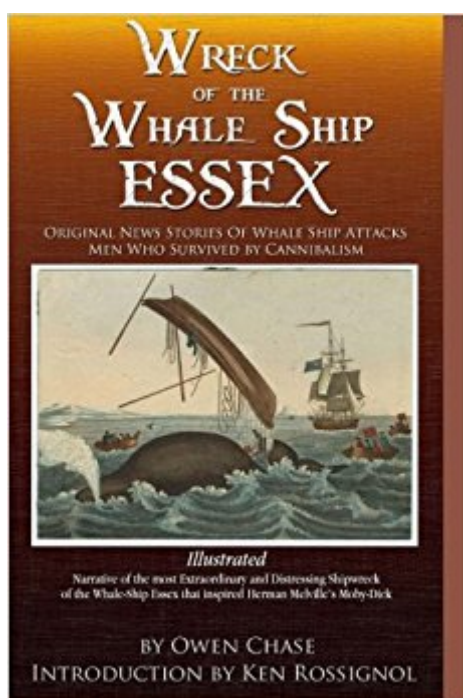


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# Wreck Of The Whale Ship Essex - Illustrated - NARRATIVE OF THE MOST EXTRAORDINAR: Original News Stories Of Whale Attacks & Cannabilism



## Synopsis

In one of the most spellbinding accounts of men who go down to the sea in ships, the modern reader is given a seat in the whale boat of Owen Chase as he and his fellow crew and their Captain make way in three boats after the wreckage of the Whaleship Essex. The account of how the Essex was wrecked inspired the infamous book *Moby Dick* and countless movies, including the newest, *In the Heart of the Sea*. The perils of sea, storms, nefarious intent of evil men and fate combined to bring an end to a long whaling voyage – typically hard and grueling enough without suffering an attack by a furious and vengeful sperm whale. The story, told in a first-person narrative by Owen Chase, the first mate of the Essex, was first published in 1821 and served to inspire Herman Melville to write his fictional book of the attack by the whale. The perseverance and determination of the crew, mate, and captain to use each and every tool and morsel available to them in salvage from the wrecked Essex to outfit their flimsy whaleboats for a voyage of more than 2,500 miles back to the South American coast is remarkable in many ways. Every ounce of energy and civility rapidly evaporated after two months at sea. The story not told by Melville may be the best part though the attack by the whale is still impressive if one imagines being on the small ship as the leviathan repeatedly bashes in the hull. In addition to the stirring account by Owen Chase are parts of the account by cabin boy Thomas Nickerson. Nickerson returned to the seas on whale ships following the Essex shipwreck, one of just a few known to have been sunk by a whale. After he retired to running a boarding house in Nantucket was when Nickerson finally wrote his account of the Essex and the plight of the crew. Nickerson only put pen to paper when challenged by a visiting author. When the writer, Leon Lewis, escaping from his creditors, became acquainted with Nickerson, he encouraged him to write down his tale of the incredible shipwreck of the Whaleship Essex. Nickerson did so and entrusted the manuscript to the erstwhile writer who promised to get it published and then fled to England. Over one hundred years later the Nickerson account *The Loss of the Ship "Essex" Sunk by a Whale and the Ordeal of the Crew in Open Boats*; was discovered in an old trunk and authenticated by the Nantucket Historical Association and published in 1984, a century after Nickerson wrote it. Nickerson's story told of the incredible attack on the Essex while two of the whaleboats were in the hunt to harpoon their prey. The first attack crashed the vessel and rocked it hard. Then, Nickerson wrote that the monster whale turned and rammed the Essex again, causing it to heave, break apart and sink. The crew began their search for land and eventually found a small island that was rather poor in resources. The sailors, with the exception of three men who decided to stay on the island, left in search of a better island, the mainland or perhaps a ship. Chase described how during the 90-day journey to the coast of Chile, the men were

forced to eat one of their fellow sailors who had died. Nickerson was less than specific about the act of cannibalism and was on the same whaling boat with Chase. The other boat commanded by Capt. Pollard had, but four men left alive and too weak to continue. Finally, they decided to draw lots to determine who would have to be shot so that the others could live. The young cousin of the captain was the loser in that drawing and was killed. Only eight of the crew of twenty survived.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

First the Essex and the harrowing tale of the whale attack, disaster, starvation, cannibal deprivation and finally rescue of a fraction of the crew from which the adventure Moby Dick was drawn. The stirring story, taken from a survivor's writings, is followed by tale after tale of whale attacks, whaling lore, and details of harvesting nearly every part of the whale. -- Sam B. WagnerIf you're interested in early 19th Century Americana or in early commercial whaling, this is an ideal scratch for your itch. I know I loved it and am glad I bought it. -- BillbobAnderson Top 1000 ReviewerJust in time for "In the Heart of the Sea" fans, "Wreck of the Whale Ship Essex" is a true account of whaling. "Moby Dick" is an amazing novel, but challenging to read. "Wreck of the Whale Ship Essex" is more accessible, and it's a factual story of the hazards of whaling. This would be a great holiday gift for anyone interested in the fictional stories of the whale hunting industry.-- Tech Girl

Wreck of the Whale Ship Essex is a Stunning Rendition of the True Story Behind Moby Dick. Great Historical TomeBy [Billbobanderson](#) [TOP 1000 REVIEWER](#) on December 3,

2015Format: Kindle EditionÃ A Verified PurchaseLength: Print, 174 pages; Audible; not yet available but I hope it gets converted soon.This book is targeted to people interested in early 19th Century American History and Commercial Whaling during that period. Actually, this is two books written by two different participants in the endeavor. Also, some loosely related excerpts of other similar stories.What was the Rank on the date this review was published? 113,907.Is this a book that I can read without having to read others first? Yes.Are there other books by this author that might also be helpful? On this topic, no, but the publisher has an extensive library of historical titles that may interest historians, especially regarding the Chesapeake Bay.Are there a lot of typos/misspellings, grammatical errors or other editing failures? None that are significant.Is it a quick, easy read? Not really. This is more of a leisure read than a quick read. A book to savor.What sort of language does this writer use to amplify the points made? English but of a different sort than commonly spoken these days. Bear in mind, it is largely comprised of a book first published in "the 46th year after" American independence from England. The writing style is absent of foul language but is more passively written than present day writing. Beware, though, there are some disturbing scenes, albeit, not graphic in detail, but, in any language, cannibalism is repugnant to most.My biggest pleasure or disappointment was? The reprint of the original writing by Owen Chase is phenomenal. I only wish he had been more descriptive of the scenes before the whale wrecked the Essex. Especially of the Galapagos.I also wish there had been more Thomas Nickerson's writing. Not merely because his writing had better flow, but simply because he included sketches in his narrative. Something else that impressed me was the illustrations in the second half of this book. Some are simple line drawings, some are full color and reproduced in color, and a few are B&W photographs. All, though, are appreciated by me, as they depict the various scenes and whale attacks of various vessels.EXCERPT:The surf flew in all directions about him, and his course towards us was marked by a white foam of a rod in width, which he made with the continual violent thrashing of his tail; his head was about half out of water, and in that way he came upon, and again struck the ship.I was in hopes when IÃ A descriedÃ A him making for us, that by a dexterous movement of putting the ship away immediately, I should be able to cross the line of his approach, before he could get up to us, and thus avoid what IÃ A knew if he should strike us again, would prove our inevitable destruction. I bawled out to the helmsman, "hard up!" but she had not fallen off more than aÃ A point before we took the second shock.I should judge the speed of the ship to have been at this time about three knots, and that of the whale about six. He struck her to windward, directly under the cathead, and completely stove in her bows. He passed under the ship again, went off to leeward, and we saw no more of him. Our situation at this juncture can be more readily

imagined than described. The shock to our feelings was such, as I am sure none can have an adequate conception of, that were not there: the misfortune befell us at a moment when we least dreamt of any accident, and from the pleasing anticipations we had formed, of realizing the certain profits of our labor, we were dejected by a sudden, most mysterious, and overwhelming calamity. Not a moment, however, was to be lost in endeavoring to provide for the extremity to which it was now certain we were reduced. We were more than a thousand miles from the nearest land, and with nothing but a light open boat, as the resource of safety for myself and companions. I ordered the men to cease pumping, and everyone to provide for himself; seizing a hatchet at the same time, I cut away the lashings of the spare boat, which lay bottom up across two spars directly over the quarter deck, and cried out to those near me to take her as she came down. They did so accordingly and bore her on their shoulders as far as the waist of the ship. The steward had in the meantime gone down into the cabin twice and saved two quadrants, two practical navigators, and the captain's trunk and mine; all who were hastily thrown into the boat, as she lay on the deck, with the two compasses that I snatched from the binnacle. He attempted to descend again, but the water by this time had rushed in, and he returned without being able to effect his purpose. By the time we had got the boat to the waist, the ship had filled with water, and was going down on her beam-ends: we shoved our boat as quickly as possible from the plank-shear into the water, all hands jumping in her at the same time, and launched off clear of the ship. We were scarcely two boat lengths distant from her, when she fell over to windward, and settled down in the water. Amazement and despair now wholly took possession of us. We contemplated the frightful situation the ship lay in and thought with horror upon the sudden and dreadful calamity that had overtaken us. We looked upon each other as if to gather some consolatory sensation from an interchange of sentiments, but every countenance was marked with the paleness of despair. Not a word was spoken for several minutes by any of us; all appeared to be bound in a spell of stupid consternation; and from the time we were first attacked by the whale, to the period of the fall of the ship, and of our leaving her in the boat, more than ten minutes could not certainly have elapsed! God only knows in what way, or by what means, we were enabled to accomplish in that short time what we did; the cutting away and transporting the boat from where she was deposited would of itself, in ordinary circumstances, have consumed as much time as that, if the whole...

Chase, Owen; Nickerson, Thomas (2015-12-01). *Wreck of the Whale Ship Essex - Illustrated - NARRATIVE OF THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY AND DISTRESSING SHIPWRECK OF THE WHALE-SHIP ESSEX: Original News Stories of Whale Attacks & Cannibals* (Kindle Locations 379-408). Huggins Point Publishing & Co. Kindle Edition.

The first part of the book, written by a survivor of the Whale Ship Essex, was both fascinating and inspiring. It is remarkable that anyone could survive the ordeal of being in an open boat at sea thousands of miles from land for such an extended period of time. The second part of the book, composed mostly of newspaper articles written when whaling was a prosperous business and before whales were scarce due to overfishing, gives added information about the dangers of whaling. I thoroughly enjoyed the book and recommend it especially to those who appreciate first hand sources and accounts written in the time period events occurred.

Length: Print, 174 pages; Audible; not yet available but I hope it gets converted soon. This book is targeted to people interested in early 19th Century American History and in Commercial Whaling during that period. Actually, this is two books written by two different participants in the endeavor. Also, some loosely related excerpts of other similar stories. What was the Rank on the date this review was published? 113,907. Is this a book that I can read without having to read others first? Yes. Are there other books by this author that might also be helpful? On this topic, no, but the publisher has an extensive library of historical titles that may interest historians, especially regarding the Chesapeake Bay. Are there a lot of typos/misspellings, grammatical errors or other editing failures? None that are significant. Is it a quick, easy read? Not really. This is more of a leisure read than a quick read. A book to savor. What sort of language does this writer use to amplify the points made? English but of a different sort than commonly spoken these days. Bear in mind, it is largely comprised of a book first published in 1791 "the 46th year after American independence from England. The writing style is absent of foul language but is more passively written than present day writing. Beware though, there are some disturbing scenes, albeit, not graphic in detail, but, in any language, cannibalism is repugnant to most. My biggest pleasure or disappointment was? The reprint of the original writing by Owen Chase is phenomenal. I only wish he had been more descriptive of the scenes before the whale wrecked the Essex. Especially of the Galapagos. I also wish there had been more Thomas Nickerson's writing. Not merely because his writing had better flow, but simply because he included sketches in his narrative. Something else that impressed me was the illustrations in the second half of this book. Some are simple line drawings, some are full color and reproduced in color, and a few are B&W photographs. All, though, are appreciated by me, as they depict the various scenes and whale attacks of various vessels. EXCERPT: The surf flew in all directions about him, and his course towards us was marked by a white foam of a rod in width, which he made with the continual violent

thrashing of his tail; his head was about half out of water, and in that way he came upon, and again struck the ship. I was in hopes when I descried him making for us, that by a dexterous movement of putting the ship away immediately, I should be able to cross the line of his approach, before he could get up to us, and thus avoid what I knew, if he should strike us again, would prove our inevitable destruction. I bawled out to the helmsman, "hard up!" but she had not fallen off more than a point, before we took the second shock. I should judge the speed of the ship to have been at this time about three knots, and that of the whale about six. He struck her to windward, directly under the cathead, and completely stove in her bows. He passed under the ship again, went off to leeward, and we saw no more of him. Our situation at this juncture can be more readily imagined than described. The shock to our feelings was such, as I am sure none can have an adequate conception of, that were not there: the misfortune befell us at a moment when we least dreamt of any accident; and from the pleasing anticipations we had formed, of realizing the certain profits of our labor, we were dejected by a sudden, most mysterious, and overwhelming calamity. Not a moment, however, was to be lost in endeavoring to provide for the extremity to which it was now certain we were reduced. We were more than a thousand miles from the nearest land, and with nothing but a light open boat, as the resource of safety for myself and companions. I ordered the men to cease pumping, and every one to provide for himself; seizing a hatchet at the same time, I cut away the lashings of the spare boat, which lay bottom up across two spars directly over the quarter deck, and cried out to those near me to take her as she came down. They did so accordingly, and bore her on their shoulders as far as the waist of the ship. The steward had in the meantime gone down into the cabin twice, and saved two quadrants, two practical navigators, and the captain's trunk and mine; all which were hastily thrown into the boat, as she lay on the deck, with the two compasses which I snatched from the binnacle. He attempted to descend again; but the water by this time had rushed in, and he returned without being able to effect his purpose. By the time we had got the boat to the waist, the ship had filled with water, and was going down on her beam-ends: we shoved our boat as quickly as possible from the plank-shear into the water, all hands jumping in her at the same time, and launched off clear of the ship. We were scarcely two boat lengths distant from her, when she fell over to windward, and settled down in the water. Amazement and despair now wholly took possession of us. We contemplated the frightful situation the ship lay in, and thought with horror upon the sudden and dreadful calamity that had overtaken us. We looked upon each other, as if to gather some consolatory sensation from an interchange of sentiments, but every countenance was marked with the paleness of despair. Not a word was spoken for several minutes by any of us; all appeared to be bound in a spell of stupid

consternation; and from the time we were first attacked by the whale, to the period of the fall of the ship, and of our leaving her in the boat, more than ten minutes could not certainly have elapsed! God only knows in what way, or by what means, we were enabled to accomplish in that short time what we did; the cutting away and transporting the boat from where she was deposited would of itself, in ordinary circumstances, have consumed as much time as that, if the whole

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Bottom Line: If you're interested in early 19th Century Americana or in early commercial whaling, this is an ideal scratch for your itch. I know I loved it and am glad I bought it. Comments?

Wreck of the Whale Ship Essex is the story of the real life ship that inspired the fictional story of Moby Dick. This book tells the horror these survivors faced while on the ship and while at sea. The telling is chilling. This whaler, Chase Owen, used his own journals to assure his facts were accurate. He gives a day by day accounting of their struggle. He begins his story explaining how he was hired by the captain of the Essex for a period of three years. The Essex was a whaling ship and has about twenty whalers on board. While harpooning one whale and focusing on that whale, one whale attacked while they were occupied with that other whale. The ship was torn apart and began to sink. The surviving men loaded into the smaller boats and they stayed afloat for over a month. Over twenty men left the ship with few provisions and leaky boats. Many of the men were lost. They landed on an uninhabited island and faced starvation there and all but three men were forced to leave the safety of the island and head back to sea. Another long period of floating in order to reach Easter Island over eight hundred miles away. There are other stories included that tell of whale attacks and there is some interesting facts about whale production. It is a very interesting read. Loved the history of it all.

You've got to read this. I read most of it in one sitting. It's heartbreaking and horrible, but I couldn't stop reading. There were also surprises about what they did after the whale attack when they had little chance of survival. I won't be too specific about it because I don't want to spoil it for you, but the author states that companionship meant so much to them that they sometimes stayed together even when it lessened the chance of survival. The author isn't trying to



make a point about the nobility of the human spirit. He states it as a mere fact. My review is of the 87 page Owen Chase account of the Essex. The book also contains several other stories and newspaper articles of varying quality about this period of whaling. Apparently, these kinds of whale attacks weren't common, but were frequent enough to be well known. The illustrations are lackluster, but, come on, it's an e-book. If you can find a cheaper version of the Owen Chase account without illustrations, go for it. 3.5 stars

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