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New Bedford Whaling Museum Launches Inaugural "Moby-Dick" Book Club in Partnership with Melville Society Scholars

First-time and returning readers of the iconic American novel invited to join free virtual club

NEW BEDFORD, MA – *August 14, 2025* – The New Bedford Whaling Museum is pleased to announce its first-ever "**Moby-Dick" Book Club**, a free, virtual three-part series exploring Herman Melville's iconic American novel.

Moderated by **Marina Wells**, assistant curator of history & culture at the New Bedford Whaling Museum, and featuring discussions with **seven nationally-recognized Melville scholars,** the series will meet virtually on the third Tuesday of the month in September, October, and November 2025 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. to prepare readers for the 30th "Moby-Dick" reading marathon at the New Bedford Whaling Museum in January 2026. To register, visit www.whalingmuseum.org/program/moby-dick-book-club/.

Each book club session will focus on a guiding theme and include a suggested reading schedule, but participants are encouraged to read at their own pace, join when they can, and bring their thoughts, questions, and interpretations to share with fellow readers and Melville experts alike.

The schedule is as follows:

- **Tuesday, September 16, at 5:30 p.m.**
  Extracts to Chapter 47
  Theme: Making Meaning in "Moby-Dick"
  Featured Guests: Tony McGowan *(Associate Professor, English & World Languages, U.S. Military Academy West Point)* & Tim Marr *(American Studies Professor, UNC Chapel Hill)*

- **Tuesday, October 21 at 5:30 p.m.**
  Chapter 48 to Chapter 95
  Theme: Race, Nation, and Representation
  Featured Guests: Bob Wallace *(Regents Professor, Northern Kentucky University)* & Wyn Kelley *(Senior Lecturer Emerita, MIT)*

- **Tuesday, November 18 at 5:30 p.m.**
  Chapter 96 to the Epilogue
  Theme: Melville and the Ocean
  Featured Guests: Mary K Bercaw Edwards *(English Professor, University of Connecticut)* & Jennifer Baker *(Associate Professor of English, New York University)*

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“As we approach the exciting milestone of our 30th annual ‘Moby-Dick’ Marathon in January, we are thrilled to present our first book club,” said Marina Wells, assistant curator of history & culture at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. “Whether reading ‘Moby-Dick’ for the first time or returning to it with fresh eyes, these sessions will help all readers enjoy the masterpiece in a new way, through engaging, thought-provoking conversations led by some of the world’s leading Melville scholars.”

The book club deepens the Museum’s partnership with the Melville Society. In 2000, the two organizations developed the Melville Society Cultural Project (MSCP), a research-oriented group of scholars within the Melville Society dedicated to fostering a critical understanding of Herman Melville’s writings, life, and times.

“In 25 years of affiliation with the New Bedford Whaling Museum, we have cherished the ‘Moby-Dick’ Marathon and events,” said Wyn Kelley, founding member of the Melville Society Cultural Project. “The new ‘Moby-Dick’ Book Club gives us a way to continue our conversations with the museum’s visitors, fans of Melville’s book, descendants of whaling men, and lovers of the sea. We can’t wait!"

The 30th anniversary of the New Bedford Whaling Museum’s iconic “Moby-Dick” Reading Marathon will take place January 2-4, 2026. The 25-hour read-a-thon of Herman Melville’s masterpiece will feature notable readers from southeastern Massachusetts and beyond and will be interwoven with engaging Melville-inspired activities, conversations with scholars, live performances, and hands-on fun. Since 1997, this beloved mid-winter tradition has honored Melville’s 1841 departure aboard the whaleship Acushnet. For more information, visit www.whalingmuseum.org/program/moby-dick-marathon-2026/.

About the Melville Society and the Melville Society Cultural Project:

The Melville Society, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a community of academics and general readers devoted to the study and appreciation of the works, life, and influence of the author Herman Melville.

Founded in 1945, it is one of the nation’s oldest, continuously active single-author societies. Since 1990, the Society has expanded its scope, membership, and outreach to advance the reading and enjoyment of Melville’s works in all levels of education, in fine arts, and popular culture, worldwide.

The Melville Society Cultural Project (MSCP) is a research-oriented group of scholars within the Melville Society dedicated to fostering a critical understanding of Herman Melville’s writings, life, and times. The Project, in affiliation with the New Bedford Whaling Museum, collects scholarly and artistic texts related to Melville, oversees the Melville Society’s Archive, and contributes to a wide variety of programming at the Whaling Museum and elsewhere.

The MSCP seeks to promote public awareness of and appreciation for Melville and his writings and assist other scholars and teachers, as well as educational and cultural institutions, in becoming well-informed about the author and his work. In these roles we take seriously the importance of building partnerships across communities to ensure that the humanities survive and thrive outside the academy. For more information, visit www.melvillesociety.org/melville-society-cultural-project.

About the New Bedford Whaling Museum:

Anchored in the story of New Bedford’s whaling industry, the Museum documents and shares the diverse stories of this vibrant maritime region and its people, both bygone and current. Founded as the Old Dartmouth Historical Society in 1903, the Museum’s rich history reveals an intimate relationship with the communities it serves. Today, the New Bedford Whaling Museum ignites learning through

explorations of art, history, science and culture, rooted in the stories of people, the region and an international seaport. The New Bedford Whaling Museum is the leading cultural institution in the region, attracting more than 100,000 visitors annually.

The cornerstone of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, the Museum is located at 18 Johnny Cake Hill in the heart of the city's historic downtown. Daily hours are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. The Museum is open until 7 p.m. every second Thursday of the month (on AHA! nights) and closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Admission is free for Museum members; adults $23, seniors (65+) $21, youth $13. For more information, visit www.whalingmuseum.org.

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