

CAPTAIN BIDDLE'S 'COOLNESS' COMMANDEERS
A SPERM WHALE TOOTH

by

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the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in American Material Culture

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

A portrait engraved in a sperm whale tooth circa 1830-1860 presents Captain James Biddle's "coolness," his "perseverance and self possession in difficult emergencies": a dramatic gash splits the tooth-sitter's chin. The mark evokes his U.S.S. *Hornet*'s engagement with the H.M.S. *Penguin* in March 1815. After the latter's surrender, a British sailor fired a musket ball that "struck Captain Biddle's chin." Though wounded with "blood flow[ing] profusely," he quelled his crew's blood thirst and secured surrender. Biddle's wound on the tooth and the other artifactual peculiarities it elicits foreground his lauded "coolness" in combat in ways postwar portrayals by Thomas Gimbrede, Charles Willson Peale, and Moritz Furst cannot. Floating churches, lighthouses, and Peale's *The Artist in His Museum* (1822) value a self-possession similar to that the tooth extols. These shared significations reveal a network of affect that formal categorizations and object hierarchies may obscure. Working with a variety of historical sources and theories of material culture, I argue that the tooth-portrait provides more than an untutored appropriation of a fine art print; it is a complex representational artifact that partakes in and contributes to a nineteenth-century trope of "coolness."

Section 1

INTRODUCTION: BIDDLE DEFACED

A portrait engraved in an ivory sperm whale tooth circa 1830-1860 [figure 1] propagates Captain James Biddle's "coolness," his "perseverance and self possession in difficult emergencies."¹ On March 23, 1815, his sloop-of-war the U.S.S. *Hornet* engaged the brig-sloop H.M.S. *Penguin* off Tristan D' Acunha in the south Atlantic. A twenty-two minute cannonade commenced, leaving the latter vessel severely damaged. After the *Penguin*'s surrender, a British sailor fired a musket ball that "struck Capt. Biddle's chin."² His men sought vengeance. "It was with difficulty," he recounted, "I could restrain my crew from firing into him [the *Penguin*] again, as he had certainly fired into

¹ "Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle," *The Analectic Magazine* VI (November, 1815): 398. Citations in this thesis follow the title punctuation as presented in the referenced source. All italics in quotations are the author's emphasis.

² Ibid., 396. Full quote: "The ball struck Capt. Biddle's chin, passed along the neck, and disengaged itself at the back, th[r]ough his cravat, waistcoat, and the collar of his coat." *The Port Folio* published a similar biography. As pertaining to the chin wound, it states that "the ball struck the chin directly in front with much force." See "Biographical Memoir of Captain James Biddle of the United States' Navy," *The Port Folio* VI (November, 1815): 445. According to David F. Long, Biddle's twentieth-century biographer, "Early nineteenth-century narrators tended to paraphrase or even copy directly the lives of Biddle printed in the *Port Folio* or *Analectic* magazine articles of 1815." See David F. Long, *Sailor-Diplomat: A Biography of Commodore James Biddle, 1783-1848* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1983), 54. I will focus, then, on these two sources.

us after having surrendered.”³ Biddle quelled his crew’s blood thirst and secured surrender despite a violence the tooth depicts: a dramatic gash splits his chin **[figure 2]**. The scrimshander—one who carves nautical bone, baleen, or ivory—either made the mark or worked with a break in the tooth. Either way, the tooth pictures Biddle wounded.

This mark, foreign to the Thomas Gimbrede print **[figure 3]** that accompanies *The Analectic Magazine*’s November 1815 “Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle” and provided the tooth portrait’s pictorial source, acts akin to Roland Barthes’s punctum, a “‘detail’” in a photograph whose “mere presence changes my reading.”⁴ Its presence enlivens the deceptively unassuming tooth-portrait and alludes to “a whole life external to...[the] portrait.”⁵ Nineteenth-century histories of the War of 1812’s naval theatre, including popular accounts penned by James Fennimore Cooper and Theodore

³ James Biddle as quoted in “Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle,” 394.

⁴ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981; New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 42. Citations refer to the 2010 edition. His punctum, as we will see, lends itself well to the lexicon of scrimshaw manufacture; he characterizes this “detail” as “this wound, this prick, this mark,” a “sting, speck, cut, little hole.” See Barthes, 26 and 27. Barthes problematizes if the punctum can be intentional: “the detail which interests me is not, or at least is not strictly, intentional, and probably must not be so.” Barthes, 47. I would like to think of the punctum less discursively. *The Port Folio* published a different Gimbrede portrait of Biddle not considered here.

⁵ Barthes, 57. Considering a Scotsman-servant in an 1863 George W. Wilson photograph of Queen Victoria on horseback, Barthes posits that “The *punctum* [the Scotsman] fantastically ‘brings out’ the Victorian nature (what else can one call it?) of the photograph, it endows this photograph with a blind field.” My intention is to explore the tooth-portrait’s “blind field.”

Roosevelt, extol Biddle's composure in combat.⁶ Yet official postwar portraits by Gimbrede, Charles Willson Peale, and Moritz Furst erase the violence.⁷ The tooth-portrait acts unlike these contemporary depictions. The mark suggests the corporeal and mental perils of battle: defacement, delirium, and death. It also brings into relief additional artifactual idiosyncrasies that, like the punctum, have a "power of expansion,"⁸ a signifying prowess. These features begin to envisage the tooth-portrait's sitter as a model of coolness.

Three iconographical and material peculiarities, I contend, register Biddle's coolness. First, the mark references a martial engagement wherein Biddle displayed great emotional discipline. The captain's face presents a battle wound and suggests the self-possession that helped him defeat his opponent. Second, Biddle's visual and physical rendering imbues him with the stoic character of stone. He looks like a marble bust; a

⁶ For examples, see "Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle," 398; "Biographical Memoir of Captain James Biddle of the United States' Navy," 447-448; James Fennimore Cooper, *History of the Navy of the United States of America*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1840), 387-389; Theodore Roosevelt, *The Naval War of 1812 or the History of the United States Navy During the Last War with Great Britain to Which is Appended an Account of the Battle of New Orleans* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1882; Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987), 384. Citations refer to the Naval Institute Press edition.

⁷ Joseph Wood, Thomas Sully, and others produced portraits of Biddle in traditional media. These do not show Biddle wounded. My intention is to provide a brief but close analysis of three popular contemporary portraits as opposed to a generalized assessment of many.

⁸ Barthes, 45. These significations can be separate from that of a work's studium which is linked to the "photographer's intentions" and the work's prescribed "*functions*." See Barthes, 27 and 28.

pedestal supports his portrait. The tooth's coloration mimics marble, a medium associated with mental coolness.⁹ The tooth's manufacture, a reductive process, further recalls stonework. Finally, the tooth acts as a synecdoche for the sperm whale, a "monster" whose much-sensationalized madness—addressed in period texts, visual culture, and signified by the tooth itself—contrasts and accentuates Biddle's coolness.¹⁰ As Ishmael informs readers in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (1851): "there is no quality in this world that is not what it is merely by contrast. Nothing exists in itself."¹¹ Together the mark, allusions to marble sculpture, and the medium's connotations conspire to foreground Biddle's emotional fortitude in the midst of chaos.

This thesis proposes a different way to consider the Biddle tooth and sperm whale teeth engraved with portraits of national heroes: as images of coolness. Biddle was not unique in this respect; writers dubbed many leaders cool. Multiple implications of this deportment, however, make the tooth-portrait unique. More than an untutored appropriation of a professional portrait, it is a complex representational artifact. The Western art historical cannon overlooks American scrimshaw, though many pieces display the carver's skill, imagination, and iconographical debt to fine art. My aim,

⁹ For an example included below, see Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Prose Work of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (London: David Bogue, 1851), 84.

¹⁰ For an example included below, see J.C.P., letter to the editor of the *Weekly Messenger* published as "Adventure of a Whale," *Rhode Island American and Gazette*, 1 November 1831, 2.

¹¹ Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*, ed. A. Robert Lee (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, Co. Inc., 1996), 48.

however, is not to substantiate scrimshaw's aesthetic merit; surveys have already succeeded at this. Bruno Latour argues that "society is not stable enough to inscribe itself in anything."¹² I am interested in artifacts that, regardless of their categorization, "inscribe" similarly, that act and shape society or thought in concert; I want to consider scrimshaw beyond an exclusive whaling culture. Mid-century floating churches, lighthouses, and Peale's *The Artist in His Museum* (1822) share values of a coolness comparable to that which the tooth presents. The tooth partakes in and contributes to a nineteenth-century trope of coolness, an emotional culture under-considered in scholarship on decorative sperm whale teeth.

¹² Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 197-198.

Section 2

HISTORIOGRAPHY, WHALING, MANUFACTURE

Studies of nineteenth-century American scrimshaw introduce the history and processes of whaling, the manufacture of scrimshaw, and the provenance of authentic pieces.¹³ Sperm whaling, scholars believe, started as early as 1712 in New England.¹⁴ Whaling thrived after the War of 1812 through the years before the American Civil War. Much American scrimshaw—including outstanding examples by Edward Burdett, Frederick Myrick, and N.S. Finney—belongs to this period. Connoisseurs consider the 1830s and 1840s the “Golden Age” of scrimshaw, though hunters have made aesthetic and utilitarian objects from whale bone and ivory since antiquity. During this period, according to Stuart Frank, “a wide variety of forms emerged, conventions solidified, traditions developed, and individual styles emerged.”¹⁵ Whalers sailed for months or years in ships prepped with provisions, equipment, and whaleboats. The length of the voyages extended as vessels expanded their hunting grounds. Some crew members spent

¹³ For three examples, see E. Norman Flayderman, *Scrimshaw and Scrimshanders: Whales and Whalemen*, ed. R. L. Wilson (New Milford, CT.: N. Flayderman & Co., Inc., 1972); Charles R. Meyer, *Whaling and the Art of Scrimshaw* (New York: Henry Z. Walck, Inc., 1976); Stuart Frank, *Ingenious Contrivances, Curiously Carved: Scrimshaw in the New Bedford Whaling Museum—A Comprehensive Catalog of the World’s Largest Collection* (Boston: David R. Godine, 2012).

¹⁴ Frank, 9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

idle hours carving ivory and bone until a whale sighting demanded that they attend the hunt.

Once sighted, a whale was approached by at least one whaleboat deployed from the larger ship. Ideally, sailors advanced quietly from directly behind or in front of the whale, out of the beast's vision. Whales exhibited different demeanors: Captain Edwin Peter Brown encountered both "thundering wild whales" and "large bulls...gentle as old Sheap."¹⁶ Following the harpoon's puncture a whale might fight or flee. Line attached to the harpoon kept the boat in pursuit. In *The Natural History of the Sperm Whale* (1839), Thomas Beale pictured one whale's reaction: "The sea, which a moment before was unruffled, now becomes lashed into foam by the immense strength of the wounded whale, who with his vast tail strikes in all directions at his enemies...his huge body writhes in violent contortions from the agony the 'iron' has inflicted."¹⁷ The men continued their assault while weathering the beast's fury. Their craft did not offer much protection; "the wrecker of boats"¹⁸ could "crush the boat like an egg-shell."¹⁹ An effective strike punctured the whale's lungs or heart, bringing the contest to an end.

¹⁶ Edwin Peter Brown, *In the Wake of Whales: The Whaling Journal of Captain Edwin Peter Brown 1841-1847*, prepared for publication by Constance J. Terry (Long Island, NY: Old Orient Press, 1988), 136 and 140.

¹⁷ Thomas Beale, *The Natural History of the Sperm Whale*. (London: John Van Voorst, 1839), 163-164.

¹⁸ Alexander Starbuck, *History of the American Whale Fishery from Its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876*. (Waltham, MA: Alexander Starbuck, 1878), 123.

¹⁹ Reverend John S. C. Abbot, "Trials and Dangers of the Whale Fishery,," *Vermont Phoenix* (Brattleboro, VT), 14 April 1843, 1.

Whalers then towed the corpse shipside to be cut-in. They collected spermaceti from the whale's case and rendered cut strips of blubber oil in a process called trying-out. The crew and vessel owners earned money from the sale of this oil. Customers used oil to light spaces as varied as homes, streets, lighthouses, and ship decks.²⁰ If obliged, whalers also harvested whale meat and teeth. Larger sperm whales have more than forty teeth in their lower jaw, some "of formidable dimensions."²¹ At 6.5 x 2.62," the tooth with Biddle's portrait, for instance, easily dwarfs a human hand.²² Other whales offered material—besides bone—to carvers. The mouth of the right whale, for instance, houses plates of dark keratin called baleen that they use to filter prey. In demand for corsets, baleen was a profitable product in itself. Decorated sperm whale teeth, however, according to historian Charles R. Meyer, provided "a side dish...to the main course of making money."²³ *Pulling Teeth*, from Frederick Allyn Olmsted's *Incidents of a Whaling Voyage* (1841), illustrates one way to remove the ivory. Four men hoist a jaw steadied by a block-and-tackle while another cuts strips of flesh, teeth intact—"the teeth snap from their sockets in quick succession."²⁴ An echo of the preceding confrontation, the jaw

²⁰ "The American Whale Fishery," *The Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review*, 1 November 1840, 394.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 377.

²² The entire tooth, one should note, would not have been exposed in the whale's mouth.

²³ Meyer, 72.

²⁴ Francis Allyn Olmsted, *Incidents of a Whaling Voyage*. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1841), 182.

appears to lunge towards the men. Narrowing sharply from the wide, angled panbones, it echoes the form of the harpoon's pointed blade; even bones endangered whalemén.²⁵

Scrimshanders carved whale bone and ivory into aesthetic and utilitarian artifacts during free time. They removed layers of rough cementum that surrounded the tooth's dentine root with an abrasive material.²⁶ Polishing produced a smooth white surface that yellowed with age. The carver then handled a sharp implement, perhaps a jackknife, prick punch, or awl, to incise the tooth. Many inscribed portraits or scenes illustrating recent whaling pursuits.²⁷ Carvers drew freehand or traced images on paper with pin-pricks to guide their work. Dots outline Biddle's portrait; the carver placed the print over the tooth, pricked holes into the ivory through the image, and, after removing the paper, engraved lines that connected the puncture marks. Biddle's plinth, the ship, and the decorative patterning that circles the tooth, however, appear to be freehand work. The carver filled the negative space with ink, although many used lampblack. Additional polishing

²⁵ Processing the whale was dangerous. In one fictional and harrowing example, *Moby-Dick*'s Tashtego falls into the case while retrieving its spermaceti. His peers "saw the before lifeless head throbbing and heaving just below the surface of the sea, as if that moment seized with some momentous idea; whereas it was only the poor Indian [Tashtego] unconsciously revealing by those struggles the perilous depth to which he had sunk." See Melville, 289.

²⁶ For an explanation of the anatomy of a sperm whale tooth, see Beale, 92-95.

²⁷ Pursuit iconography was likely the most common engraved on teeth. See Flayderman, 36. Even the tooth's natural form models a vessel's sail full in chase.

accentuated the incised image.²⁸ Historian E. Norman Flayderman noted that “at one time it was assumed that every New England family had in its possession at least one piece of scrimshaw.” Scrimshanders gifted their art; few owners purchased these decorative pieces.²⁹

Despite or, perhaps, because of familial gifting, many teeth remain unattributed. Surveys attempt to establish provenance and group pieces that suggest a particular hand. The Biddle tooth’s provenance is unknown.³⁰ Still, one can ponder the captain’s placement. Whaling lexicon characterized the whale as a “monarch,” “ship,” or “soldier,” appropriate forms with which to pair Biddle. A whale was “the monarch of the ocean,”³¹ a “monster in his remote watery kingdom.”³² The *State Journal* (Delaware) recounted

²⁸ Winterthur conservator Bruno Pouliot examined the tooth under a stereobinocular microscope on October 25, 2012. He tentatively identified India ink in the tooth’s incised marks. For more on the manufacture of scrimshaw, see Frank, 151-173.

²⁹ Flayderman, 42. Given their plentitude, scrimshawed artifacts permit the student to engage a large segment of society. Appreciating artifacts, according to anthropologist Daniel Miller, “will lead to a more profound appreciation of persons.” See Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2010), 6. Art historian Jules David Prown states, “Objects are used by a much broader cross section of the population and are therefore potentially a more wide-ranging, more representative source of information than words.” See Jules Prown, “Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 17 (1982): 3.

³⁰ The piece entered the collection at the Winterthur Museum at the bequest of Henry Francis du Pont in 1967.

³¹ “The Whale, and Whale Catching,” *The American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge* 2 (September, 1835): 6.

³² Review of *The Natural History of the Sperm Whale* by Thomas Beale, *The Museum of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* 8 (May, 1839): 73.

that whalers “invade[d]...his majesty’s dominions.”³³ Beale and New York’s *Merchants’ Magazine and Commercial Review* compared the beast—specifically its physical build—to a ship.³⁴ Likewise conflating whaling with human battle, the *State Journal* deemed harpoons and whaling tools “instruments of war.”³⁵ Reverend John S. C. Abbot noted, “There are hardly any scenes upon the field of battle, more replete with danger, than those which are often witnessed in this perilous pursuit [whaling].”³⁶ Whaler J.C.P. quotes one seaman who referred to a large whale as “an old soldier.” The author then explains that “this phrase is used by whalemen to designate a large whale.”³⁷ The sperm whale, invoked by the synecdochical tooth, metaphorically serves Biddle’s history.³⁸ Whether the carver considered this or not, the work signifies accordingly.

³³ *The State Journal* (Delaware) as quoted in Kenneth R. Martin, *Delaware Goes Whaling 1833-1845* (Greenville: The Hagley Museum, 1974), 29.

³⁴ Beale posited that “the [whale’s] head viewed in front...presents a broad, somewhat flattened surface, rounded, and contracted above, considerably expanded on the sides, and gradually contracted below, so as in some degree to attain a resemblance to the cutwater of a ship.” See Beale, 24-25. *Merchants’ Magazine* concurred, stating, “the head of this animal...exhibits a very blunt appearance, with a front like the breakwater of a ship.” See “The American Whale Fishery,” 376. It even functioned similarly. Beale continued, “[this part of the whale] would be the only part exposed to the pressure of the water in front, enabling him thus to pass with the greatest celerity and ease through the boundless tract of his wide domain.” See Beale, 28.

³⁵ *The State Journal* (Delaware) as quoted in Martin, 28-29.

³⁶ Abbot.

³⁷ “Adventure of a Whale.”

³⁸ Unlike many objects fashioned shipboard, scrimshaw explicitly conveys the capture and slaughter of the whaler’s prey. On the tooth, the towering and confident Biddle serves as a final figure in a chain of human power; he surmounts not only a “monarch,”

Section 3

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The intentions and life of the Biddle tooth's scrimshander are irretrievable. The tooth does not provide the carver's name or the piece's place and year of production. However, I second George Kubler's estimation that biography need not drive historical inquiry: "To describe railroads accurately, we are obliged to disregard persons and states, for the railroads themselves are the elements of continuity, and not the travelers or the functionaries thereon."³⁹ My method treats material and visual culture as historical evidence. Jules David Prown explains that artifacts embody "the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased, or used them, and by extension the beliefs of the

"ship," or "soldier," but, like calm whalers and sailor-carvers before him, the beast itself. No matter its manipulation, a decorated sperm whale tooth evokes man-leviathan battle and the scrimshander's success. See Flayderman, 29. The tooth is, to use Susan Stewart's phrase, a "sign of survival." See Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993; Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 148. Citations refer to the 2007 paperback edition. As Biddle partook in the final events of a war that stymied the American whale fishery, a scrimshander may have found him a deserving figure to picture. See "The American Sperm Whale Fishery," 371. Captain E.C. Williams wrote that the whaler's "prosperity is *his country's honor*." See E.C. Williams, *Life in the South Seas. History of the Whale Fisheries. Habits of the Whale. Perils of the Chase and Method of Capture*. (New York: Polhemus and De Vries, Printers, 1860), 7.

³⁹ George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 5. Citations refer to the 2008 edition.

larger society to which they belonged.”⁴⁰ A “well-equipped cultural scholar,” he adds, engages textual sources as well: “The object may not testify with complete accuracy about its culture, but it can divulge something.”⁴¹ Divulging this “something,” Kenneth Haltman writes, requires “vigorous attention, beyond [objects’]...state of being, to these objects’ cultural significance; attention not just to *what* they might be said to signify but, as importantly, to *how* they might be said to signify; to their gerundial *meaning*..., to the *way they mean*, both phenomenologically and metaphorically.”⁴² To do this, I offer a close formal, material, and contextual analysis of one tooth. My assessment is indebted to art historical methodology and three theoretical frameworks.

In addition to Barthes’s thoughts on the photograph’s punctum, my interpretation of the Biddle tooth is informed by the methodologies of thing theory, affect theory, and actor-network theory. Objects act in ways exceeding their makers’ intentions.⁴³ Martin Heidegger and Bill Brown argue that this bespeaks their thingness, an essence often obscured by the item’s prescribed idea. Heidegger states that “what and how the jug *is* as this jug-thing, is something we can never learn—let alone think properly—by looking at

⁴⁰ Prown, 2. “To know man,” E. McClung Fleming declares, “we must study the things he has made.” See E. McClung Fleming, “Artifact Study: A Proposed Model,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 9 (1974): 153.

⁴¹ Prown, 9.

⁴² Kenneth Haltman, “Introduction,” in *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture*, ed. Jules David Prown and Kenneth Haltman (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), 1-2. Haltman is working from Prown.

⁴³ Miller explains that “Objects can be obdurate little beasts....Things do things to us, and not just the things we want them to do.” See Miller, 94.

the outward appearance, the *idea*.”⁴⁴ Brown concurs, adding that “we look *through* objects (to see what they disclose about history, society, nature, or culture—above all what they disclose about *us*), but we only catch a glimpse of things. We look through objects because there are codes by which our interpretative attention makes them meaningful, because there is a discourse of objectivity that allows us to use them as facts. A *thing*, in contrast, can hardly function as a window.”⁴⁵ Seeing the object as a “fact” requires making paramount to meaning the object’s seemingly explicit uses and purposes, suggested by the maker and the object itself.

Heidegger and Brown both see the thing as an actor. Heidegger explicates the thing’s ability to “gather” (“thinging”) diverse elements to it in a passage presenting “thing” as noun and verb. Through its connotative power, a jug “stays earth and sky, divinities and mortals,”⁴⁶ linking, for instance, libations and the very earth of its material. The thing wields a profound signifying power that collects disparate realms in a way akin to Barthes’s notion of the punctum’s “power of expansion.”⁴⁷ Brown appears more intrigued by the insubordination of things and how they can be disruptive. He explains that, “we begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when

⁴⁴ Martin Heidegger, “The Thing,” in *The Object Reader*, ed. Fiona Candlin and Raiford Guins (New York: Routledge, 2009), 115.

⁴⁵ Bill Brown, “Thing Theory,” in *The Object Reader*, ed. Fiona Candlin and Raiford Guins (New York: Routledge, 2009), 140.

⁴⁶ Full quote: “The thing things. In thinging, it stays earth and sky, divinities and mortals. Staying, the thing brings the four, in their remoteness, near to one another.” He adds, “Nearness is at work in bringing near, as the thinging of the thing.” See Heidegger, 120.

⁴⁷ Barthes, 45.

the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the windows get filthy, when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily.”⁴⁸ Both writers express interest in how the thing effects and affects in less commonly ascribed ways.

The tooth-portrait’s mark—a punctum—acts as a thing, as both a “break” and an agent that “gathers.” A literal and figurative mark that breaks both the tooth’s surface and Biddle’s face, it encourages one to interrogate the object’s materiality and construction, to consider—in a way that “looking through” disallows—those events that facilitated the work’s creation. It evidences the vulnerability of Biddle’s and the whale’s respective bodies as well as that of the scrimshawed artifact. This idiosyncrasy and others underscored in this investigation begin to transcend the “represented object,” a portrait easily subsumed into a larger body of sperm whale teeth engraved with portraiture.⁴⁹ This does not defeat the portrait’s suggested celebratory function. Rather, it expands this assertion by eliciting a trope of coolness. Any element of an object, I contend, can be a thing, offering a “break” in the image that “gathers” different objects through shared cultural significations. This enables one to recontextualize the artifact. A thing, I propose, can function as a window.

Moreover, things (and objects) act upon those looking in the past and present. A sperm whale tooth picturing a national hero provides a rich site to witness the

⁴⁸ Bill Brown, 140.

⁴⁹ Heidegger argues that, “the thingly character of the thing does not consist in its being a represented object.” See Heidegger, 114.

propagation of coolness. My second framework, then, is recent scholarship on affect and material culture.⁵⁰ I am working with the definition of affect proposed by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth: “affect, at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension.”⁵¹ Artifacts can incite “those forces.” They are, according to Sherry Turkle, “provocations to thought.”⁵² John Corrigan provides an illustration of the relationship between affect and material culture that is analogous to what this thesis will attempt to advance as pertaining to the Biddle tooth: “material

⁵⁰ One measure of the significance for affect studies within American art history is the recent issue of *American Art* with essays exploring this subject. Contributors “explore how feelings and emotions inform—and are informed by—American visual and material cultures.” One way these artifacts, according to Erika Doss, “are meaningful...[is] because of their affective dimensions.” See Erika Doss, “Makes Me Laugh, Makes Me Cry: Feelings and American Art,” *American Art* 25 (Fall 2011): 2 and 4. Doss provides a brief distinction between emotion and feelings: “Emotions are the expressions or projections (or responses) of feelings; emotions are social, whereas feelings are individual, physical sensations.” See Doss, 3. For a definition for affect she turns to Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth.

⁵¹ They continue, “...that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world’s apparent intractability.” See Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, “An Inventory of Shimmers,” in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.

⁵² Sherry Turkle, “The Things that Matter,” in *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*, ed. Sherry Turkle (Cambridge: the MIT Press, 2011), 4. In addition, as Lorraine Datson explains, “things in a supersaturated cultural solution can crystallize ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.” See Lorraine Datson, “Speechless,” in *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*, ed. Lorraine Datson (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 20. A full summary of the scholarly work on affect theory and emotional culture resides beyond the scope of this essay. Sources cited, however, offer introductions to the discourse.

culture—a cathedral window, for example—inspires awe and in doing so legitimates it for religion.”⁵³ One can conflate or transfer their sensual or emotional experience with artifacts with their understanding of faith or, in the case of the Biddle tooth, the sitter engraved. “Emotions,” according to Barbara H. Rosenwein, “are among the tools with which we manage social life as a whole”;⁵⁴ the study of emotional life is difficult, but important.⁵⁵

Nineteenth-century texts acknowledge the affective agency of material and visual culture; their authors posit the artifact’s ability to model and encourage exemplary emotions. John Sanderson, trying to obtain subscriptions for “A Biography of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence, Accompanied with Plates” in 1820, argued that, “great and splendid actions will seldom be achieved by men who have humble or ordinary objects in prospect. It is by contemplating the life and character of those who are

⁵³ John Corrigan, “Emotions Research and the Academic Study of Religion,” in *Religion and Emotion: Approached and Interpretations*, ed. John Corrigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 18.

⁵⁴ Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Worrying about Emotions in History,” *The American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 842.

⁵⁵ Rosenwein wisely cautions: “even the most seemingly intimate diary can give us only an approximation of the emotional life of its subject. We cannot know for sure (and often neither can the diarist) if the feelings expressed are purely conventional, idealized, manipulative, or deeply felt.” Furthermore, people “[adjust] their emotional displays and their judgments of weal and woe” as they move between different environments. See Rosenwein, 839 and 842. Feelings are also temporal. As Biddle wrote in 1828 to a midshipman’s mother, “Last Wednesday I gave the Macedonian [his vessel] and all on board of her to Captain Hoffman. It cost me much emotion, but emotions do not last forever; they do not last a week, for already I am tolerably composed altho this is only the fourth day.” Biddle as quoted in Nicholas B. Wainwright, “Commodore James Biddle and His Sketch Book,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 90 (1966): 25.

marked out from the multitude by their eminent qualities, that we become emulous of their virtues and their renown.”⁵⁶ At the unveiling of the bronze statue of Admiral David G. Farragut in 1881, Ex-Postmaster General Horace Maynard stated: “The soldier and the sailor will come to gaze upon the face of the bravest of the brave and to drink in lessons of courage and fidelity for future wars, if they should unhappily befall us.”⁵⁷ In some instances to be discussed, statuary intellectually or emotionally moved people. Yet, my interest here is not to speculate as to how viewer’s felt before the tooth. Because the tooth’s provenance is unknown, I cannot guarantee how many people encountered the artifact, let alone retrieve their impressions (if they had any). Instead, looking closely at the tooth and using a wide array of period sources, I propose how the artifact could instruct feeling and, thus, thought. I conclude by relating my findings to all portraiture of national heroes on sperm whale teeth.⁵⁸ Rosenwein’s interest in “systems of feelings”⁵⁹

⁵⁶ John Sanderson, “Proposals by Joseph M. Sanderson,” *Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser* (Baltimore, MD), 02 September 1820, 4. Despite the article’s title, the author is noted as John Sanderson.

⁵⁷ General Horace Maynard as quoted in “Farragut. Unveiling of the Statue of the Heroic Old Admiral,” *The New York Herald* (New York, NY), 26 April 1881, 6. General Maynard continues: “The American citizen of every calling and of every section, as long as the Republic exists, will here dwell with emotions of pride upon a character too great for a divided love among his countrymen. May every portion of the American Union salute this statue with equal honor, and may that Union stand in justice, peace, fraternity and equality while brass and marble endure.”

⁵⁸ I should emphasize, I am proposing *one* way to see scrimshaw through a focused study of one example. “An artifact,” Fleming reminds readers, “is not subject to just one ‘correct’ interpretation, but many.” Such meanings are influenced by what beliefs viewers bring to the object. See Fleming, 161. The object itself partakes in this meaning-making. Datson argues that, “the language of things derives from certain properties of the things themselves, which suit the cultural purposes for which they are enlisted.” See

leads her to “suggest that we recognize...varieties, as well as convergences, in emotional feeling and expression.”⁶⁰ This complements my method of looking for coolness in different contexts.

A third framework, actor-network theory, shapes my thesis implicitly and my penultimate section explicitly. I consider objects in networks of affective agency and ask how artifacts act in concert. Rosenwein posits that society “shape[s]” emotions.⁶¹ Latour, as mentioned above, argues that “society is not stable enough to inscribe itself in anything.”⁶² “The name of the game,” he explains, “is not to extend subjectivity to things, to treat humans like objects, to make machines for social actors, but to...talk about the folding of humans and nonhumans. What the new picture seeks to capture are the moves by which any given collective *extends* its social fabrics to *other* entities.”⁶³ Those “other entities” can collectively shape the emotions themselves and how a period conceptually

Datson, 15. As Barthes explains: “Last thing about the *punctum*: whether or not it is triggered, it is an addition: it is what I add to the photograph and *what is nonetheless already there*.” See Barthes, 55.

⁵⁹ Rosenwein, 842. She defines “systems of feelings” as “what...[emotional] communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others’ emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.” See Rosenwein, 842.

⁶⁰ She also notes that: “not only does every society call forth, shape, constrain, and express emotions differently, but even *within the same society* contradictory values and models, not to mention deviant individuals, find their place.” See Rosenwein, 842-843.

⁶¹ Ibid., 842.

⁶² Latour, 197-198.

⁶³ Ibid., 193-194.

and literally pictures an emotion. Studying these convergences in evocation helps students to see artifacts in wider networks of affect that formal categorizations and hierarchies of objects may obscure.⁶⁴ Close study of the tooth encourages a foray into other material actors extolling coolness in the nineteenth century.

⁶⁴ *Merchants' Magazine*, for example, distinguishes between scrimshaw artifacts and “fine arts.” See “The American Whale Fishery,” 393.

Section 4

COOLNESS

Coolness—described elsewhere as “freedom from agitation”⁶⁵ and a “freedom from passion”⁶⁶—earned accolades in various contexts. George Crabb’s 1824 book of synonyms told readers that “*coolness* in a time of danger, and *coolness* in an argument, are alike commendable.”⁶⁷ An 1823 account of the Eddystone Lighthouse’s destruction by fire proffered that, “in times of difficulty and danger, a steady *coolness* cannot be too strongly recommended; even though it should appear slowness, it will not do so much harm as the mistakes which confusion always causes.”⁶⁸ Coolness before death also

⁶⁵ George Crabb, *English Synonymes Explained, in Alphabetical Order; with Copious Illustrations and Examples Drawn from the Best Writers*, 3rd ed. (London: Printed for Baldwin, Craddock, and Joy, and Simpkin and Marshall, 1824), 293.

⁶⁶ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (London: Printed for Longman, Reese, Orme, Brown, and Green, et al., 1827), section heading “COO.”

⁶⁷ Crabb, 293. While defining courage, the text adds, “*Courage* is that power of the mind which bears up against the evil that is in prospect; *fortitude* is that power which endures the pain that is felt.” See Crabb, 303.

⁶⁸ The passage continues: “besides, the remedies in such cases, can never be so well applied, since the hurry and agitation of mind are always found to prevent one’s thinking of the best means of escape or safety.” See Michael Rough, *The Eddystone Light-House, A Poem. To Which is Subjoined, An Historical Account of Every Remarkable Occurrence That Has Transpired Since the First Light House Was Erected on the Eddystone Rock, 1696, And a Short Sketch of the Author’s Life*. (London: Printed by Jr & H.W. Bailey, 1823), 31.

deserved note. A memorial handkerchief honoring George Washington records that he was “in the full Possession of all his Fame, like a Christian and an Hero, calm and collected, without groan and without a sigh” when he died.⁶⁹

Indeed, Washington was renowned for this trait, and his example provides a very well-known model of coolness analogous to Biddle’s. In his “Eulogy of Washington” (1800), Fisher Ames recalled how “The soul of Washington was...exercised to danger; and on the first trial, as on every other, it appeared firm in adversity, cool in action, undaunted, self-possessed.”⁷⁰ Washington knew the stakes of coolness; it won battles and saved lives. “The enemy,” he once told his men, “will endeavor to intimidate, by show and appearance...and, if opposed with firmness and coolness on their first onset, with our advantage of works and knowledge of the ground, the victory is most assuredly ours.”⁷¹ Washington’s performance at the Battle of Monongahela on July 9, 1755, offered a celebrated illustration of battlefield composure. Four bullets punctured his coat and “two

⁶⁹ As quoted in Phoebe Lloyd Jacobs, “John James Barralet and the Apotheosis of George Washington,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 12 (1977): 117. Jacobs notes that this circa 1800 handkerchief is in the collection of the New York Public Library. It was printed in Glasgow, Scotland.

⁷⁰ Fisher Ames, “Eulogy on Washington. Delivered at the Request of the Legislature of Massachusetts, February 8, 1800.,” in *Works on Fisher Ames. With a Selection from His Speeches and Correspondence. Edited by his Son, Seth Ames.* vol. 2., ed. Seth Ames (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1854), 73.

⁷¹ Washington as quoted in David Ramsay, *The Life of George Washington, Commander in Chief of the Armies of the United States of America, Throughout the War which Established Their Independence, and First President of the United States*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Joseph Hewett, and Cushing & Sons, 1832), 38.

horses [were] shot under him.”⁷² The engagement left British General Edward Braddock, his superior, severely wounded and his forces depleted. Yet, according to David Ramsay’s *The Life of George Washington* (1832), “throughout the whole of the carnage and confusion of this fatal day, Washington displayed the utmost coolness, and the most perfect self-possession.”⁷³ Some thought that they may have avoided defeat if Washington had led the group.⁷⁴ By the time of the first Congress, Jared Sparks wrote, “All the world acknowledged his [Washington’s] military accomplishments, intellectual resources, courage, coolness, and control over the minds of others.”⁷⁵

One can read *The Fall and Defeat of Gen. Braddock* [figure 4], a print published in Ramsay’s text, as a depiction of Washington’s coolness. General Braddock, shot, lays flanked by two officers. An upturned cart’s wheel surrounds his head in a halo, its spokes imparting a radiating glow and sense of ascent that anticipates his death four days later. Braddock’s image provides a more apt comparison for the tooth Biddle because heroic

⁷² Ramsay, 14.

⁷³ The passage continues by commending Braddock: “Braddock was undismayed amidst a shower of bullets, and by his countenance and example, encouraged his men to stand their ground.” See *ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁴ Ramsay adds that, “This reverse of fortune rather increased, than diminished the reputation of Washington. His countrymen extolled his conduct, and generally believed, that if he had been commander, the disasters of the day would have been avoided.” See *ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁵ Jared Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington; Being His Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and other Papers, Official and Private, Selected and Published from the Original Manuscripts; with A Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations*. vol. 1. (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1852), 139. Biddle, circa 1830-1831, commissioned a marble bust of Washington by Horatio Greenough; he likely shared the nation’s affinity for Washington. See Long, 163.

portraits on scrimshaw rarely show their sitters wounded. Both men are depicted as injured, though collected. Unlike Braddock, Washington, presumably the man before the general, stands. His extended right hand, perhaps, gestures to calm his superior. The hand visually links with the long diagonal line of soldiers battling Native Americans; he pictorially and metaphorically helps men hold the line. His other hand calmly balances a sword; Washington, surely distressed at the sight of his superior harmed, does not react with violent passion. The image also expresses his vulnerability: three men lie deceased behind him. Natives to the viewer's bottom right, unlike those above, are not pushed back by soldiers; Washington stands exposed. Still, he, like Biddle aboard the *Hornet*, is unperturbed, unlike the worry-faced man who props Braddock and his compatriot who affectionately holds the fallen leader's hand.

Like Washington's coolness, a ship captain's composure facilitated a crew's safety and success. Sailors appreciated an unruffled leader. General Maynard addressed men in the audience who "saw his [Farragut's] scorn for personal danger and heard his orders given with coolness and precision when aloft in the rigging of his ship, under a fire as strong and as accurate as ever assailed a fleet."⁷⁶ G.W. Bronson, in *Glimpses of the Whaleman's 'Cabin'* (1855), instructed readers that "commands, certainly in time of danger, should be given in a composed, distinct manner. They will then not confuse those

⁷⁶ General Horace Maynard as quoted in "Farragut. Unveiling of the Statue of the Heroic Old Admiral."

to who they are addressed, and need not be repeated.”⁷⁷ The crew’s obedience to the captain had an effect on “not only the success of the expedition, but...the safety of their lives.”⁷⁸ According to Thomas Nickerson, survivor of the 1820 whaleship *Essex* disaster (wherein a sperm whale rammed and sank the vessel), a captain’s “cool and undismayed countenance... brought all to their sober senses.” The leader provided an emotional compass his men followed.⁷⁹ The Biddle tooth presents such a model.

Biddle’s tooth-portrait exudes a fortitude at which the print [see **figure 3**] only hints, though the former borrows much from its source. Pin-prick production facilitates near identical portrait dimensions. Other correspondences abound: the sturdy and straight posture that gives both men a firm politeness; the similar martial uniforms, snug at the shoulders, which interject the sitter’s occupation into the visual narrative; the figures’ crisp termination beneath the elbows, returning one’s gaze to the face. The carver even treats Biddle’s hair with comparable care, faithfully representing the portrait’s strands and peaking tuft. Striations in the tooth’s cementum imitate the print’s billowing clouds; the carver may have been putting natural features to dramatic use. Biddle’s body is beneath and flanked by striations whose visual pull directs the viewer’s eyes toward the figure. The work testifies to the scrimshander’s skills of close observation, appropriation,

⁷⁷ G.W. Bronson, *Glimpses of the Whaleman’s ‘Cabin’* (Boston: Damrell and Moore, Printers, 1855), 85-86.

⁷⁸ “The American Whale Fishery,” 383.

⁷⁹ Thomas Nickerson as quoted in Nathaniel Philbrick and Thomas Philbrick, eds., *The Loss of the Whaleship Essex, Sunk by a Whale: First-Person Accounts* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 91.

and creativity. Regarding the latter, the carver, though copying the text's font, moved "James S. Biddle, Esq." to the tooth-portrait's tiered pedestal, trying, it seems, to place many elements from the print in the tooth's curved surface.

Other iconographical divergences from the original image—his gaze, transformative gash, and the pedestal—register Biddle's coolness. Starting with the gaze, black pupils harboring unmarked paper's flat twinkle look heavenward in the print. Two pictorial features accentuate their direction. The portrait's unadorned and immaterial frame slants slightly to Biddle's right. A lapel with buttons draws the viewer's eyes upward and, again, to the sitter's right. An assertive nose, spry hair, and flowing bow all gesture opposite, intensifying the pull of the sitter's preoccupation on his periphery. The injured captain, by contrast, contemplates something before him in the viewer's space. A bright, nearly texture-less face directs attention to eyes densely engraved, inked, and framed. Heavy eyebrows lack the print's nuanced density and suggest great weight over his eyes, the location of his mind. He does not bask in past praise but, collected, confronts an unseen presence or approaching future. The print sitter's disposition, however, borders on indifference, a different kind of coolness the tooth-portrait avoids.⁸⁰

The chin mark and pedestal provide more recognizable differences between the tooth-portrait and print. The chin mark conjures the *Hornet-Penguin* battle. The engagement tested then-master commandant Biddle's coolness, one shaped by tests in his

⁸⁰ E.C. Young's many sketches of Biddle—his back to the viewer—can be read as humorously suggesting the sitter's indifference. See Wainwright, 47.

naval career.⁸¹ Early in the contest, before the musket ball's wound, Biddle embodied the battle's violence; the *Analectic* notes that splinters "disfigured him considerably."⁸² An 1897 account by James Barnes characterized Biddle's wounds as rendering him "almost unrecognizable" and adds that "several times his men had asked him to go below."⁸³ Still he remained active. Theodore Roosevelt, in his 1882 book *The Naval War of 1812*, admired how the captain "coolly" kept his men from boarding the British vessel.⁸⁴ These seamen, Barnes wrote, "could scarcely be restrained from tumbling over the bow of the *Penguin* as her jib-boom crossed the *Hornet's* taffrail."⁸⁵ The crew, Biddle recalled,

⁸¹ In 1803, for example, the Bashaw of Tripoli captured Captain William Bainbridge, then-midshipman Biddle, and their shipmates. Despite opportunities for individual releases, the men refused to abandon company, opting "to support their own, as well as the country's honour, by firmness, cheerfulness and unconquerable fortitude." The tooth Biddle, unlike the print source, appears confined, signifying captivity. Biddle's captors offered him release, but he remained steadfast. After nineteen months the men returned to America and "received...every where...the most affectionate attentions" from citizens "who had sympathized most deeply in their [the crew's] captivity." Loyalty and calm resolve brought national accolades. See "Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle," 386. His poise and leadership as lieutenant under Captain Jones during the battle of the U.S.S. *Wasp* and the British sloop-of-war *Frolic* was also much commended. See "Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle," 388-391; "Biographical Memoir of Captain James Biddle of the United States' Navy," 436-439. Long quotes a period doggerel stating that the *Wasp's* attack on the *Frolic* had a mental effect on the latter vessel: "She [the *Wasp*] pierced through his [the *Frolic's*] entrails, she maddened his brain." As quoted in Long, 45.

⁸² "Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle," 395.

⁸³ James Barnes, *Naval Actions of the War of 1812* (London: Osgood, McIlvaine, & Co., 1897), 251. *The Port Folio's* similarly described Biddle's early injuries. See "Biographical Memoir of Captain James Biddle of the United States' Navy," 445.

⁸⁴ Roosevelt, 384.

⁸⁵ Barnes, 250-251.

“eagerly pressed me to permit them to board the enemy. But this I would not permit, as it was evident from the commencement of the action that our fire was greatly superior, both in quickness and effect.”⁸⁶ He did not submit to the emotional fervor riling his men and, as he correctly anticipated, the opponent surrendered.⁸⁷

The chin wound clearly attests to the post-surrender attack upon Biddle. Not all accounts of the battle mention the chin wound like the *Analectic* and the *Port Folio*’s “Biographical Memoir of Captain James Biddle of the United States’ Navy” published the same month. Cooper’s text, for instance, notes that the ball “just missed the chin.”⁸⁸ Biddle’s official letter records “a wound in the neck.”⁸⁹ Because microscopic examination of the tooth suggests that the mark is intentional and the portrait’s debt to Gimbrede’s print in the *Analectic* is clear, one can propose that the scrimshander worked from the *Analectic* for both the image and the narrative.⁹⁰ The wound-incision’s jaggedness contrasts with the stiff regularity of surrounding facial lines; its articulation suggests the puncture’s violence and imbues the line with the animacy of wounded flesh.

⁸⁶ Biddle as quoted in “Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle,” 394.

⁸⁷ As Long notes, Biddle “never permitted his craving for a fight to outweigh his prudence, as evidenced when he resisted the appeals of his crew to board the *Penguin*.” See Long, 59.

⁸⁸ Cooper, 387. Cooper notes two shooters.

⁸⁹ Biddle as quoted in “Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle,” 396.

⁹⁰ It is not a fault in the tooth or result of poor handling. Pouliot believes that the chin mark is intentional and was made at the time of the piece’s engraving. The finer scratches that cross Biddle’s face, however, are a natural result of wear and aging.

Biddle's "blood flowed profusely...[and] the anxiety of the crew became very great."⁹¹

His men shot his assailant, albeit too late. Biddle accepted surrender and, in a manner "honorable to this gallant young officer," reportedly refused treatment until his unscathed crew members finished attending to the injured.⁹²

The *Hornet*'s retreat from the H.M.S. line-of-battle ship *Cornwallis* the following month afforded Biddle another display of coolness that the tooth may also reference. On the reverse side of the artifact an unidentified stern-side seventy-four-gun ship-of-the-line **[figure 5]** pursues the captain. Seventy-four guns armed the *Cornwallis*, though, one should note, other ships were armed likewise. The British vessel chased the *Hornet* for thirty-six-hours. Biddle, "still weak from his wounds... continued to encourage his men by example and exhortation, preserved the utmost *coolness*, [and] exerted the most admirable skill."⁹³ The *Port Folio* celebrated his composure:

⁹¹ "Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle," 395.

⁹² Ibid., 396. Cooper commended the *Hornet*'s "coolness" by noting that the engagement "was one of the most creditable to the character of the American marine that occurred in the course of the war." Cooper 389 and 388. Praising the vessel complimented Biddle by proxy. The *Analectic* instructed readers that "when we contemplate a victory gained over an enemy, accustomed to triumph over every opponent, in every sea, it is not alone the splendour of the achievement that should monopolize our feelings. We should reflect on the vast expense of labor by which the skill and discipline necessary to this result was acquired, and on the patience, perseverance, zeal and ability of that admirable race of gallant officers, under whose auspices the system was brought to such perfection." See "Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle," 384.

⁹³ The *Analectic* adds, "There are few situations in which the sterling qualities of an officer are more severely tested than the one just described, nor is it easy to offer any higher praise than to say, that in this long and arduous struggle Capt. Biddle fulfilled the wishes of his friends, and the hopes of this country." See "Biographical Notice of Captain James Biddle," 397.

During this long and anxious chase, captain Biddle, though still much indisposed and debilitated by his wound, preserved his accustomed fortitude and presence of mind...he could not bring his mind to give up the ship, and his persevering and unyielding spirit was rewarded by the success which it merited, but could scarcely have expected. It is this gallant and heroic temper, which never despairs and is always master of itself, that gives its possessor a claim to much higher merit, than can be made by the ordinary efforts of courage. As their capture appeared to be almost inevitable, and the minds of the crew were depressed, captain Biddle called them together and addressed them....The effect of this address, was to reanimate the spirits of the crew, and to make them all pleased and proud to resign their fate, confidently and cheerfully, to the direction of their brave commander.⁹⁴

His men discarded nearly all of their ship's weaponry before finally outrunning their pursuer. Cooper informed readers that "Biddle gained nearly as much reputation for the steadiness and skill with which he saved his ship, on this occasion, as for the fine manner in which he had fought...a few weeks earlier."⁹⁵

Contemporary portraits by Gimbrede, Peale, and Furst omit reference to Biddle's injuries and the engagement with the *Cornwallis*. The earliest of those considered here, the Gimbrede engraving [see **figure 3**], floats a woundless captain in a celestial sky, untouched, divorced not only from battle but from earth itself. Peale painted Biddle in 1816 [figure 6]. The portrait's display in the artist's Philadelphia Museum elevated Biddle to the public stature of fellow Peale sitters. Yet, it covers a scar on the sitter's neck from the *Hornet-Penguin* encounter, denying a corporeal allusion to his battle

⁹⁴ "Biographical Memoir of Captain James Biddle of the United States' Navy," 447-448.

⁹⁵ Cooper, 392. The *Port Folio* shares Cooper's esteem for the *Hornet*'s performance: "The chase and escape of the Hornet, under extraordinary circumstances which have been related, is considered, by competent judges, as one of the most honourable acts of which the navy can boast." While at sea Biddle "was promoted to the rank of post-captain." Celebrations in New York and Philadelphia welcomed him upon his return. See "Biographical Memoir of Captain James Biddle of the United States' Navy," 449.

record and exemplary coolness.⁹⁶ A decorative sword sits still, bearing no mark of use. Furst's medal—first struck in January, 1820—portrays the captain in clean unadulterated profile [figure 7], though the reverse side of the artifact shows the *Hornet* and *Penguin* in combat. Only the tooth-portrait alludes to both seminal 1815 engagements wherein Biddle's coolness earned its reputation; it more adequately serves as a history of his emotional strength.

Also linking Biddle to depictions of noteworthy figures, striations in the tooth's cementum mimic those in marble, a traditional medium for patriotic portraiture. Sanderson noted that, "in all the republican states the first tribute of genius has been paid to the patriot or the hero who has promoted the cause of liberty, and maintained the independence and dignity of man. The animate canvas and the breathing marble have rescued his features from the grasp of death."⁹⁷ Sculpture animated both sitter and viewer; it excited feelings. One visitor to the Crystal Palace encountered an equestrian statue of Washington and explained "whenever my eye met it, my feelings involuntarily expanded, and rose in dignity with the subject."⁹⁸ Considering Sir Francis Chantrey's white marble statue of Washington in 1827, John Lowell wrote: "If I had never seen

⁹⁶ Doris Devine Fanelli and Karie Diethorn, *History of the Portrait Collection: Independence National Historical Park* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 90.

⁹⁷ Sanderson.

⁹⁸ "Starkville, Sept. 5," *Cayuga Chief* (Auburn, NY), 27 September 1853, 3. After encountering works by Hiram Powers, the same writer professed that, "one's critical demands are not only satisfied, but the emotions are immediately moved."

Washington himself—nor a painting, nor a bust of him, I should say of Chantrey’s, that it is the most perfect exhibition of Washington’s character. That face, person, and attitude, represent to my mind, calmness, dignity, elevation and purity of soul, a power over the minds of other men, the most firm and determined resolution, united with great coolness, and habits of reflection.”⁹⁹ The statue—note the writer’s attention to “that face”—inferred coolness, modeling character for Lowell.

Cool to the touch, marble, as a material, also betrayed a mental state. Two characters in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s 1839 *Hyperion: A Romance* contemplate Goethe’s “philosophic coolness,” his “calm and dignified attitude,” before referring to his Iphigenia who “is as cold and passionless as a marble statue.”¹⁰⁰ In Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun: or, The Romance of Monte Beni* (1860), Miriam tells the sculptor Kenyon that in making busts, “You turn feverish men into cool, quiet marble.”¹⁰¹ William Winter expanded upon this later in the century when he wrote that a stage critic, when requested to share his thoughts on a debut performance, “must preserve the coolness and composure of a marble statue, when every nerve in his system is tingling

⁹⁹ John Lowell, “Statue of Washington,” *Salem Gazette* (Salem, MA), 29 November 1827. He continues: “Such the statue appears to my eye. It perfectly represents Washington’s moral and intellectual traits.” He prefaces his description by noting his own ignorance of art: “For myself, I make no pretensions to the character of the connoisseur. I have formed no rules, by which to decide whether a piece of art ought or ought not to please. I judge of it simply by its effects.”

¹⁰⁰ Longfellow, 84.

¹⁰¹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun: Or, The Romance of Monte Beni* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1860; New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 119. This citation refers to the Penguin Books edition.

with the anxious sense of responsibility, haste, and doubt.”¹⁰² Presenting Biddle as such, the tooth’s allusions materialize character, lending him what *The Register of Pennsylvania* deemed in 1831 the “mental and corporeal coolness of...admirable stone.”¹⁰³

The plinth [figure 8] also conveys Biddle’s equanimity by anchoring him in space. A decorative band of black triangles connected with drooping lines—simulating garlands or festoons—wraps the tooth. The two platforms above—one with ornamentation suggesting a stylized craggy rock, one with the sitter’s name encased in a decorated rectangle backed by diagonal stripes—belong to Biddle’s portrait. They subtly narrow while ascending, making the transition from base to Biddle seamless, as if he too was made of their material. He appears more as a monument to the man rather than the man himself. Also connecting Biddle and the base pictorially, the width and dark density of the diagonals in the uppermost tier rhyme with those lines delineating the sitter’s form; the border of the rectangle with his name matches the speckled lining of his lapel; and the oval shape of his eyes and mouth reiterate that of the rocks in the lower tier. The bases’ width and steadily repeating shapes visually read as heavier, steadying Biddle’s tall portrait.

The visual device of the plinth differentiates Biddle’s portrayal from most scrimshaw portraiture. An unattributed circa 1846 tooth honoring James K. Polk,

¹⁰² William Winter, *The Press and the Stage: An Oration* (New York: Lockwood and Coombes, 1889), 37.

¹⁰³ “The Alchemist,” *The Register of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, PA), 29 January 1831, 65.

fashioned aboard the U.S.S. *Vincennes* and published in Flayderman's *Scrimshaw and Scrimshanders* presents a more common type of tooth portrait, its sitter isolated and indifferent.¹⁰⁴ Polk does not reciprocate the viewer's gaze. A cross-hatched, rope-like medallion encases the president, hovering above an arched-back eagle and draped American flags. Waves swell beneath, but only the bird—who shares the sitter's ambivalence—connects Polk to the world about him, pictorially breaking the medallion. Still, the eagle is a symbol—nothing concrete connects Polk to an environment that ruffles waves and flags alike. By contrast, Biddle confidently engages the audience's space with the resolve of a statue. Furthermore, his tooth has a flattened bottom, enabling the attachment of a base to prop the artifact. Like a traditional stone bust, the tooth can stand up; its sculptural qualities reinforce that of Biddle's image.

Further conferring the stoicism of stone, the tooth's decorative manipulation—a reductive process—is analogous to stonework. Incising, especially, lends Biddle's portrait an inherent fortitude as the image resides firmly *in* its medium unlike the portraits noted above.¹⁰⁵ In Gimbrede's picture the axis that starts with a tuft of hair and continues down through Biddle's nose, neckpiece, and the opening of his uniform anchors him compositionally, but the gentle stipple engraving belies any emotional heft. Likewise,

¹⁰⁴ For an image of the tooth, see Flayderman, 7.

¹⁰⁵ Robert Friedel believes that, "material itself conveys messages, metaphorical and otherwise, about the objects and their place in a culture." I concur and add that the effects of a work's manufacture can also prove metaphorical. See Robert Friedel, "Some Matters of Substance," in *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture*, ed. Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 42.

Peale's painterly application of color—above a surface, not pressed or dug into it—similarly underwhelms the captain's stolidity. Furst's profile portrayal in high relief infers movement outward and forward, emphasizing the tooth-portrait's contrary interiority.¹⁰⁶ The reductive process of carving, then, intrinsically imparts the character of stonework. Paper and ink, canvas and paint, and metal coinage, speak little materially or metaphorically to Biddle's coolness, unlike marble or ivory.

Biddle's coolness resonates with images of exemplary whalemens, a comparison that the tooth insists upon via its material. *Merchants' Magazine* characterizes patient whalers in a whaleboat as "men, calm as marble statues."¹⁰⁷ Others also celebrate this calm of body and mind. Men aboard the *Pequod* in *Moby-Dick* exhibit these qualities. In a passage worded like that extolling Biddle in the *Analectic*, Ishmael credits Stubb's excellent pitchpoling to a "deliberate coolness and equanimity in the direst emergencies."¹⁰⁸ "The utmost skill and coolness," according to Alexander Starbuck's *History of the American Whale Fishery*, helped one captain avoid a lanced bull sperm

¹⁰⁶ Regarding the profile's inferences of movement, see Jennifer L. Roberts, "Copley's Cargo: *Boy with a Squirrel* and the Dilemma of Transit," *American Art* 21 (2007): 29-32.

¹⁰⁷ "The American Whale Fishery," 385. The essay continues, explaining that whalemens, "have combined in their character the most valuable traits; cool, determined, and brave, they bear the weight of duties, and encounter hazards, which could hardly be appreciated upon the land." See "The American Whale Fishery," 392. Olmsted refers to "coolness and intrepidity in danger" as "those indispensable qualifications in the character of a seaman." See Olmsted, 129.

¹⁰⁸ Melville, 311.

whale that “rushed open-mouthed at the boat.”¹⁰⁹ Doctor John B. King’s journal—written aboard the Nantucket whaler *Aurora*—records that a whaleman needs “cool judgment” and a “cool head.”¹¹⁰ In a passage near the source’s conclusion, a ship’s steward retrieves a spyglass for his captain at the sight of a whale. The steward tempers his joy “to preserve his dignity and imitate the coolness of the captain.”¹¹¹ Proper seamen, the tooth and these passages propose, control their emotions in the face of danger.

¹⁰⁹ Starbuck, 124.

¹¹⁰ Doctor John B. King, Whaling Log kept aboard the Nantucket Whaling Ship *Aurora* from October 14, 1837-December 1, 1840, entry dated 8/22/1840, unpaginated, Log 12, 220-Ships’ Logs Collection, Nantucket Historical Association.

¹¹¹ Ibid., passage not dated. During his voyage King read “Zimmerman on Solitude,” a text likely similar to J. G. Zimmerman’s *Solitude*. See King, entry dated 11/12/1840. *Solitude* encourages readers “to acquire that cool judgment and intrepid spirit which enables you to form correct estimates of the characters of mankind, and of the pleasures of society.” See J. G. Zimmerman, *Solitude* (New York: David Huntington, 1813), 21. In the book’s conclusion, the author quotes “an eloquent preacher” who asks “How should...[a] man discharge any part of his duty aright, who never suffers his passions to cool?” See Zimmerman, 401. The spelling of the author’s name is in keeping with that presented in the source cited. Other publications of *Solitude* offer different spellings.

Section 5

MADNESS

As a sign, the sperm whale tooth presents the opposite of Biddle's pictured coolness: a monster's madness. Teeth engraved with portraiture juxtapose sitter and animal. Here Biddle and beast meet. The tooth contrasts its subjects' emotional nature much like August Kiss's sculpture *Amazon* (1843). One reviewer's account of the work merits full quotation:

But by far the most spirited piece of sculpture in the exhibition [at the Crystal Palace], is the *Amazon*, a hunting scene by Kiss. A powerful woman is mounted upon the most powerful of horses; a tiger has sprung and fastened from before, upon the shoulder of the horse, and buried his jaws deep in the horse's flesh, his nose corrugated, and his eyes flaming intensest fire from under the flattened eye-brows. The tiger's attack, instead of frightening the horse, maddens him; and turning partly aside his immensely broad, tense-arched neck, with ears flat, eyes rolling fire, and nostril clenched, and mouth open, he is in the act of venging fury upon the foe. The female bestriding the rump of the horse, raises her spear, and is in the act of plunging it into the head of the assailant. The spirit of the horse and tiger, is in fine contrast with the coolness of the rider.¹¹²

The piece stages the rage of contesting passions—animal fury fighting animal fury—and contrasts it with the “coolness of the rider” who, like a harpooner, calmly wields a spear to puncture a frenzied beast. The tooth corporeally suggests this character of animality. It signifies differently than an ornamented piece of panbone or a piece of baleen for it is part of the sperm whale's feared offensive arsenal.

¹¹² “Starkville, Sept. 5.” The writer then notes an analogous piece wherein an Indian battles a serpent, adding that “each equestrian is attacked by a powerful foe, and each preserves that coolness, so requisite in danger.”

The sperm whale's sensationalized irascibility made them "monsters of the briny deep."¹¹³ Once attacked, unlike Biddle, they acted "with the energy of delirium"¹¹⁴ and became "blind with rage."¹¹⁵ Beale visualized the animal's combativeness: "Mad with the agony which he endures from these fresh attacks, the infuriated 'sea beast' rolls over and over...he rears his enormous head, and, with wide expanded jaw, snaps at everything around."¹¹⁶ Some met challenges not posed. Simply upon seeing a ship, one whale acted: "He seemed to be aware of our intention, for he turned and rushed towards us with the design of giving us a *fawing*, which we narrowly escaped. During the next half hour he

¹¹³ "Adventure of a Whale." Many accounts were likely sensational as not all whales proved monstrous: "intentional mischief on the part of a whale, it must be observed, is an occurrence which is somewhat rare." See William Scoresby, *An Account of the Arctic Regions, with a History and Description of the Northern Whale-Fishery.*, vol. 2 (London: Hurst, Robinson and Co., 1820), 360. Beale suspected many stories of "fighting whales" to be "much exaggerated accounts of the real occurrences." See Beale, 183. According to Sir William Jardine, "This leviathan is, like the mysticetus, remarkably timid, and is readily alarmed by the approach of any unlooked for object." See Sir William Jardine, *The Naturalist's Library. Mammalia. Vol. VI. On The Ordinary Cetacea or Whales.* (London: S. Highley, 1837), 165. Yet, he adds, "These enormous creatures...are sometimes known to turn upon their persecutors with unbounded fury, destroying every thing that meets them in their course." See Jardine, 171. Starbuck recorded that "Scarcely a whaler, however, but can tell some story of the attacking of boats by these monsters, and the attacks and parryings require on the part of those having charge of the boats the utmost nerve, adroitness and precision." See Starbuck, 122.

¹¹⁴ King, passage not dated.

¹¹⁵ Joseph C. Hart, *Miriam Coffin, or The Whale-Fishermen. A Tale.*, vol. 2. 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1835), 149.

¹¹⁶ Beale, 165.

chased us, and it was with much difficulty that we avoided him.”¹¹⁷ A whale could move “at railroad speed,” its impact devastating.¹¹⁸ Owen Chase, survivor of the *Essex* attack, recalled seeing the whale “smite his jaws together as if distracted by rage and fury” before the beast approached the ship “with tenfold fury and vengeance in his aspect.”¹¹⁹

Many images of sperm whales emphasize the animal’s monstrosity and contrast it with human vulnerability. *The American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge* informed readers that the “[sperm] whale is not so timid as the Bone whale, and has more means of offence. It can attack with its square head, its jaw, or its flukes, and either of them are usually fatal to its opponent.”¹²⁰ Prints like *Capturing a Sperm Whale*, published by Cornelius B. Hulsart in 1835, and *Sperm Whaling, No. 2—“The Conflict.”*, published by Charles Taber & C. New Bedford in 1858, revel in reversed sailor fortunes. Swiftly casting the crew overboard, the whale in the latter image rises like a stone beneath the boat, its colossal weight and strength—earthly in magnitude—overwhelming its pursuers. Perhaps without the intent of the artist, the print ably illustrates a passage in *Moby-Dick* wherein Ishmael imagines a “portentous and mysterious monster” that inhabited the “wild and distant seas where he rolled his island

¹¹⁷ “A Whale with the Tooth-Ache,” *Christian Advocate and Journal* (New York, New York), 7 October 1852, 164.

¹¹⁸ Abbot.

¹¹⁹ Owen Chase as quoted in Olmsted, 143.

¹²⁰ “The Whale, and Whale Catching,” 6.

bulk.”¹²¹ A formidable tail mocks the uppermost sailor’s raised hand, which shares its shape and angle, emphasizing the whale’s size and power. Whalers in *Capturing a Sperm Whale* fare better: while a similarly wide and powerful tail stoves a boat, a second craft assaults the leviathan who spouts blood.¹²²

Destruction of a Whaleboat from the Ship Ann Alexander of New Bedford, a print published in *Gleason’s Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion* on January 3, 1852 [figure 9], fixates on the devastating effects of a sperm whale’s jaws. On August 20, 1850, an “enraged animal...lifted open its enormous jaws, and, taking the boat in, actually crushed it into fragments as small as a common-sized chair!”¹²³ An approaching harpooner heads a second boat, weapon in hand. He gazes forward, devoid of emotion, like the statue residing directly above him in another article. Both figures face the same direction and, save the whaleman’s extended left arm, share a similar pose. The harpooner, the page proposes, stands calm and undaunted like a statue.¹²⁴ His fixed composure accentuates the flailing chaos of the stove boat scene before him. Though partially obscured by

¹²¹ Melville, 9.

¹²² For more on these images, see M.V. and Dorothy Brewington, *Kendall Whaling Museum Prints* (Sharon, MA.: Kendall Whaling Museum, 1969), 3 and 6.

¹²³ His men saved, the captain “gave the monster battle a second time.” The whale, “seized it [the second whaleboat] in his wide-spread jaws, and crushed it into atoms.” The whale then rammed the ship, “knocking a great hole entirely through her bottom, through which the water roared and rushed impetuously.” See “Encounter with a Whale,” *Gleason’s Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*, 3 January 1852, 5.

¹²⁴ This figure resonates with a passage in *Moby-Dick*: “Starbuck himself was seen coolly and adroitly balancing himself to the jerking tossings of his chip of a craft, and silently eyeing the vast blue eye of the sea.” See Melville, 188.

waves, the whale's pointed teeth portend the future of the felled, those panicked men in the boat and water.

The print compositionally and thematically recalls John Singleton Copley's 1778 painting *Watson and the Shark* wherein a different "monster" panics the boatmen at center.¹²⁵ Much here augurs violent ends. The shark's sharp white teeth—enlivened by their near transparency—draw attention to the vulnerability of the similarly-hued naked body out of its element. The harpooner punctures the shark with his severe stare in the tense moment preceding the thrust of iron. Even the formal arrangement of figures—a pyramid—echoes the form of a shark tooth.¹²⁶ Before the "monster" could consume him, Watson was "wonderfully and literally saved from the jaws of death."¹²⁷ The explicit display of the beast's power and human fragility in images like *Watson* and *Destruction* made human personal courage all the more impressive. Both contrast the fearful horror of "monster" teeth with the cool self-possession needed to subdue them, a poise that both harpooners and Biddle's tooth-portrait exude.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ "London, April 30," *The Independent Ledger, and the American Advertiser* (Boston, MA), 24 August 1778, 2.

¹²⁶ Jules David Prown, *John Singleton Copley*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 272-273.

¹²⁷ "London, April 30."

¹²⁸ Another feature relates *Watson* to *Destruction*. Prown explains that, "Copley was not representing a significant or historic event, but merely the unusual maiming of a quite ordinary individual. Such subjects were customarily the province of cheap, sensational pictorial journalism rather than of history painting." See Prown, *John Singleton Copley*, 273.

Sailors justifiably feared the sperm whale's mouth and teeth. Unlike panicked fins or thundering flukes, teeth helped these monsters capture humans.¹²⁹ Many period accounts exemplify these fears. A brief article published in 1827 shares an event wherein a sperm whale collided with a boat, throwing a young man "a considerable Height from the Boat, and when he fell the Whale turned with her devouring Jaws opened, and caught him: he was heard to scream when she closed her Jaws, and part of his Body was seen out of the Mouth, when she turned, and went off."¹³⁰ Joseph C. Hart's 1835 story *Miriam Coffin, or The Whale-Fisherman* produces a comparable scene of horror: "the jaws of the monster closed upon his [harpooner Thomas Starbuck's] body, leaving the legs of the victim projecting from the mouth!"¹³¹ Both stories report a victim visually and perhaps physically parted or swallowed. Other stories were more explicit about the captured body's fate.

The tooth alludes to corporeal harm in ways Biddle's other portraits cannot. Like the story of Jonah saved by God's grace from the beast's belly and certain fate, Biddle survived his encounter with death. Yet, portrayed on a whale's tooth, he returns to danger; he metaphorically awaits death inside the whale's mouth. Many knew the story of Jonah and those with less fortunate outcomes. Whales consumed foes. "A Regular Yankee Story!," a fictional account published in 1832, tells of a whale that, "made

¹²⁹ Sperm whales do not chew their prey. They capture them then swallow.

¹³⁰ "Boston, October 2 1776.," *Republican Star and General Advertiser* (Easton, MD), 21 August 1827, 2.

¹³¹ Hart, 149.

towards him [Jack] with open jaws, and—swallowed him, oar and all!”¹³² A whale’s expansive mouth (“Jonah’s coach”)¹³³ was “as capacious as a good-sized bedchamber,” its throat could “admit the body of a full-grown man.”¹³⁴ Picturing a mouth crushing a boat “into fragments as small as a common-sized chair”¹³⁵ or comparing its size to a bedchamber evidences prevalent fears of residence therein and made the horror more palpable to a wider readership. In this sense, Biddle’s image faces the “*entrance* to the *abyss*,”¹³⁶ his unwavering coolness—embodied by his gaze and marble-like stolidity—exemplary and admirable. Like the Washington remembered on the handkerchief, Biddle appears “in the full Possession of all his Fame, like a Christian and an Hero, calm and collected, without groan and without a sigh.”¹³⁷

Furthermore, the Biddle tooth-portrait presents an object (a sperm whale tooth) and is a product of an occupation (whaling) that could harm the human body. The wound-mark conflates the captain’s defacement with the whale’s weaponry—its curve echoes that of the tooth. Moreover, the image visually severs his hands, legs, and waist. Whaling mishaps could result in physical amputations. Thomas M. Barker, writing in 1830 aboard

¹³² “A Regular Yankee Story!,” *The Philadelphia Album and Ladies’ Literary Portfolio*, 7 April 1832, 109.

¹³³ Bronson, 55.

¹³⁴ “The American Whale Fishery,” 377.

¹³⁵ “Encounter with a Whale.”

¹³⁶ “A Regular Yankee Story!”

¹³⁷ As quoted in Jacobs, 117.

the Nantucket whaler *Enterprise*, refers to a peer's partial leg amputation following a "line getting foul round his ankle."¹³⁸ The aforementioned Hulsart print tells viewers that the publisher "lost an arm" while whaling.¹³⁹ King's journal includes a separate section detailing how to perform amputations, for "when an arm or leg has been crushed or otherwise injured to such a degree that the loss of it is inevitable, amputations should be performed, thus making a healthy wound in the place of a mashed or torn mass that would certainly mortify and in all probability destroy the sufferer."¹⁴⁰ Undergoing the procedure aboard demanded great composure. Crabb notes that, "The man of *courage* goes with the same *coolness* to the mouth of the cannon, as the man of *fortitude* undergoes the amputation of a limb."¹⁴¹ Though the half-length portrait was a common way to depict a sitter, it takes on unsettling resonances when paired with a sperm whale tooth. Unlike oil, the tooth was not rendered abstract; it clearly testifies to a mutilation

¹³⁸ Thomas M. Barker, Whaling Log kept aboard the Nantucket Whaling Ship *Enterprise* from July 14, 1829-July 28, 1832, entries dated 8/1/1830 and 8/3/1830, unpaginated, Log 76, 220-Ships' Logs Collection, Nantucket Historical Association. *Merchants' Magazine* describes a "line, which runs almost with the speed of light" attached to a fleeing whale. See "The American Whale Fishery," 385. Melville evocatively discusses a still whale line: "the calm is but the wrapper and the envelope of the storm; and contains it in itself, as the seemingly harmless rifle holds the fatal powder, and the ball, and the explosion; so the graceful repose of the line, as it silently serpentines about the oarsman before being brought into actual play—this is a thing which carries more of true terror than any other aspect of this dangerous affair." See Melville, 240.

¹³⁹ As quoted in Brewington, 3.

¹⁴⁰ See King, passage not dated.

¹⁴¹ Crabb, 303.

that started with a harpoon's puncture, continued with the whale's dismemberment, and concluded with the tooth's decorative carving.

Section 6

INSCRIBING COOLNESS

Decorated teeth embody the precursor to madness: anxiety. Long days at sea exacerbated uneasiness. Scrimshanders carved ivory when becalmed and at leisure.¹⁴² Yet inactivity could lead to what Captain Brown referred to as an “anxiety of mind.”¹⁴³ Whale-less waters caused him to vent in his journal, “O what horror fills my heart.”¹⁴⁴ Stillness similarly unnerved King: “A listlessness pervades all things. Why is it that one can not read or do any thing with interest when in a calm at sea?”¹⁴⁵ J. G. Zimmerman, who King read aboard, linked idleness to anxiety: “The minds of the idle persons are always restless; their hearts never at perfect ease; their spirits continually on the fret; and

¹⁴² An 1826 log from Dartmouth’s *By Chance* reads: “All these 24 hours of small breezes and thick foggy weather, made no sale. So ends this day, all hands employed Scrimshonting.” As quoted in Flayderman, 3. Some vessels did not work on Sunday. See Bronson, 32. This would allow one time to scrimshaw if inclined.

¹⁴³ Edwin Peter Brown, 69. Other entries include lamentations: “O who can form any idea what my feelings...” and “Who can tel the feelings of this troubled soul.” See Edwin Peter Brown, 80 and 194. Flayderman notes the potentially unpleasant demeanor of scrimshanders when working, yet he does not expand upon scrimshaw as embodying anxiety. He positions scrimshaw, rather, as a product of “boredom and ennui.” See Flayderman, 99-103.

¹⁴⁴ Edwin Peter Brown, 81.

¹⁴⁵ King, entry dated 8/24/40.

their passions goaded to the most unwarrantable excess.”¹⁴⁶ Calm seas inverted the desired natural order. Many sailors likely scrimshawed to, in the words of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “keep randomness from invading their mind,” to stay cool.¹⁴⁷

The Biddle tooth evokes and encourages coolness much like other nineteenth-century forms, utilitarian and aesthetic. Biddle’s portrait recalls prints of floating churches, mid-century institutions that assuaged seamen’s emotional discomfort.¹⁴⁸ Compare his form to the image of New York’s Floating Church of Our Savior for Seamen pictured in Philadelphia’s *The Ladies’ Companion* [figure 10]. Scrimshanders used such publications for pictorial sources.¹⁴⁹ Captain and church face the viewer as pyramidal forms, the former echoing the shape of the tooth, itself evoking a crooked gothic window. In each, a smaller triangular opening resides at center, an entrance for

¹⁴⁶ Zimmerman, 353. He adds, “Idleness, even in social life, inflicts the severest torments on the soul; destroys the repose of individuals; and, when general, frequently endangers the safety of the state.” See Zimmerman, 353. Whalers produced scrimshaw in periods of potential desperation. Aboard the Nantucket whaleship *Mary Mitchell*, Joseph McCleave, Jr. wrote, “I wish it would rain Sperm Whales as it appears we shan’t see any unless some such phenomena doeth happen.” Though the author does not discuss scrimshaw, the passage suggests the deep despair one could feel aboard. See Joseph McCleave, Jr., Whaling Log kept aboard the Nantucket Whaling Ship *Mary Mitchell* from June 28, 1835-May 27, 1838, entry dated 5/26/1837, unpaginated, Log 242, 220-Ships’ Logs Collection, Nantucket Historical Association.

¹⁴⁷ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “Why We Need Things,” in *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture*, ed. Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 22. The author argues that objects “help focus and objectify emotions.” See Csikszentmihalyi, 25.

¹⁴⁸ Reverend B.C.C. Parker, “The Floating Church of the Redeemer, For Seamen and Boatmen in the Port of Philadelphia” *Godey’s Magazine and Lady’s Book*, April 1849, 252.

¹⁴⁹ For pictorial resources for the whaleman-carver, see Flayderman, 39; Frank, 75.

churchgoers in the print and a void facilitated by pinned clothing in the portrait. Atop the church a flag reading “Bethel” waves; Biddle’s hair shares the flag’s direction and curves. Each subject rests upon a wide horizontal platform that accentuates the thrust and weight of their tiered ascents.¹⁵⁰

Pictorial resonances between tooth-portrait and print aside, Biddle tooth and floating church share affective agency. “A Sailor’s Home,” a poem published in 1848, states a floating church’s aspirations: “Arrest the thoughtless, check the rash,/Win home the wanderer, from his ways;/The broken-hearted bind with balm,/And fill the penitent with praise.”¹⁵¹ Sea and ship could inhibit correct emotional development. In an 1849 essay for *Godey’s Magazine and Lady’s Book* discussing Philadelphia’s Floating Church of the Redeemer, Reverend B.C.C. Parker argued that the sailor lives in exile “from all that can warm the heart and humanize the feelings, no wonder that he gives himself up to a reckless course of life, and suffers the overflowing of his passions.”¹⁵² *Merchants’ Magazine* described whalemens, in part, as “warm in their imaginations, impulsive.”¹⁵³ Parker implied the sailor’s propensities to become much like the whaler’s reckless prey:

¹⁵⁰ Accentuating Biddle’s righteousness, the tooth’s most dominant line, its curved tip, frames him, forming an arch that enshrines the officer as if a holy figure, a sanctified patriot in an ecclesiastical niche.

¹⁵¹ “The Sailor’s Home,” *Trenton State Gazette*, 30 December 1848, 1.

¹⁵² Parker. For an additional essay articulating Christians’ concern for seamen, see Edward Payson, “An Address to Seamen,” *American Advocate and General Advertiser* (Hallowell, ME), 29 December 1821, 4.

¹⁵³ “The American Whale Fishery,” 382. Bronson’s essay attributes nobler qualities to these men. See Bronson, 28-30. Though complimentary of seamen’s character, it addresses their ability to be led by “mere animal gratifications.” See Bronson, 31.

“When his sterner feelings are aroused, he can be as hard-hearted as the most relentless of monsters.”¹⁵⁴ The *Gleason’s* page [see figure 9] shows one monster sailors encountered and, surmounting the terror, a floating church. These institutions, like the Biddle tooth, endorsed self-possession and offered a means of positively directing wayward emotions.

Biddle’s portrait calls to mind another maritime structure that guided seamen, literally and metaphorically. His portrayal resembles a lighthouse. The tiered, ornate platforms (the top striped as one could a lighthouse) support a stone-evoking, narrowing body that shores up a face left largely un-textured, bright. Whalers’ logs include references to lighthouses.¹⁵⁵ Dotting the coast, they helped seamen establish their location and avoid destructive shoals and rocks that could prematurely end a ship’s journey.¹⁵⁶ Whale oil fueled many lighthouses.¹⁵⁷ Appropriately, then, lighthouses appear on scrimshaw. Biddle’s allusion to a lighthouse seems less far-fetched when one considers *Firm as the Surge Repelling Rock* [figure 11], the frontispiece of Ramsay’s *The Life of Washington*. Washington, an exemplar of coolness, is represented as a rock that, like a lighthouse, steadfastly braves fervent waves.

Washington’s and Biddle’s coolness in combat metaphorically corresponds with period depictions of lighthouses weathering great storms. Consider *War without and Peace within* [figure 12], published in Robert Michael Ballantyne’s *The Lighthouse*:

¹⁵⁴ Parker.

¹⁵⁵ For one example, see Barker, entry dated 7/14/1829.

¹⁵⁶ “The American Whale Fishery,” 384 and 394.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 394.

Being the Story of a Great Fight Between Man and the Sea (1865). The character Ruby Brand contemplates Scotland's Bell Rock Lighthouse (built 1807-1810) in a passage that bespeaks the structure's significations:

the impression of immovable solidity which its cold, grey, stately column conveyed to his mind, contrasted powerfully with the howling wind and the raging sea around. It seemed to him, as he sat there within three yards of its granite base, like the impersonation of repose in the midst of turmoil; of peace surrounded by war; of calm and solid self-possession in the midst of fretful and raging instability.¹⁵⁸

Ballantyne later contrasts the "peace, comfort, [and] security" of the scene within the lighthouse to that "madly raging conflict" outside.¹⁵⁹ *War without* illustrates this juxtaposition. The print's composition highlights the structure's poise. Upright, the lighthouse parallels the pull of the vertical picture frame, drawing its strength. The tower's direct ascent compliments the straight horizontal lines of the sky, associating the lighthouse with celestial composure. The orderly view of the interiors further reinforces the tower's stolidity.

Earlier nineteenth-century texts also juxtaposed lighthouses with a fervent sea. The Eddystone Lighthouse, according to one 1823 text, symbolized "the triumph of Genius over the most furious elements,"¹⁶⁰ a conquest similar to the seaman's triumph

¹⁵⁸ Robert Michael Ballantyne, *The Lighthouse: Being the Story of a Great Fight Between Man and the Sea*. (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1865), 346. The text also values coolness. Brand—distinguished in the navy by his "coolness and courage"—arrives at the lighthouse after fleeing a French ship. His swim to the structure was successful, in part, due to his "presence of mind." See Ballantyne, 335 and 344.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 365.

¹⁶⁰ *Rough*, 3.

over the whale verified by the decorated tooth. In his 1829 poem “The Light House,” Revered George Woodley similarly boasted: “Bright, through vapor, mist, and cloud,/That vainly strives its beam to shroud,/Glow the monitory blaze/Over wild and trackless ways.”¹⁶¹ This triumph over nature, as *War without* shows, was hard fought. Waves shatter against the lighthouse, their flame-like spray bursting into a black sky, as if attempting to extinguish lamp and stars. Woodley imagined a similar scene: the lighthouse “Ris[es] from the dark wild sea,/(Awful in immensity!)/Based upon a craggy rock,/That long has braved the infuriate shock/Of angry billows widely gushing,/And in mighty onset rushing,/As combined to overwhelm/Rock and tower in ocean’s realm.”¹⁶² The lighthouses in Woodley and *War without* withstand the pummeling, undaunted.

Yet, *War without* underplays the mental tax of lighthouse keeping. A “contentment of mind”¹⁶³ made one more suitable for the position. Long periods of inactivity, like that aboard a whaleship, bred anxiety. The author of “An Episode in the History of the Eddystone Lighthouse: A Thrilling Narrative” (1849), for instance, quickly finds the occupation unfavorable.¹⁶⁴ He has “nothing to do, nothing to look forward to, nothing to wish for, nothing to care about, nothing to excite an idea,” and is “chained to

¹⁶¹ Revered George Woodley, “The Light House,” *The Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics* (Portsmouth, NH), 11 April 1829, 1.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ “The Light-House on Seal Island and Its Keeper,” *Daily Evening Transcript* (Boston, MA), 30 August 1843, 4.

¹⁶⁴ “An Episode in the History of the Eddystone Light House. A Thrilling Narrative.,” *Inquirer* (Nantucket, MA), 21 May 1849, 1. A difficult relationship with his fellow keeper exacerbated the unpleasantness.

my rock to suffer its solitude in silence and without a hope.”¹⁶⁵ Unlike the sturdy lighthouse, the author breaks down—“I began to lose all control over them [my ideas]”¹⁶⁶—and, figuring himself mad, contemplates suicide.¹⁶⁷ Before he can end his life, “too much anxiety” contributes to his fellow keeper’s death.¹⁶⁸ Shortly thereafter, a ship approaches the unlit lighthouse. The author’s attempt at composure fails: “‘Let me be calm and collected,’ I said to myself hurriedly, ‘I must be calm—if anything occur to me afterwards which I might have done, woe be to me if my excitement shall have hindered me thinking of it while it was yet time—some way there must be,’ so I said to myself, but of course there was none.”¹⁶⁹ The ship crashes and all are lost; his anxiety of mind claims multiple lives. *War without*’s keepers, to the contrary, weather the storm with an equanimity reminiscent of Biddle’s deportment on the tooth.

¹⁶⁵ He laments, “I began to understand and sympathise with the restlessness of wild animals in captivity.” See, “An Episode in the History of the Eddystone Light House. A Thrilling Narrative. Continued.,” *Inquirer* (Nantucket, MA), 23 May 1849, 1.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ He records how deeply the situation affected him: “Sometimes I burst into tears and cried like a child for an hour, but tears brought me no relief.”; “At times I was induced to dash my head against the wall, and so end my miserable life at once; often was I about to throw myself into the sea--, it was easy, and all my wretchedness would be ended with the plunge.”; “Sometimes I thought I was going mad—nay, sometimes I even thought that I had gone mad.” He connects his mental plight with the devil’s work: “no consideration could ever justify man in acting the devil’s part by corrupting, alienating, and destroying the mind.” See *ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ “An Episode in the History of the Eddystone Light House. A Thrilling Narrative. Concluded.,” *Inquirer* (Nantucket, MA), 25 May 1849, 1.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

Peale's painting *The Artist in His Museum* (1822) displays self-possession in a way uncannily akin to the Biddle tooth and complementing the intentions of the floating church and the evocations of the lighthouse. Peale—his body towering with a bright light upon his head, his mind—lifts a curtain, revealing his Philadelphia Museum's Long Room dense with didactic portraits and natural specimens, including a mastodon skeleton.¹⁷⁰ This is a fiction; the skeleton was not exhibited in this space. Yet it is a key component of the portrait. A woman sees the lumbering bones and raises her hands aghast. In contrast, Peale stands collected—as unaffected by the bones about him as the portraits gazing into the gallery.¹⁷¹ The sitter's attire helps one identify the center-most picture along the back wall as, I believe, that Peale painted in 1816. A button on Peale's coat breaks Biddle's frame, as if singling out the work. Moreover, Peale's left leg creates a diagonal from the mastodon jaw up towards the captain, connecting Biddle and another set of leviathan teeth. *The Artist* offers a historical parallel for the tooth's Biddle-beast juxtaposition.

The museum's Mammoth Room—where the mastodon skeleton resided—offered its own provocative pairing. “Encircling the door” to the space, a visitor recorded, “are

¹⁷⁰ According to David C. Ward, Peale wanted “to use history and biography as guides to right conduct in the future.” The portraits participate in this guiding. See David C. Ward, *Charles Willson Peale: Art and Selfhood in the Early Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 160.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 180-181. Ward hints that Peale's clothes render him, as Biddle on the tooth, stone or bust-like: “Peale's clothes, neither foppish, luxurious, nor effeminate fancy dress, are so severe that they barely exist at all: they are simply black cloth pedestals supporting that mighty head.” See *ibid.*, 174.

the lower Jaw-bones of a Whale, 13 1-2 feet long.”¹⁷² Another visitor noted seeing “the under jaw of a whale, which was about seven feet wide”¹⁷³ at the museum. Given the structure of the sperm whale jaw (wide at the skull and then narrowing sharply), this jaw might not have belonged to a sperm whale. Nonetheless, its presence connected mastodon and whale—and visitor and whale intimately: one, presumably, walked through the jaws upon entering or exiting the room. Either way, the jaw towered over visitors, likely inspiring a sublime encounter like that experienced before the mastodon bones. A Mr. Duncan informed Charles Augustus Goodrich that “a human being shrinks into insignificance, beside the bony fabric of this enormous antediluvian.”¹⁷⁴ The bones testified to the beast’s size, stirring the imagination. Peale believed that “whatever might have been the appearance of this enormous quadruped when clothed with flesh, his massy bones can alone lead us to imagine.”¹⁷⁵ Having much less to reference, one could easily aggrandize the whale’s “appearance,” increasing a sense of formidability.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² “Peale’s Museum,” *The Port Folio* IV (November 1807): 296.

¹⁷³ A. Traveller, *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the United States* (New Haven: Printed for the Author, 1826), 218.

¹⁷⁴ Mr. Duncan as quoted in Charles Augustus Goodrich, *The Family Tourist. A Visit to the Principle Cities of the Western Continent: Embracing an Account of Their Situation, Origin, Plan, Extent, Their Inhabitants,. Manners, Customs, and Amusements, and Public Works, Institutions, Edifices, & c. Together with Sketches of Historical Events* (Hartford: Case, Tiffany and Company, 1848), 311.

¹⁷⁵ Charles Willson Peale, “Mammoth,” *The Philadelphia Gazette, and Daily Advertiser*, 24 December 1801, 2.

¹⁷⁶ Stewart, 91-92.

Other period sources conflated the leviathans and measured their power against that of man. Reverend Henry T. Cheever, for instance, titles the eighth chapter in his 1850 whaling memoir “Atlantic Ocean Mammoths and Monsters.”¹⁷⁷ *Merchants’ Magazine* more explicitly relates the giants: “The whale may be considered to the sea what the mammoth is to the land, and while the creation of these numerous animals attests the power of God, their capture, amid so many hazardous circumstances, evinces also the hardihood and enterprise of man.”¹⁷⁸ Peale’s confident gaze amid massive bones and the Long Room’s arrangement of portraits above natural specimens assert a sense of order and enterprise.¹⁷⁹ When physically and mentally manifested, these characteristics facilitated success. Conquering the whale, Beale explained, proved “the great power of the *mind* of man.”¹⁸⁰ The practice of coolness offered dominion over formidable opponents, whether a tusked mammoth, monstrous whale, or the H.M.S. *Penguin*.

¹⁷⁷ Reverend Henry T. Cheever, *The Whale and His Captors; or, The Whaleman’s Adventures, and the Whale’s Biography, as Gathered on the Homeward Cruise of the “Commodore Preble.”* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850), 128.

¹⁷⁸ “The American Whale Fishery,” 376.

¹⁷⁹ Ward, 179-180. Peale, of course, did not encounter a mastodon in combat.

¹⁸⁰ Beale, 167.

Section 7

CONCLUSION: BEYOND BIDDLE

Regarding the *Hornet-Penguin* engagement, Cooper stated, “It is by such exploits that the character of a marine is most effectually proved.”¹⁸¹ Olmsted believed that “exposure to every variety of peril” taught the whaler “coolness and intrepidity in danger.”¹⁸² The Biddle tooth conjures such great adversity. Shot and chased, Biddle weathers all with marble’s composure. Madness and monstrosity illuminate this calm. Susan Stewart argues that the souvenir’s “otherness speaks to the possessor’s capacity for otherness: it is the possessor, not the souvenir, which is ultimately the curiosity.”¹⁸³ Though the original maker and owner of the tooth remain unknown, Biddle—towering, confident—visually possesses the object; he is the curiosity here. His “otherness” is the exemplary emotional character the tooth’s connotations cannot crush. He commandeers the sperm whale tooth, projecting a coolness modestly modeled, uniquely elicited, and stove by no foe.

I think this interpretation of one sperm whale tooth engraved with a heroic portrait might benefit future studies of scrimshaw. First, the Biddle tooth-portrait acts as a punctum in the larger body of scrimshaw; it asserts and brings into relief every tooth-

¹⁸¹ Cooper, 389.

¹⁸² Olmsted, 129.

¹⁸³ Stewart, 148.

portrait's inherent collocation of emotional characteristics: coolness (man) and madness (whale). This occurs even if the object lacks the Biddle tooth's rich iconographical peculiarities. Second, the Biddle tooth-portrait might not be considered great art in a traditional aesthetic sense. It is undoubtedly great, however, in its idiosyncrasies' "power of expansion"¹⁸⁴ or ability to "gather"¹⁸⁵ and act.¹⁸⁶ This essay has elucidated the shared significations of seemingly disparate objects. Studying these common resonances enables one to see the artifacts and the past anew. It insists that the historian respects all material culture and makes problems inherent in formal categorizations explicit. A "whole life external to...[the] portrait"¹⁸⁷ awaits patient students freed from explicating normative "facts."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Barthes, 45.

¹⁸⁵ Heidegger, 118.

¹⁸⁶ Latour, 214.

¹⁸⁷ Barthes, 57.

¹⁸⁸ Bill Brown, 140.

FIGURES



Figure 1: Unknown Scrimshander, Engraved Sperm Whale Tooth (portrait of James Biddle Esq.), circa 1830-1860, 6.5 x 2.62." Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.

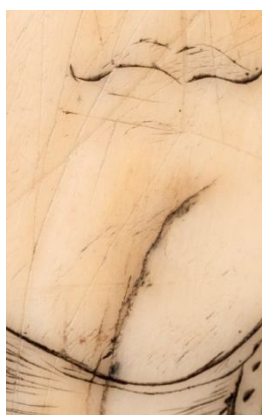


Figure 2: Engraved Sperm Whale Tooth (detail of chin). Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.

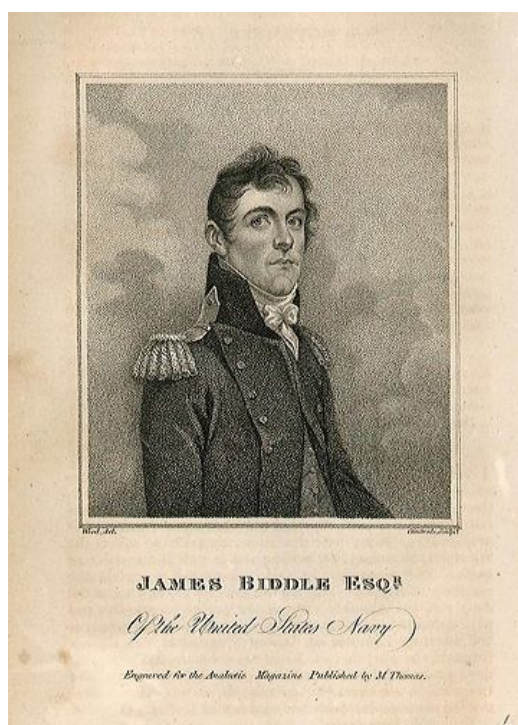


Figure 3: Thomas Gimbrede, *James Biddle Esq.* (after Joseph Wood), published in *The Analectic Magazine*, November 1815, p. 394. Courtesy of the Winterthur Library: Printed Book & Periodical Collection.



Figure 4: *The Fall and Defeat of Gen. Braddock*. Reprinted from David Ramsay, *The Life of George Washington, Commander in Chief of the Armies of the United States of America, Throughout the War which Established Their Independence, and First President of the United States*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Joseph Hewett, and Cushing & Sons, 1832).



Figure 5: Engraved Sperm Whale Tooth (vessel opposite the portrait of Biddle). Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.



Figure 6: Charles Willson Peale, *James Biddle* (detail), 1816. Collection of Independence National Historical Park.



Figure 7: Moritz Furst, James Biddle Medal (front), c. 1820-1885. Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society.

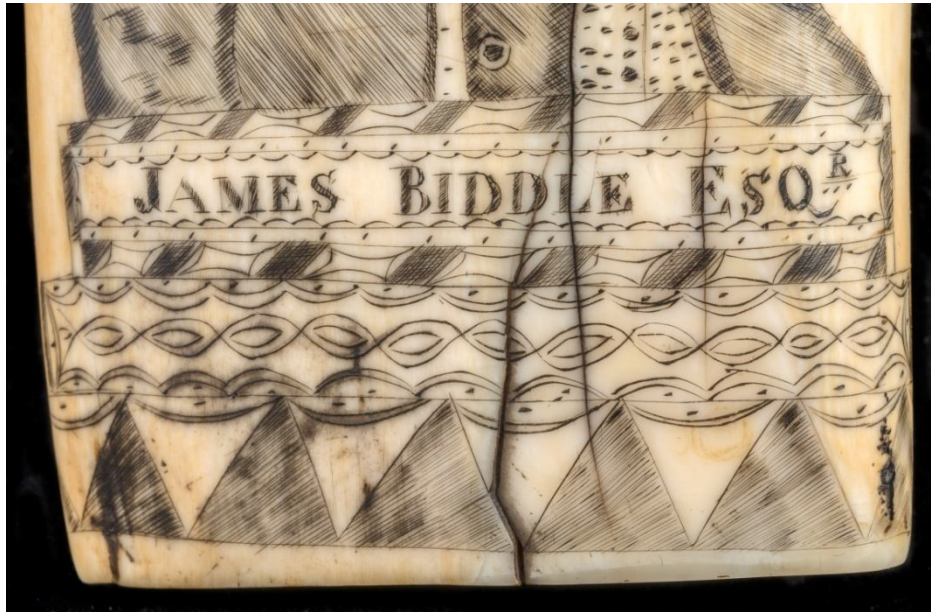


Figure 8: Engraved Sperm Whale Tooth (detail of plinth). Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.



FLOATING CHURCH FOR SEAMEN AND BOATMEN, PHILADELPHIA.

ENCOUNTER WITH A WHALE.

The ship *Ann Alexander*, Captain John S. Debliss, sailed from New Bedford, Massachusetts, June 1, 1850, for a cruise in the South Pacific for sperm whale. Having taken about 800 barrels of oil in the Atlantic, the ship proceeded on her voyage to the Pacific. After reaching the grounds known as "off-shore grounds," the crew began to look for whales. On the 20th of August, having attacked a whale, the enraged animal turned upon the boat and, rushing at it with tremendous violence, lifted open its enormous jaws, and, taking the boat in, actually

crushed it into fragments as small as a common chair! Having picked up his men, the captain of the *Ann Alexander* gave the monster battle a second time. As soon as the whale perceived the demonstration being made upon him, he turned his centre suddenly, and, making a tremendous dash at this boat, seized it with his wide-spread jaws, and crushed it into atoms, allowing the men barely time to escape his vengeance by throwing themselves into the ocean. The crew then made their way to the ship. Soon after they gained the vessel, Capt. Debliss was at this time standing in the high bows

FLOATING CHURCH.

The Floating Church was designed and built by a self-taught architect and builder of New York, Mr. Clement L. Dressing, for the Churchmen's Missionary Association for the seamen of the port of Philadelphia. The interior decorations were executed by H. and O. Flint, of New York, which has been so much admired as a work of art. The Floating Church is a great novelty and ornament to Philadelphia, where so few spires are to be seen; and located at the foot of one of the local streets, will be discovered at the distance of a mile in the centre from its locality. By the published documents of the association, the following gentlemen compose the board of managers, by whose efforts the edifice has been erected, assisted by benevolent individuals of that city, who feel an interest in the religious benefit of the class for whom it is intended: Right Rev. Bishop Foster, D. D., James C. Booth, William C. Kent, D. D., E. Collins, Isaac Walsh, George Calhoun, G. B. Marshall, Edward L. Clark, T. H. Wickers, Joseph Massey, Joseph E. Harvey, William G. Allen, James M. Axtell, George S. Twells. The chaplain in charge of the church is the Rev. Mr. Trevelyan, formerly a lieutenant in the navy, and now an ordained minister in the Episcopal Church. The building is firmly fastened on a substantial dock 38 feet by 96, with guards extending 4 feet outside around it, and resting on two boats of 80 tons each, placed ten feet apart, and strongly connected together. The church will seat 500 persons, and has a five-toned organ and bell. The top of the spire is 70 feet from the deck, and the edifice is 30 feet wide by 65 long, including the vestry. This church was designed especially for the benefit of seamen and boatmen who frequent that port. The *seas* are all free.

STATUE OF GUTENBERG.

The following engraving is from Mayence: it is a noble memorial to Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, or at least one of those to whom that invention is ascribed with the greatest probability—for there are many claimants of the honor. The statue is a colossal one, in bronze, cast by Crozier, of Paris.



STATUE OF GUTENBERG, AT MAYENCE from a model by Thorwaldsen. The pedestal is of marble, from the quarries of Lahn; the four lions bear his relics, in bronze. The statue faces the Rhine, and is on one of the best sites in Mayence. Gutenberg, for so he is called generally (his proper name literally interpreted, is "Good-flesh"), was born in 1398, in a house that yet exists.

on the larboard bow, with craft in hand ready to strike the monster a deadly blow, should he appear, the ship moving about five knots, when working on the side of the ship, he discovered the whale rushing towards her at the rate of 15 knots. In an instant the monster struck the ship with tremendous violence, shaking her from stem to stern. Captain Debliss immediately descended into the fore-cabin, and there, to his horror, discovered that the monster had struck the ship about two feet from the keel, abreast the foremast, knocking a great hole entirely through her bottom, through which the water

roared and rushed impetuously. Springing to the deck, he ordered the mate to cut away the anchors and get the cables overboard, to keep the ship from sinking. The ship was then sinking very rapidly. The captain went into the cabin, where he found three feet of water; he, however, succeeded in procuring a chronometer, sextant and chart. He then came upon deck, ordered all hands into the boats; the ship was then on her beam-ends, her top-gallant yards under water. They pushed off, and the ship sank. On the following day they were picked up by the good ship *Nantuxet*, of Nantuxet.



DESTRUCTION OF A WHALEBOAT FROM THE SHIP ANN ALEXANDER OF NEW BEDFORD.

Figure 9: Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion, 3 January 1852, p. 5. Courtesy of the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

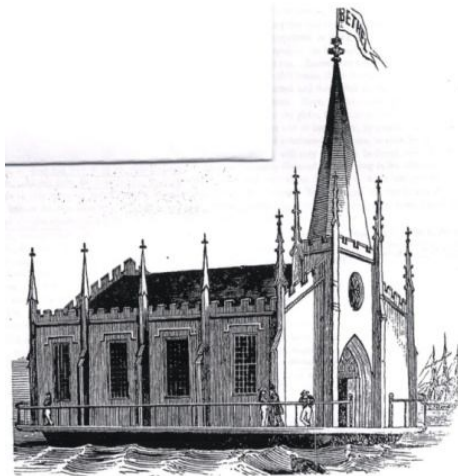


Figure 10: *Floating Church of Our Savior for Seamen*. Reprinted from *The Ladies' Companion*, September 1844.

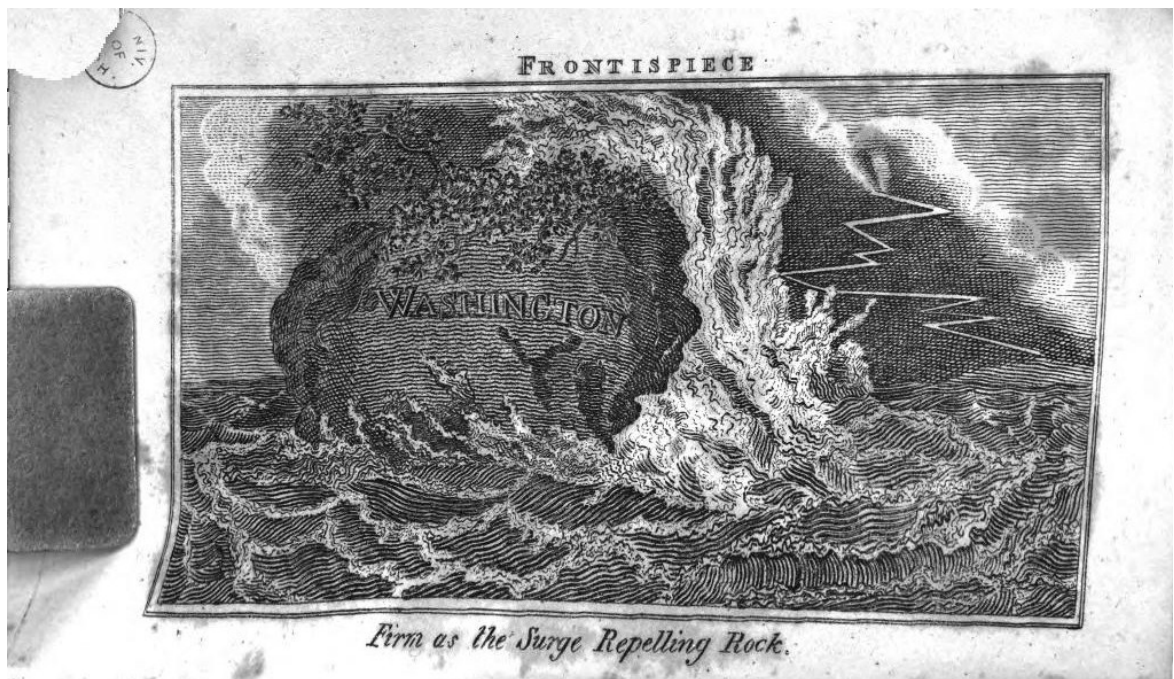


Figure 11: *Firm as the Surge Repelling Rock*. Reprinted from David Ramsay, *The Life of George Washington*, frontispiece.

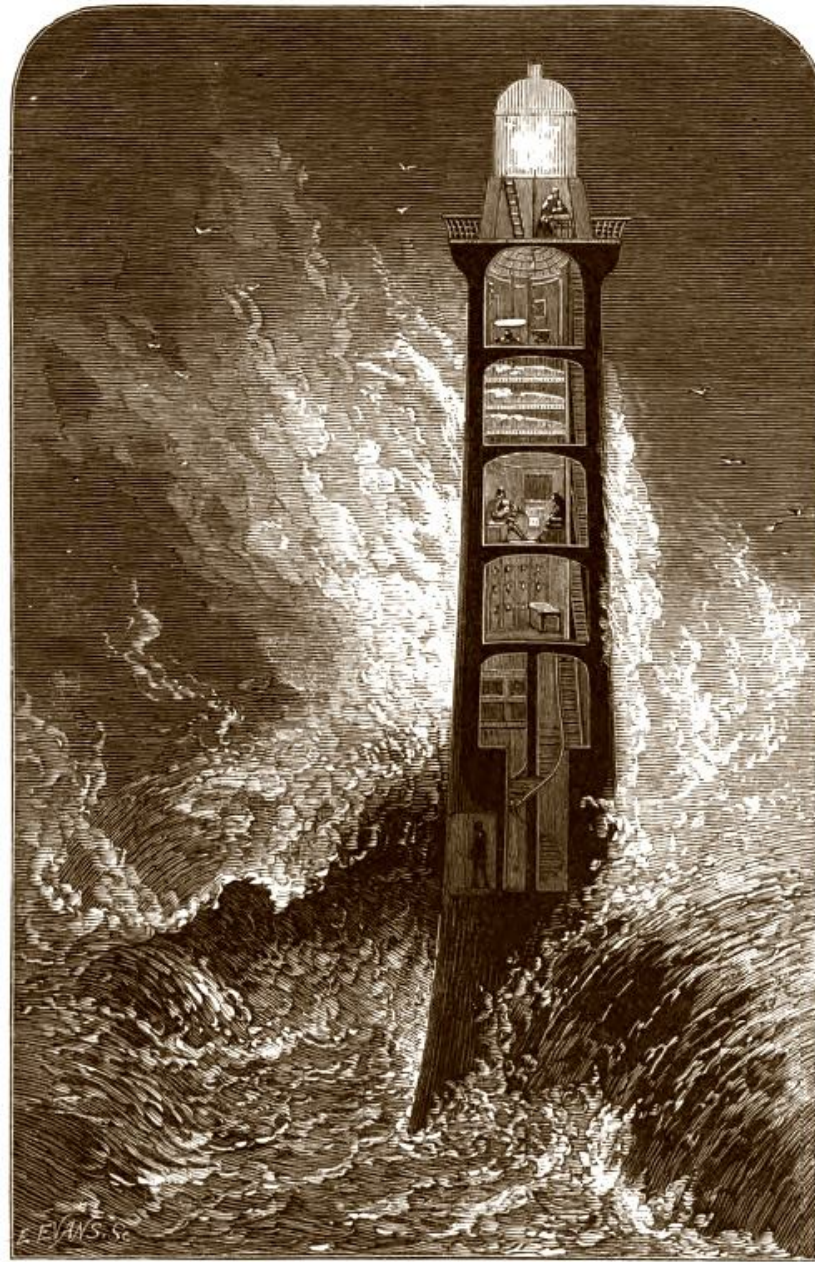


Figure 12: *War without and Peace Within*. Reprinted from Robert Michael Ballantyne, *The Lighthouse: Being the Story of a Great Fight Between Man and the Sea* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1865), frontispiece.

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April 17, 2013

Joseph Lamerd
Lois F. McNeil Fellow
Winterthur Program in American Material Culture
Academic Programs Department
Winterthur Museum, Library, & Garden
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Rev 3/08



Joseph Larnerd <

Re: Biddle portrait access-- update on tomorrow's appointment

Diethorn, Karle

To: Joseph Larnerd

Mon, Apr 15, 2013 at 3:34 PM

Joseph--

Okay, no permission needed. We always appreciate acknowledgement in captions, though. "Collection of Independence National Historical Park" is fine. Thanks.

Karle

On Mon, Apr 15, 2013 at 2:48 PM, Joseph Larnerd

wrote:

Hello Karle,

Thank you for your prompt response. I took a photo of the painting last year and would like to use it in my thesis.

Best,
Joseph

On Mon, Apr 15, 2013 at 2:41 PM, Diethorn, Karle

wrote:

Joseph--

If it's a photo you took of our bust, our permission isn't needed. If it's not a photo you took, how did you acquire it? If it's from the web, again, our permission isn't needed. However, I would caution that a web photo of this object probably isn't accurate, i.e. not reflective of the conservation work we had done on the bust in 2009. If it's a photo you purchased from us, the permission to use form would have been part of the paperwork our rights and reproductions librarian sent to you. So, let me know which scenario is correct.

Karle

On Mon, Apr 15, 2013 at 2:29 PM, Joseph Larnerd

wrote:

Hello Ms. Diethorn,

Thank you again for your help last year. I enjoyed looking through the files on Peale's portrait of James Biddle. I am currently wrapping up my thesis. Do I need permission to use an image of Peale's portrait of Biddle in my master's thesis? Any guidance would be appreciated. Thank you!

Best,
Joseph

On Sun, Jul 15, 2012 at 1:51 PM,

wrote:

Happy to help.

Karle Diethorn



Joseph Larnerd <

Thesis Research Inquiry -- James Biddle Medals

NYHS Rights & Repro <rightsandrepro@nyhistory.org>
To: Joseph Larnerd

Mon, Apr 15, 2013 at 10:21 AM

Hello Joseph,

For thesis use, we won't charge a permission fee. If you need a high-resolution digital file, let me know and I can invoice for new photography.

Very best wishes,
Rob

Robert Delap, R&R Assistant
Department of Rights and Reproductions
The New-York Historical Society

170 Central Park West
New York, NY 10024

On Fri, Apr 12, 2013 at 9:20 AM, Jillian Pazareckas
Hi Joseph,

wrote:

You're very welcome. I'm glad your visit and our collections have been useful to your thesis. I am cc'ing Rob Delap, from the Department of Rights and Repro, who will be able to answer your question about permissions. If you're willing to share a copy of your thesis when you're done, we'd love to hear what you had to say about the Biddle medals and possibly add it to our object files for future researchers.

Many thanks and all the best. Jill

On Thu, Apr 11, 2013 at 4:56 PM, Joseph Larnerd
Hello Jill,

wrote:

Thank you again for permitting my access to the Biddle medals in November. Do I need permission to publish an image of one of the museum's Biddle coins in my thesis?

Best,
Joseph

On Thu, Nov 29, 2012 at 8:18 AM, Joseph Larnerd
Hello Jill,

wrote:

This is just a friendly reminder regarding my appointment at 1pm today. If anything comes up, please let me know (267-709-9325). I look forward to arriving at the NYHS!



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Authorized Signature for the Applicant / Publisher *Joseph A. Larnesse* Date 5/2/13
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 Signature for The New Bedford Whaling Museum *Mark Procknick* Date 5/2/13
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