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PHOTO CAPTION: The life of a sailor on a whaling ship was fraught with danger. WHALE HO!, an evening of whale-related tales, will take place at Café Le Perche on Thursday, January 21st. A 6pm illustrated lecture is \$25.00. Tickets at the door. At 8pm, a whaling-themed dinner will be served. Advance reservations are required. Call 518.822.1850. This is a benefit for the Hudson Area Library.

Steering by Aid of the North Star

HUDSON – WHALE HO!, an evening of whale related tales, will take place at Café Le Perche on Thursday, January 21st. At 6pm, an illustrated lecture by Carlo DeVito, Editorial Director on the book *Wreck of the Whale Ship Essex*, will highlight the dangers of whaling along with the economics of the business and the specifics of what happened to sailors aboard the *Essex*. At 8pm, a whaling-themed dinner will be served to those who make advance reservations at the restaurant - 518.822.1850. Proceeds from the evening will benefit the Hudson Area Library.

The life of a sailor on a whaling boat was fraught with danger. Here's a description from 1876 of surviving a wreck. "Nothing out of the ordinary course of starvation, thirst and rapid decline of their energies occurred until 7 days had elapsed." The *Essex*, destroyed in 1820, left 30 survivors who escaped from the ship. Of those, only 8 survived their time on the open sea. Their real-life tale became the basis for Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*.

Accounts by surviving sailors include the need to steer their tiny long boats without charts, using only their knowledge of the seas and the North Star as a guide. They sometimes landed on islands where, instead of finding welcomed safety, they encountered cannibals. The 8 survivors from *The Essex* admitted to cannibalism themselves in order to survive their time adrift.

Aboard ship was only slightly less threatening. Scurvy was common as were any number of other ills. The fresh water kept aboard in barrels, was rationed daily. Within weeks of setting sail on their two-year excursions, the algae in the water turned the "refreshment" into a slimy soup.

It was discovered that by mixing rum and lemon or lime juice with the water, the growth of algae diminished as did the incidence of scurvy. This mixture, named for a type of fabric worn by British Admiral Edward Vernon (Old Grogam) became known as grog. A modern day variant of this drink will be served to those who attend the 6pm lecture.

The book *Wreck of the Whale Ship Essex*, will be offered for sale throughout the evening by Kelly Drahushak of Spotty Dog Books and Ale. DeVito will sign all copies.

Tickets to the lecture will be sold at the restaurant door. They are \$25.00. The whaling-themed dinner requires advance reservations. Call the restaurant at 518.822.1850.