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PHOTO CAPTION: In 1819, a breaching sperm whale would have been cause for celebration among the sailors on board the whale ship Essex. Little did they know that their ship would be rammed by a whale and sunk, leaving only eight of them to survive the harrowing 90 days that followed before help arrived. This true life adventure was the basis of *Moby Dick*. The story is the topic of a Library fundraiser, WHALE HO! at Café Le Perche on January 21st. Tickets to hear the saga and enjoy a glass of grog are \$25.00. A price-fixed whaling-themed dinner follows.

Reservations are required. Call Café Le Perche at 518.822.1850.

WHALE HO! A Library Fundraiser

HUDSON – In this former whaling town on the Hudson River, it seems likely that many citizens once knew the story of the *Wreck of the Whale Ship Essex*, now a book by first mate Owen Chase (as compiled by Carlo DeVito with an introduction by Pulitzer-prize winner Gilbert King) and a movie, out this month, directed by Ron Howard. But time makes memories fade. And what Chase called “a true-life horror” would be virtually unknown today had it not become the inspiration for *Moby Dick*.

On Thursday, January 21st, an evening with Carlo DeVito, historian and editorial director of the book, will take place at Café Le Perche. It is a fund raiser for the Hudson Area Library. The event, aptly called WHALE HO!, consists of two parts. Part one, beginning at 6pm, is an illustrated lecture recounting tales of the Essex, the workings of a whaling ship and how Melville came to learn about the disaster. Tickets to the lecture, sold at the door, will be \$25.00 each and include a glass of grog – a typical libation for shipmates of the day.

Mr. DeVito will sign copies of the book *Wreck of the Whale Ship Essex* - sold during the evening by Kelley Drahushak of *Spotty Dog Books and Ale*.

At 8pm, Café Le Perche will serve a “whaling inspired” dinner to supporters of this event. Reservations are required. The meal is price fixed at \$50.00 per person. Dinner reservations must be made in advance by calling the restaurant at 518.822.1850.

On the morning of November 20th, 1820, the *Essex* was more than 1,500 miles from the nearest land, hunting a pod of sperm whales, when an enraged bull whale rammed her. The crew was only able to collect some bread, water, and a few navigational tools before fleeing the wreck in small, frail, open boats. They spent the next 90 days without charts, sun baked, starving and dehydrated. Of the 30 who left the ship, only 8 survived.

Whale Ho! Is an opportunity to learn more about the harrowing life of a nineteenth Century sailor through the stories in this book. Writings from Herman Melville and Jack London add historical and cultural context and the book also includes paintings from the period, charts and accounts of other ships lost to the whales they hunted. This is a gripping narrative that has special significance given the city of Hudson’s contribution to the whaling economy.