



The Lost Fleet: A Yankee Whaler's Struggle Against the Confederate Navy and Arctic Disaster

Marc Songini

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It's the mid-19th century and the American whaling fleet, the wonder and envy of the maritime nations of the world, is struck by one hammer blow after another. Yankee whalers are contending with icebergs, storms, rogue whales, sharks, hostile natives, and disease. Now conditions are getting even worse, and the chances become ever slimmer a whaling master and his crew will return from a voyage safe and profitable. The scarcity of whales, the increasing dangers of going further into the Arctic, and the roving Confederate privateers are making this already difficult profession ever riskier. Many whalers give up the life--but some carry on the vocation.

One such man is a tall captain from Wethersfield, Connecticut, Thomas William Williams. Not only does he go out on voyage after voyage, but he even takes on board with him his tiny wife, Eliza, and his infant son and daughter.

The Lost Fleet's thrilling narrative recounts Williams' remarkable career, including a daring escape from the Confederate cruiser *Alabama* and a daring rescue and salvage of lost ships off Alaska's coast. A family saga, a true narrative of adventure and death on the high seas and a detailed and well-researched look at the demise of Yankee whaling--Songini has crafted an historical masterpiece.

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