CONNECTICUT & THE SEA
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TEASE

WALTER CRONKITE: Long Island Sound, the rivers, the estuaries, the open waters of the Atlantic. Connecticut's maritime geography helped establish the state and define its early culture.

GADDIS SMITH (Larned Prof. of History, Yale University) the whole economic development and the whole history of ¾ of the colony and then the state is tied up with the sea and this is true to this day.

CRONKITE: No part of Connecticut is more than two hours from the Sound. Yet for many state residents there is no real connection to the sea. For others, the maritime life largely defines who they are.

FRED CALABRETTA (Assoc. Curator, Mystic Seaport) our experiences and history in relationship with the sea has entered our culture in ways that we don't always even realize

CRONKITE: Next – Connecticut & the Sea.

OPEN

CRONKITE: The history of Connecticut has been powerfully shaped by the sea.
For hundreds of years, Connecticut has looked to the open waters of the Atlantic, Long Island Sound, the coastal estuaries and inland rivers -- for both inspiration and livelihood.

Connecticut's people have always aggressively found new ways and new industries to exploit the sea's bounty, pursue adventure on and under its surface, and enjoy its vast beauty.

It is a steadily unfolding story of boundless possibilities met by extraordinary ingenuity. Through new ideas and technologies, fishery development, naval defense, and exploration -- Connecticut's continuing connection to the sea helped not only to build the state, but also played a large part in America's maritime story.

Although the sea was once the economic mainstay of Connecticut and a dominant part of its culture, many state residents today have little sense of its exceptional role in state history.

But Connecticut's seafaring ways and its coastal connections continue to spur imagination and stimulate the economy.

These are the sea stories that make Connecticut history, and that continue to influence Connecticut today. These are the stories of Connecticut and the sea …

NATIVE AMERICANS & THE SEA

CRONKITE: Native people in Connecticut from the earliest days looked to the sea for sustenance, transportation and culture.

MELISSA FAWCETT (Dir., Mohegan Tribal Museum Authority): In the beginning, we believe that the earth came out of the sea upon the back of grandfather turtle, Guganous Tuapas, great sea turtle. Since

that time we've looked upon the turtle and the sea as the birth and origin of our beginnings and the grandfather turtle as the most sacred of all beings.

In ancient times one of the reasons that the Mohegans chose to live in this area were rumors of the great fishing, particularly the shellfish beds that were supposedly in this area.

Oystering is extremely important to the Mohegan people in ancient times right up to the present. On all our traditional tribal lands you'll find huge heaps of what we call middens or oyster piles. Oyster piles were used not only for food garbage dumps but also in the wintertime when people couldn't be buried beneath the Earth you'll find that Indian people were buried in these huge heaps.

KEVIN MCBRIDE (Dir. Research, Mashantucket Pequot Museum): The earliest year 'round settlements that we identify in New England are always in coastal settings.

These areas provided the mechanism and the opportunity to settle year 'round, establish permanent villages and sort of really establish a very complex lifeways very closely tied to the sea. 50 percent of the subsistence base of these native people were tied, directly tied to the ocean.

MELISSA FAWCETT (Dir., Mohegan Tribal Museum Authority): Wampum was one of the most sacred commodities that the Mohegan people drew from the sea.

When belts are created in ancient times, they were traded but they were also used as a medium of preventing spiritual infection. It's a token of honor. A token of esteem.

KEVIN MCBRIDE (Dir. Research, Mashantucket Pequot Museum): When Europeans arrived they noticed the importance of this shell to native people and they would exchange European trade goods to native people for furs and they would take these furs, ship them back to Europe that they made into felt.

Natives in the interior not only desired European trade goods in exchange for their furs but more importantly they began to demand wampum which was a specific type of bead made from these shells. Purple bead was made from Quahog and a white bead was made from the whelp and the only suppliers of this material was the coastal peoples of Long Island Sound and very quickly these beads became such an important commodity in the fur trade that unless you had access to these beads you couldn't compete very well in the fur trade.

The first place that Europeans chose to settle tended to be those areas along the coast and along the rivers because of access for transportation and communications for their ships and they slowly pushed native people into the interior. So the history of native people in this region is directly tied to the – to the coast, both prior to European contact and after European contact.

ISLAND TRADERS

CRONKITE: Colonial Connecticut was quick to exploit the sea for economic growth. Connecticut's farmers and merchants prospered during the colonial period and the early 19th century with a huge maritime trade to the West Indian islands of the Caribbean.

Connecticut shipped endless amounts of livestock, …to the West Indies as well as a lot of grown products: wheat, corn, potatoes, butter, cheese and what they generally brought back was rum, molasses and it was a very, very lucrative trade.

WILLIAM PETERSON (Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport): When you think of the West Indies Trade in Connecticut you ¾ you think of New Haven, you think of New London, Norwich, Stonington, ports along the Connecticut River, particularly Middletown and Hartford, Glastonbury all were deeply involved in the trade to the West Indies. If you look at the marine lists …in the various newspapers of the time vessels were constantly leaving … for the West Indies.

BRENDA MILKOFSKY (Dir., Wethersfield Historical Society): The trade was an impetus for shipbuilding all over the state and for all of the allied trades for the anchor forgeries for sail makers for rope walks. It created a great deal of prosperity that a lot of people shared in, farmers as well, coopers, and it really led to the development of much of the great architecture that remains in Connecticut and the furniture and paintings that we find in museums and collections.

WHALING CITY 1 - COIT/SHAW

SALLY RYAN (New London Municipal Historian): This is the home built by William Coit 1763 But actually the Coit family in New London – goes back to the 1660's when Coit came here and became involved in shipbuilding. The family was always involved in shipbuilding and they had shipyards right down on this cove here. If you look, you see it's still land, you can see behind the houses across the way was where the Coit had their shipyards. People like Coit built the ships that the mariners used in the West Indie trade.

New London, from the very beginning was a seaport. Merchants like Nathaniel Shaw who lived here, this was his home, he was involved in the West Indian trade and people like Nathaniel Shaw became extremely wealthy.

In the 18th Century the islands of the Caribbean, the West Indies, most of them their one big crop was sugar and they completely cleared the islands and planted every bit of land they had into sugar. So places like New London, supported the plantation system down there in the West Indies.

BRENDA MILKOFSKY (Dir., Wethersfield Historical Society): The trade lasts really until the 1830's when the plantation system in the islands begins to break down and the London investors who were backing all of those sugar plantations are looking to new industry for investment. The slaves are freed down there and so the mass markets for agricultural products and – and lumber begins to dissipate

WOODEN BOATS, NUTMEG BUILDERS

CRONKITE: Shipbuilding -- for pleasure, commerce and defense -- is an enduring Connecticut industry, starting in the Colonial era and continuing through today.

BRENDA MILKOFSKY (Dir., Wethersfield Historical Society): Shipbuilding along the Connecticut River was one of the largest industries with the exception of agriculture during the 18th and 19th Century.

Some two dozen vessels were built across the river here in the Goodspeed Shipyard between 1848 and 1881. Over the years there were about 42 shipyards between Saybrook and Springfield, Massachusetts. In the early period they built small coastwise vessels, sloops and schooners many of them in response to the – the stone industry, to carry brownstone and cobble and granite from the Connecticut River Valley to New York.

In the later years the shipyards congregated in the lower valley and they began building 700 to 1,000 tonners. Many of those cotton packets for the cotton packet trade that many Connecticut families invested in. Many of them whalers …and vessels in the European packet trade as well.

WILLIAM PETERSON (Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport): In the 19th Century I think of the principal activities as shipbuilding, fishing and coastal commerce as the great sort of triumvirate of activity

The number of vessels sailing along the rivers and the Sound were just tremendous …today we don't really get a glimpse of it at all because of the size of the vessels have changed, the types of vessels have changed.

CRONKITE: For a small state, in the 19th Century, Connecticut had a far-reaching impact in the maritime industry. Although most of the oceangoing long-distance vessels sailed from large ports like New York City or Boston, ownership often was Connecticut-based.

WILLIAM PETERSON (Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport): Being so close to New York which was the chief entrepot, chief port …of the nation …during the 19th Century was very important to the development not only of New York but of Connecticut itself. Connecticut built the vessels that sailed out of the Port of New York, supplied the merchants who operated the counting houses and the commission houses on South Street and also supplied the ship captains who sailed many of these vessels as well.

During the era of the clipper ship, for example, Connecticut furnished 22 clipper ships to the Port of New York and these vessels would sail from New York. A clipper ship actually is a vessel that was designed to carry cargo …in the quickest possible fashion to the ¾ to the gold fields of California. They were very heavily sparred, heavily canvassed vessels, carried a lot of sail

The clipper ship era lasted about 10 years, from 1850 to 1860, essentially, …Connecticut participated in it principally through the port of Mystic. The Mystic clippers were ¾ were kind of a distinctive vessel. In fact, the speed record from New York to San Francisco during that 10-year period was held by Mystic built clippers three of those years

One of the clippers built here in …Mystic was a ship called the Andrew Jackson whose master was also a Mystic man, Captain John E. "Kicking Jack" Williams. And he is credited along with the famous Massachusetts built Flying Cloud as making the fastest passage from New York to San Francisco and he made that voyage in 89 days and 4 hours.

CRONKITE: There are few remaining shipyards in Connecticut today. The building of wooden boats is all but a vanishing trade. Howard Davis is a fourth-generation Connecticut shipwright whose years of experience inform his work as an exhibit interpreter at Mystic Seaport.

HOWARD DAVIS (Retired Shipwright): Well, you know, when you grow up next door to a boat shop, your father and grandfather are both working in the shipyard which is just over the hill, why, it just kind of came natural to me that that's what I wanted to do.
I went in the shipyard as soon as I was out of high school at 18 years old and I learned to be a ship carpenter.

By 1941, I was ready to go to work in the Noank Shipyard. So after I had been there a while I was moved into the carpenter's crew and worked on the building of the ships which were 97-foot wooden mine sweepers.

After we finished the boats for the Navy we worked on pleasure boats, fishing boats and all this general maintenance of all kinds of boats, then I was offered a job at the Eldridge Boatyard in - down in Noank in 1947. We built smaller boats mostly in the 35-foot class, by 1958 though something had happened to

wooden boats. I spent 17 years learning to build them, then they build them out of fiberglass and so the Eldridge shop closed in 1958.

I haven't worked on anything but woodworking because I wanted to build wooden boats. To me it's the best work anybody could get. You start out with a pile of oak and a pile of cedar, two piles of wood and by April, if you'd start around Christmas, by April you've got a finished boat that's ready to slide down into the water and the sense of satisfaction, I can't describe it, but you've got it.

WHALING CITY 2 – CUSTOM HOUSE

SALLY RYAN (New London Municipal Historian): Being a seaport, New London has always had a customs house. This customs house was built in 1833, designed by Robert Mills who actually designed the Washington Monument. A customs house was important because the federal government depended on custom duty to finance the government. …The whaling ships that came in, their cargo would come through this customs house.

Today, this building is now a museum. … but … the federal government still does maintain an office here as a customs office because New London is still an active seaport.

DEFENDING THE SHORES

CRONKITE: Connecticut's impact on America's maritime naval tradition goes back to the very beginning of the country.

In the American Revolution, Connecticut's government protected the seacoast and the commerce of the state with a small state navy of about 13 vessels. In both the American Revolution and the War of 1812, Connecticut, like other states, also licensed privateers, which were commercial vessels converted to military use in order to disrupt British shipping. Captured cargoes would be divided among the privateer crew and the government.

REAR ADM. DOUGLAS H. TEESON (Supt., U. S. Coast Guard Academy): in the time of the American Revolution New London was the home to the greatest concentration of privateers who went out and helped win the revolution. I think that's why Benedict Arnold came here and burned the place down.

CRONKITE: In addition to privateering, smuggling helped win the revolution. But after the Revolution was won, Alexander Hamilton founded the Coast Guard to help the custom service collect shipping revenues.

REAR ADM. DOUGLAS H. TEESON (Supt., U. S. Coast Guard Academy): Smuggling had been a time honored practice. …but as soon as the …war was won it was then necessary to build the economy and so the Coast Guard got its start as a maritime force to enforce the customs laws …of the day.

IRVING KING (Prof. Emeritus of History, U. S. Coast Guard Academy): It was the only source of revenue that the nation had at the time that which it took in from tariffs and tonnage duties.

The Coast Guard Academy was begun in 1876, '77 to provide a well-trained professional officer corps really in response to a problem of corruption in the old collecting service.

REAR ADM. DOUGLAS H. TEESON (Supt., U. S. Coast Guard Academy): The Coast Guard Academy started on a school ship, not as big as the Eagle but a schooner. It was called the Dobbin. Initially out of Baltimore. Later it sailed out of New Bedford. The skipper of the first school ship wanted the home port

to be New London but the Coast Guard Academy didn't come here until about 1910. And initially the academy ran at Fort Trumbull

IRVING KING (Prof. Emeritus of History, U. S. Coast Guard Academy): The Coast Guard Academy again began to outgrow the old revolutionary era fort site at Fort Trumbull in the 1920's which was the result of the fact that the service expanded so during its fighting the rum war at sea to enforce prohibition.

CRONKITE: In 1932 the present Coast Guard Academy, built on land donated by New London, was occupied by cadets for the first time.

IRVING KING (Prof. Emeritus of History, U. S. Coast Guard Academy): We here at the academy train officers who end up being important to the shipping of the world to the safety of life at sea in the world to the saving of the environment.

REAR ADM. DOUGLAS H. TEESON (Supt., U. S. Coast Guard Academy): One of the things we try to teach our future leaders as – as we say it, a liking for the sea and its lore and as far as a place to have the Coast Guard Academy this city and this stretch of coast has it all. We have the harbor here with its commercial activity, we have the passenger ferries coming and going, we've got the recreational use of things like Ocean Beach, and then we've got great neighbors like Mystic Seaport. And then when you think about the Navy's presence here in terms of the submarine force, I could go on and on but basically the stretch of coast here has everything you'd want if you were picking a place to put the Coast Guard Academy.

CRONKITE: It was during the War of 1812 that the British made several major raids along the Connecticut shore, including a raid on the river port of Essex that led to the destruction of several dozen vessels.

In 1814, the British attacked Stonington and bombarded the town.

JAMES TERTIUS DEKAY (Author, *The Battle of Stonington*): On August 9th, 1814, the war was going badly for America in the War of 1812and the Royal Navy under the command of Thomas Hardy who was a famous British Royal Navy Officer, came in and he didn't want to hurt the people in the town, he just wanted to destroy the town. And he sent in a note to that effect.

MUSIC: ***Tom Callinan*** *– Battle of Stonington*

> ***Four gallant ships from England came,***
> ***Trade indeed with fire and flame,***
> ***And other things we need not name,***
> ***To have a dash at Stonington.***

JAMES TERTIUS DEKAY (Author, *The Battle of Stonington*): And the people rose up, they were outraged by this, they said, no you're not. We're gonna fight back. Which was an extraordinarily brave and, let's face it, foolhardy point of view to take because they had two cannon, this is one of them, and the Royal Navy had at least 120 cannon on these five ships that they brought in.

> ***They made as though they little cared,***
> ***For that came so very hard,***
> ***The cannon played on Stonington.***
> ***For the bombs were thrown,***
> ***The rockets flew.***

All of a sudden Commodore Hardy is sitting there saying, hey, look, I'm a hero, I don't want to be known as someone who killed a lot of innocent Yankees because they were brave enough to try to protect their homes and things like that.

He tried to attack but he tried to attack in ways that wouldn't hurt too much, and that didn't work. So then he tried to send some marines in, in boats, and the cannon, they brought the cannon down to the point and they started firing at the boats and they sunk a couple of the boats and so Hardy pulled them back.

And killed all wounded of her crew.

This thing went on and off for like three or four days and finally the British left.

The Battle of Stonington was a tiny little military operation but a remarkably important piece of propaganda for America at a time …when America was desperately in need of one. We were absolutely losing the war and the Battle of Stonington gave great heart to people at a time when they desperately needed it.

It cost the king ten thousand pounds,
To have a dash at Stonginton.

OF COTTON, GUNBOATS & CIVIL WAR

CRONKITE: In the 1850s, shipyards on the Connecticut River and in Mystic and New London specialized in building shallow-draft vessels used in the coastal cotton trade in the Gulf of Mexico and elsewhere.

When the United States entered a commercial depression in the late 1850s, this cotton trade business enabled many Connecticut shipyards to survive.

When the Civil War arrived these shipyards were still active and during the Civil War played a very important role in shipbuilding.

WILLIAM PETERSON (Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport): Right here in Mystic, for example, 56 steamers were launched in a 4-year period. Probably the most famous was the gunboat Galina which was the nation's first ocean going ironclad vessel ever. And it was one of the first of the three ironclad vessels ordered by the ¾ by the United States Navy during the Civil War. The other two being the vessel called the ¾ the New Ironsides, and the most famous, of course, was the Monitor.

CRONKITE: The Galena was built by Madison's Cornelius Scranton Bushnell, a successful shipbuilder and owner of the Shoreline Railroad.

After starting construction of the Galena, Bushnell met John Ericsson, a ship designer who had plans for a radically different type of ironclad. Bushnell recognized the cutting-edge technology and brought the plans to Washington, where he lobbied Congress for another shipbuilding contract.

It was a Connecticut connection in Washington – Gideon Welles -- that helped win Bushnell his second ironclad contract, for a ship, to be called the Monitor.

WILLIAM PETERSON (Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport): Gideon Welles, is a good example of the broader influence that Connecticut has had on the nation's maritime affairs over the years.

He was Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy. And Gideon Welles, although he wasn't really a seafarer himself, had great organizational skills and was instrumental in putting together the American Navy during the Civil War, and building that up to a ¾ to a point where it grew from a relatively small fleet of vessels to the largest naval fleet in the world by the time the ¾ the Civil War came to an end.

Edward Kubler (C.S. Bushnell's Great Grandson): The story of getting The Monitor accepted by the government in Washington is really where the story intertwines with Gideon Wells knowing Cornelius Scranton Bushnell. One thing led to another and a contract was let and simultaneously he was building The Galena and that was happening up the coast and meanwhile The Monitor was happening over in Green Point Long Island and in New York.

On March 9th 1862 the Monitor fought the battle, with the Merrimack which was the first significant battle of ironclad vessel against ironclad vessel and it was the – the final proof that a wooden hull vessel really has no more utility in this form of warfare.

THE SUBMARINE STATE

CRONKITE: During the American Revolution, Connecticut resident David Bushnell -- an ancestor of Cornelius Scranton Bushnell -- built the first submarine in America, the barrel-shaped Turtle.

Although it attacked the British several times during the War of Independence, the reality of operating in open harbor waters proved too much for the technology of the time. But Connecticut's place in submarine history would continue with Electric Boat in Groton.

John Welch (Sr. V.P. General Dynamics Marine Systems Group): The first time submarines were actually built here in New London was in 1924 when we set up the shipyard here and the first submarine we built for the United States was in 1933, here in New London, The Cuttle Fish. And then we built … about 112, 114 diesel submarines. Most of those were delivered during World War II

CRONKITE: Submarines built by Electric Boat played a critical part in the Allied war effort in World War II.

At the peak of World War Two, Electric Boat employed 12,500 people and was launching a submarine every two weeks.

But when the war ended, EB struggled to adapt to peacetime.

John Welch (Sr. V.P. General Dynamics Marine Systems Group): And it really wasn't till the early 50's that we started building submarines again post World War II and that really was to start to build the workforce, the production workforce back up for the emergence of nuclear power.

NEWSREEL: *USS NAUTILUS KEEL LAYING*

CRONKITE: USS Nautilus was christened by Mamie Eisenhower and launched into the Thames River in January 1954.

It was a soul-stirring moment for the thousands who came to see her and the millions who heard or read about the launch.

From her maiden voyage a year later, she shattered records -- running deep, fast and long, powered by the first practical nuclear power plant.

Nautilus' spectacular success was the beginning of the nuclear navy so critical to Cold-War strategy, andthe birth of the controversial civilian nuclear electric power plant program

Meanwhile, business would never be better for Electric Boat.

John Welch (Sr. V.P. General Dynamics Marine Systems Group): We grew the workforce a total of about 28,000 people in the early 80's and that was associated just with the high production rate of submarines. About 3, 4 submarines a year were being delivered out of this facility

CRONKITE: The USS Connecticut, commissioned in 1998, was the 98th nuclear submarine delivered by Electric Boat to the U.S. Navy.

Since the end of the cold war the demand for submarines has gone down. So today we're just over 9,000 people but the engineering design workforce and the production workforce is as skilled as its ever been,

John Welch (Sr. V.P. General Dynamics Marine Systems Group): There's not much like designing and building a submarine. That's probably one of the most complicated structures that ever comes together and it's a huge systems integration job.
And a lot of the technology associated with the sonar, the combat system, the torpedo technology, much of that was developed here in the region. So there became sort of a cottage industry that supported the production, the research and engineering activities in this region.

I think you can easily call it the "submarine capital of the world." The fact that the submarines are based here, that really becomes the ¾ the key ingredient and the submarine base is really the heart of the Navy's submarine training program as well.

And so that ¾ that core of both technology production skills and operational skills is as strong today as its ever been

CRONKITE: The Submarine Base New London was established in 1868 as a coaling station.' It was built on land donated by the town of New London and the State of Connecticut to the Navy.

Through the 19th and 20th Centuries, the base expanded each time there was international tension or conflict.

In recent years the number of people stationed at the base has declined, with the end of the cold war to about 9,000 Naval personnel and 1,000 civilians. The Naval impact on the area remains strong, however, with an additional 19,000 family members who live on the base or in surrounding towns.

WHALING CITY 3 – STAR ST.

SALLY RYAN (New London Municipal Historian): This is Star Street in New London. This street is really built on land that at one time was a rope walk. Being a seaport there was a great need for rope so this – this whole length of this street would be one long building like a shed where they would make rope by twisting hemp

The rope walk burned in the early part of the 19th Century and left this whole block here empty so instead of rebuilding the rope walk, they built this – these lovely houses. I think it's a good example to show you

how New London was so prosperous in the first half of the 19th Century. That these were the homes of the middle-class merchants. And this is where they lived.

TURNING GUANO INTO GOLD

CRONKITE: Connecticut's people have always harvested the sea's resources for profit.

In the early 19th Century, entrepreneurial New London investors even found a way to profit from South American bird droppings, known as guano. New Londoners introduced guano for use as agricultural fertilizer, and shipped it to farmers in New England, southern plantation owners and after the Civil War to Europe.

GADDIS SMITH (Larned Prof. of History, Yale University) Connecticut people were actively involved especially to the Chincha Islands which are islands off Peru and that trade peaked in the 1850's. In those islands there were compacted bird droppings that were two to three hundred feet thick and it was extremely valuable

What was really bad about the guano trade was digging the stuff on the islands because it ¾ when you broke up this ¾ this compacted bird droppings it was like talcum powder and would get into your lungs and it was lethal, quite literally lethal,

Chinese were used and they were virtually kidnapped. It's kind of the other slave trade They were brought there and they worked almost for nothing, like 4-dollars a month, but they weren't going to survive because they would die quickly.

The ships that came in also had their problems because this guano would be loaded on the ships, the dust of it would envelop the ship. It really stunk. I mean, awful stuff. Ship's accounts record that approaching the guano island from downwind 100 miles away they could smell it, so it was a pretty, pretty dismal business but it helped grow food in the American south and in Europe.

HUNTING ON THE HIGH SEAS

CRONKITE: One of the first Connecticut maritime ventures was hunting fur seals in the South Atlantic for trade to China in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries. Most of the fur sealers sailed from New Haven or Stonington and traded fur skins for tea, chinaware and textiles. Vast fortunes were established through the fur seal trade, which lasted about 10 years.

The wealth amassed through fur sealing paled in comparison with the riches generated from whaling.

The Hempsted house, the oldest house in New London, was the home of Joshua Hempstead, a New London farmer and ship's carpenter at Coit's shipyard.

Hempstead's journal provides the earliest surviving record of whaling in Connecticut -- in 1718. Hempsted wrote of hiring out his whale boat to locals who pursued the whales then plentiful off Long Island. It was a small harbinger of bigger things to come.

Dale Plummer (Norwich City Historian): One of the consequences of the Revolution was that New London really became cut out of the West Indies trade. The British controlled much of the West Indies.

But I think another factor in the early 1800's was the rise of New York as ¾ as the great transatlantic shipping port. Trading was not as feasible any more because, you know, much of the trade was really being drawn off elsewhere.

Whaling offered a ¾ a real alternative that was good because no longer did you have to depend on having something to ship out. It just required what we had which was skilled sailors, ships, capital. And after the War of 1812 New London went into whaling pretty whole hog. So much so that by the mid 1840's New London becomes the second largest whaling port in the world after New Bedford. 78 vessels sailing out after whales, also seals, sea elephants. This whole area was lined with wharves associated with the whaling industry.

WILLIAM PETERSON (Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport): There were other Connecticut ports that were involved from time to time: but it was New London that was the significant whaling port in the 19th Century. The whale fishery was probably the most important fishery that ¾ that Connecticut's ever had in terms of dollars.
One cargo of whale oil could be worth as much as a million and a half dollars in today's money and so it was worth the risk to send a whale ship out for two or three years, sometimes longer.

An industry like whaling that was so important to places like New London also required a lot of supporting trades and industries. It brought tremendous prosperity to the city. Fortunes were made, you know, many of the leading families in New London became wealthy through the whaling industry.

CRONKITE: Another rather unique aspect of Connecticut whaling was elephant sealing, known locally as "elephanting."

Dale Plummer (Norwich City Historian): New Londoners were known in the whaling trade as "underwater men" because they spent so much time in the far north, in the far south where the conditions were so extreme. One of their favorite ports of call -- if you could call it that, was Desolation Island in the very south of the Indian Ocean at the fringe of the Antarctic. Desolation was great because you had humpback whales that sported about in the bays of Desolation, you had huge sea elephants that would haul up on shore. You could kill them easily with clubs, spears, rifles …The blubber would yield an oil indistinguishable from whale oil. So a lot of the whale oil that was shipped into New London was actually from these giant seals some of them getting up to 20 feet long.

By the 1880's the whaling fleet had really reduced to a few vessels. People are starting to look at the industry with a lot of nostalgia

WHALING CITY 4 – WHALE OIL ROW/ACORS BARNS/NL LIBRARY

SALLY RYAN (New London Municipal Historian): This is what we call Whale Oil Row. These houses were built in 1834 by Ezrah Chapel on speculation to sell to people like whaling captains. These were expensive homes. These homes would have been for people like captains and whaling merchants who made money. The ordinary seaman never could have afforded a home like this. This would be a desirable place to live because they could walk downtown and be right where the docks were.

This is the home of Acors Barns and Acors Barns was what we call a whaling agent. The whaling agents were the ones who – they more often owned the whaling ships but they would hire the captain, they would hire the crew and they would get the supplies, and they are the ones who were in charge of the whaling voyages.

They not only got the profits from the whaling voyage itself but they owned the warehouses and when the whaling ship came back, if whale oil was not selling at a high enough profit they could store the oil and then sell it later. …And so they were the ones who became very wealthy.

This is the New London Public Library. This library was a gift from Henry P. Haven. Henry P. Haven was a whaling agent but he also was involved in the guano trade … There are many other public buildings in New London like our hospital and the Lyman Allyn Art Museum and some of the monuments, our sailors and soldiers monument. That were gifts to the city from people who made their money from whaling and other maritime pursuits.

CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS

CRONKITE: In the 18th and 19th Centuries New London, Mystic and other shoreline towns were home to numerous captains of whaling and merchant ships.

WILLIAM PETERSON (Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport): It was a very honorable position to be ¾ to be known as the master of a vessel. And sometimes it didn't really matter whether you were the master of a small little fishing sloop …or a large clipper ship. …particularly in the mid 19th Century,

A lot of these men would ¾ would grow up around the water, they would know about it, they would know how to sail by the time they were teenagers in many cases

The case of Captain Joseph Warren Holmes is ¾ is a really typical example in many ways. He was born in Mystic and started as a cabin boy and literally worked his way up through the ranks, became a whaling master and then moved over to captaining clipper ships and other large merchant ships through the 19th Century.

Captain Holmes has the record for rounding Cape Horn more than any other sea captain in a square rigged ship.

There was Captain Nathaniel Palmer of Stonington, Connecticut, for example, who discovered Antarctica in 1820 in a little sealing vessel called the Hero built right in Mystic, Connecticut.

CRONKITE: Captain George Comer was the last of New London's whaling captains.

FRED CALABRETTA (Assoc. Curator, Mystic Seaport): He was born in Quebec in 1858. His father was lost at sea and his mother couldn't support the children and apparently he spent some time in an orphanage and then was placed out with a foster family in East Haddam, Connecticut as a young boy and lived in East Haddam for the rest of his life.

At the age of 17 in 1875 he walked from East Haddam to New London and shipped out on a whaler. And over the next 44 years only 3 years passed during which he didn't spend at least some time at sea. He sailed as captain or master of a ship for the first time in 1895. He specialized in arctic whaling. A typical voyage would be 27 months, about 16 months of which would be spent in winter quarters when the ship was completely frozen in the ice and there was virtually no activity possible.

They had to survive on everything that they brought with them, and for fresh meat they obtained deer meat and salmon from the Inuit in trade

There would be a community of Inuit camped through the entire winter right near the vessel and they became part of the social activity and all the activity during the winter season.

Comer had an interesting relationship with the Inuit. He really developed an affection for them. He was also interested and became involved in arctic exploration. He collected for some of the great natural history museums not just in the United States but in the world and became the leading authority in the world of the Inuit of the Hudson Bay region

Captain Comer retired from the whaling industry in 1912 but it wasn't the end of his career at sea. He participated in a couple of arctic expeditions in association with the American Museum of Natural History,

Despite the fact that he was 59 years old he enlisted in the Navy during World War I. and made several cruises onboard naval vessels. When he came back he became involved in a trading and exploration venture heading again for Hudson Bay. Went back one more time in 1919 at the age of 62. I think the primary reason he went back was because he wanted to visit his Inuit friends.

And he returned to East Haddam permanently at that point, was somewhat of a local celebrity, He served a term in the Connecticut State Legislature. He was in declining health later in life in part because of the rigors of arctic whaling and died in 1937.

LIFE AT SEA

CRONKITE: The life of a captain was often a privileged one. But for the men who crewed the whaling ships, their standard of living and their lives at sea proved to be radically different.

Dale Plummer (Norwich City Historian): Each vessel would carry a complement of men not only to work the sails and the rigging of the ship but also to go out in small boats after whales, kill the, bring them back in, strip off the blubber …and render it down into oil. So you might have 1,500 plus men, …maybe even 2,000 on the whaling vessels.

You might have at the height of the industry several hundred sailors roaming the streets looking for a good time. I mean, New London was notorious for having, you know, grog shops along Water Street and Bank Street, Reed Street. There was Hell Hollow which was the local red light district.

The whaling merchants often encouraged sailors to have a good time, you know, spend money. They would advance them money prior to the voyage. The sailors would be charged for loading the ship, they'd be charged for whatever advances they had been given and they'd work it off as they were on the vessel and it was in the interest of the owners to actually have the sailors start out the voyage in debt to them.

The captains would be paid a share or what was called "a lay" in the voyage. In fact, each member of the crew, the officers and so forth would get this lay or share. The captain's lay might be as much as say a 12^{th} or 16^{th}. A green hand or a Portuguese from the Azores or something else, they might be signed on for 195^{th} or 175^{th}.

WILLIAM PETERSON (Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport): After a couple of years at sea, with a wage advance, and with the debts run up through purchases at the ships store, known as the slop chest, many crewmembers would be left in debt or with maybe $30 or $40 dollars. Life at sea was no leisure cruise.

A lot of whale men when they first went to sea in the whaling industry had great ideas of seeing the world and what a romantic kind of opportunity it was to go on the high seas and capture the great leviathan,

…but if you read a lot of the journals that are in the libraries around the state and elsewhere you'll see that after a few months most of these crewmen became very disillusioned with the …whole business.

MUSIC: ***Tom Callinan-*** *The Connecticut Whaler*

> ***I traveled far out in the ocean,***
> ***Hunting and searching for whales,***
> ***But know I've returned to Old Mystic,***
> ***So listen and heed my sad tail,***
> ***So listen and heed my sad tail.***

WILLIAM PETERSON (Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport): there was a lot of time on board these whaling ships that went on voyages for two, three, four years at a time and life in the forecastle …could be cramped and sometimes a little bit unhealthy and it was just not a great life after a few months for most of these ¾ these seamen.

There were long periods of boredom and routine shipboard activity.

Dale Plummer (Norwich City Historian): On the other hand, when whales were sighted, …you had extreme danger for a very short length of time. Hopefully you prevail, you bring the whale back. Now you've got a tremendous amount of work.

So what the whaling ¾ whaling merchants did was they relied on finding green hands, farm boys from faraway. Many of them not from New London. Many of them …from upstate New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania. They also recruited Portuguese from the Azores, blacks from the Cape Verde Islands, people from St. Helena, Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic, Kanakas, South Sea islanders, Hawaiians. There was a very strong Native American presence, Mohegans and Pequots, both

WILLIAM PETERSON (Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport): It's true that maritime history of the United States has often been presented pretty much as a white man's story …the truth of the matter is it was a very multicultural story particularly in the early 19th Century. Sometimes the early crew lists clearly indicate that a third of the crew were ethnic minority, folks of color.

As the whaling industry became more marginalized in the ¾ in the late 19th Century even more and more blacks came into that ¾ that fishery and so that by the turn of the Century there were, in those whaling vessels that were still going out, sometimes half the crew or more were black.

Maritime activities have often been thought of as a male-dominated province and the fact of the matter is in southeastern Connecticut during the whaling era one out of six captains took their wives with them and oftentimes their families as well and it wasn't uncommon for a woman to even give birth on one of these long whaling voyages.

MENHADEN DAYS

CRONKITE: One little- known historic state fishery is menhaden, a small industrial fish caught by the hundreds of thousands at a time in huge fishing net called purse seines.

Connecticut was a pioneer in the menhaden industry, which processed the fish into fertilizer and animal feed

From the mid-1800s to the 1930s, about 10 menhaden processing plants dotted the Connecticut shoreline from Stonington to Niantic.

ADM. HAROLD E. SHEAR (U.S. Navy Ret.1918-1999): Menhaden is Menhaden but it's got a dozen different names. Bunkers in Long Island, Bony Fish in Connecticut, Poggies in Maine and Massachusetts, Fatbacks in Chesapeake.

CRONKITE: The family of the late Groton Long Point resident Admiral Harold E. Shear was in the menhaden business for more than a hundred years.

ADM. HAROLD E. SHEAR (U.S. Navy Ret.1918-1999): A typical factory would be operating 8 to 10 steamers. Quite a few were built right here in Noank, a dozen or more. All of these steamers had large crews.

MUSIC: ***Forebitter****-Luce Bros.*

> ***We were out from the factory on Long Island Sound,***
> ***From Greenport to Nepeg, and the promise land grounds.***
> ***On the good steamer Beatrice the pride of us all***
> ***Perseinin' menhaden from spring till the fall.***
>
> ***Hall on the bunt boys and walkem on down,***
> ***Hall on the bunt boys and walkem around.***

CRONKITE: The Connecticut-based menhaden industry flourished until its decline in the 1930s.

TWINE CAPITAL OF AMERICA

CRONKITE: The 18th and 19th Century maritime economy in Connecticut brought prosperity to both shoreline towns and areas farther inland. One Connecticut River town that greatly prospered was East Haddam and its village of Moodus.

BRUCE SIEVERS (Author, *Mills Along the River*): Moodus can actually be justifiably be nicknamed "the twine capital of America" because Moodus initiated the development of ¾ of cotton twine and then later nylon twine.

In the 1820's Ebenezer Nichols who was one of the founders of the industry here in town developed a machine that was able to twist strands of cotton into a seine twine. And that's what produces a hard laid cord which was used in the maritime industry.

The mills in Moodus existed basically because of the maritime industry and the maritime industry created a great demand for cotton duct which was used as sail cloth which was manufactured in many of the mills here in Moodus. They also had a great need for ¾ for cordage, for rope and twine on the ship, which was made here in Moodus.

Each of the 12 mills located along the banks of the Moodus River employed anywhere from 25 to 50 people depending on the size of the mill.

The mill owners sold their twine to the fishermen or they sold twine to other companies that would then take the twine and make it into fish netting. Most of the netting that was used in the United States.

ED STOLARZ (President, Cofish International): Back in the 1880's , 1890's, 1900's we were the big town, Moodus and East Haddam. Wilbur Square, invented the Yankee gill net machine in 1872 in the cow pasture across the street. It revolutionized the fish netting industry.

The normal netting, the knots ran this way which were very, very bulky and with the Yankee gill net the knots ran this way so that they could get behind the gills much easier. And not only that the machine could tie 3,000 knots per minute. There was no other machine on Earth that could duplicate that.

I turned off my machines April 1st, 1979. I was working 7 days a week and losing money at it.
I was one of the last makers of gill netting in the United States.

BUILDING WITH BROWNSTONE

CRONKITE: Another inland town that prospered through access to the sea was Portland and its brownstone quarry industry.

ALISON GUINNESS (Curator, CT River Museum): Quarrying began in the late 1600's when the first settlers arrived in the Middletown settlement area. Because of the proximity of the river to the sea they were able to develop a commercial industry that involved many distant locations. It was easy to get the stone there by water.

The stone was loaded onto scows, barges, schooners, taken down the river and then shipped out to other locations along the east coast. By 1850 there were three major companies and these three companies employed about 1,500 men during peak operations between1850 and 1890 and those men were primarily Immigrants.

The stone was used for buildings: churches, row houses, mansions, all sorts of buildings.
By the 1880's most of the stone used in building in New York City came from Portland and approximately 10 million cubic yards of stone had been quarried at that site.

Towards the end of the 1800's brownstone gradually went out of use.

A VILLAGE OF FISH & SHIPS

CRONKITE: The shoreline town of Noank plays a huge role in Connecticut's watery history. Noank in the 1890s supplied more than half of the Connecticut catch of lobsters and its fishermen helped start major fisheries far from Connecticut waters.

BENJAMIN RATHBUN (Retired Waterman): Noank at one time in the 1800's was the largest fishing port between Boston and New York there were a hundred men lobstering out of here in 1898, 1899, and schooners and smacks from here and Mystic settled in Pensacola in the wintertime and - and Key West Savanna,and those ports. The fisheries down there came from here, didn't come from down there.

STEPHEN JONES (Maritime Author) Noank was a fishing and shipbuilding community both together. Everything there, you could say, had something to do with the water. The guy behind me had been a lobsterman, you know, and the guy across the way was a harbormaster …and then the guy over there across the street, he was building submarines, and the marine lab is right across the street, …There was a gas dock in there that sold fuel to - to boats, and fishing equipment, you know, lures and reels and

that sort of stuff, and advice and as you went down that whole street, you know, there's a party boat fisherman 3 houses away from me …and it was all like that. There still is a fair amount of that stuff that goes on there but more and more the people that are moving into it …are people who have made their money doing something that has nothing to do with the sea but come for the ambiance, as they call it.

THE CAPTAINS RATHBUN

CRONKITE: Ben Rathbun and his son Franklin are descended from a long line of watermen.

BENJAMIN RATHBUN (Retired Waterman): My original ancestor in this country was a fisherman when they settled Block Island. The name is on Settlers Rock. And ever since then which is 9 or 10 - 10 generations --

FRANKLIN RATHBUN (Capt., *Anna R* Charter Fishing Boat): 10 generations.-- My family has all been, always been involved in water use in either fishermen or merchant seamen or shipbuilders.

BENJAMIN RATHBUN (Retired Waterman): When I first started going fishing with my father we were lobstering and then we went dragging and then we went swordfishing and then we took charter parties out, sailboat cruising and stuff like that, worked on the cross island ferry. And so we've made a living off the water.

FRANKLIN RATHBUN (Capt., *Anna R* Charter Fishing Boat): I started swordfishing with him when I was 6 years old when we used to go out and commercial swordfish back in the last part of the heyday of swordfishing

When I was really young I just chafed at the bit to get on the boat every day

BENJAMIN RATHBUN (Retired Waterman): You've got to be willing to work 7 days a week and work 80 or 90 hours a week. And some weeks you make money, some weeks you don't. It's like farming in the sense; but you've got to be willing to get up at 3:30 in the morning or 3 o'clock in the morning and if you can't do that you'd better not get in the business.

FRANKLIN RATHBUN (Capt., *Anna R* Charter Fishing Boat): And the other part is also that every day it changes. You go out twice a day every trip is different, every day is different, the weather's different, the tides are different. Nothing is ever the same. Now a lot of it, my business, is corporate business, and they call-up and it's the entertainment business, it's not just fishing.

BENJAMIN RATHBUN (Retired Waterman): There's a difference in mindset between a commercial fisherman and a charter boat or a recreational boater because a fisherman is looking at the longer picture. He's got tomorrow. A charter you've only got today. That's the only day you've got.

FRANKLIN RATHBUN (Capt., *Anna R* Charter Fishing Boat): I don't see where I am gonna change. I fought it for a while, wanted to do something different but I just could never take myself too far away from the sea.

BENJAMIN RATHBUN (Retired Waterman): At the time it was going on I would have gladly exchanged it with anybody but now that it's over, I'm glad I did what I did. The sea is there and it's gonna be there for time immemorial. There'll always be a place for someone on the water.

BOTTOM-FEEDER BLUES

WTNH NEWS STORY ON LOBSTER DEATHS

CRONKITE: After years of growth, the $15 million dollar Connecticut lobster industry is being threatened by a mysterious killer. Dan Winchester has been a lobsterman since 1977.

DAN WINCHESTER (Capt., *Lady Charm*): It's a job that you have to like to stay with it. It's hard work, long hours, dirty work. I like it. I like doing it. Getting dirty, getting wet. Look at it out here. It's beautiful. Where can you go and be in a place like this? Only here.

I was brought up at Marstars Dock in New London. My father ran that place and everybody went lobstering, myself and my two brothers. We're still lobstering. The three of us are full time commercial lobstermen.

CRONKITE: In recent years, record-high lobster catches had been made in the Sound, attracting more people to the field. There are about 400 Connecticut- licensed part and full-time lobster fishers working the Sound.

DAN WINCHESTER (Capt., *Lady Charm*): When I got started full time. After you got past the New London Ledge Light there wasn't any buoys until you hit the Race. Now, it's all buoys all the way out, right from New London Bridge, There are so many more fisherman and each fisherman fishes a whole lot more pots than they ever used to fish. Every year it gets worse. Because to improve yourself you have to fish more pots and you're just fishing against yourself. It's more bait, you need more help, you're working harder, longer and you're not really making any more money.

CRONKITE: The Long Island Sound lobster fishery was declared a federal disaster area in January. Congress is presently considering disaster-relief legislation to help the Sound's lobster fishers and forresearch into the cause of the catastrophic decline. A parasitic infestation and a larvicide used to control mosquitoes are among the suspected causes.

As many as 90% of the lobsters in the western part of the Sound have died, forcing many state lobstermen to quit the business. . So far, lobsters in the eastern Sound have been largely unaffected.

A FISHING WAY OF LIFE

CRONKITE: The Stonington fishing fleet is the last surviving commercial fishing fleet in CT, and a unique link to an industry that has for more than 250 years been a major part of Connecticut's maritime heritage.

FRED CALABRETTA (Assoc. Curator, Mystic Seaport): There are two or three or four extended families that have been involved in fishing in Stonington for three or four generations and are still involved today. They have a lot of pride in – in the fishing way of life.

And at the same time that's an aspect of it that is in jeopardy because the current generation of young men, the 18 and 20-year olds are in most cases finding other occupations. So we're at the point right now where there is an impending break in that …tradition.

CRONKITE: Retired lobsterman Arthur Medeiros had his own lobster boat at the age of 13

ARTHUR MEDEIROS (Retired Stonington Fisherman): Everybody I grew up with worked, fished, they were either lobstering, we'd bait scallop. We were always down when the boats come in at night.It was the town thing.

At the time a fisherman he made pretty good money. When you go back in the late 30's, early 40's, $100, $200 a week, that was a lot of money.

I know what it represents to me. You're just free. Free as a bird. … But I think the air, the salt water, it's there. Once you get the bug, believe me, it's right there.

CRONKITE: Arthur's son Mike Medeiros now works in the computer industry.

MIKE MEDEIROS (Former Stonington Fisherman): One thing about the fishing showed me growing up watching my father and the way he loved his work, I learned what it's like to really love what you do.

When my father began he could make a lot more money on the ocean than he could on land. When I came along and I spent some time fishing with him, that wasn't the case any more. With government regulations and the depletion of the fishing stocks, it's a very uncertain future. That's one of the reasons why I personally didn't go into the business full time.

CRONKITE: Anne Rita's family has been in the fishing industry since 1916.

ANN RITA (Bookkeeper, Stonington Fishing Fleet): I work here at the docks. I do all the bookkeeping for all the boats down here and it makes – helps ends meet. The fishing industry is not what it used to be. There's more rules, regulations, how much they can catch, how much they can bring in, but we don't struggle by any means, you know, we just – we live comfortably.

I married my husband who was a commercial fisherman, lived right across the street. We've been married for 25 years, our first year he quit fishing and went to EB and he couldn't. It was like the – the sea drew him and I said go for it… But as far as my two boys if they really wanted to I wouldn't stop them but I would hope that they did something else because I don't know what's going to happen in years to come

CRONKITE: Anne's husband, John Rita started working for Arthur Medeiros in 1971.

JOHN RITA (Capt., *Seafarer* Fishing Boat): You've got to save the fish and the fisherman. …let us go out and make a living and send our kids to school and give them the education and so forth. That's all we want.

CRONKITE: John Rita has witnessed many changes through the years in his former home town of Stonington

JOHN RITA (Capt., *Seafarer* Fishing Boat): It used to be a complete fishing village. It was mostly a Portuguese village and people were very close knit and would help one another tremendously in times of need.

Right now a lot of the people have sold the house for good money, I guess, because it's on the water and people you don't even know from New York or whichever have bought the places. There's a lot of antiques downtown where there were no stores.
it was just a lot closer knit then, believe me, believe me.

CRONKITE: One thing that has not changed in Stonington is the annual Blessing of the Fleet. The Blessing of the Fleet started in1954 as both a celebration of the fishing way of life and as a way to honor those who have lost their lives at sea.

FRED CALABRETTA (Assoc. Curator, Mystic Seaport): It's a community celebration, a family celebration and it… also reflects Portuguese culture and the Portuguese traditions of many of the fishermen. It's sort of a renewal and reinforces their way of life. And it includes a parade through town, the actual blessing of the boats when the regional Bishop blesses the boats as they pass by in procession. They then go out and throw a memorial wreath with a symbolic broken anchor overboard in honor of those who have been lost.

Despite safety advancements and technological advancements, fishing is one of the most dangerous occupations in the country.

MUSIC: ***Forebitter-*** *Heidi Marie*

Another boat is lost from Stonington harbor,
Lobstermen this time,
God help the sons and daughters,
Of the ones that make their living harvesting the sea

Hard winds of November,
Cold arms of the deep,
Old spirit of the fisherman,
Cast your locks upon the sea.

CONNECTICUT'S WATER PARK

TERRY BACKER (Long Island Sound Keeper): I was born into the fishing industry and later became politicized to the point where I started looking at the environment. For me it's just been part of my life.

MUSIC: Callinan – *Long Island Sound's Been Good to Me*

Oh, Long Island Sound has been good to be,
It taught me to swim and my love of the sea.
But now it needs help from others like me,
Who say Long Island Sound's good to me.

TERRY BACKER (Long Island Sound Keeper): I later went on to become a Soundkeeper because I saw the – the environment of Long Island Sound slipping drastically in the late 70's and early 80's. It was really becoming one big sewage pot.

I'm employed by the Long Island Soundkeeper Fund which is a nonprofit organization.
Our job is to protect the biological, physical and chemical integrity of this water body.
It's a huge job.

Things are improving, however, when you look at their improving you also have to look at, you know, three centuries of abuse from everything from wetland filling to toxic legacy in the sediment to declining fish stocks and species. The Sound has a long way to come back and the only way it's going to come back is continued resolve to stay at it at all times.

And my love of the sea,
But know it needs help from others like me.

This Sound is our national park. We don't have a Yellowstone or a Yosemite or a Baxter State Park. We don't have anything on that scale. Long Island Sound is Connecticut's equivalent to a national park.

Gov. John Rowland (Connecticut): Well, it's one of our greatest resources. Economically it has – pays huge benefits. We really lost a lot of our water quality a dozen or so years ago and we found the people weren't harvesting oysters here and that from a recreational standpoint people weren't swimming here as much as they used to and boating and fishing and so forth.

We've began to clean up our waste water treatment facilities in New Haven, Norwalk, Stamford, Waterbury and along the coast as well so that's helped a great, great deal. We've spent half a billion dollars in the last six years. We've been able to bring back the oysters, we've been able to bring back the fish, you have more recreation here than ever before, but I think we can do a lot better. We realize not only is it a quality of life issue it's an economic development issue.

Who say Long Island Sound's good to me.

FARMING THE SOUND

CRONKITE: The oystering industry is one of Connecticut's agricultural success stories. From the mid to late-19th century, oysters were the hamburger of their day and Norwalk oystermen were among the nation's most successful.

At the turn of the 20th Century Connecticut could boast of having the largest fleet of steam powered oyster boats in the world, with many of those boats built in Connecticut

JOHN VOLK (Dir., Ct Bureau of Aquaculture) In recent years really Connecticut has become sort of the top of the shell pile in oyster production in the U.S. We have a little more than 30 businesses that are involved in culturing oysters in Connecticut. Annually we produce about 50 to 60 million dollars worth of oysters

Our bureau of aquaculture works very closely with the shellfish industry. We do all the water testing to assure where they're growing and harvesting shellfish is safe for – for consumption. We lease them the submerged land. We license and inspect all their operations. We carry out, with industry assistance, the planting of kulch, the clean oyster shell, to improve the conditions on oyster beds.

CRONKITE: Norwalk's Tallmadge Brothers, which started in the 1870s is the largest single oyster company in the United States with about 22,000 acres of oyster grounds. Captain Dave Hopp has worked for Tallmadge Brothers for more than 35 years.

DAVE HOPP (Capt., Tallmadge Bros. Oysters): My great grandfather, grandfather were all oystermen and I kind of got into it with them,

Today we caught a load of market sized oysters, off a bed. The oysters are approximately 4 years old. They're originally from Bridgeport; they've been transplanted three times since they set on the… beds

Early July we plant kulch which is old oyster shells that have been dried on the beach. …The oyster spawns, the larvae swims in the water, young oyster. It finally settles after about 14 days onto these clean

shells. They grow their own shell from the clean shell that they set on. And the following year we move them to another area where we spread them out so they'll grow properly and make the nice oyster that you eat on a half shell.

CRONKITE: Oysters, like any agricultural crop, are subject to environmental conditions, various pests and predators. The industry is presently battling a killer parasite.

Many in the state, like Edward Lang, are part-time oyster farmers. Lang has been an oysterman since 1977.

EDWARD LANG (Part-time Oyster Farmer): This is called Fence Creek and it's in the town of Madison, and it's important because it's an ideal habitat for growing oysters. And I lease this area from the Town of Madison Shellfish Commission and for the past 10 years I've been raising seed oysters in there. And although you can see we're in the middle of a marsh here, just across the street, maybe 500 feet to the other side of the street is Long Island Sound.

Unfortunately, we got hit with a double parasite: Dermo and MSX and the oyster bed which was packed with live oysters. Unfortunately, about 80 or 90 percent of them are dead. And, for example, there's a shell that was in here last year that had an oyster set on it …it's absolutely covered with baby oysters, probably 15, 16 oysters on here. Unfortunately, every one of them has died.

Normally it takes 4, 5 years for an oyster to grow from a set to a market size oyster and all of my mature oysters have, 90 percent of them have perished, so probably I won't have a marketable crop for at least 4 or 5 years if the disease goes away.

THE MARITIME ECONOMY

CRONKITE: Non-agricultural commercial maritime activity has also long been important to the state. Today, large ports are being upgraded in New London, New Haven and Bridgeport. To promote its ports, the state of Connecticut has undertaken a centralized marketing and planning initiative

The port in New London, the only facility actually owned by the state, has lumber as its major cargo activity. In New Haven, a major oil importing seaport, automobile scrap is regularly exported to Asia. And In Bridgeport, banana boats come in on a weekly basis from Colombia delivering bananas for distribution as far west as the Midwest and as far north as Canada.

Privately-owned marine trade businesses are also a significant component of Connecticut's maritime economy. Some businesses, such as netmaking and sailmaking, echo back to the early days of seafaring Connecticut.

But more often, the type of maritime business has evolved, primarily reflecting the growth of recreational boating.

Since the early 1940s, one such business that has prospered is the marina. Today, the shoreline and rivers are dotted with about 175 marinas, hosting thousands of pleasure boats.

Dick Thayer has been in the marina business since 1974.

DICK THAYER (Owner, Thayer's Marine) had, you know, he had to support nine people so during the war he became a machinist and he also became a fisherman so he could stay out of the draft. So I learned boat building, I learned skills, I learned how to fish and I just kept on going.

You gotta be very versatile. You gotta do it all. You gotta build, you gotta weld, you gotta be a ship-fitter, you gotta be a pipe-fitter, you gotta be a machinist. And the biggest thing you gotta do is you've gotta be a good troubleshooter.

We sell bait, we sell tackle. We sell hardware, we sell all the oils and all the chemicals that are needed to clean your boats. We sell boats, we sell trailers. We do a lot of electrical work. We take and we build hulls, we do a lot of repower so if somebody needs power by the weekend, I could get them back in the water for the weekend. Everybody wants a boat. Everybody when the weather is like it is here everybody wants a boat. The recreational person likes to take a boat, sit on it, enjoy the weather, enjoy the atmosphere and maybe just tool around, but they'll plan a trip, at least one trip a year they'll plans something. The fisherman, his boat's got to be ready. He wants to fish.

YACHTING BY THE HOUR

CRONKITE: In the 19th century only the wealthy could afford to own a pleasure boat.
Gun manufacturer Samuel Colt's son Caldwell Colt was the prototypical 19th century Connecticut yachtsman. Colt's 5th yacht, the mystic-built dauntless, was a legendary champion racer.

Since the early 1980s, private pleasure boating has boomed, tying more Connecticut residents to the sea and its arteries. The joy of boating, however, is no longer limited only to those who own one.

FRANK ROGERS (Captain, *Real Escape* Charter Yacht): We're in the charter business. We do it hourly. There was a time when we did the overnight charters but my wife and I find this a lot more rewarding. We get out for birthdays and special occasions, business lunches, and it's short-term but full of fun.

JOANNA ROGERS (First Mate, *Real Escape* Charter Yacht): Part of the success of what we do as far as chartering is for a very short amount of time the people that are here feel like it's their boat, and we do everything we can to make sure that they feel comfortable and that they're at ease with everything that we have, all the facilities, and it is their boat for 3, 4, 5 hours, whatever it is,

FRANK ROGERS (Captain, *Real Escape* Charter Yacht): And, look, I'm around a great bunch of people here enjoying themselves. An 80th birthday. My gosh. You know? Who wouldn't want to be here on the water on a gorgeous day like this with people enjoying themselves? I mean, it's contagious.

THE WATER HIGHWAY

CRONKITE: Today, recreational boating is a pastime available to many Connecticut residents. The concept of pleasure boating first became a reality for most people in the early 1800s, with the newly invented steamboat. For the first time, Connecticut's rivers conveniently connected state residents to the sea and previously far-off ports for both business and pleasure.

BRENDA MILKOFSKY (Dir., Wethersfield Historical Society): Steamboats were really the leading edge of the transportation revolution in the early 19th Century. And for the first time shippers didn't have to worry about the wind or the tide and of great importance to the development of business was the fact that you could count on them coming.

Steamboats were really the first, with the exception of those gut-wrenching stagecoaches, the first public transportation that was embraced by lots and lots of Americans.

Disasters, of course, were not uncommon to steamboats. But the American public loved the steamboat and they embraced the industry and more competition meant. The boats were improved with very elegant appointments. They, of course, became known for speed and they really vied for audiences by having crystal chandeliers and grand salons with rosewood furniture and brocade upholstery and wonderful tapestries and interior paintings.

It was steamboats that enabled hundreds of New Yorkers to come up the Connecticut past Goodspeed's Landing here in East Haddam to Upper Landing just to the north where there was a great hotel, The Champion House, and a very successful music seminary. William Goodspeed who was a great entrepreneur and had a general store in town didn't like to see people going by his establishment and so in 1876 he opened this marvelous opera house. …He brought New York theater to people along the Connecticut River and that in turn attracted summer visitors. This was sort of the beginning of destination tourism and establishments like this sprung up all along the steamboat routes

CRONKITE: Although the steamboat transportation industry is long vanished, thousands of Connecticut residents still use the water as an alternative to travel over land.

At the Water Street Dock in downtown Bridgeport, ferries owned by the Bridgeport Port Jefferson Steamboat Company traverse the sound several times a day. Started in the late 1800s by a group that included P. T. Barnum, the ferries run year round, and along with the ferry service at New London, comprise a water highway linking Connecticut to Long Island. About 2.2 million passengers use the ferries each year taking about 745,000 vehicles off the road.

In the late 1990s, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, whose ancestors once traveled the Sound in huge dugout canoes, established the Pequot River Shipworks to build high-speed TriCatamaran ferries. The shipyard ceased building ferries in 1999 after 5 craft were built. .
VO 17CToday the tribal owned Fox Navigation operates 2 TriCats for a tribal ferry service on Long Island Sound.

BY THE BEAUTIFUL SEA

CRONKITE: The tribal ferries often carry people whose destination is the area casinos and other southeastern Connecticut attractions.

They are the modern-day counterpart to the steamers that helped bring mid-19th Century residents to riverside and coastal areas for rest and recreation.

Mystic Island, opened in the 1840s, was one such popular destination for Connecticut and Rhode Island residents who ferried in for a respite from work and business.

Today, tourism in Connecticut benefits greatly from the state's maritime heritage. In the southeastern part of Connecticut water-related tourism is a significant part of the economy.

In New London, Ocean Beach has attracted area beachgoers since 1888. Letizia Smith's family moved to Ocean Beach in 1940 when her parents purchased the Mayberry Hotel.

LETIZIA SMITH (Co-Chair, Save Ocean Beach): During the height of the summer people used to come and spend from 4 to 6 weeks here in the summertime as a summer resort for them. The families would stay and dad would go home and work during the week and just come back on the weekends …And of course the local people were here all the time.

It was blanket-to-blanket on the beach and people would come and stake out their spot early in the day. People had their bathhouses here and they kept their umbrellas and their beach chairs here for the whole summer. It was really a complete amusement park for adults and children, all of that was here and little by little that all disappeared.

CRONKITE: The museums and tourist centers of Southeastern. Connecticut play a large role in bringing the story of Connecticut and the sea to hundreds of thousands of visitors annually.

The southeastern part of Connecticut has a strong maritime tradition

J. REVELL CARR (Exec. Dir., Mystic Seaport): from its earliest days and they're being carried on and perpetuated by a number of organizations in the area. The Mystic Seaport, The Lighthouse Museum in Stonington, the Nautilus Museum, the Customs House Museum in New London, the Coast Guard Museum in New London, The Eagle, Mystic Aquarium all covering different aspects of the maritime story.

JIM STONE (VP Programs and Exhibitions, Mystic Aquarium): People come to this region and they're accustomed, in fact, expecting to get, I think, a lesson about the sea. And ¾ and they're able to learn about the sea's history, about people's interaction with the sea, about the natural history. I think it's a synergistic effect that ¾ that all the institutions in this area are ¾ are creating by being here.

STEVE FINNIGAN (Curator, Nautilus /Submarine Force Museum): The Submarine Force Museum was actually started by the Electric Boat Company in 1955. And when the Nautilus decommissioned in 1980, they refurbished it and decided to open it up to the public, which was a pretty novel thing to do. It's the only nuclear powered submarine open to the public today. They decided to bring to back to Groton at the same time the museum was then going to be enlarged and a new facility was being built. In 1986 we opened the site which you see today which houses the Submarine Force Museum and the historic ship Nautilus. We have become the third largest cultural attraction in this area after Mystic Seaport and the aquarium

J. REVELL CARR (Exec. Dir., Mystic Seaport): Mystic Seaport was founded in 1929 out of a concern for the loss of ¾ of the history of this river and the shipbuilding activities on it but it quickly focused much more broadly. The museum is a sanctuary for endangered buildings and ships of the maritime world. And in addition to that, the educational programs developed all following World War II

For Mystic Seaport its an exciting time. We have a large factory building that is being converted to the American Maritime Education Research Center. And, as well, we're pursuing the idea of the mission of creating a ¾ a broad public understanding of the relationship of America and the sea. So we published a book called America and the Sea, and we're creating a major exhibition that will convey the America and the sea theme

JIM STONE (VP Programs and Exhibitions, Mystic Aquarium): Mystic Aquarium is …the largest visitor attraction in the state. 800,000 people a year coming here this year to the aquarium and in the future it will probably be more than that,

The aquarium started actually as a brainchild of Calvin Smith and a couple of other people who invented something called instant ocean. His dream was to build a ¾ a major aquarium and he was inspired to build it here because he vacationed in the Mystic area and thought it was a beautiful area.

We've completely renovated our main building, all new exhibits. We have a new outdoor beluga whale exhibit called The Alaskan Coast. And there is the Institute for Exploration and the exhibit center called The Challenge of the Deep.

LOOKING TO THE SEA

CRONKITE: Connecticut is once again, expanding its influence outward in the scientific and educational aspects of maritime
affairs.
At the University of Connecticut Avery Point Campus, the focus is on a marine-oriented curriculum. Both the educational programs and the physical plant have been expanded in recent years.

With undergraduate and graduate courses for nearly 800 students a year, high school programs for about 25,000 students annually, and marine research programs on a range of topics, Avery Point has transformed itself into a top-rank oceanographic center …

RICHARD A. COOPER (Dir. Marine Science & Tech. Ctr., UConn Avery Point): The major products of our marine program here is one of – of public education and even more specifically advanced education … for people that will do research on the dynamics of our coastal environment …for this ultimate goal of protection and - and efficient management.

A lot of people don't realize that there is a greater concentration of marine oriented industries ranging from military to recreation to commerce to education and research concentrated in southeastern Connecticut than probably any other part of our country and, perhaps, even the world. And so southeastern Connecticut is a logical place for this kind of major expansion of our state's flagship university

I and my cohorts a short while ago formed a not-for-profit foundation called the Ocean Technology Foundation whose goal it is to develop …undersea systems that will allow men and women, engineers, military people, scientists, students, educators to live and work effectively in the sea for weeks and months at a time down to depths of about 600, 800 feet, to better understand this very complex marine environment, the so-called continental shelf. Some of these are very visionary undertakings on our part. This kind of research is valuable not only for our own local waters but there's such a tremendous need for these kinds of environmental and aquaculture production type systems around the world

CRONKITE: Famed deep-sea explorer Dr. Robert Ballard came to Connecticut after many years of being headquartered at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Massachusetts

ROBERT BALLARD (President, Institute for Exploration): Our work is down to 20,000 feet and most people don't realize that most of the ocean is very deep. The average depth is 12,000 feet. So what we're trying to do with our new exhibit center is to sensitize people to the role the oceans play in our planet and we're the only kind of educational program in the world that deals with the deep sea. So that's its education component.

Its academic potential really grew out of my discovery of the Titanic and that was the realization that the deep sea is a preserver of human history. And so what we're doing here at IFE is to bring together the

Oceanographic world which is the one I've been living in for the last 30 years with the archeological world, to create a whole new field of research called deep water archeology.

I came to southeastern Connecticut because of the critical mass that was already here. There's so many different entities here that are committed to the ocean and all of them, and this is very critical, are willing to work together. So I see a great future. I'm very involved in the history and the maritime history of this state, it's a great--great history.

CLOSE

CRONKITE: The story of Connecticut and the sea is constantly evolving, connecting the rich maritime history of the state to its future.

Through the centuries, Connecticut's people have used the sea for an endless stream of maritime commerce, production and recreation. Some industries have run their course, and become part of history. Others have been transformed by changing times. Still others are yet to be born and to flourish.

In the final analysis, the defining characteristic of Connecticut's relationship with the sea is the fertile meeting of imagination with the sea's infinite possibilities -- how ideas, expertise and bold ventures have created great rewards -- often with equal sacrifice.

Somewhere, at this moment, someone is looking out at Long Island Sound's watery horizon, with yet another new idea on how to exploit, nurture or harness this richest of resources.

That is the continuing story of Connecticut and the sea.

CREDITS

MUSIC PERFORMANCE: ***Forebitter, Strike the Bell***

Down on the poop deck walkin' all about,
There's a second mate so steady and so stout,
What he's a thinkin' he knows not himself,
We're wishing he would hurry up and strike the bell.

Strike the bell second mate,
Let us go below,
Look you well to windward you can see it's going to blow,
Lookin' at the glass you can see that it has fell,
And we wish that you would hurry up and strike the bell.

Now down on the main deck and workin' at the pumps,
There's a larboard watch just longing for the bunks.
Looking to the windward they see a great swell,
They're wishin' that the second mate would strike the bell.

Strike the bell second mate,
Let us go below,
Look you well to windward you can see it's going to blow,
Lookin' at the glass you can see that it has fell and we wish that you would hurry up and strike the bell.

Now at the wheel poor Anderson stands,
Clutchin' at the spokes with his cold mittened hands.
Lookin' at the compass at the course is sure and well,
He's wishing that the second mate would strike the bell.

Strike the bell second mate,
Let us go below,
Look you well to windward you can see it's going to blow,
Lookin' at the glass you can see that it has fell and we wish that you would hurry up and strike the bell.

Strike the bell second mate,
Let us go below,
Look you well to windward you can see it's going to blow,
Lookin' at the glass you can see that it has fell and we wish that you would hurry up and strike the bell.