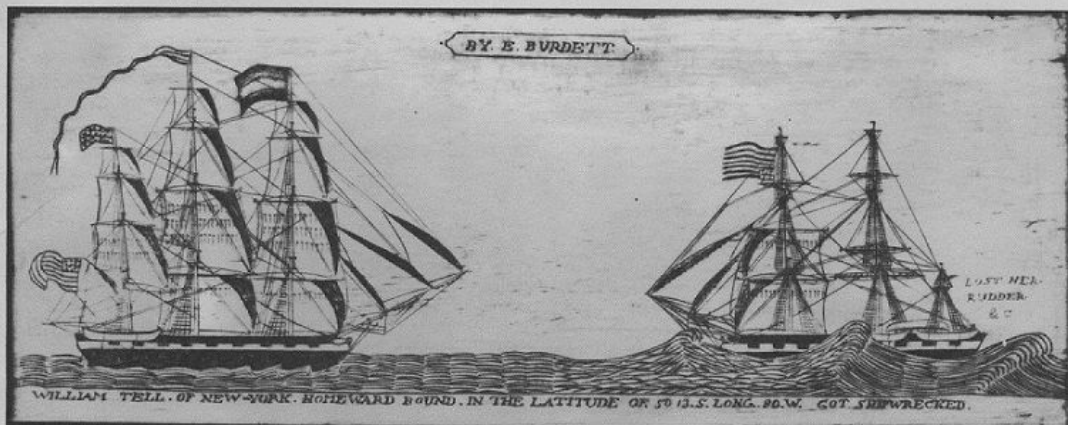


KENDALL WHALING MUSEUM MONOGRAPH SERIES No. 5

**Edward Burdett, 1805-1833
America's First Master Scrimshaw Artist**

**Joshua Basseches
Stuart M. Frank**



**The Kendall Whaling Museum
Sharon, Massachusetts USA
1991**

Edward Burdett, 1805-1833: America's First Master Scrimshaw Artist

Kendall Whaling Museum Monograph Series No. 5.

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Cover: Whale-panbone scrimshaw by Edward Burdett of Nantucket, polychrome engraved with two portraits of the whaleship *William Tell* of New York, circa 1832. The scene on the left illustrates the ship under sail, while on the right the same vessel—partially dismasted, with deck awash and the flag inverted in a signal of distress—is in danger of foundering in a gale off the Chile coast in August 1832. The scene of near disaster is inscribed "WILLIAM TELL. OF NEW-YORK. HOMEWARD BOUND. IN THE LATITUDE OF. 50 13. S. LONG[ITUDE] 80. W. GOT SHIPWRECKED" and "LOST HER RUDDER. & C."; and is signed "BY. E. BURDETT." Cat. #1. Collection of the Kendall Whaling Museum.

Title Page: Whaleship *Daniel IV* of London on fire at sea: sperm-whale tooth engraved and inset with red sealing-wax by Edward Burdett; inscribed "Daniel.the.fourth.of. London."; unsigned; circa 1828. Cat. #13. Collection of the Kendall Whaling Museum.

Inside back cover: Figure of Britannia, attributed to Edward Burdett, circa 1828. The so-called Britannia-Hope teeth typically portray Britannia on one side (shown here) and Hope on the other side (see the Town Docks Museum example, Cat. #26, fig. 12). Cat. #24. Collection of the Kendall Whaling Museum.

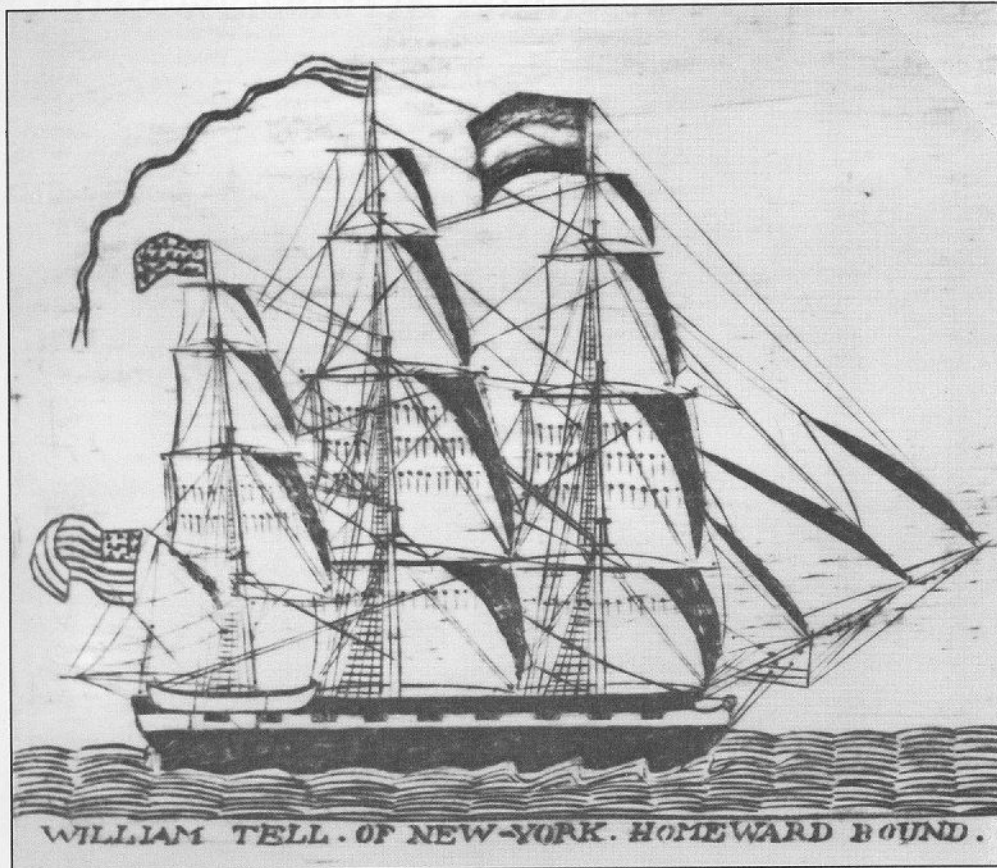
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Whaleship *William Tell* of New York, circa 1832: detail of Burdett's polychrome panbone panel (see cover illustration). Cat. #1. Collection of the Kendall Whaling Museum.

PART ONE
**Edward Burdett, Early
Scrimshaw Artist**

by Joshua Basseches

On a summer day in June 1833, Edward Burdett, whaleman, age 27, signed articles as first officer of the Nantucket whaleship *Montano*. Not six months later, while in close pursuit of a harpooned whale, Burdett became entangled in the whale line and was yanked overboard and drowned. One can imagine his crewmen's stunned faces as they watched him disappear forever below the surface of the sea.

The grisly circumstances of his death occasioned sufficient interest that both the *New Bedford Daily Mercury* and the *Nantucket Inquirer* ran detailed obituaries. They remark on Burdett's entanglement in the ill-fated line and report that he "was carried down instantly." Alexander Starbuck, in his *History of the American Whale Fishery*, also has the brief footnote, "First mate, E. Burditt [sic], taken down by a foul line November, 1833" (Starbuck, 1878, 301). But these three references to Burdett are the only ones to be found in the annals of the whale fishery.

Injury, illness, and death were commonplace aboard American whaleships in the nineteenth century. Seamen fell from the rigging, were swept overboard in storms, contracted exotic diseases, lacerated themselves with flensing gear. Without adequate medical expertise aboard ship, sailors tended to suffer more than landsmen from even the most common injuries and ailments. However, despite popular fancy, comparatively few deaths were actually caused by whales or occurred during pursuit. Edward Burdett's tragic demise was a dramatic exception, occasioning mention in the newspapers and by Starbuck more because of the nature of the accident than anything Burdett might have done to distinguish himself while alive.

In all other respects this young officer's life and career have been largely forgotten. But Burdett bequeathed a legacy that brings fresh attention to his name more than a century-and-a-half after his death. For Burdett was not merely a whaleman, he was also a master scrimshaw artist and pioneer of the genre—a highly skilled and prolific artisan.

Burdett produced all of his scrimshaw during an active whaling career in the 1820s and early 1830s. He is thus one of the first practitioners of a relatively new art form—the decorative engraving of sperm-whale teeth and whale panbone (jawbone) panels—pioneered no earlier than 1815. In fact, he is the earliest American maker of pictorial scrimshaw whose name and career have been discovered. His scrimshaw is notable not only for its historical primacy but also for its quality and quantity. Despite his probable lack of formal training, he was a superb artisan whose work displays a distinctive power and beauty rare in scrimshaw, and his output was probably more than 20 pieces.

Scrimshaw is an occupational art form indigenous to the whale fishery, and, by definition, depends crucially upon the use of various byproducts of whaling—whale and walrus ivory, skeletal bone, and baleen. As such, scrimshaw art is inextricably rooted in the historical milieu of the whaling industry and related seafaring trades. Yet, valuable recent scholarship notwithstanding, scrimshaw remains largely anonymous, a body of folk material divorced from specific knowledge of its makers and without specific historical context. A step-by-step analysis of Burdett and his art not only can provide an understanding of one man's work, but also sheds light on the study of scrimshaw as a whole, yielding insight into the methods and potential significance of scrimshaw research.

* * *

Six examples of scrimshaw signed by Edward Burdett are known. Three are in the collection of the Kendall Whaling Museum, Mystic Seaport Museum holds a fourth, and a private collector holds the fifth. The sixth signed piece was formerly held by the Nantucket Historical Association.

The largest and finest of the three teeth in the Kendall Whaling Museum portrays the whaleships *William Tell* of New York and *Friends* of New London (Figs. 1a, 1b). On one side the *William Tell*, with all sails set, pursues a mammoth bull sperm whale. The scene is inscribed "WILLIAM TELL OF NEW YORK IN PURSUIT [sic] OF A WOUNDED WHALE" and "ENGRAVED. BY EDWARD BURDETT. OF NANTUCKET. ONBOARD OF THE / WILLIAM TELL" (1a). The other side (1b) is inscribed "FRIENDS OF NEW-LONDON IN THE ACT OF WHALING" and shows the *Friends* hove-to, with a large blanket-piece of whale blubber dangling from a block-and-tackle rigged for cutting-in. Alongside the ship an enraged sperm whale, its jaws gnashing as it feels the lance, is pursued by a pair of whaleboats.

The tooth in the Mystic Seaport Museum collection¹ illustrates the same two vessels in somewhat calmer attitudes (Figs. 3a, 3b). On one side, the *Friends* cruises through a quiet sea, a pod of whales playing off her bow while two birds glide smoothly above her royals; the inscription reads "Friends of New London Chasing [sic] Whales" (3a). The other side has the *William Tell*, with yards cocked, flensing a large whale. Beneath the design appears the caption "Wm Tell of New York a Cutting," while, above, are the words "Engraved by Edward Burdett" (3b).

Two other teeth—the one held privately and the one formerly in the Nantucket Historical Association—bear images similar to the pieces in the Kendall Whaling Museum

and Mystic Seaport. One of these has two views of the *William Tell*: on one side the ship is shown under sail in the foreground, with a second vessel in the distance; and on the other side she is represented hove-to and cutting-in blubber. The inscription identifies the vessel and the artist. The other tooth depicts the same vessel under full sail bearing down on a large whale and, on the other side, hove-to cutting-in amidst a whale hunt. This one is inscribed "WM. TELL OF NEW YORK" and "CARVED BY EDWARD BURDETT ON BOARD OF THE WILLIAM TELL."

The fifth piece signed by Burdett, in the Kendall Whaling Museum, shows a different vessel, the whaleship *Pacific* of Nantucket (Figs. 2a, 2b). The pictures on this tooth are much like those on the other two: one side captures the *Pacific* in the act of cutting-in (2a) and the other shows her chasing a pod of galled whales (2b). The inscriptions read simply "The Pacific of Nantucket" and "By Edward Burdett."

The last of Burdett's signed works, also in the Kendall collection, is the most complex of the four and is Burdett's only known engraving on a panbone panel rather than on a tooth. Like four of the other signed pieces, the subject of the panbone plaque (see cover illustration and frontispiece) is the *William Tell*. In the scene on the left, the ship, with sails set, moves calmly through a gentle sea. On the right, the same vessel—partially dismasted, with deck awash and flag inverted in a signal of distress—is in danger of foundering in a gale. Beneath the scene of potential tragedy are the inscriptions "WILLIAM TELL. OF NEW YORK. HOMEWARD BOUND. IN THE LATITUDE OF. 50 13. S. LONG[ITUDE] 80. W. GOT SHIPWRECKED"; "LOST HER RUDDER & C."; "BY. E. BURDETT."²

¹ Illustrated in Richard C. Malley, "Graven by the fishermen themselves": Scrimshaw in Mystic Seaport Museum (Mystic, 1983), figs. 23 & 24, #56.172. (The larger example illustrated is a *William Tell* tooth now in the Kendall Whaling Museum—see Fig. 1.)

² After the one whaling voyage from New York on which Edward Burdett was aboard, the *William Tell*, 362 tons, seems to have been withdrawn from the whale fishery and does not reemerge in the whaling records until some ten years later, when she was registered at Sag Harbor, Long Island. She completed five whaling voyages from that port before she was

Even a cursory examination of these six pieces establishes them as noteworthy examples of the scrimshanders' art. Each exhibits stylistic authority and a sophisticated quality of design; each is rendered with certainty and attention to the details of hull, sails, and rigging; each captures a moment of life at sea and the business of whaling; and each is a handsome work of art. A single signed piece of scrimshaw that is well fashioned and depicts a specific vessel is rare enough, but a group of six such pieces by the same hand is nearly unique.

Taken together, these six pieces are a point of embarkation in understanding the scrimshaw genre and in revealing the context and motives of the artist.

On two of the signed teeth, Burdett proclaims that he hailed from the island of Nantucket, Massachusetts, where genealogical records indicate that he was born on 19 October 1805, to Lydia and Reuben Burdett. His was a seafaring family, related to the most prominent Nantucket clans, such as the Coffins and the Macys. Edward's father was a well-established merchant sea captain, and Edward himself almost certainly spent his early years surrounded by ships and ship lore. But the published record of his life is sparse: Edward's birth is noted in the Vital Records, he is listed in the 1830 census, and, finally, newspapers in Nantucket and New Bedford ran notices of his death at age 27 in 1833. A crew list in Josiah C. Long's manuscript journal of his maiden voyage in the whaleship *Foster* of Nantucket indicates that Burdett was also a green hand on that vessel (1822-24). About the intervening years there is little direct information, and, with the exception of

lost in 1859. That same year the *Friends*, 403 tons, was withdrawn from the New London whaling fleet after having made 11 voyages during 1827-59. The Nantucket ship *Pacific*, 314 tons, was the first of six American whaling vessels of that name. Built in 1818 at Scituate, Mass., specifically for the whale fishery, she made nine voyages from Nantucket (1818-1837) before being sold to Fairhaven, where she finished out her career (1854) after seven additional voyages.

his fated voyage in the *Montano*, there is nothing further about his seafaring career.

On others of the signed teeth, Burdett indicates that he sailed "onboard of the *William Tell*"; and his signed panbone panel documents which voyage this was. The inscriptions on the panel refer to a specific event: a shipwreck in the waters on the Chile coast off Valparaiso. Starbuck confirms that the *William Tell* was lost as the result of a wreck; but the wreck to which he refers (p. 559) was in 1859, long after Burdett's death, when the ship was registered at Sag Harbor, Long Island (not at New York City), and foundered off the East Cape, in the Beaufort Sea (not the coast of Chile). However, an obscure listing under the heading of "Disasters" in the December 12, 1832 edition of the *Shipping and Commercial List and New York Price Current*, makes the following report: "Ship William Tell, [Captain] Gardner, of and for this port [New York], put back to Valparaiso, last of August, with loss of rudder, and other damage." It can only be to this "shipwreck" that Burdett refers on his panbone panel, and it is safe to assume that this was the voyage on which Burdett sailed (1829-33) and which resulted in five works of scrimshaw depicting the *William Tell*.

Burdett's career from 1829 to 1833 thus appears clear; and to have reached the rank of first officer by 1833 (when he shipped as chief mate in the *Montano*), he must have made another whaling voyage in the years intervening between his early outing in the *Foster* and his later voyages in the *William Tell* and *Montano*. His signed work again provides some of the clues, suggesting the course of his earlier career. A signed tooth in the Kendall Whaling Museum portrays the *Pacific* of Nantucket; and while further evidence is still to be found to establish that Burdett sailed in the *Pacific*, the fact that he commemorated her in a handsomely scrimshawed tooth—as he did in the case of the *William Tell*—suggests that he may at one time have been a member of her crew in the mid 1820s. (Burdett's whaling career is tak-

en up in greater detail in the ensuing section, "Edward Burdett: Biographical Notes.")

Just as these six pieces bear Burdett's written signature, they also bear the signature of his style. In fact, in standpoint of design and execution these six pieces are so similar that even without written signatures it would be clear that they are the work of the same artist; and it is reasonable to expect that these characteristics would carry over to some or all of the artist's other works.

For example, each scene on the signed pieces is dominated by a broadside view of a full-rigged ship. In some cases the vessel is shown hove-to cutting-in and in others it is under sail and underway; and whales appear in some of the scenes and not in others. However, the visual impact of the six signed Burdett pieces is strikingly consistent. The proportions and lines of the vessels, and the relationship of ship to sea, sky, and picture plane, do not vary. On a more minute stylistic level, the way that the sea is incised, the deft curve and hatch-marking of the sails, and the vine borders that ring the teeth, all link these pieces together and suggest characteristics that might be found elsewhere in Burdett's work.

The most distinctive aspect of Burdett's style, what might be called his trademark, is his engraving technique. Rather than simply incising the lines of the designs, he gouged out the surface of the ivory in certain areas, employing what can be called an intaglio engraving method. This is especially true on the hulls of the vessels, and the heads and flukes of the whales. The result is a boldness of image that is unusual and readily recognizable, as well as powerful and beautiful.

Just as Burdett's written signature and the information he presents on his work provide clues to his personal history, so, too, his stylistic "signature" provides clues for visual comparison. In the absence of other signed works, the question arises whether these six signed pieces represent Burdett's entire output; or whether other, unsigned scrimshaw by his hand might be identified on the basis of

the clearly-defined characteristics of his style.

Accordingly, it is abundantly evident that Burdett carved many pieces in addition to the six he signed. Six unsigned teeth have surfaced in the United States and Britain that bear his stylistic signature, if not his written one, and these can be confidently attributed to his hand. Three of these are in private collections and three in public repositories.

One of the privately-owned teeth (Fig. 6) depicts an unidentified ship hove-to, cutting-in. Another shows a similar flensing scene on one side and a whaleship under sail on the other. These two teeth are stylistically most clearly linked to the Kendall Whaling Museum's signed *Pacific* tooth (Figs. 2a, 2b). There is an over-all visual similarity of concept and design among the three pieces; and the rendering of minute details on the unsigned examples—from the short horizontal lines of the water and the stiff vine borders, to the slightly awkward handling of the flag—is practically identical to that of the *Pacific* tooth. Thus, they appear to have been done during the same period of Burdett's career, probably in the mid-1820s (see the section entitled "Biographical Notes").

A third tooth in private hands (ex Cohen Collection),³ like one of the preceding, depicts an unidentified ship cruising for whales and, on the other side, a cutting-in scene. However, this tooth is stylistically much closer to Burdett's *William Tell* pieces than to the *Pacific* tooth. Like the *William Tell* teeth, this third unsigned tooth has a curving (rather than stiff) vine border, and the sea is rendered in short, choppy strokes, as opposed to the somewhat longer strokes on the *Pacific* tooth. This piece is unmistakably Burdett's work, even without the benefit of a written signature. Treatment of the hull and rigging suggest that it may be another portrait of the *William Tell*; in any case, it appears to have been done during the *William Tell* period of Burdett's career, circa 1829-33.

³ Illustrated in the Cohen Collection catalogue by Richard A. Bourne Co., Hyannis, Mass., 31 July 1989, #132.

The analysis of an unsigned tooth held by the Nantucket Historical Association is slightly more complex (Fig. 7).⁴ Unlike the other three unsigned pieces, this tooth has stylistic features similar to both the *Pacific* tooth (such as the rendering of the sea and the flag) and the *William Tell* teeth (most obviously in the hull and sails). However, it is identical to neither, and the whaling scene in the foreground is more frenetic than those on the other works discussed. Nevertheless, like the others, it bears Burdett's unmistakable stylistic signature—all of the characteristic elements in the execution of the ship, the sea, and the whale-hunt; the same over-all visual structure and geometry of design; and Burdett's trademark intaglio engraving technique. It seems likely that this tooth represents a transition between the *Pacific* and *William Tell* periods.⁵

The last two of this group of six are in the Peabody Museum of Salem, Mass. The smaller piece, on deposit from the Bostonian Society collection, is inscribed "Origion [sic] of Fairhaven" (Figs. 4a, 4b). On one side it shows the whaleship *Oregon* as she rides a calm sea with mainsails loosely furled, while a crewman, cutting-spade in hand, flenses a blanket-piece of blubber (4a). On the other side, a large bull whale dominates the scene, breaching nearly fully out of the water in a last, angry flurry as the officer steadies himself to thrust the lance (4b).⁶

The larger of the two specimens in the Peabody (Figs. 5a, 5b) depicts neither

whaleships nor whaling scenes, but merchant vessels. On one side, the New York-registered full brig *Tamaahmaah*, with all sails set, is beating upwind (5a), while on the reverse, the hermaphrodite brig *Chinchilla*, also of New York, is shown sailing on a downwind tack (5b). Inscriptions reveal not only the names of the vessels and their home port but also the names of their commanders, Thomas and John Meek, brothers of Salem, Mass.⁷

Burdett's stylistic signature shows up as clearly on the *Oregon* and *Chinchilla* teeth as it does on the others: in the design of the images, the carving method, vine borders, and handling of the sea, hull, and rigging. He probably carved these two at about the same time as the "transitional" pieces, circa 1827-29.

The *Chinchilla* tooth in particular helps to expand the catalogue of Burdett's stylistic features: here he departs from whaleships as his subject matter and introduces both a saw-toothed border (at the root end of the tooth) and a technique for incising the sea with interlocking lines, as opposed to short, separate strokes.

* * *

The information inscribed on Burdett's six signed teeth provides the outlines of the artist's biography and paves the way to one of the most detailed portraits of any scrimshander. These same six teeth reveal a stylistic signature that enables the attribution of six additional pieces to Burdett's hand, increasing the core of his opus to a total of 12.

⁴ Illustrated in the Cohen Collection catalogue, Bourne, Hyannis, Mass., 31 July 1989, #131.

⁵ It is interesting to note that on the reverse side of this tooth is an inscription professionally carved by another hand thirteen years after Burdett's death: "A Sperm Whales [sic] Tooth / Presented by Peter F. Ewer / of Nantucket U.S.A. / Richard Niven, Esq. / Chrome Hall. / March 15 / 1846." This tooth is said to have been a gift to Niven following the wreck of the merchant ship *Earl of Eglinton* on 14 March 1846.

⁶ The *Oregon*, 308 tons, built in 1822, made four voyages before she was lost in 1837.

⁷ Both the *Tamaahmaah* and the *Chinchilla* had exciting careers. The *Tamaahmaah* was renowned as one of the fastest vessels of her day, having set the record for a passage between New York and Honolulu in 1824. She served mostly as a trader, made at least one voyage as a seal hunter in 1825, and was eventually sold in 1828 to King Kamehameha III of the Hawaiian Islands. The *Chinchilla* owes her fame to slightly less auspicious circumstances. Like the *Tamaahmaah*, she served most of her career as a trader in the Pacific. In 1830, however, while taking beche-de-mer near Wallis Island, she was seized by the natives and her entire crew killed.

While this is already an unusually high number of attributed works for a whaler artist, the process of visual and stylistic analysis permits still further attributions. There are at least eight other scrimshaw teeth that display such striking similarities to Burdett's work that they must be credited as probable Burdett creations. These pieces, housed in public and private collections in the United States and Britain, reiterate the now-familiar images commonly encountered on Burdett's scrimshaw and exhibit Burdett's distinctive incising technique. What distinguishes these eight teeth from the other pieces discussed so far—and provides additional complex problems for visual analysis—is that they depict British rather than American whaleships. Six portray the *Daniel IV*, the seventh the *Phoenix*, and the eighth the *Ranger*, all of London.⁸

Burdett was a Nantucketer and spent most of his working life aboard American ships. Yet there is no mystery concerning how he might have seen the *Daniel IV*, the *Phoenix* and the *Ranger* and known them well enough to engrave their portraits on whale teeth. In the 1820s, American and British whaleships cruised many of the same grounds and called at many of the same ports for provisions and repairs, their crews frequenting many of the same watering holes and boardinghouses ashore. Burdett could hardly have missed seeing many British vessels in the Hawaiian Islands and elsewhere in the Pacific, where

⁸ While the details of her history are sketchy, the full-rigged ship *Phoenix*, 342 tons, was built in 1809, taken as a prize in 1810, and made whaling voyages to the South Seas throughout the 1820s. Her career came to a sudden end on a merchant voyage in 1834 when she went down at Gothenburg, a total loss. The *Daniel IV*, 490 tons, was also an active South Seas whaler in the 1820s. Her moment of fame (or infamy) came in 1825. In October of that year, under Captain William Buckle, she sailed into the Hawaiian port of Lahaina after an absence of eight months. During the intervening period, the chiefs of the island had established a *kapu* (taboo) prohibiting women from going on board ships for "immoral purposes." Needless to say, the crew were both surprised and enraged by this development. Over the ensuing days the men of the *Daniel*

the *Ranger*, *Phoenix* and *Daniel IV* also passed much of their careers. Just as the *Chinchilla* tooth was likely made to the order of a Salem sea captain, the *Ranger*, *Phoenix* and *Daniel IV* portraits may have been commissioned as mementos of a Pacific Ocean voyage. As Burdett did not sign any of these eight pieces, it is on the basis of stylistic comparison that they may, with some confidence, be attributed.

The *Phoenix* tooth (Figs. 10a, 10b) is in the collection of the Town Docks Museum at Hull (England). Like many of the pieces discussed above, it has a whaling scene on one side and a cutting-in scene on the other. A second tooth, in a private collection, bears similar whaling and flensing scenes but is inscribed "Daniel the Fourth of London." The Kendall Whaling Museum holds two other teeth portraying the *Daniel IV*. One of these (Figs. 9a, 9b) features yet another whaling scene on one side (9a), while on the other side the *Daniel IV* is shown under full sail making headway through a quiet sea (9b). The other tooth is more unusual: while on one side it portrays the *Daniel IV* calmly sailing downwind (Fig. 8), the other side shows her in her last desperate moments, fire and clouds of smoke engulfing her deck, and rigging flying in all directions as she founders in a torturous sea (illustrated on title page). A notable feature is that the bold black outlines of the ship and rigging are highlighted by flames ren-

IV roamed the streets of the town, weapons in hand, and with Buckle's tacit approval, threatened the lives of a local missionary and his family in a futile effort to have the *kapu* repealed. The ship eventually left Lahaina but the Islanders did not soon forget. The event came to be known in Hawaiian history as the "First Outrage." Two and a half years later, in March 1828, en route to London with a full cargo of oil, the *Daniel IV* burned to the waterline (under what circumstances is not clear). Her crew was rescued by the ships *Elizabeth* and *Charles*. The *Ranger* of London made two consecutive Pacific voyages under Captain May during the period in question (1824-29). Information about the vessel herself is sketchy and inconclusive.

dered in the brilliant red-orange hues of sealing-wax inlay.⁹ The fifth tooth devoted to a British subject matter, held in a private collection in England, also illustrates the final moments of the *Daniel IV*. This differs from the Kendall version by depicting not only the *Daniel IV* afire, but also the *Elizabeth*, the vessel that rescued the *Daniel IV*'s crew. The picture on the other side captures the *Daniel IV* before she caught fire: shown in the center of an elaborate sperm-whaling scene, she has six whales and five whaleboats grouped around her in Burdett's characteristic style. The sixth and seventh teeth in this group both depict the *Daniel IV*, are both held in private collections, and are very similar in image and design to the five teeth already discussed. The last tooth, currently at South Street Seaport Museum, depicts the *Ranger* under sail in the midst of an active whaling scene. This tooth is distinctive because it presents a stern-quarter view of the *Ranger* as opposed to the broadside portraits seen on other teeth, and because it is incised on only one side.

The familiar features of Burdett's work are abundantly evident on the eight "British" teeth: the deployment of ships and whales, the intaglio incising, the method of carving the sails, rigging, and sea. The most salient connection to the signed Burdett's is evident in one of the *Daniel IV* teeth in the Kendall Whaling Museum (Fig. 9a), where the scene is virtually identical to one on the *Pacific* tooth (Fig. 2b): the depiction of ships and rigging, the elements of the whaling scenes in the foreground, and the relationship of ships to whaleboats and whales, are all the same.

⁹ In 1983 a baleen corset busk was submitted on approval to the Museum of London and examined by Stuart Frank at the invitation of the curatorial staff. It was found to have virtually the same scene as this *Daniel IV* tooth in the Kendall Whaling Museum, inscribed in a quite similar fashion with the fire identically inlaid in red-orange sealing wax. On this basis the busk is provisionally attributed to Burdett and is believed to represent the same incident (S.M. Frank, *Dictionary of Scrimshaw Artists*, in press). No other example of Burdett scrimshaw in baleen is known.

Despite these similarities, clearly there are also differences in technique and handling when the *Daniel IV* and other "British" teeth are compared to the *Pacific* tooth. The British teeth seem looser, more deft, more relaxed in treatment than the *Pacific* tooth, suggesting that the British teeth may have been created later in Burdett's career, when the artist had become more experienced and more confident. However, the British teeth lack the precision of design and rendering evident in the *William Tell* teeth. In fact, with regard to the British teeth, the strongest affinities of style and execution can be made to the "transitional" pieces—the *Oregon* and *Chinchilla* teeth—a connection further strengthened by the presence of the saw-toothed border, noted previously on the *Chinchilla* tooth and also present on several of the British teeth. Thus, it appears that these eight teeth were executed at around the same time as the transitional pieces and can be attributed to the late 1820s.

* * *

The portrait of Edward Burdett that emerges from the comparison of twenty works,¹⁰ however sketchy, is more detailed than that of any scrimshaw artist of his vintage. It is much like a jigsaw puzzle in nature: there are a number of pieces of the puzzle whose positions in the picture are certain; there are several more pieces whose roles are based on supposition and inference; and still others that are missing altogether. But place the jumbled pieces together and step back from them, and the resulting whole becomes clear. It presents a picture of Burdett as a pioneer of a new occupational art form and as a folk artist of significant ability. It also presents him, in life and in death, as a man intimately entwined with the whale fishery—as was scrimshaw itself. Viewed from an artistic and historical perspective, this portrait shows Edward Burdett to be one of the greatest and most important scrimshaw artists.

¹⁰ See the section "Edward Burdett: Catalogue of Works" for consideration of the so-called "Britannia" teeth and other pieces provisionally attributed to Burdett (entries 24-27).

PART TWO
**Edward Burdett:
 Biographical Notes**

by Stuart M. Frank

When Edward Burdett first started engraving whale teeth as a young professional sailor not yet out of his teens, pictorial scrimshaw was a new art. There were no precedents to follow, and each step was, by definition, groundbreaking. As he went along, not only did his iconography and execution mature, with new variations, permutations, and complexities incorporated into the unvarying geometry of his ship-portraiture, but he also took the virtually unprecedented step of signing his name to his work, the first American known to have done so. By the mid 1820s he was also (like some of his British contemporaries) adding explanatory inscriptions. At first these were mere labels identifying the vessel only, such as his portraits of the *Pacific* of Nantucket and *Oregon* of Fairhaven (circa 1824-29). The inscriptions became increasingly informative as time went on, and in such later works as his portraits of the *William Tell* and *Friends* (circa 1829-33) there are full-blown captions quite specifically documenting both the subject and context of the pictures.

The dates and circumstances of Burdett's maiden voyage in the Nantucket whaleship *Foster* (1822-24) are reliably established by the manuscript journal of Burdett's shipmate and fellow green hand, Josiah C. Long. The journal quite specifically indicates that Burdett stayed with his ship for the duration and was not aboard on any subsequent voyage of the *Foster*. The specificity of the references in Burdett's later scrimshaw is especially significant because, except for this first voyage in the *Foster*, no logbooks, journals, or comprehensive crew lists are known to have survived from any of Burdett's voyages, and other written documentation is at

best sparse and inconclusive. Thus, the inscriptions on the scrimshaw provide the best clues to the undocumented middle period of the artist's seafaring career; and in applying the evidence from his scrimshaw to the study of his biography, it is reasonable and necessary to work backward chronologically, for it is his later pieces that are the most specific and informative. These later pieces establish the stable groundwork for placing in context the more equivocal evidence harvested from his earlier work.

We have Burdett's own testimony on a signed tooth that he was in the *William Tell* of New York. The panbone panel identifies this as the ship's only cruise from New York (1829-33), when a near shipwreck occurred; and we know both from Starbuck and from the Nantucket and New Bedford newspapers that Burdett was first mate of the *Montano* when he died in November of 1833. As the requirements for that very responsible post include significant whaling experience and at least one (and usually more than one) voyage as an officer, it is safe to conclude that Burdett must have been an officer—in all likelihood, second mate—on his voyage immediately preceding, in the *William Tell*. It is also reasonable to conclude that, as was universally the case among the professional caste of whaling officers and master mariners, he had gradually worked his way up to the afterdeck over the course of several whaling voyages. This is the solid groundwork of Burdett's later career, upon which conclusions about the missing middle part of his history are premised.

Taking the known voyages in sequence, Burdett served as a green hand in the *Foster* (1822-24) and later as an officer in the *William Tell* (1829-33) and *Montano* (1833). He returned to Nantucket aboard the *Foster* in December 1824 and did not sail in the *William Tell* until November 1829, leaving an unknown period (1825-29) during which, in the normal course of things, an aspiring

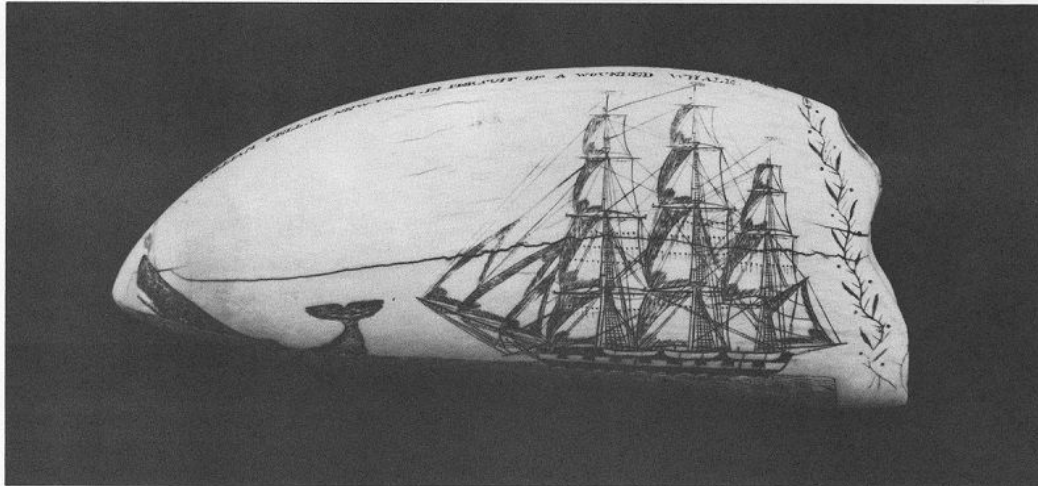


Fig. 1a (Cat. #2)
"William Tell of New-York in persuit [sic] of a wounded whale." Inscribed with title, circa 1830. The Kendall Whaling Museum.

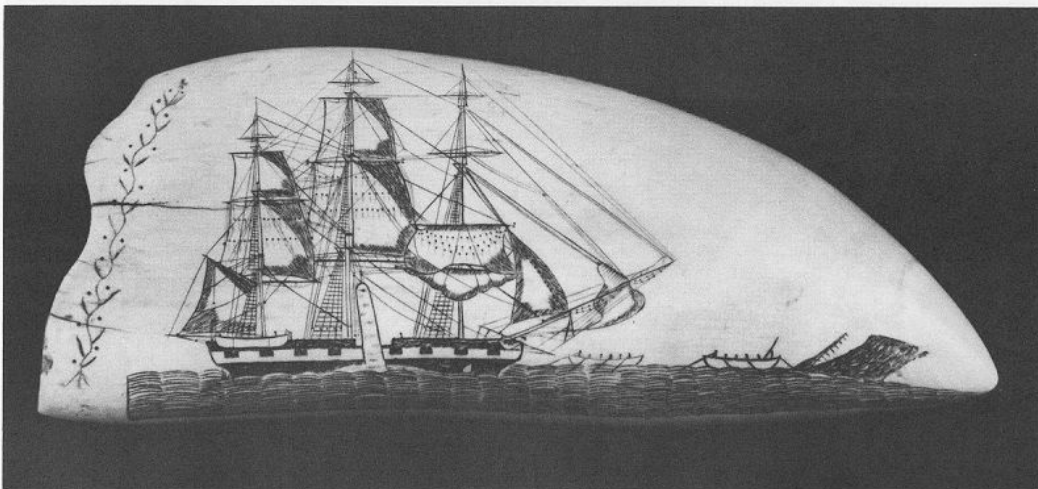


Fig. 1b (Cat. #2)
"Friends of New-London in the act of whaling." Cutting in scene on the Pacific Ocean grounds, inscribed with title, circa 1830. The Kendall Whaling Museum.

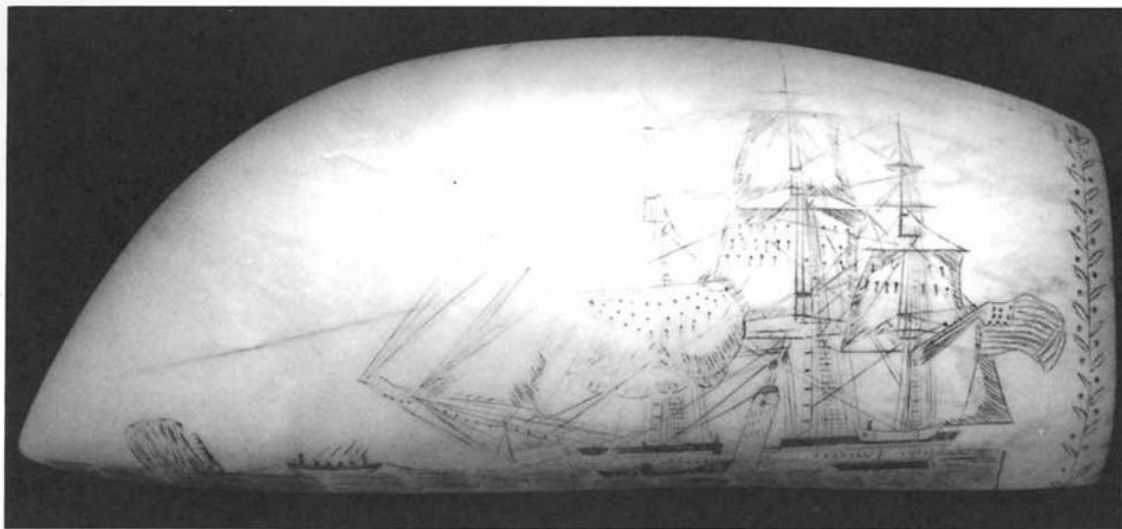


Fig. 2a (Cat. #3)
Whaleship *Pacific* of Nantucket, cutting-in a sperm whale, circa mid 1820s. The Kendall Whaling Museum.

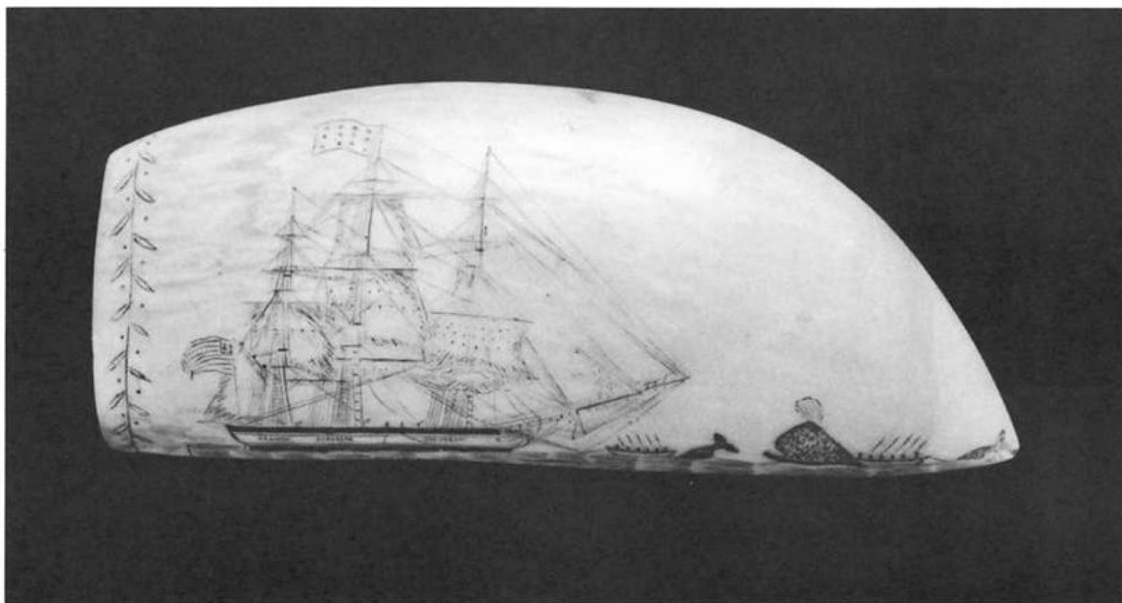


Fig. 2b (Cat. #3)
Whaleship *Pacific* of Nantucket, hove-to on the whaling grounds, circa mid 1820s. The Kendall Whaling Museum.

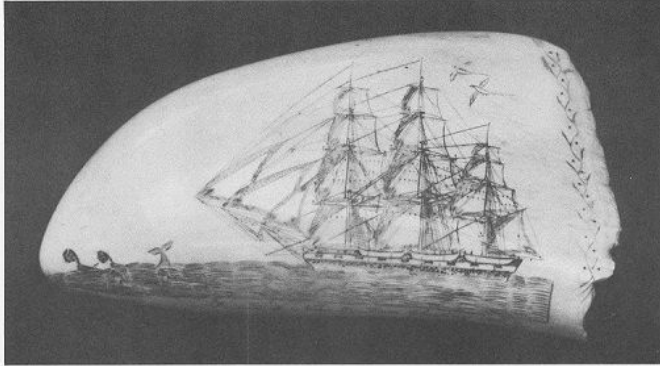


Fig. 3a (Cat. #4)
"Friends of New London Chaseing [sic] Whales." Inscribed with title, circa 1830. Mystic Seaport Museum.

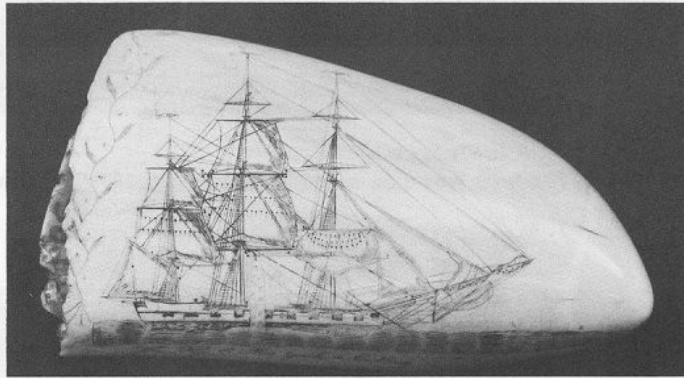


Fig. 3b (Cat. #4)
"Wm. Tell of New York a Cutting." Inscribed with title, circa 1830. Mystic Seaport Museum.

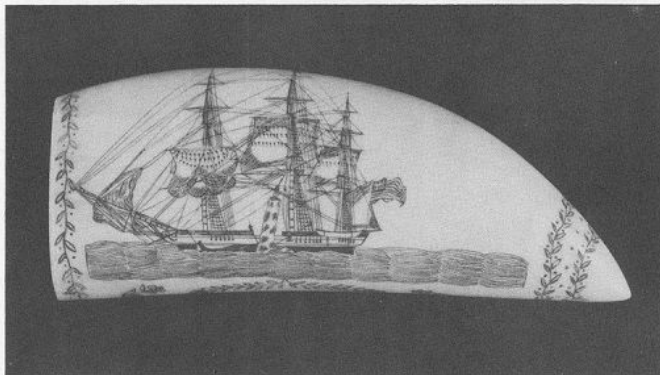


Fig. 4a (Cat. #7)
The Oregon of Fairhaven cutting-in. Inscribed "Origon [sic] of Fairhaven," circa 1827. Rostonian Society

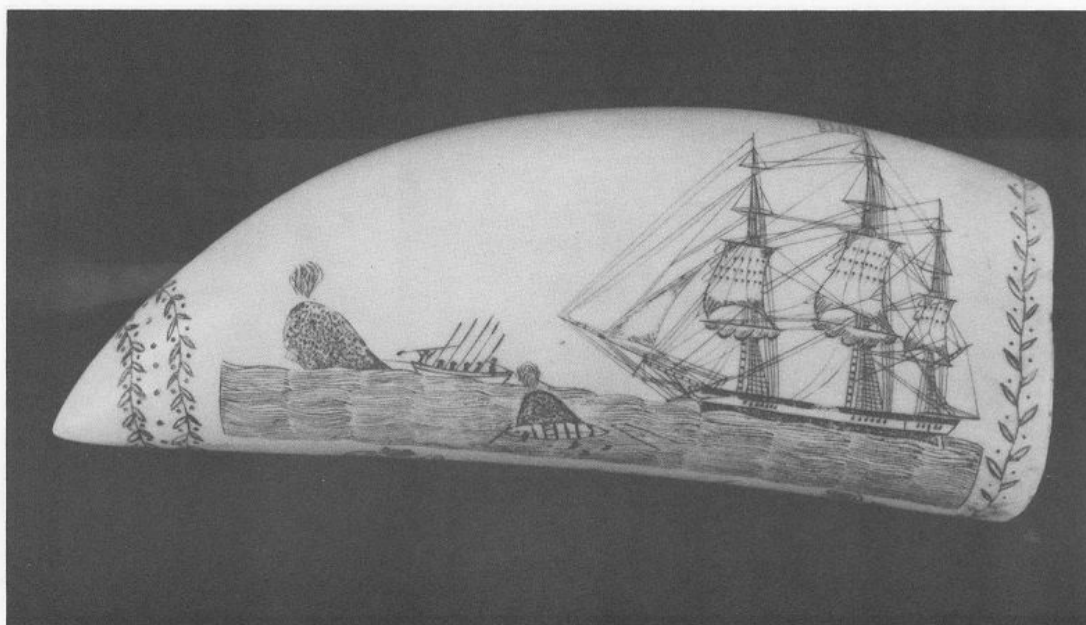


Fig. 4b (Cat. #7)
The *Oregon* of Fairhaven hove-to on the whaling grounds, circa 1827. Bostonian Society.

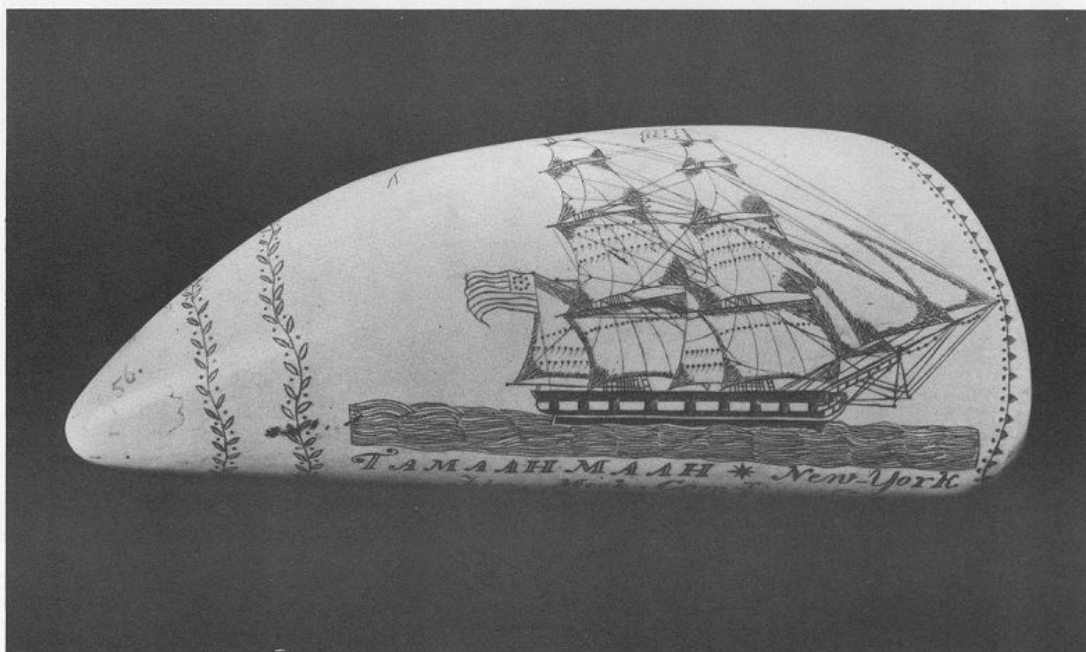


Fig. 5a (Cat. #8)
"Tamaahmaah, New-York / John Meek, Com[mande]r." Inscribed with title, circa 1827. Peabody Museum of Salem.

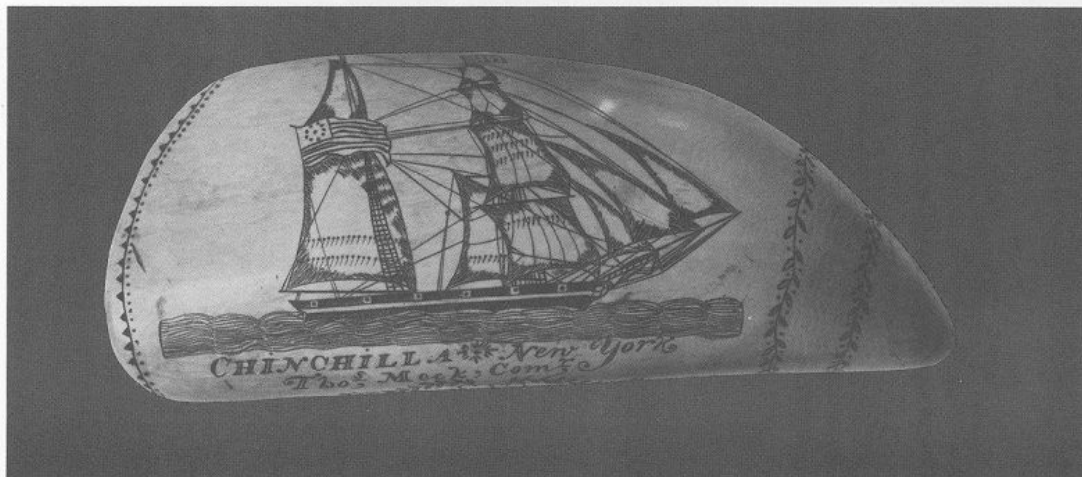


Fig. 5b (Cat. #8)
"Chinchilla, N.Y. / Thos. Meek, Com[mande]r." Inscribed with title, circa 1827. Peabody Museum of Salem.

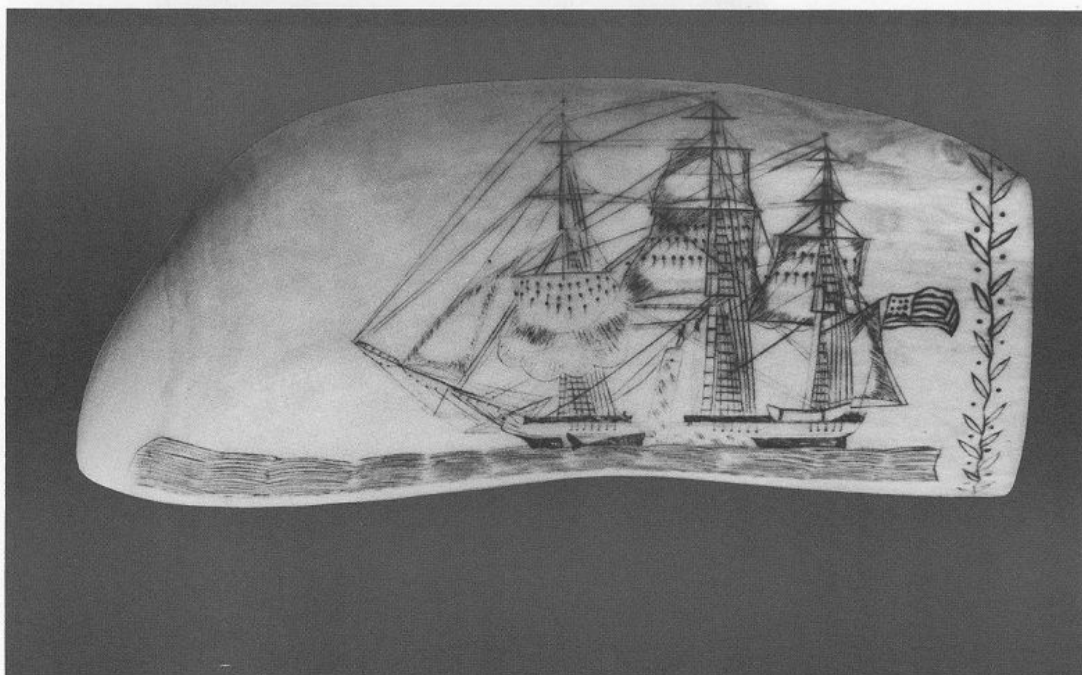


Fig. 6 (Cat. #10)
Unidentified vessel cutting-in, circa mid 1820s. Private collection.

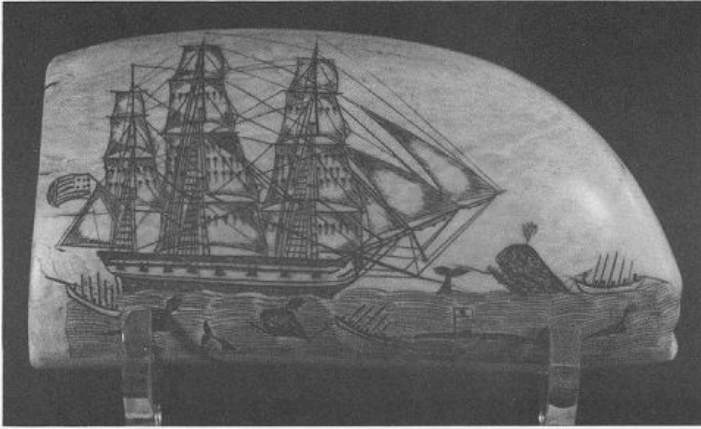


Fig. 7 (Cat. #12)
Unidentified vessel on the whaling grounds, circa mid 1820s. Nantucket Historical Association. Photo by Andrew H. Kessler.

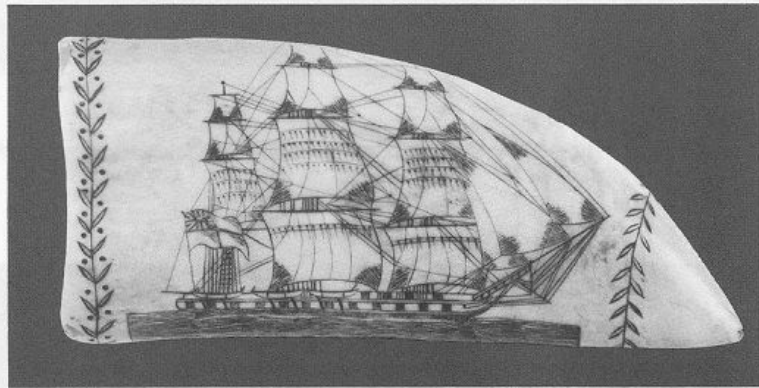


Fig. 8 (Cat. #13)
Whaleship *Daniel IV* of London under sail, circa 1828. Inscribed with ship name; reverse side illustrated on title page (q.v.). The Kendall Whaling Museum.

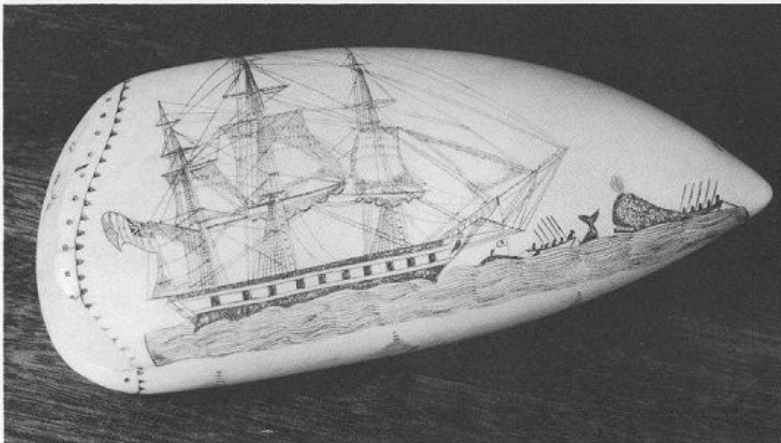


Fig. 9a (Cat. #14)
Whaleship *Daniel IV* of London on the whaling grounds, circa 1828. Inscribed with ship name. The Kendall Whaling Museum.

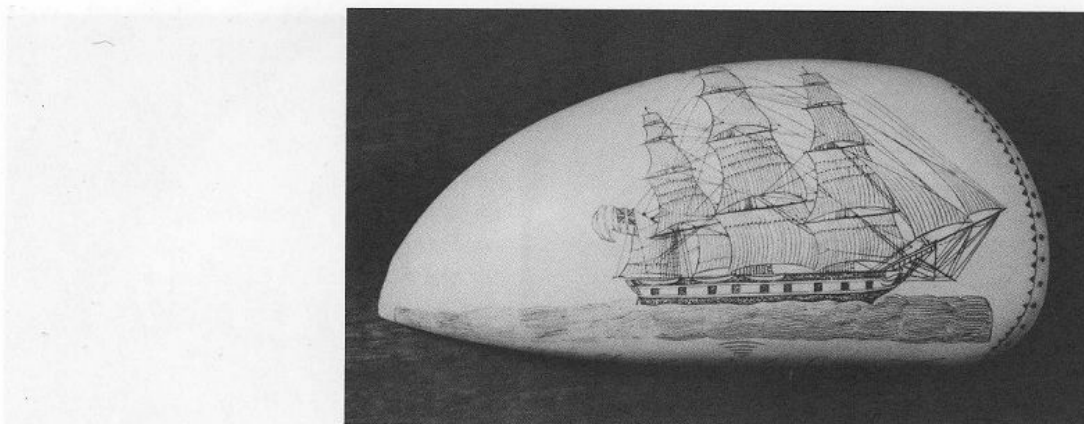


Fig. 9b (Cat. #14)
Whaleship *Daniel IV* of London under sail, circa 1828. Inscribed with ship name.
The Kendall Whaling Museum.

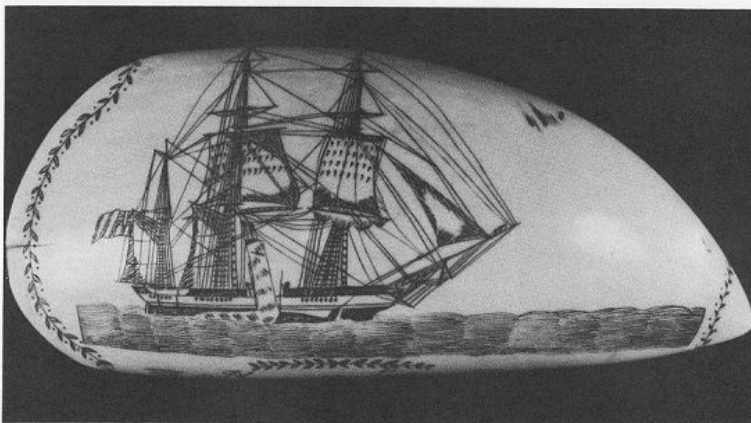


Fig. 10a (Cat. #15)
Whaleship *Phoenix* of London cutting-in, circa 1828. Inscribed with ship name.
Town Docks Museum (Hull).



Fig. 10b (Cat. #15)
"Phoenix Of London." Inscription, circa 1828. Town Docks Museum (Hull).

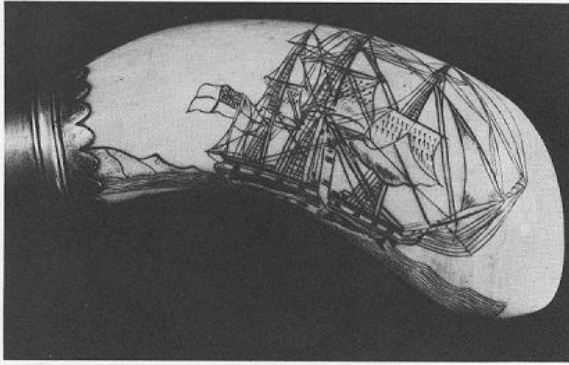


Fig. 11a (Cat. #23b)
Knife handle fashioned from a sperm-whale tooth, depicting the *Elizabeth* of London cutting-in. Private collection.

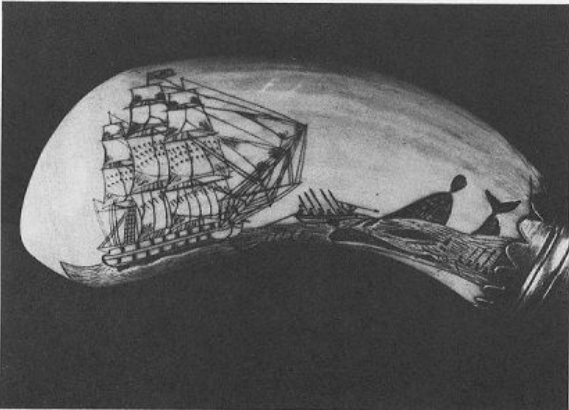


Fig. 11b (Cat. #23b)
Knife handle fashioned from a sperm whale tooth, depicting the *Elizabeth* of London on the whaling grounds. Private collection.

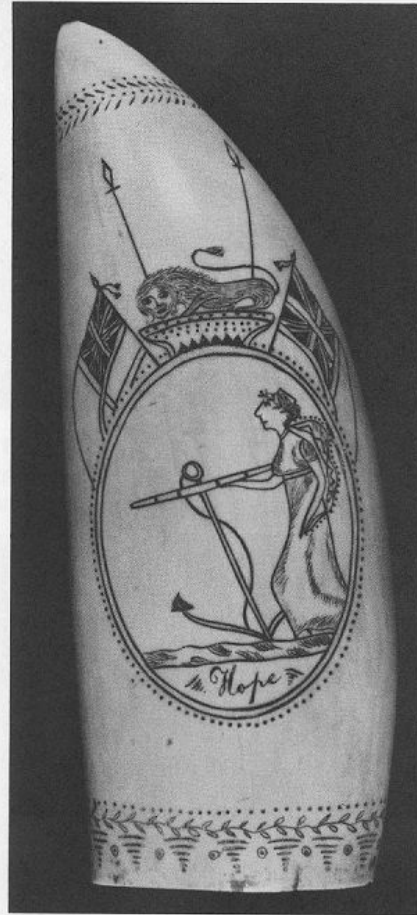


Fig. 12 (Cat. #26)
Figure of Hope, inscribed "Hope," circa 1828. On the other side of this tooth is a figure of Britannia (see also companion figure of Britannia, inside back cover). Town Docks Museum (City Museums of Hull, England).

Nantucket whaleman and future deck officer would normally have been at sea most of the time, allowing only for respectable layovers ashore between voyages.

From his portrait of the *Pacific* of Nantucket, it seems reasonable to postulate that Burdett might have spent at least a part of the unaccounted time aboard the *Pacific*. However, by the time Burdett arrived home in the *Foster* in December 1824, the *Pacific* was already more than a year at sea (having sailed in November 1823) and would not set out from Nantucket again until November 1826—which for Burdett would have meant 23 months ashore, too long for a layover to be respectable. If he sailed in the *Pacific* in November 1826 it was almost certainly not his next voyage after the *Foster*; if he did go in the *Pacific* in November 1826 (perhaps after an intervening voyage), he would have been back home in March 1829, in plenty of time to sail in the *William Tell* the following November.

Burdett's portraits of the New London whaleship *Friends* suggest another possibility; however, the *Friends* was not in the whale fishery at all until October 1827, when she embarked on a voyage that lasted until May 1830—by which time Burdett was already six months out in the *William Tell*.

Burdett's fine portrait of the *Oregon* of Fairhaven presents that vessel as an alternative. Built at Fairhaven in 1822, the *Oregon* was originally employed as a merchantman. Burdett would have been just a few weeks short of his twenty-first birthday when the *Oregon* first sailed for the Pacific whaling grounds a few months ahead of the *Pacific*, in the autumn of 1826—again, too long for a respectable layover. If he did sail in the *Oregon* on her maiden whaling voyage, it was probably not his first outing after the *Foster*. And like the *Pacific*, the *Oregon* (which returned in May 1829) would have had him back in New England in plenty of time to rest up before shipping out in the *William Tell* six months later.

Burdett's known scrimshaw may provide clues but does not provide the solution to the mystery of his whereabouts from 1825 to the end of 1829. Evidently, most of these ships Burdett knew—as he surely knew the British vessels whose portraits he engraved—from having encountered them in the distant outports and on the Pacific whaling grounds. As Burdett is not known to have produced any scrimshaw of the *Foster*—and in fact, is not known to have been making scrimshaw yet at all—there is no logical reason to suppose that his scrimshaw was yet integrally related to the vessels in which he sailed.

The likelihood is that, having arrived in Nantucket in the *Foster* in December 1824, he shipped out again a few months later in some other vessel, as yet unidentified. Whether or not he returned to New England in time to sail in the *Pacific* or the *Montano*, or whether he may have transferred to one of these vessels or to the *Friends* somewhere in the Pacific, are matters of conjecture. In fact, Burdett could have shipped in any of a dozen Yankee whaling vessels in 1825 and been back in Nantucket in ample time to be aboard the *Pacific* or the *Oregon* when they sailed in late 1826. In this scenario the most likely candidate is the ship *Barclay*, the only Nantucket whaler to sail in 1825 and return in 1826.

To the extent that they are known, the specific dates and circumstances of these voyages coincide to make this hypothesis a plausible explanation of Burdett's career, with the customary and appropriate layover between voyages and the expected sequence of deepwater experience to bring Burdett to the threshold of a captaincy at age 27. Taken chronologically, Burdett's career can be summarized with varying degrees of probability:

- (1) A sperm-whaling voyage of 30 months to the Peru grounds, as a green hand in the ship *Foster*, 317 tons, of Nantucket, Captain

Shubael Chase; 24 June 1822 to 27 December 1824. The voyage returned 2,167 barrels of sperm oil to agents Paul Mitchell & Sons in Nantucket. Documented by a manuscript journal written by fellow-Nantucketer Josiah C. Long, who was also a green hand on this voyage but later commanded eight whaling cruises in the *Foster* and ships *Richard Mitchell* and *Charles Carroll* of Nantucket. While Burdett may have begun incising teeth during the *Foster* voyage, no scrimshaw is definitively ascribed to this period.

(2) An undocumented period in which Burdett was certainly producing scrimshaw; the vessels in which he sailed have not been identified. One of these may have been the Nantucket ship *Barclay*, 301 tons, Captain Peter Coffin; 11 months Right-whaling on the Brazil grounds from 2 July 1825 to 17 June 1826. Another may have been the ship *Pacific*, 314 tons, of Nantucket, 32 months sperm-whaling and Right-whaling to the Pacific Ocean grounds, Captain David Baker; from 4 November 1826 to 8 March 1829; or, alternatively, two and one half years sperm whaling on the Pacific Ocean grounds in the Fairhaven ship *Oregon*, 308 tons, from the autumn of 1826 to 31 May 1829. During the latter period Burdett was probably a boatsteerer or junior mate, contemporaneously with which the London whaler *Daniel IV* burned at sea (March 1828)—an event that Burdett memorialized in sperm-whale teeth and perhaps a baleen corset busk. By the end of this period Burdett was customarily incising labels to identify the ships portrayed on his scrimshaw.

(3) A sperm-whaling voyage of 39 months to the Pacific Ocean grounds, probably as second mate, in ship *William Tell*, 362 tons, of New York City, commanded by Nathaniel Gardner; 23 November 1829 to 18 March 1833; returned 1,700 barrels of sperm oil to Jacob Barker, agent. This, Burdett's longest

voyage, was the one on which the *William Tell* was damaged in a storm and had to put into Valparaiso for repairs—a “shipwreck” episode commemorated in Burdett's signed panbone scrimshaw (see cover illustration and frontispiece); he also signed teeth portraying the *William Tell* and *Friends*.

(5) The tragic last voyage in the Nantucket ship *Montano*, 365 tons, Captain David N. Edwards; sailed 1 June 1833 for sperm whaling in the Pacific Ocean. Burdett's fatal accident occurred at sea, five months out. Ironically, the voyage turned out otherwise to be quite a success, with a catch of 3,097 barrels of sperm oil returned to agent Samuel B. Folger on 10 April 1836.

Sperm whaling on the Pacific Ocean was the quintessence of Nantucket seafaring, a matter of pride and ideology among Islanders. The point was first elevated to poetry by Herman Melville then debased to cliché in the silent-film era of the 1920s, that every Nantucket lad was expected—perhaps even obligated by heritage—to venture a-whaling in his youth or forever leave the Island; and that a male Nantucketer who had not drawn the blood of a sperm whale with his own harpoon would be unwelcome as a partner in marriage. Burdett more than satisfied these criteria of heroic passage, though he never lived to be married. For his entire foreshortened career he was a professional hunter of sperm whales on the Pacific Ocean, rising through the ranks to Executive Officer at 27, with a promising career before him, when he lost his life to a whale the same year.

We know rather little about Edward Burdett, the professional whaleman and master scrimshaw artist, other than that he went to sea in a succession of worthy ships, honing his skills and becoming highly disciplined as a seaman and as a carver. He learned to pull an oar, and then to steer with one; he learned to read the wind and sails, and then

to navigate by the sun and stars, and by sea-charts and tables of azimuths. Finally, on the brink of a Nantucketer's greatest success, with his promotion in view to command a ship of his own—and while engaged in the actual hand-to-flukes combat with a sperm whale—his life was eradicated in a freak accident, the kind of hazard that all whalers in all times have feared. By this tragedy Nantucket lost one of its most promising young mariners and one of its most accomplished artists.

What may have seemed most significant about him in his own time was that Burdett had proven his mettle in the business of whaling—and had fallen, like countless of his forebears, a martyr to the sea. From the perspective of our time, we can see also that he had pioneered a new genre in which four generations of Yankee whale-hunters were to commemorate their lives, their hopes, and their peculiar industry.

PART THREE

Edward Burdett: Catalogue of Works

by Joshua Basseches

In order to systematize the descriptions in this catalogue, the terms "obverse" and "reverse" have been employed in reference to the respective sides of a sperm whale tooth. "Obverse" refers to the side of the tooth that curves to the right when it is standing on its end, and "reverse," to the side that curves to the left.

I. Works Signed by Edward Burdett

The following six pieces represent the core of Burdett's work. They provide the foundation for researching Burdett's life and for analyzing the stylistic features of his scrimshaw.

1.

Vessel(s): *William Tell* of New York

Scene(s): two views of the *William Tell*: on the left, the *William Tell* sails under full canvas; on the right, the *William Tell*, partially dismasted, inverts her flag in a signal of distress.

Inscription(s): "WILLIAM TELL. OF NEW-YORK. HOMEWARD BOUND. IN THE LATITUDE OF. 50 13. S. LONG[ITUDE] 80. W. GOT SHIP-WRECKED"; "LOST HER RUDDER. & C."; "BY. E. BURDETT."

Date: c. 1832

Material: sperm whale panbone. This is the only example of Burdett's work executed on panbone, and also is Burdett's largest and most complex work.

Identifying stylistic feature(s): straight line sea, folded flag

Collection: Kendall Whaling Museum

Illustrations: front cover, frontispiece (detail)

2.

Vessel(s): *William Tell* of New York, *Friends* of New London

Scene(s): obverse: the *Friends* hove-to flences a whale; reverse: the *William Tell* pursues a large bull whale.

Inscription(s): "FRIENDS OF NEW-LONDON IN THE ACT OF WHALING"; "ENGRAVED. BY EDWARD BURDETT. OF NANTUCKET. ONBOARD [sic] OF THE/WILLIAM TELL."; "WILLIAM TELL OF NEW-YORK. IN PERSUIT [sic] OF A WOUNDED WHALE."

Date: c. 1830

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): straight line sea, curved vine border

Collection: Kendall Whaling Museum; formerly of the Hollander Family Collection on deposit at Mystic Seaport Museum.

Illustrations: Figs. 1a, 1b

3.

Vessel(s): *Pacific* of Nantucket

Scene(s): obverse: the *Pacific* hove-to as her whaleboats pursue a pod of whales; reverse: the *Pacific* hove-to flences a whale as an officer in one of her whaleboats prepares to lance a whale.

Inscription(s): "The Pacific of Nantucket"; "By Edward Burdett"

Date: c. mid 1820s

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): straight line sea, stiff vine border, folded flag, tornado motif

Collection: Kendall Whaling Museum

Illustrations: Figs. 2a, 2b

4.
Vessel(s): *William Tell* of New York, *Friends* of New London
Scene(s): obverse: the *William Tell* hove-to flences a whale; reverse: the *Friends* sails after a pod of whales.
Inscription(s): "Wm Tell of New York a Cutting"; "Friends of New London Chaseing [sic] Whales"; "Engraved by Edward Burdett"
Date: c. 1830
Material: sperm whale tooth
Identifying stylistic feature(s): straight line sea, curved vine border
Collection: Mystic Seaport Museum
Illustrations: Figs. 3a, 3b
5.
Vessel(s): *William Tell* of New York
Scene(s): obverse: the *William Tell* flences a whale; reverse: the *William Tell* sails through a calm sea.
Inscription(s): "Wm. Tell"; "E. Burdett"
Date: c. 1830
Material: sperm whale tooth
Identifying stylistic feature(s): straight line sea, curved vine border
Collection: private
6.
Vessel(s): *William Tell* of New York
Scene(s): obverse: the *William Tell* hove-to flences a whale as two of her whaleboats pursue a breaching whale with sea birds flying overhead; reverse: the *William Tell* sails behind a whaleboat pursuing a whale.
Inscription(s): "CARVED BY EDWARD BURDETT ON BOARD OF THE. WM TELL"; "WM. TELL OF NEW YORK"
Date: c. 1830
Material: sperm whale tooth
Identifying stylistic feature(s): straight line sea, folded flag, red sealing wax
Collection: formerly in the Nantucket Historical Association; not examined, attribution is therefore speculative.
- II. Strong Attributions**
- The following six works, while they are unsigned, can be attributed with certainty to the hand of Edward Burdett based on identifying stylistic features.
7.
Vessel(s): *Oregon* of Fairhaven
Scene(s): obverse: the *Oregon* hove-to flences a whale; reverse: the *Oregon* hove-to as one of her whaleboats pursues a whale and another is capsized by a second whale.
Inscription(s): "Origion [sic] of Fairhaven"
Date: c. 1827
Material: sperm whale tooth
Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea, curved vine border
Collection: on deposit at the Peabody Museum of Salem from the Bostonian Society collection.
Illustrations: Figs. 4a, 4b
8.
Vessel(s): *Chinchilla* of New York, *Tamaahmaah* of New York
Scene(s): obverse: the *Chinchilla* sails under full canvas; reverse: the *Tamaahmaah* sails in a calm sea.
Inscription(s): "CHINCHILLA, New York/Thos Meek, Comr"; "TAMAAHMAAH, New-York/John Meek, Comr".
Date: c. 1827
Material: sperm whale tooth
Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea, curved vine border, saw-toothed border
Collection: Peabody Museum of Salem; accessioned by the East India Marine Society (now the Peabody Museum) prior to 1831 along with a second tooth decorated with British patriotic motifs (catalogue #25) given to the Society by a Captain Osgood of Salem. The Society's 1831 catalog identifies the pieces as "two sperm whale's teeth, curiously carved," in one of the earliest known references to identifiable examples of scrimshaw.
Illustrations: Figs. 5a, 5b
9.
Vessel(s): unidentified
Scene(s): obverse: an unidentified vessel sails under full canvas; reverse: an unidentified vessel hove-to flences a whale.
Inscription(s): none
Date: c. mid 1820s
Material: sperm whale tooth
Identifying stylistic feature(s): straight line sea, stiff vine border, folded flag
Collection: private

10.

Vessel(s): unidentified

Scene(s): an unidentified vessel hove-to flences a whale; this is one of only two pieces attributed to Burdett that was not incised on both sides, and possibly is an unfinished work.

Inscription(s): none

Date: c. mid 1820s

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): straight line sea, stiff vine border, folded flag

Collection: private

Illustration: Fig. 6

11.

Vessel(s): unidentified

Scene(s): obverse: an unidentified vessel hove-to flences a whale; reverse: an unidentified vessel sails behind two whale boats pursuing a breaching whale.

Inscription(s): none

Date: c. 1830

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): straight line sea, curved vine border, red sealing wax in vine berries, blanket of blubber and whale spout

Collection: private

12.

Vessel(s): unidentified

Scene(s): obverse: an unidentified vessel sails in the midst of a busy whale hunt including three whaleboats and seven whales; reverse: a lengthy inscription.

Inscription(s): Added posthumously: "A Sperm Whales [sic] Tooth/Presented by Peter F. Ewer/of Nantucket U.S.A./Richard Niven, Esq./Chrome Hall./March 15/1846."

Date: c. mid 1820s

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): straight line sea, folded flag

Collection: Nantucket Historical Association

Illustration: Fig. 7

III. Attributed Work

The following eight pieces exhibit extremely strong stylistic connection to Burdett's signed work, and thus can be attributed to Burdett's hand. However, they depict slightly different subject matter (British rather than American vessels), and are rendered in a slightly looser and defter manner than the signed pieces.

13.

Vessel(s): *Daniel IV* of London

Scene(s): obverse: the *Daniel IV* sails under full canvas; reverse: the *Daniel IV*, partially dismasted, rides a stormy sea as flames engulf her deck.

Inscription(s): "Daniel.the.fourth.of.London."

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea (on obverse), braided sea (on reverse), stiff vine border, tornado motif, red sealing wax on Union Jack and flames

Collection: Kendall Whaling Museum

Illustrations: title page, Fig. 8

14.

Vessel(s): *Daniel IV* of London

Scene(s): obverse: the *Daniel IV* hove-to as two of her whaleboats pursue a pod of whales; reverse: the *Daniel IV* sails under full canvas.

Inscription(s): "Daniel. the. fourth. London."

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea, saw-toothed border, tornado motif

Collection: Kendall Whaling Museum

Illustrations: Figs. 9a, 9b

15.

Vessel(s): *Phoenix* of London

Scene(s): obverse: the *Phoenix* hove-to flences a whale; reverse: the *Phoenix* hove-to as two of her whaleboats pursue whales.

Inscription(s): "Phoenix OF London."

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea, stiff vine border, tornado motif

Collection: Town Docks Museum of Hull (England)

Illustrations: Fig. 10a, 10b

16.

Vessel(s): *Daniel IV* of London

Scene(s): obverse: the *Daniel IV* hove-to as whaleboats pursue a pod of whales; reverse: the *Daniel IV* hove-to flences a whale.

Inscription(s): "Daniel. THE. Fourth. OF. London"

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth with silver cap at the root end creating a snuff box. The silver cap — added after the tooth was incised — is decorated with Celtic interlace ornament and bears the Edinburgh hallmark for 1916.

Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea, stiff vine border, tornado motif

Collection: private

17.

Vessel(s): *Daniel IV* of London, *Elizabeth* of London
 Scene(s): obverse: the *Daniel IV* hove-to rides a calm sea in the midst of an active whale hunt including five whaleboats and six whales; reverse: the *Daniel IV*, partially dismasted, burns in turbulent sea as the *Elizabeth* sails off carrying the her crew.

Inscription(s): "Daniel. the. Fourth, London. Elizabeth."

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea (obverse), braided sea (reverse), stiff vine border, tornado motif, red sealing wax in flames, Union Jack and whale spouts

Collection: private

18.

Vessel(s): *Ranger* of London

Scene(s): the *Ranger* sails in the midst of an active whale hunt including three whaleboats and seven whales. This is one of only two pieces attributed to Burdett that was not incised on both sides, and is also one of the few pieces that is inscribed with a ship portrait with a stern-quarter view as opposed to Burdett's familiar broadside view.

Inscription(s): "Ranger. of. London"

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): continuous line sea, stiff vine border, tornado motif, red sealing wax in Union Jack and whale spouts

Collection of Seamen's Bank for Savings, N.Y.C. [at South Street Seaport Museum, N.Y.C., at the time of this entry]

19.

Vessel(s): *Daniel IV* of London

Scene(s): obverse: the *Daniel IV* under sail as two whaleboats pursue a pod of whales while a third boat is capsized in the foreground; reverse: the *Daniel IV* hove-to flences a whale.

Inscription(s): "Daniel. the. fourth, London"

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea, tornado motif

Collection: private

20.

Vessel(s): *Daniel IV* of London

Scene(s): obverse: the *Daniel IV* sails under full canvas; reverse: the *Daniel IV* rides a stormy sea as fire engulfs her deck.

Inscription(s): "Daniel, of, London."

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea (on obverse); braided sea (on reverse), stiff vine border, red sealing wax

Collection: private; not examined, attribution is therefore speculative.

IV. Possible Attributions

The following eight works incorporate stylistic features that are similar to those of Burdett's signed and attributed pieces. However, some of these works are ambivalent, while others bear insufficient visual or historical information to permit confident attribution to Burdett.

21.

Vessel(s): *General Marion* of New York and *Algerine*

Scene(s): obverse: the *Algerine* sails toward a lighthouse on a small island; reverse: the *General Marion* sails away from a fort flying an American flag.

Inscription(s): "Algerine"; "General Marion of New York".

Date: C. 1826

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea, folded flag, tornado motif

Collection: Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge (England)

22.

Vessel(s): *Charles* of London

Scene(s): obverse: a sperm whale smashes a whaleboat with its flukes in the midst of an active whale hunt; reverse: the *Charles* hove-to rides a calm sea.

Inscription(s): "The Ship Charles of London/Whaling"

Date: reverse: c. 1827; obverse: possibly inscribed at a later date.

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): interlocking line sea, sawtooth border

Collection: private

23-A.

Vessel(s): *Daniel IV* of London and *Elizabeth* of London

Scene(s): obverse: *Daniel IV*, partially dismantled, rides a stormy sea as flames engulf her deck; reverse: the *Elizabeth* lies hove-to in a turbulent sea near an island.

Inscription(s): identifies vessels

Date: 1828; this server is documented in the codicil of the will of Ann Maria Slatter, nee Crowder, prepared at Sheffield, England in 1920 and is thought to have been in the Crowder family from before 1858.

Material: sperm whale tooth set in a metal carving fork; one of a serving set of two.

Identifying stylistic feature(s): braided sea (obverse), continuous line sea (reverse), red sealing wax in flames

Collection: private

23-B.

Vessel(s): *Elizabeth* of London

Scene(s): obverse: the *Elizabeth* hove-to flenses a whale near an island or spit of land; reverse: the vessel sails in the midst of an active whale hunt including three whaleboats and five whales.

Inscription(s): identifies vessel

Date: 1828; see note for 23-A

Material: sperm whale tooth set in a metal carving knife; one of a serving set of two.

Identifying stylistic feature(s): continuous line sea

Collection: private

Illustrations: Fig. 11a, 11b

24.

Vessel(s): none

scene(s): obverse: Britannia rests on a British heraldic shield within an oval medallion surmounted by a lion with a cross on its forehead, a pair of crossed horns and four Union Jacks; reverse: Hope leans on a ship's anchor within an oval medallion surmounted by a crown with a cross, two Union Jacks, pikes, axes and rifles.

Inscription(s): none

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): saw-toothed border, tornado motif

Collection: Kendall Whaling Museum

Illustration: inside back cover

25.

Vessel(s): none

Scene(s): obverse: Hope leans on ship's anchor within an oval medallion surmounted by a crown with a cross and two Union Jacks; reverse: Columbia blows a horn within an oval medallion surmounted by a globe, a lion with a cross on its forehead, and Union Jacks.

Inscription(s): none

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): saw-toothed border, tornado motif

Collection: Peabody Museum of Salem; accessioned by the East India Marine Society (now the Peabody Museum) prior to 1831. This tooth was given to the Society by the same donor (Captain Osgood of Salem) and at the same time as catalog entry 8.

26.

Vessel(s): none

Scene(s): obverse: Britannia leans on a British heraldic shield beside a lion with a cross on its forehead within an oval medallion surmounted by a crown with a cross, two Union Jacks, pikes, axes, rifles and sabers; reverse: Hope leans on a ship's anchor within an oval medallion surmounted by a lion, two pikes and two Union Jacks.

Inscription(s): "Britannia," "Hope"

Date: c. 1828

Material: sperm whale tooth

Identifying stylistic feature(s): curved vine border, tornado motif

Collection: Town Docks Museum of Hull (England)

Illustration: Fig. 12

27.

Vessel(s): *Daniel IV* of London

Scene(s): *Daniel IV*, partially dismantled, rides a stormy sea as flames engulf her deck.

Date: c. 1828

Material: baleen; this is the only piece attributed to Burdett that was executed on baleen, and also the only corset busk.

Identifying stylistic feature(s): red sealing wax on flames and Union Jack

Collection: unknown; examined at Museum of London, 1983.

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