After the Gold Rush, access via the port of San Francisco, had become an irresistible magnet to sailors, so much so that New Bedford whaleship owners instructed the masters of their vessels to avoid San Francisco when outfitting for refreshments or repairs. They encouraged their captains to visit Hawaii instead, because the chance of desertion was less attractive in the middle of the Pacific. Thus Azorean and Cape Verdean communities developed early in Hawaii, and one of the first Portuguese fraternal organizations was formed there in 1878. Beginning that same year, large-scale agriculture of sugar and later pineapples drew laborers from the Azores and Madeira. Among the most significant cultural adaptations resulting from this influx of Portuguese islanders were the iconic Hawaiian musical instrument, the ukulele. The ukelele's origins stem from the Madeiran instrument, the cavaquinho. There is a version of this instrument also in northern Portugal, but it was the Madeiran sugar workers who brought it to Hawaii.

The War with Mexico (1846-48) helped to consolidate American influence in California; shore whaling was about to begin along its coast and San Francisco Bay was poised to become the terminus of the trans-continental railroad. These opportunities helped to create a welcoming environment for a host of immigrants, from Azorean and Cape Verdean whalemen to Chinese laborers, East Coast fortune hunters and opportunistic merchants by the thousands.

Teaching the shores of every ocean and port, crewmen on American whaleships came and went, as ports like San Francisco, San Diego, and Honolulu grew to be important centers, the diversity of their settlements expanded. Atlantic islanders, largely following kinship patterns and hopes for economic prosperity, moved west, greatly aided by the transcontinental railroad that was completed by 1869.

Former whalers who had ventured inland for the Gold Rush, later settled in the fertile valleys of California as cowboys and ranchers. By the 1970s, roughly half of all dairy farms in the San Joaquin Valley were owned and operated by Portuguese Americans and contributed to making California the number one dairy producing state in the nation. Evidence of this existence today is that many of the dairy farms of the San Joaquin and Central Valleys abound with families of Portuguese ancestry. In the 20th century the important tuna fishery based in San Diego was dominated by Portuguese and Portuguese Americans.

Point Loma in San Diego was discovered by the Portuguese navigator João Rodrigues Cabrilho in 1542 when he sailed there from Mexico to lead an exploratory expedition to explore the Pacific coast for the Spanish crown. The whaleship Rebecca of New Bedford returned in 1793 from a voyage around Cape Horn and reported large pods of sperm whales off the coast of Chile, ushering in the great age of Yankee Whaling in the Pacific.
Cabo Verde is comprised of 10 volcanic islands in the Atlantic Ocean, 3,300 miles southeast of New Bedford and 300 miles off the westernmost point of Africa. The active volcano on the island of Fogo reaches 9,281 feet. A major eruption in 1675 was followed by two smaller events in 1847, and another as recently as 1995.

Strategically located between the continents of North America, Europe, Africa and South America and along wind and current-driven routes, the archipelago of Cabo Verde (the “Green Cape”) seemed “expressly placed to facilitate navigation by offering to vessels supply and refreshment,” according to British Admiral Arthur Phillip in 1789. For centuries Cabo Verde served as a port of call for traders, each contributing over time to island culture. A strong Creole identity developed – marked by the unique Crioulo language, music, food, and other distinctive traditions. As a Creole society, the Cape Verdean people have a unique cultural and ethnic heritage influenced by the varied cultures coming to the islands and spread by the worldwide reach of whaling.

Settled around 1460, Ribeira Grande (known today as Cidade Velha) on the island of Santiago was the first European colonial outpost in the tropics. Eight other islands were subsequently populated. Slave traders found the central location of the islands optimal, in particular the island of Santiago. Many thousands of Africans passed through, leaving a major imprint on the culture of Cabo Verde, long past an 1836 Portuguese law abolishing the slave trade. As a result of frustrations with colonization, Amilcar Cabral founded the PAIGC party (African party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde) in Guinea-Bissau. After years of war in western Africa, Cabo Verde declared its independence from Portugal on July 5, 1975.

The islands of Cabo Verde are diverse. Santo Antão is made up entirely of volcanic material and a mountain range separates the island into northern and southern regions. On the island of São Vicente, Monte Cara (Portuguese for “face mountain”) got its name because the peaks resemble a person’s profile. The mountainous island of São Nicolau has an agricultural economy. Originally named Llana, the island of Sal (Portuguese for “salt”) underwent its name change when salt deposits were found in the mines of Pedra de Lume. The sand dunes and beaches of Boa Vista are growing in popularity as tourist destinations, while Maio is most popular for its beaches and forests. Santa Luzia still remains uninhabited due to its arid climate. While Brava was once a major port of call for Yankee whalers, today agriculture and fishing are its primary industries.

“If you forget me, I will forget you. Until the day you come back…”

—Saudade, lyrics by Armando Zeferino Soares and popularized by Cesaria Evora

Nha Terra
A Proud Young Nation
Cape Verdean cultural attributes in New Bedford are preserved and celebrated by a close-knit parish community and social network, as they have been for over a century.

Built in 1905, Our Lady of the Assumption was the first Cape Verdean Catholic Church in the country. In 1910 the O Grémio Cabo Verdiano was established in city’s South Water Street commercial district, the first Cape Verdean American organization in the country and a sign of a growing Cape Verdean community identity. The Cape Verdean Beneficiente Association soon followed. Cape Verdean groups have worked for over one hundred years to maintain the culture of the “Old Country” through Cape Verdean language classes, genealogy workshops, debutante balls, cultural celebrations, concerts and dances. Cape Verdean traditional dishes such as Jagacida (rice and beans) and Manchupa or Katxupa are favorites among locals and visitors, and are offered in several family establishments. Confections made from candied coconut and papaya provide a taste of authentic island delicacies.

In summer, Cape Verdean festas welcome visitors to experience the joy of rich traditions. Several groups work to retain unique aspects of their homeland culture. Organizations such as the Bisca Club, the Cape Verdean Recognition Committee, the Cape Verdean American Veteran Association, and the Cape Verdean Association remain active players in maintaining Cape Verdean culture. The only Cape Verdean parade in Massachusetts is the Cape Verdean Recognition Parade, held in early July in tandem with Fourth of July festivities.

Cape Verdeans continue to celebrate and share their cultural heritage, strengthening the historic bonds between Cabo Verde and the United States.
The Packet Trade and the Ernestina

As whaling declined, Cape Verdean mariners recognized opportunity. Entrepreneurs purchased and repurposed oceangoing vessels, often former whaleships, and developed a strong packet trade between the islands and New England. Regularly scheduled routes carried cargo and passengers, strengthening cultural bonds through the exchange of goods and the transportation of thousands of immigrants to New England. These packet ships returned to Cabo Verde laden with care packages from America.

For many, the American experience began upon boarding a packet vessel such as the Coriolanus, Arcturus, Amos Pegs, Savoia, Bradford E. Jones, or Ernestina. Of all Cape Verdean immigrants to the U.S. between 1800 and 1921, more than 70% arrived via the Port of New Bedford.

The Schooner Ernestina was the last sailing vessel to bring immigrants to the United States from Cabo Verde. This vessel has served many purposes since it was originally launched in 1894 as the Effie M. Morrissey under the command of Captain Clayton Morrissey. The Effie M. Morrissey was retrofitted in New Bedford and renamed Ernestina after the daughter of Cape Verdean Captain Henrique Mendes. She completed dozens of packet voyages between New England and Cabo Verde.

In 1982, a combined Cape Verdean and American crew sailed the Ernestina on its return voyage to New England. It was gifted to the U.S. by the newly independent Republic of Cabo Verde with the support of its first president Aristides Pereira. She is 120 years old in 2014.

The schooner Ernestina, in the custody of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, is the official vessel of the state and a National Historic Landmark as designated by the U.S. Dept. of the Interior. The Ernestina is berthed within the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and can be appreciated dockside.

Did You Know?

- Over a period of 105 years, Cape Verdean Americans captained 890 (7%) of packet trade voyages.
- Moreover, in 250 of those voyages (41%), the vessel was owned by Cape Verdean Americans.
- A total of 487 voyages (38.5%) involved Cape Verdean Americans in the dual role of captain and owner.
- The dominant involvement of entrepreneurial packet ship captains and owners in Cape Verdean immigration to the U.S. is both unprecedented and important.
- No other group with an African heritage was able to develop and control their means of transport to this country during the 19th and early-20th centuries.

Image Captions:
- Starboard view of the schooner Ernestina under full sail in calm seas. Image courtesy of Waltraud “Taudi” Coli M.A, M.B.A.
- Schooner Ernestina Captain Alexandre Corsino Fortes. Image courtesy of Waltraud “Taudi” Coli M.A, M.B.A.
- 1960’s deck view of the Ernestina, owned and operated by Cape Verdeans. Image courtesy of Waltraud “Taudi” Coli M.A, M.B.A.

Background Image:
The Azores remains a strategic crossroads in the Atlantic a century after the end of Yankee whaling.

**Window on “The Old Country”**

**The Azores**

In the days of sail, the best route to the whaling grounds was to ride the prevailing Trades Winds from New Bedford directly to the Azores. The Azores are a group of nine islands located in the middle of the North Atlantic that were settled by the Portuguese in the 15th century. The Azorean archipelago was developed under an agricultural plantation system. Grain, sugar cane, and grapes were grown for sustenance and commercial sale. Portuguese settlers inhabited the islands and brought with them domesticated animals.

As early as 1716, whalers were successfully harvesting sperm whales near the Azores. The ships stopped Azorean ports for food and water, and to make repairs. Many islanders joined whaleship crews and sailed to whaling grounds around the world, climbing the ranks in the ship's hierarchy.

Meanwhile Azorean shore-based whaling developed into an industry important to the island economy. The first whaling-related structures in the Azores were coastal whaling stations founded around 1860 by whalemen who were familiar with Yankee whaling techniques. Shore whaling soon spread throughout the archipelago, becoming a characteristic industry of the islands, and one greatly influenced by Yankee methods.

Whale spotters kept watch for flukes and spoutings, calling the whalemen by rocket (later radio) to the boathouses to drag their whaleboats to shore and begin the hunt when whales were sighted. Once caught, the animals were brought to one of several whale factories for flensing, rendering and further processing. Whaling was a profitable enterprise in the Azores well into the 20th century.

Whaling in the Azores ended in the 1980s, beginning with the dissolution of the Grémio dos Armadores da Pesca da Baleia (Whaling Ship-owners Guild) in 1982 and the closing of the São Roque Whaling Station, Pico in 1984. In 1987, a 20 ton, 15 meter sperm whale killed off the coast of Lajes do Pico, was the last whale captured in the Azores.

The Azores has remained a strategic crossroads in the Atlantic well beyond Yankee whaling. The island of Terceira was chosen as the seat for the government in exile during the Portuguese Civil War, 1828-1834. Barbary pirates often raided Azorean islands for supplies as they sailed the Atlantic Ocean. In 1919, the NC-4 was the first plane to cross the Atlantic and it landed in Faial to refuel.

Early in WWII, the German Navy used the islands to refuel and resupply. In 1941, President Roosevelt requested a draft war plan to occupy the Azores, but this plan was set aside when intelligence sources provided evidence that Nazi Germany was not planning to invade Spain or Portugal.

In 1944, the Lajes Field air base was constructed on Terceira by the U.S. military. During the Cold War, operations on the base expanded. Since 1976, the Azores has functioned as an autonomous region of Portugal and continues to serve as a strategic meeting place, evidenced by the summit held there among U.S., Portuguese, Spanish, and British leaders before the commencement of the Iraq War in 2003.
Many in New Bedford trace their roots to the Azoreans who excelled at whaling and maritime trades, where Azorean community members supported one another. Antone L. Sylvia, who owned shares in many vessels and managed numerous whaling voyages, demonstrates the point. The Bark Greyhound, of which he was part owner, was the unofficial “schoolship” for Azorean officers. Azoreans who later became ship masters served at one time aboard the Greyhound. Sylvia also owned property all over the city including a cigar manufacturing firm. He owned and managed paddle ships including the Verónica and the Moses B. Tower, trading goods among New Bedford, the Azores and Madeira, returning with passengers, and employing other Azoreans.

Cultural traditions continue. Legacy and pride in the descendants of whalers and other maritime families remain strong with Portuguese festivals and the Azorean Whaleboat Regatta, held alternately in the Azores and New Bedford, a clear public sign of the important Azorean role in the community. Casa dos Botes (boat house) at the New Bedford Whaling Museum houses Azorean whaleboat replicas built by Azorean boatbuilder João Tavares. Azoreans play a prominent role in the community from elected government officials, to judges, to successful and influential businessmen. Yet the connections to the Azores remain a strong aspect of self-definition, many still speaking Portuguese and continuing to enjoy together the history and traditions of their homeland.

Azorean New Bedford

Between the 1820s and the mid-1900s, Azorean immigrants, largely because of the whaling industry, created a strong community in New Bedford, Fall River and other nearby towns. The first Portuguese Catholic parish in the U.S., St. John the Baptist, was established in New Bedford in 1871. The Portuguese became an integral part of the cultural, business, industrial and social community of New Bedford. Today the Portuguese community remains strong in the region, with about 60% of New Bedford’s population claiming Portuguese descent.
The Portuguese have had a profound influence on the development of the region, bringing rich traditions in music, dance, literature and cuisine, which add zest to the cultural landscape. In addition, the self-acknowledged national characteristic of the Portuguese known as Saudade – a nostalgic longing for things past – have motivated many groups to establish institutions that preserve their Portuguese cultural heritage, contributing to the region’s vibrancy and its broad appeal to visitors.

The cultural tapestry of southern New England is woven with the myriad threads of Lusophone immigrants.
The City That Lit the World

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park is a compelling destination that preserves and interprets the American whaling industry and its global influence through an exemplary national model of partnership and community collaboration. The National Park Service and its local partners invite visitors to meet the people who are part of the New Bedford story, share the legacy of the city’s whaling past and maritime present, and experience the energy of a vibrant seaport community.

New Bedford Historical Society

One of the most significant expressions of the American civil rights movement, the Underground Railroad brought tens of thousands of southern slaves to the free northern states and Canada before the Civil War. Many agreed with whaling merchant Charles W. Morgan when he called New Bedford “one of the greatest asylums of the fugitives.” In 1858 the fugitive Frederick Douglass and his free wife Anna found their first home in freedom in New Bedford with Nathan and Polly Johnson, African American entrepreneurs, whose home is now a National Historic Landmark. New Bedford and the whaling industry provided many opportunities for fugitive slaves to escape to the sea and reinvent themselves as free men in New Bedford.

Seamen’s Bethel

Founded in 1830, the New Bedford Port Society maintains the historic Seamen’s Bethel and Mariner’s Home, and has served the maritime community for over 175 years. In the late 1820s, a number of the city’s leading citizens gave their deep consideration to the “character building” of nearly five thousand seamen employed out of the port. Accordingly, they organized under the title of the New Bedford Port Society for the moral improvement of seamen.

The Seamen’s Bethel is the “Whaleman’s Chapel” of Melville’s Moby-Dick, and because of its association with whalemen, and other sailors that “Go down to the Sea in Ships,” it has become known in the ports of every ocean on the globe.

The Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum

Built in 1834 for whaling merchant William Rotch Jr., this Greek Revival mansion located on a full city block of formal gardens, is a premier example of the “brave houses and flowery gardens” described by Herman Melville in Moby-Dick. Furnished period rooms chronicle 150 years of economic and social life in the city, as reflected in the stories of those who lived and worked at the property (1834 – 1981). The Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum offers permanent and changing exhibits, concerts, lectures series, horticultural workshops and curriculum-based educational programming for area students. This Historic Landmark joins the city’s cultural and educational institutions in embracing, celebrating and learning from the rich history of this maritime community.

“In this same New Bedford there stands a Whaleman’s Chapel, and few are the moody fisherman, shortly bound for the Indian Ocean or Pacific, who fail to make a Sunday visit to the spot.” —Herman Melville, Moby-Dick, 1851