Whale Port by Mark Foster

A Great Resource For Adults, Too!

Long before the invention of electricity or the discovery of underground reservoirs of fossil fuels, people depended on whale oil to keep their lamps lit. A few brave Colonial farmers left their fields and headed out to sea to chase whales and profits farther and farther off shore. When they did, towns sprung up around their harbors as demand grew for sailors, blacksmiths, ropewalkers, and the many other craftsmen needed to support the growing whaling industry. Through the fictional village of Tuckanucket, Whale Port explores the history of these towns. Detailed illustrations and an informative narrative reveal the way Tuckanucket’s citizens lived and worked by sharing the personal stories of people like Zachariah Taber, his family and neighbors, and the place they called home. Whale Port is also the story of America, and the important role whales played in its history and development as people worked together to build communities that not only survived, but prospered and grew into the flourishing cities of a new nation.

Features:
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My Personal Review:
The son-father team of Mark and Gerald Foster have collaborated to produce an eye-pleasing book that not only offers a creative approach toward explaining the history of New England whaling over time, but is a crash course in all the terminology and processes related to the whaling industry, maritime trades that developed because of it, and other aspects of Colonial life.
I recommend this book for children AND adults who want to use it to prepare for, or supplement, a visit to any whaling point of interest, such as the New Bedford Whaling museum in Massachusetts, Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut, a whale watch, or any other whale-related tourist spot worldwide.
This book also provides a starting point for those who want to learn to appreciate whales, understand how human action profoundly affects their survival on this planet, and gain historical knowledge from which to decide how to act today to protect these important and endangered mammals. The exquisitely detailed, labeled illustrations by Gerald Foster are educational in and of themselves, but together with Mark's comprehensive historical instruction, this book becomes a gem. Well done!

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