



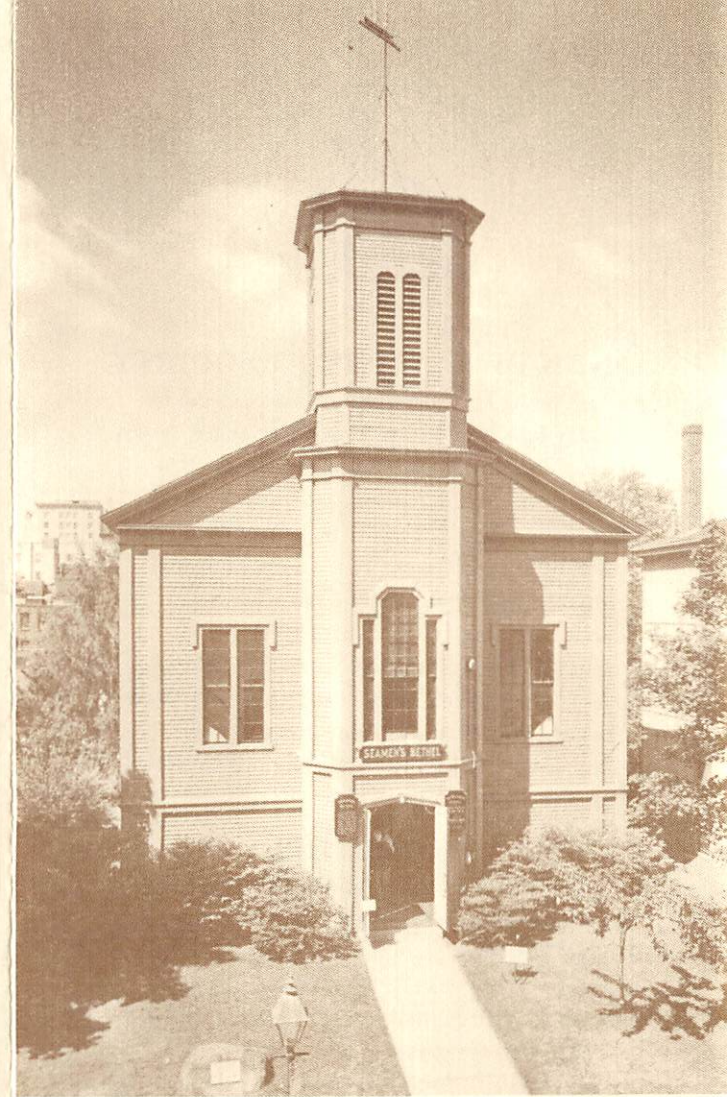
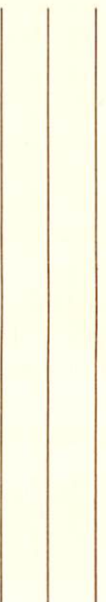
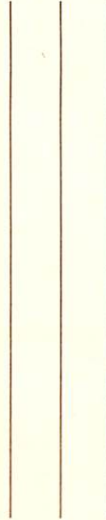
MARINER'S HOME

On Johnny Cake Hill, just north of the Seamen's Bethel, stands the Mariner's Home. It was built in 1787 as a private residence for William J. Rotch, Jr. on what is now the corner of William and Water Streets.

In 1850 it was offered to the Port Society by Mrs. Sarah Rotch Arnold, wife of James Arnold, to be used as a home for mariners. The expense of relocating it was paid for by Mr. Arnold with the stipulation that the Ladies Branch of the Port Society would provide \$3,000 for furnishing the home.

It opened in 1851 and later, until the death of Chaplain Charles S. Thurber in 1955, the chaplains and their families would be residents and caretakers of the Mariner's Home.

When transient seamen—whether they are outward bound on a voyage, or just returning—desire a clean and wholesome place to stop for a while, these "Sons of Neptune" are made welcome in the Mariner's Home, which is dedicated to the shelter and comfort of the men "that go down to the Sea in Ships; that do business in great waters."



Seamen's Bethel

THE WHALEMAN'S CHAPEL
OF MELVILLE'S "MOBY DICK"

15 JOHNNY CAKE HILL
NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740

PLACE
STAMP
HERE



NEW BEDFORD PORT SOCIETY

During the 1820's when the whaling industry in New Bedford was rising to its height, a number of the city's leading citizens gave their deep consideration to the arduous and licentious lifestyles of the nearly 5000 seamen employed at this port. The young, impressionable men from all walks of life were exposed to some of the worst temptations imaginable. Accordingly, on June 2, 1830, these citizens organized under the title of the "New Bedford Port Society," later incorporated, dedicated to the moral and religious improvement of Seamen.

THE BETHEL

To further promote this good work proposals were made to construct a "Mariners Chapel" as early as February 1831. Late in the summer of 1831 construction began and the church was completed and dedicated on May 2, 1832. The present structure differs in several ways from that of the original building, mainly due to damage from fire in 1866. In July 1867, the Seamen's Bethel reopened with the pulpit replaced and the seating turned to face the West and the west gallery removed. The stairs were enclosed, a vestibule built and the tower added which gave the building a more church-like appearance, considerably different from the structure Herman Melville first visited in 1840 and described in "Moby Dick."

The most striking reminders of what the Bethel is all about are to be found on the cenotaphs lining the walls of the chapel. They are visible memorials to those men who lost their lives at sea.

"It needs scarcely to be told," wrote Melville, "with what feelings, on the eve of a Nantucket voyage, I regard those marble tablets, and by the murky light of that darkened, doleful day read the fate of whalers who had gone before me."

There are 31 black-framed marble stones, 22 adorning the walls of the main floor and nine on the galleries. While 23 predate 1900, it is not known when the first were installed. They include tributes to men of the present day fishing fleet.

Among the regular church services still conducted at the Bethel are:

Vesper Services generally are on the third Sunday each month.

The Festival of Thanksgiving for the Harvest of the Sea;

The Christmas Candlelight Vespers;
The Memorial Day Dock Side Service

Weddings, Baptisms and memorial services are conducted by our Chaplain with special consideration to our "Waterfront Parish."

Pastoral Counseling is also available at times of personal need or family crisis.

CHAPLAINS

The Society has had only eleven regular chaplains.

The first Chaplain was Enoch Mudge, who held office for 12 years. The reference to Father or Chaplain Mapple in Herman Melville's famous whaling epic "Moby Dick" is believed to be a characterization of Rev. Enoch Mudge.

Rev. Enoch Mudge, 1832-1843
Rev. Moses Howe, 1843-1858
Rev. James D. Butler, 1859-1863
Rev. Samuel Fox, 1863-1869
Rev. James D. Butler, 1870-1889
Rev. Edward Williams, 1889-1909
Rev. Charles S. Thurber, 1910-1955
Rev. Gene D. Landry, 1957-1965
Rev. Sidney Adams, 1969-1979
Rev. C. Leonard Newbert, 1980-1989
Rev. Roy A. Richardson, 1989-1993

