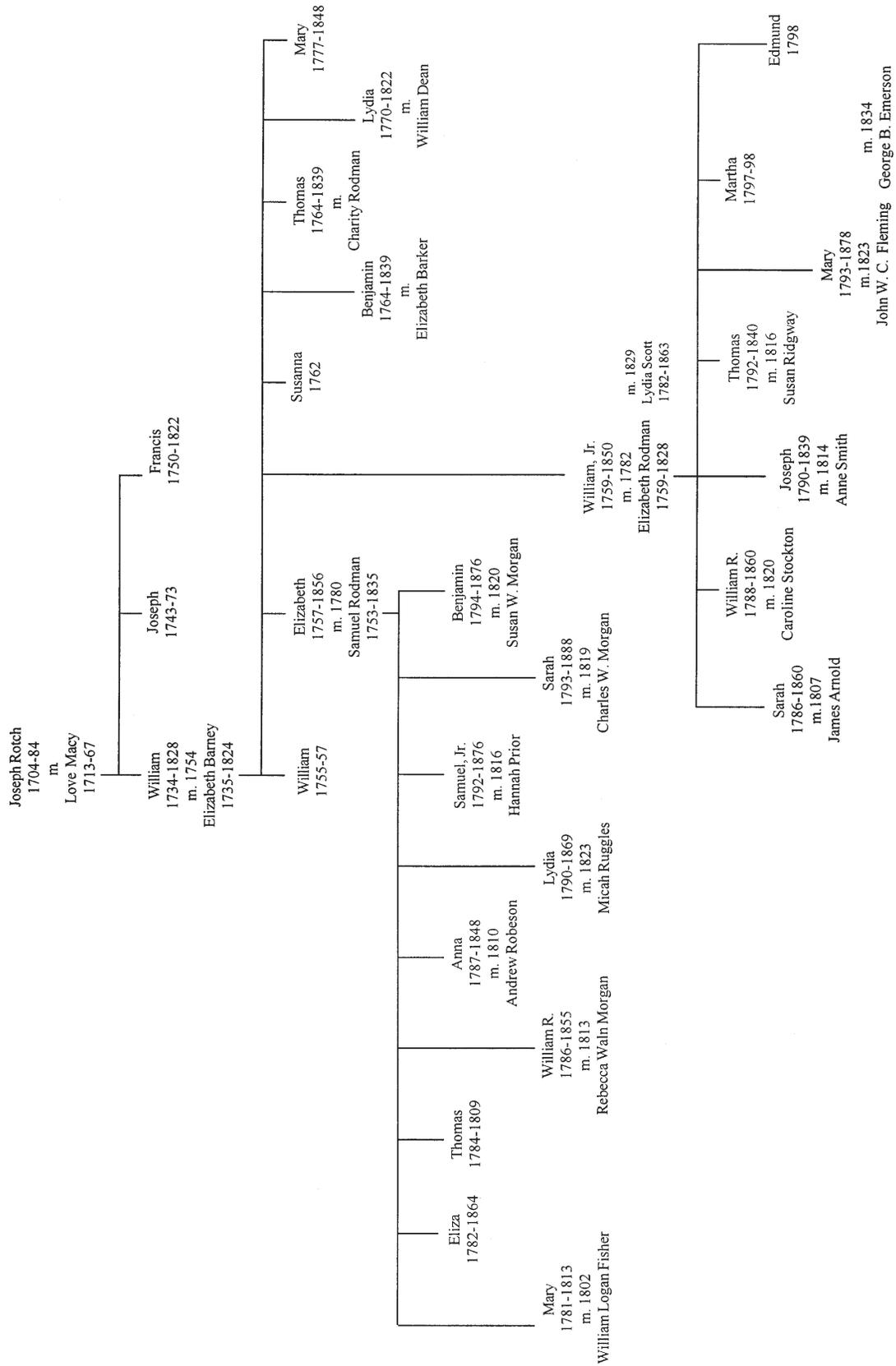


Union Street, looking east from  
Acushnet Avenue, ca.1880.  
Photograph courtesy of the Old  
Dartmouth Historical Society.

## VII. APPENDICES

ABBREVIATED GENEALOGY OF THE ROTCH-RODMAN FAMILY OF NEW BEDFORD  
PATTERNS OF STREET DEVELOPMENT AND NOMENCLATURE  
BUSINESSES ON UNION STREET IN 1849  
NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION  
ENABLING LEGISLATION





Year	Area I	Area II	Area III	Area IV
1769	King (Union) St. [County to river]			Kempton St. [County to Rockdale]
prior to 1776	North Water [Union to William]			
ca. 1778	Queen St. [Water to Acushnet] King St. renamed Union			
1788	Middle St. [Water to Second] N. Water St. [William to Middle]			
1792	Rose Alley [Water to Front]			
1795	Market (William) St. [Water to Purchase]		Third St. [Union to Spring] First St. [Union to Spring]	
1797		Maxfield St. [Acushnet to river; <i>named after Zadock Maxfield</i> ]		
1798		Middle St. [Second to County]		
1801	Elm St. [Water to Second] Queen St. renamed School			
1803		Willis St. [Purchase to Acushnet; <i>named after Samuel Willis</i> ]		
1807			Bush St. [Water to Fourth]	
1808		Elm St. [Purchase to Pleasant] Hillman St. [Purchase to Water; <i>named after Zacharia Hillman</i> ] Maxfield St. [Acushnet to Purchase]	School St. [Acushnet to Sixth]	
1812		Willis St. [Acushnet to County]		
1819		Elm St. [Second to Purchase]		

Year	Area I	Area II	Area III	Area IV
1821			Russell St. [County to Sixth; named after Joseph Russell] Wing St. [Acushnet to County; named after Edward Wing]	Arnold St. [west of County; named after James Arnold]
1830		Market St. [Purchase to County; renamed William Rotch]		
1831		Elm St. [Pleasant to County]	First St. [Walnut to Madison]	
1833			Russell St. [Sixth to Acushnet]	
1834		Walden St. [Hillman to Maxfield; named after John Walden]	Griffin St. [Water to Acushnet; named after Griffin Barney]	
1835		Kempton St. [Rockdale to Foster] Hillman St. [Purchase to Summer]	Bush St. [Seventh to County]	
1836		Kempton St. [Foster to Purchase]		
1837		Foster St. [Middle to North; named after Patrick Foster]		Middle Street [County to Summer]
1838	Centre St. [Front to Water]	Campbell St. [Purchase to Pleasant]		
1839			First St. [Spring to School and Grinnell to South]	
1840		Hill St. [Kempton to North; named for Benjamin Hill] North Water [Middle to North] Thomas St. [Hillman to Maxfield]		
1841	Rodman St. [Water to Front; named after Samuel Rodman]		Bush St. [Sixth to Seventh]	

Year	Area I	Area II	Area III	Area IV
1842		Kempton St. [Purchase to Second]	Bush St. [Fourth to Sixth]	Orchard St. [Arnold to Hawthorn] Smith St. [west of County] Union St. [County to Orchard]
1843		Foster St. [North to Hillman]		Elm St. [west of County] Orchard St. [Hawthorn to Bedford]
1844		Hill St. [North to Hillman]	Coffin St. [Second to Water; <i>named for David Coffin</i> First St. [School to Walnut and from Madison to Coffin]	
1845				Hawthorn St. [County to Cottage]
1846		North Water St. [North to Hillman]		Cedar St. [Kempton to North]

\*Data incomplete.

	Chapman & Bonney, sailmakers (Merchants Block)	65	Sylvester Snell, fruit & groceries
1	Edward E. Wood, grain & groceries	66	B.C. & J. Ward, merchant tailors
2	Ivory H. Bartlett, oil merchant	67	Elisha Thornton & Son, apothecary
3	A.H. Seabury & Co., grain & groceries	73	Ashley A. Royce, dry goods
	P.G. Seabury, counting room	76	Edward H. Thurston, merchant tailor
7-10	Shaw & Macomber, flour, grain, & hay	78	Benjamin Pitman, silversmith
11	Nye & Wordell, groceries	80-1/2	Jeremiah Greenman, barber
12/14	Gushee & Parker, groceries	82	Oliver Swain, boots & shoes
19	R.K. Eastman, groceries	83	Franklin P. Seabury, dry goods & clothing
21	Dexter & Chase, painters	84	Augustus J. Eaton, hats & caps Charles C. McClosky, hatter
22	Wood, Potter & Brownell, groceries	85	George W. Howland, groceries
23	Amasa Bullard, ready-made clothing		Jonathan Bourne, Jr., merchant
24	Thomas Knowles & Co., groceries	86	Thomas Crouch, barber
25/31	Sylvanus G. Nye, groceries		O. & E.W. Seabury, dry goods
26	William Bater, painter	86-1/2	Edward T. Taber, tailor
30	John N. Barrows, auctioneer & commission merchant	87	Lewis Boutell, Mansion House (hotel)
32	Niles Tilden, cigar manufacturer	88	Lyman Bartlett, physician & surgeon
35	Alfred Kendrick, drygoods & clothing		James D. Thompson, merchant
36	William Woodhouse, "shop"		Joseph C. Kent, architect
37	Jeremiah Brownell, groceries	90	Marine Bank
40	William Harris, "refreshments"	91	Gwynneth & Co., hardware
45	William Taber & Son, booksellers	92	Amos Bates, watchmaker
--	Albert Giffor, apothecary (storefront on Water Street)		Luther Studley, watchmaker
46	John Britnell, "refreshments"	94	Benjamin Dexter, watchmaker
50	Thomas J. Baker, auctioneer		Andrew P. Brownell, jewelry
51	Allen & Zeno Kelley, watch-makers	95	Nathaniel R. Childs, boots & shoes
52	Joseph F. Dearborn, lawyer	96	Edward S. Cannon, hats, caps & furs
	Benjamin Coombs, magistrate	97	John T. Stall & Co., merchant tailors
53	Charles Ricketson & Son, merchant tailors	98	James Munroe, watchmaker
54	William Berry, barber	99	Stephen Curtis, carver & gilder
55	James H. Collins, ship chandlery	101	John Kenney, ready-made clothing
56	Perry & West, barbers	102	Charles D. Cushman & Co., dry goods & clothing
57	Alexander Hamilton, tailor	103	William Hall, hats, caps & furs
59	George Macomber, groceries	104	Rodney French, counting room
60	Isaac D. Hall & Co., groceries		James C. Tripp, tailor shop
61	Humphrey H. Sowle, barber		Henry B. Chase, tailor shop
62	Nehemiah Waterman, auctioneer & commission merchant	105	Charles E. Hawes, daguerreotype artist
63	Edward Bourne, fruit & groceries	105	Benjamin T. Jenney, tailor shop
64	Josiah Wood, jeweler	106	Henry C. Kelley & Co., dry goods
64-1/2	<i>Seamen's Reporter</i> , office		Hiram D. Wentworth, cab office
		107	G. & N. Richmond, merchant tailors
		108	George M. Eddy, domestic dry goods

- 
- 110 Morris Smith, miniature painter  
Ebenezer Plant, surgeon dentist
- 111 F. & I. C. Taber, ship chandlery
- 112 John H. Perry & Co., boots & shoes
- 113 George Tappan, crockery & glassware
- 116 Richard F. Merchant, clothing  
William Robinson, books & periodicals
- 117 George F. Barker, groceries  
Abraham Barker, counting room
- 118 Wood, Potter & Brownell, groceries
- 119 Albert D. Hatch, Boston & New Bedford  
Express (stage & railroad office)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

THEME: Commerce and Industry

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC New Bedford Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

New Bedford Historic District

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Acushnet Avenue, Elm, Water, Rodman, Front, Commercial and Union Streets

CITY, TOWN

New Bedford

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Twelfth

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

COUNTY

Bristol

CODE

005

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME multiple ownership (administered by New Bedford Historical Commission c/o City Hall)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

New Bedford

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, Registry of Deeds, Southern District  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

New Bedford

STATE

Massachusetts

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey (listings for individual buildings)

DATE

1961

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington 20540

STATE

D.C.

**7 DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The New Bedford Historic District, bounded by portions of Acushnet Avenue and of Elm, Water, Rodman, Front, Commercial, and Union Streets, is comprised of eleven city blocks and part of a twelfth, totaling some 19.6 acres. Within this area, some 20 buildings, most of them constructed between 1810 and 1855, are significant examples of the architectural types to be found in the commercial district of a major New England seaport of that period. In addition to the primary buildings, such as the Custom House and the banks, the district contains good examples of smaller Federal and Greek Revival buildings with shops on the ground floor and living quarters above, and several gable-roofed warehouses of brick or stone, 2½ to 4 stories in height.

The Historic District is separated from New Bedford's still active waterfront, immediately to the east, by the John F. Kennedy Expressway, a limited access highway now under construction. To the north and south of the district are areas devoted to mixed commercial-industrial use. On the west is New Bedford's central business district.

The construction of intrusive elements within the area in recent years was a significant factor in the adoption of a local historic district ordinance aimed at preventing further deterioration of its historic character and encouraging its rehabilitation. Chief among the intrusive elements are a gas station at the corner of Second and Union Streets and a parking structure and lot which occupy most of the block bounded by Acushnet Avenue, Barkers Lane, Second and William Streets. Many buildings in the area have been turned to new commercial uses and their character affected by inappropriate signing and changes in fenestration. However, the local historic district commission hopes, with the cooperation of property owners, to see these inappropriate elements gradually removed.

Among the buildings of primary interest in the district are the following (numbers correspond to those on the attached district map):

1. United States Custom House. Designed by Robert Mills and constructed by Seth H. Ingalls in 1834-36; two-story, granite ashlar building with low hipped roof and giant Doric portico; an outstanding example of the Greek Revival public building.
2. New Bedford Institution for Savings. Designed by Russell Warren and erected in 1853; a one-story structure in Renaissance Revival style with brownstone front, brick sides and rear; after 1896 housed the Third District Court.

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3. Samuel Rodman House. Built in 1831; a square, three-story building of dressed stone with quoins; hipped roof broken by interior chimneys and gabled dormers.
4. Mariner's Home. Built c. 1790 as the residence of merchant William Rotch, Jr.; moved from original location at William and North Water Streets; a Federal style building with clapboard front, brick ends, hipped roof; center hall plan with good detail and paneling.
5. Seamen's Bethel. Described by Melville in Moby Dick; two-story frame church built in 1832; rebuilt in 1867 after a fire, at which time the front elevation was redesigned, the present tower added, and the original interior (seating) plan reversed.
6. Whaling Museum. Sponsored by the Old Dartmouth Historical Society; a massive 20th century building in Georgian Revival style; houses extensive collections illustrating the history of the whaling industry.
7. Mechanics Bank (north half) and Merchants Bank (south half). Built in 1831 from designs by Russell Warren; Greek Revival, Ionic temple style; steps, foundation, and front wall of polished granite, remainder of brick; portico supported by eight wooden columns, northern four with entasis, southern four without; interior wall divides the building into halves.
8. Samuel Rodman Candlehouse. Built in 1810; square, three-story building of stone, later stuccoed; semicircular lunette windows at third story level; quoined window and door frames and corner quoins.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1790, 1810-1855 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Russell Warren and others

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The New Bedford Historic District, bounded by portions of Acushnet Avenue and of Elm, Water, Rodman, Front, Commercial, and Union Streets, is a good example of the commercial district of a major New England seaport of the period 1810-1855. The district retains some 20 historic buildings, several of which were designed by the noted architect Russell Warren.

New Bedford began its rapid growth as a whaling port shortly after the town's establishment in the early 1760's. By 1840, she had superseded Nantucket as the nation's leader in the industry and maintained that position until the growth of the petroleum industry, beginning in the late 1850's, brought American whaling to an end. New Bedford's last whaling voyage ended on August 20, 1925.

In the late 1960's, a campaign was begun to preserve the remaining portions of New Bedford's historic waterfront. Led by a citizens' group, the Waterfront Historic Area League, it resulted in 1971 in the enactment of a local ordinance (under the authority of a state enabling act) establishing the Bedford Landing Waterfront Historic District.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

New Bedford, located at the mouth of the Acushnet River on Buzzards Bay, began its rapid rise as a whaling port shortly after the town's establishment, as Bedford Village, in the early 1760's. Joseph Russell, who is regarded as the town's founder, promoted New Bedford's birth because of his extensive land holdings in the general area. Several ship builders, a blacksmith, and other skilled workers soon settled there.

In 1765, Joseph Rotch, a leading Nantucket whaling merchant, moved to New Bedford. He and Russell took advantage of the deep harbor, something Nantucket lacked, and spurred the development of whaling by the young settlement. A ship, the Dartmouth, soon slid from the ways at New Bedford, the first locally constructed whaling vessel. The ship carried the first load of New Bedford whale oil to London in 1767. Within eight years, New Bedford and the nearby area claimed fifty whaling sloops.

(Continued)

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The American Revolution led to the near destruction of New Bedford. Angered by the depredations of New England privateers, the British raided the coast of Connecticut and southeastern Massachusetts in the fall of 1778. Two thousand redcoats attacked New Bedford early in September. The inhabitants, alerted to the danger, had already fled, leaving their homes unprotected and many vessels unmanned. Smoke soon told the tale. Fires set by the British destroyed 11 homes, 76 shops, 26 storehouses, 2 ropewalks, and 34 ships.

Despite the devastation suffered during the Revolution, New Bedford rapidly recovered, and within half a century after 1783 had become America's greatest whaling port. She dispatched the Rebecca on a voyage in September, 1791, and the vessel became the first American whaler to fill her hold with oil taken from the Pacific Ocean. The precedent-breaking ship returned on February 23, 1793. War again disrupted New Bedford's whaling industry when Great Britain and the United States joined in battle during the War of 1812. But as after the end of the Revolution, New Bedford rapidly recovered from the effects of the second war. By 1823 her whaling fleet equalled that of Nantucket in tonnage. Both towns strove for dominance during the next several years, with New Bedford finally edging beyond her competitor. In 1827 Nantucket recorded a total catch of 33,063 barrels of sperm oil, while New Bedford posted a total of 38,752. And in 1828 New Bedford sent out forty-nine vessels, twenty-four of which sailed for the Pacific. The town continued to develop the industry in the 1830's, and by the end of the decade had superseded Nantucket as America's whaling center.

New Bedford reached her zenith in the 1840's and 1850's. In 1841 she employed about 10,000 men in the industry and had at least \$12,000,000 invested in ships and equipment. She owned half of the Nation's whaling ships by 1857. In the same year, her fleet accounted for 48,108 barrels of sperm oil, 127,362 barrels of whale oil, and 1,359,850 pounds of whalebone.

New Bedford's eminence in the whaling industry is explained by several factors. First, she possessed an excellent harbor. Located on the mainland, unlike Nantucket, the town also benefited from the rise of the railroad. Second, the demand for whaling's products increased during the first half of the nineteenth century. But most important was the enterprising and vigorous nature of the merchants engaged in the industry. Mostly Quakers, the New Bedford whale oil merchants concentrated on their business and availed themselves of every opportunity to exploit the industry.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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New Bedford whaling reached its peak in 1857 and then gradually declined, largely because of competition from the growing petroleum industry. After the Civil War, in which New Bedford lost many ships, whaling continued but at an even slower pace. Natural disasters during the last three decades of the 19th century--numerous ships were caught and crushed in ice packs in Arctic waters--were also a factor in the death of the industry. New Bedford's last whaling voyage ended on August 20, 1925.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

(See Continuance Sheet)

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 19.6 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	3,3,9	8,6,0	4,6	1,1	0,0,0	B	1,9	3,3,9	8,9,0	4,6	1,0	7,3,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			
C	1,9	3,3,9	6,2,0	4,6	1,0	7,0,5	D	1,9	3,3,9	5,9,0	4,6	1,0	9,7,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the National Historic Landmark designation for the New Bedford Historic District are those of the Bedford Landing Waterfront Historic District, established by the City of New Bedford in 1971 under authority of the Massachusetts Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40 C of the Massachusetts General Laws. Boundaries are outlined in red on the attached map of the Bedford Landing Waterfront Historic District, prepared by the New Bedford City Planning Department.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME/TITLE Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project; original form prepared by S. S. Bradford, Historian, 1/24/67

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service</u>	<u>1/30/75</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>1100 L Street NW.</u>	<u>202-523-5464</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Washington 20240</u>	<u>D.C.</u>

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE      LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE N/A National Historic Landmark

TITLE

Landmark Designated: 11-7-66  
date

DATE Boundary Certified:

Conelium WA Nov 6-19-76  
Chief, Hist. & Arch. Surveys  
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE Boundary Affirmed:

1.18.75  
Acting Director  
Director, OAHHP  
date

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Allen, Everett S. Children of the Light: The Rise and Fall of New Bedford Whaling and the Death of the Arctic Fleet (Boston, 1973).  
Ashley, Clifford W. The Yankee Whaler (Boston, 1938).  
Hegarty, Reginald B. "New Bedford's History" (pamphlet, New Bedford, 1959).  
Morrison, Samuel Eliot. The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860 (Boston, 1921).  
Stackpole, Edouard A. The Sea-Hunters (Philadelphia, 1953).  
Spears, John R. The Story of the New England Whalers (New York, 1908).

P.L. 104-333: Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996  
SEC. 511. NEW BEDFORD NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT.

(a) Findings and Purposes.--

(1) Findings.--The Congress finds that--

(A) the New Bedford National Historic Landmark District and associated historic sites as described in subsection (c)(2), including the Schooner Ernestina, are National Historic Landmarks and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as historic sites associated with the history of whaling in the United States;

(B) the city of New Bedford was the 19th century capital of the world's whaling industry and retains significant architectural features, archival materials, and museum collections illustrative of this period;

(C) New Bedford's historic resources provide unique opportunities for illustrating and interpreting the whaling industry's contribution to the economic, social, and environmental history of the United States and provide opportunities for public use and enjoyment; and

(D) during the nineteenth century, over two thousand whaling voyages sailed out of New Bedford to the Arctic region of Alaska, and joined Alaska Natives from Barrow, Alaska and other areas in the Arctic region in subsistence whaling activities; and

(E) the National Park System presently contains no sites commemorating whaling and its contribution to American history.

(2) Purposes.--The purposes of this section are--

(A) to help preserve, protect, and interpret the resources within the areas described in subsection (c)(2), including architecture, setting, and associated archival and museum collections;

(B) to collaborate with the city of New Bedford and with associated historical, cultural, and preservation organizations to further the purposes of the park established under this section; and

(C) to provide opportunities for the inspirational benefit and education of the American people.

(b) Definitions.--For the purposes of this section--

(1) the term "park" means the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park established by subsection (c); and

(2) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(c) New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park.--

(1) Establishment.--In order to preserve for the benefit and inspiration of the people of the United States as a national historical park certain districts structures, and relics located in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and associated with the history of whaling and related social and economic themes in America, there is established the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park.

(2) Boundaries.--(A) The boundaries of the park shall be those generally depicted on the map numbered NAR-P49-80,000-4 and dated June 1994. Such map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service. In case of any conflict between the descriptions set forth in clauses (i) through (iv) and such map, such map shall govern. The park shall include the following:

(i) The area included with the New Bedford National Historic Landmark District, known

as the Bedford Landing Waterfront Historic District, as listed within the National Register of Historic Places and in the Massachusetts State Register of Historic Places.

(ii) The National Historic Landmark Schooner Ernestina, with its home port in New Bedford.

(iii) The land along the eastern boundary of the New Bedford National Historic Landmark District over the east side of MacArthur Drive from the Route 6 overpass on the north to an extension of School Street on the south.

(iv) The land north of Elm Street in New Bedford, bounded by Acushnet Avenue on the west, Route 6 (ramps) on the north, MacArthur Drive on the east, and Elm Street on the south.

(B) In addition to the sites, areas, and relics referred to in subparagraph (A), the Secretary may assist in the interpretation and preservation of each of the following:

(i) The southwest corner of the State Pier.

(ii) Waterfront Park, immediately south of land adjacent to the State Pier.

(iii) The Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum, located at 596 County Street.

(iv) The Wharfinger Building, located on Piers 3 and 4.

(v) The Bourne Counting House, located on Merrill's Wharf.

(d) Related Facilities.--To ensure that the contribution of Alaska Natives to the history of whaling in the United States is fully recognized, the Secretary shall provide--

(1) financial and other assistance to establish links between the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and the North Slope Borough Cultural Center, located in Barrow, Alaska; and

(2) to provide appropriate assistance and funding for the North Slope Borough Cultural Center.

(e) Administration of Park.--

(1) In general.--The park shall be administered by the Secretary in accordance with this section and the provisions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including the Act entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes", approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1, 2, 3, and 4) and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666; 16 U.S.C. 461-467).

(2) Cooperative agreements.--(A) The Secretary may consult and enter into cooperative agreements with interested entities and individuals to provide for the preservation, development, interpretation, and use of the park.

(B) Any payment made by the Secretary pursuant to a cooperative agreement under this paragraph shall be subject to an agreement that conversion, use, or disposal of the project so assisted for purposes contrary to the purposes of this section, as determined by the Secretary, shall result in a right of the United States to reimbursement of all funds made available to such project or the proportion of the increased value of the project attributable to such funds as determined at the time of such conversion, use, or disposal, whichever is greater.

(3) Non-federal matching requirements.--(A) Funds authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for the purposes of--

(i) cooperative agreements under paragraph (2) shall be expended in the ratio of one dollar of Federal funds for each four dollars of funds contributed by non-Federal sources, and

(ii) construction, restoration, and rehabilitation of visitors and interpretive facilities (other than annual operation and maintenance costs) shall be expended in the ratio of one dollar of Federal funds for each one dollar of funds contributed by non-Federal sources.

(B) For the purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary is authorized to accept from non-Federal sources, and to utilize for purposes of this section, any money so contributed. With the approval of the Secretary, any donation of property, services, or goods from a non-Federal source may be considered as a contribution of funds from a non-Federal source for the purposes of this paragraph.

(4) Acquisition of real property.--For the purposes of the park, the Secretary may acquire only by donation such lands, interests in lands, and improvements thereon within the park as are needed for essential visitor contact and interpretive facilities.

(5) Other property, funds, and services.--The Secretary may accept donated funds, property, and services to carry out this section.

(e) General Management Plan.--Not later than the end of the second fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a general management plan for the park and shall implement such plan as soon as practically possible. The plan shall be prepared in accordance with section 12(b) of the Act of August 18, 1970 (16 U.S.C. 1a-7(b)) and other applicable law.

(f) Authorization of Appropriations.--

(1) In general.--Except as provided in paragraph (2), there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out annual operations and maintenance with respect to the park and to carry out the activities under section 3(D).

(2) Exceptions.--In carrying out this section--

(A) not more than \$2,000,000 may be appropriated for construction, restoration, and rehabilitation of visitor and interpretive facilities, and directional and visitor orientation signage;

(B) none of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this section may be used for the operation or maintenance of the Schooner Ernestina; and

(C) not more than \$50,000 annually of Federal funds may be used for interpretive and education programs for the Schooner Ernestina pursuant to cooperative grants under subsection (d)(2).

## AN ACT

TO MAKE TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO THE OMNIBUS PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1996, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

*Be enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**Sec. 11. NEW BEDFORD NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT.**

(a) Section 511(c) of Division I of the Omnibus Parks Act (110 Stat. 4160; 16 U.S.C. 410ddd) is amended as follows:

(1) in paragraph (1) by striking *certain districts structures, and relics* and inserting *certain districts, structures and relics*.

(2) in clause (2) (A) (I) by striking *The area included with the New Bedford National Historic Landmark District, known as the* and inserting *The area included within the New Bedford National Historic Landmark District, also know as the*.

(b) Section 511 of Division I of the Omnibus Parks Act (110 Stat. 4159; 16 U.S. C. 410ddd) is amended -

(1) by striking (e) *GENERAL MANGEMENT PLAN* and inserting (f) *GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN*; and

(2) by striking (f) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS* and inserting (g) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS*

(c) Section 511 (g) of Division I of the Omnibus Parks Act (110 Stat. 4159; 16 U.S.C 410ddd) is further amended -

(1) by striking *to carry out the activities under section 3(D)* and inserting *to carry out the activities under subsection (d)* and

(2) by striking *pursuant to cooperative grants under subsection (d)(2)* and inserting *pursuant to cooperative grants under subsection (e)(2)*.