

MI Michigan-I-O
Whaling Songs

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STORY

People have been hunting whales since the Dark Ages. Those fearsome creatures could sink a small craft with a flick of the tail, but if you could kill one and bring it in, you would have a wealth of meat to consume and oil to burn.

New England settlers began whaling almost as soon as they arrived. They even used the *Mayflower*. Eventually a great industry would thrive in harbors such as Nantucket and New Bedford. Young men would go to sea, sometimes for years at a time, and return with oil to light the street lamps of Industrialized world.

The journeys were long, and the hunts were dangerous. Only a hardy folk would dare face the world's largest mammals with a single blade.

Here's to them; these are their songs.

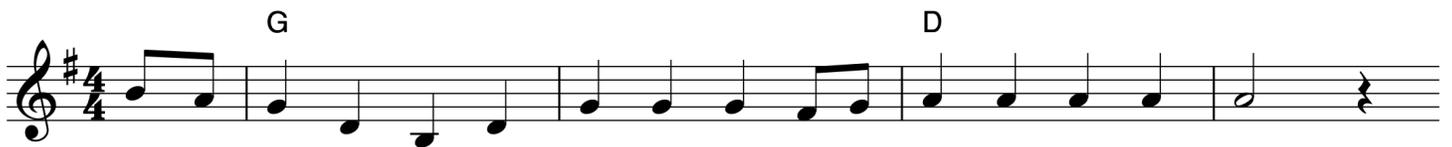
SONGS

1. *Colombia On Our Lee* – A spirited celebration of the freedom of being at sea.
2. *Jack the Whaler* – Ballad, eulogy, and farce all rolled into one; the story of a sailor who could never be knocked down.
3. *The Coast of Peru* – Capturing the anticipation leading up to a whaling ship's first kill; then, the excitement and gore of it. This ship traveled to some of the same waters as the *Essex* did, with much better luck.
4. *Blow Ye Winds* – A song about the ups and downs of whaling.
5. *It's Me for the Inland Lakes* – What happens when ocean sailors realize they can still make decent money on a much shorter voyage? They head to fresh water.
6. *Fare You Well* – Found in a whaler's journal on his 1795 journey. It's not a song about whaling at all; it's more a song about leaving.

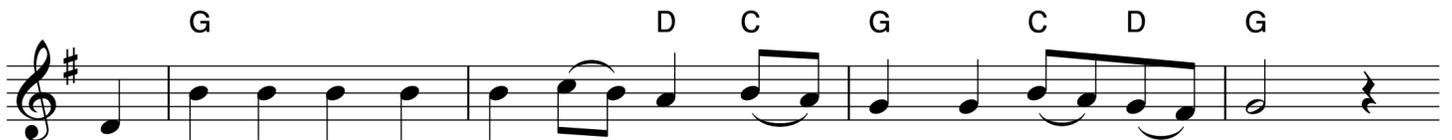
SOURCES

- *Sea Songs of Sailing, Whaling, and Fishing* by Burl Ives, © 1956 Ballantine Books.
- *Songs of the Polly, 1795*, by Stuart M. Frank, © 2001 The Kendall Whaling Museum of Sharon, Massachusetts USA.
- *Songs the Whalemens Sang* by Gale Huntington, © 1964 Barre Publishing Company, Inc. Third Edition © 2005 Emily Huntington Rose.

COLOMBIA ON OUR LEE



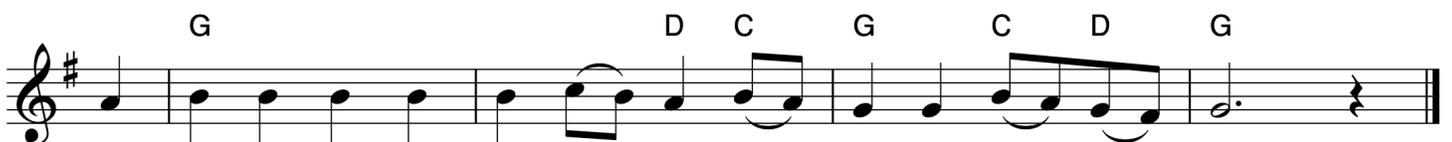
1. A wet sheet and a flow-ing sea and a wind that fol-lows fast
2. "Oh for a soft and gent-le wind," I heard a fair one cry
3. There's a tem-pest in yon horn-éd moon and light-ning in yon cloud



That fills the white and rust-ling sail and bends the gal-lant mast.
But give to me the roar-ing breeze and the white waves heav-ing high.
And hark the mus-ic mar-i-ners! The wind is pip-ing loud.



That bends the gal-lant mast, my boys, when, like an eag-le free
The white waves heav-ing high, my boys, and a good ship tight and free
The wind is pip-ing loud, my boys, the light-ning flash-es free



A-way our good ship flies and leaves Co-lom-bia on our lee.
The world of wa-ters is our home and mer-ry men are we.
While the hol-low oak our pal-ace is, our her-i-tage the sea.

JACK THE WHALER



1. What's_ more de - light on a win - ter's night than to sip a glass of grog,
2. Now 'twas twen - ty - five or_ thir - ty years since_ Jack first saw the light,
3. When_ Jack grew up to_ be a man, he went to the Lab - ra - dor.
4. The_ whale went straight for_ Baf - fin's Bay, a - bout nine - ty miles an hour,



And hear the old men spin their yarns be - fore a burn - ing log.
 He came in - to this world of woe one dark and storm - y night.
 He fished in Ind - ian Har - bor where his fa - ther fished be - fore.
 And ev - ery time he'd blow a spray he'd sent it in a shower.



They tell their tales of mon - strous whales and of sights that they have seen,
 He was born on board his fa - ther's ship_ she was ly - ing to
 On_ his re - turn - ing in the fog he_ met a heav - y gale,
 "O_ now," says Jack un - to him - self, "I must see what he's a - bout."



It makes your hair stand end on end and your stom - ach turn quite green.
 'Bout twen - ty - five or thir - ty miles south - east of Ba - ca - loo.
 And Jack was swept in - to the sea and_ swa - llowed by a whale.
 He caught the whale all by the tail and_ turned him in - side out.

Refrain



Jack was ev - 'ry inch a sail - or, Five and twen - ty years a whal - er.

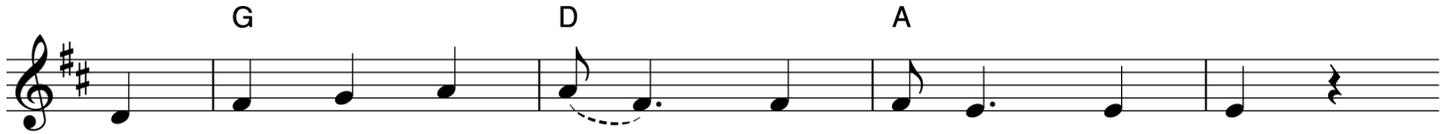


Jack was ev - 'ry inch a sail - or, He was born up - on the bright, blue sea!

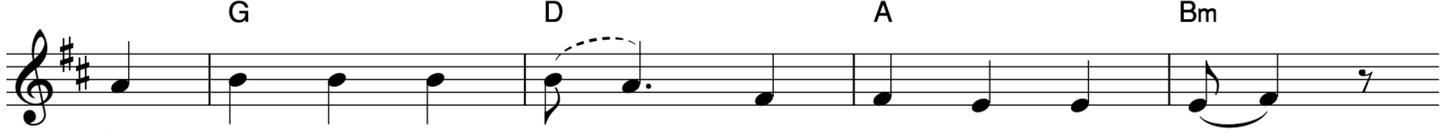
THE COAST OF PERU



1. Come all you young fel - lows that's bound af - ter sperm,
 2. We've weath - ered the Horn, now sail to Pe - ru
 3. The first whale we saw, it was late in the day.
 4. Next morn ing at day-break, a - bout five o' - clock,
 5. Our waist boat got down and of course got the start.



Come all you young fel - lows that's round - ed the Horn.
 We are all of one mind, and en - deav - or to do
 The cap - tain came up, and this he did say:
 The man at the mast-head cried, "Yon - der she spouts!"
 Lay on, Cap - tain Bun - ker, I'm hell for to dart.



Our cap - tain has told us, and we hope it comes true
 Our boats are all rigged, our mast - head all manned,
 "Get in - to your hammocks, and qui - et there be,
 "Where a - way does she lay?" and the call from a - loft:
 "Now bend to your oars, boys, and make the boat fly,



There's plent - y of spermwhales on the coast of Pe - ru.
 Our rig - ging rove light and our sig - nals all planned.
 We'll see him a' - morn - ing close un - der our lee.
 "Two points on our lee bow, about three mil - es off."
 But one thing we dread of: keep clear of his eye."

6. The chief mate, he struck him; the whale he went down
 The captain pulled up and he tried to bend on
 But the whale then did vomit, and blood out his spout;
 In less than ten minutes we had him fin-out.

7. We towed him alongside, with many a shout
 We soon cut him in and began to try out.
 Our whale she is tried, and likewise stowed down
 She's better to us, boys, than five hundred pounds.

8. Here's health to all whalemens, boys, drink it down, do
 Likewise to the Bengal, and all our ship's crew,
 All you that want money, I'd have you to go
 On the coast of Peru, where the sperm whales do blow.

Words trad. American folk, author unknown. Music (RED IRON ORE) trad. American folk. Public Domain.

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BLOW YE WINDS



1. 'Tis ad - ver - tised in Bos - ton, New York and Buf - fa - lo,
2. They send you to New Bed - ford, A fa - mous whal - ing port,
3. They tell you of the clip - per - ships a - run - ning in and out,
4. And now we're out to sea, my boys, the wind comes on to blow;



Five - hun - dred brave A - mer - i - cans A - whal - ing for to go, — sing ing:
 And give you to some land - sharks to board and fit you out, — sing ing:
 And say you'll take five hund - dred sperm, be - fore you're six months out, — sing ing:
 One half the watch is sick on deck, the oth - er half be - low, — sing ing:

Refrain



Blow, ye winds, in the morn - ing, — Blow, ye winds, heigh - ho,



Haul a - way your run - ning gear, and blow, ye winds heigh - ho.

5. The skipper's on the quarterdeck,
 A-asquintin' at the sails,
 When up above the lookout sights
 A mighty school of whales, singing:
6. Then lower down the boats, my boys,
 And after him we'll travel,
 But if you get too near his fluke,
 He'll kick you to the devil, singing:
7. And now that he is ours, my boys,
 We'll tow him alongside;
 Then over with our blubber-hooks,
 And rob him of his hide, singing:
8. When we get home our ship made fast,
 And we get through our sailing,
 A brimming glass around we'll pass,
 And damn this blubber whaling, singing:



IT'S ME FOR THE INLAND LAKES

G D G

1. If ev - er I fol - low the ships__ a - gain
 2. You get__ a berth__ that's real - ly a berth;
 3. The runs__ are short,__ the ves - sels good,
 4. Late gales__ may blow__ an' seas__ run high,
 5. Two dol - lars a day they__ of - ten pay,

G D(SUS4) D

to ga - ther my spuds and my cakes,__
 an' the jaw that the cap - tain takes.__
 an'__ real men__ are__ the mates;__
 an' the lees feel of coun - try Jakes;__
 much__ bet - ter than o - cean crates;__

G C G

I'll not be work - ing a deep - sea hack;
 No end I swear, it's a won - der - ful life,
 They're men and they__ can han - dle a ship,
 But quarters are warm and the grub__ is great;
 and when the sea - son's done,__ all win - ter you bum,

G D G

it's me for the in - land Lakes.
 it's me for the wind - y Lakes.
 it's me for the rol - ling Lakes.
 it's me for the op - en Lakes.
 it's me for the in - land Lakes.

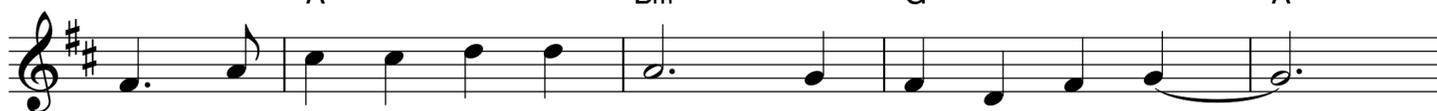
FARE YOU WELL



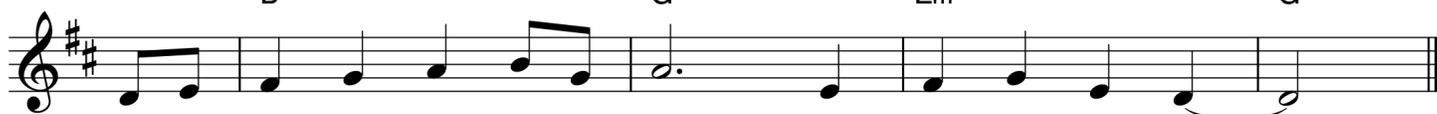
1. "Fare you well my dear-est dear___ since I must leave you___
 2. "Why___ would you go to sea___ to fight for strang-ers___
 3. Down___ by one Riv-er - side___ as I was a walk - ing
 4. "Our___ Cap-tain calls us now___ with haste_ and hurry___



I___ can no long - er stay___ I must go from you."___
 When___ you could stay at home___ free from all dan - gers. ___
 A___ man and maid I es - pied as they were a talk - ing
 I___ can no long - er stay___ I must go from you. ___



"Oh,___ I shall pine and die if you go from me___
 I'll___ en - fold you in my arms my dear - est jewel___
 Their___ hands were joined to - gether as they were a - going___
 So___ dry up wat - ery tears and leave_ off weeping_



So___ stay at home my___ Dear and do not leave me."___
 And I'll keep you from all___ harms. Love do not be cruel."___
 'Twas a black and rowl - ing___ ear that proved my ruin. ___
 For___ hap - py we shall_ be at our___ next meet - ing.

5. Then on her knees she fell, like one a-dying
 And spread her arms a-broad and this replying
 Awake you rocks and stones that is now relenting
 All for the sake of one I die lamenting

6. Fare well you parents dear, Father and Mother
 You have lost your daughter dear and I have no other
 It is vain to weep for me, for I am going
 Where joys forever be and fountains a-flowing

Words from Stephen Cahoon's Journal aboard the Whaleship *Polly* of Gloucester, Mass, 1795. P.D.

Music by Ralph Vaughan Williams P.D.

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ABOUT OUR ALBUM, "MICHIGAN-I-O"

A collection of forgotten folk songs from Michigan and Great Lakes region, re-imagined in a contemporary style.

In the 19th century, while the lumber and mining trades prospered in Michigan, so did the folk tradition. That's owed mainly to the workers themselves, who, after a hard winter spent felling trees, or a dangerous voyage in a freighter filled with far too much iron ore, turned that pain and adventure into music. These very songs -- and many songs like them -- were sung throughout the Great Lakes region for decades, yet, in spite of their popularity, were rarely written down. They might have been lost for good, but for the work of a young song collector by the name of Alan Lomax. In 1938 the Library of Congress sent Lomax through Michigan and Wisconsin for the sole purpose of documenting the folk tradition there. The trip yielded impressive results: after three months of travel, interviews, and recording sessions, Lomax returned home with hundreds of vinyl field recordings, photographs, and even a few black-and-white video clips. All together, they compose the largest single collection of the folk music and storytelling tradition from Michigan's early statehood. The Library of Congress recently published a large portion of this collection at loc.gov, so you can go see for yourself what all the fuss is about.

MICHIGAN-I-O IS

Andy Bast, Bruce Benedict, Jake Helder, Jonathan Gabhart, Aaron Kates, and Noah McLaren

FIND OUR WORK

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Graphic design by Blake Johnson | blake-johnson.dribbble.com

Stay tuned for "Michigan-I-O vol. II" and a Whaling Songs EP in 2021



EXPLORING LOCAL HISTORY
AND FOLK MEMORY
THROUGH SONG

