

entries begin and end with tedious repetitive observations of the wind and weather. Whales sighted, chased and taken are generally, though not invariably, also mentioned. Few other matters are considered worthy of inclusion, and then their treatment is concise and insignificant in comparison. It is very very rare indeed to locate a logbook entry of a descriptive nature which can be used in, for example, local historical research. Sherman not unfairly compares the monotony of logbook entries with the reading of a dictionary. Some journals, being personal rather than official records, more frequently include descriptive comments and observations, but many are no less terse and narrow than logbooks.

Notwithstanding the above dire warnings to researchers, and especially those who regrettably have to produce results by some pre-ordained deadline, it must be admitted that relevant items have been, and may continue to be, found among whaling records, some of which are of outstanding interest to historians, anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, biologists, etc. For example, no doubt meteorologists could extract extraordinarily detailed accounts of the coastal weather conditions in 1839, 1840, and 1841, and certainly historians might find value in interpreting the historical events of those and other years with some reference to the local weather, e.g. the incidence and magnitude of influenza epidemics among the Maoris.

New Zealand research workers who wish to go beyond the published sources can anticipate willing co-operation from the librarians and contemporary whalers of New England who invariably have proved to be most helpful and generous with their time and knowledge. However it is essential, and only fair, that each enquirer exhibit a substantial element of self help and express these enquiries as specific, precisely defined, requests. This guide has been prepared to advise New Zealanders, including those without any previous acquaintance whatsoever with whaling records, how most profitably to formulate such enquiries, and to indicate and locate the basic minimum of information without which they cannot reasonably seek such assistance.

It is thus essential before passing to a description of the individual American institutions and a listing of their collections, that this guide include an extended description of the preliminary work which can and must be accomplished in New Zealand.

While even beginners are likely to be acquainted with, and to have profitably consulted, the various historical works published by Robert McNab over fifty years ago, regrettably few New Zealanders are aware of the extensive compilations contained in the unpublished Master of Arts thesis by P. G. Canham in 1959 entitled *New England Whalers in New Zealand Waters, 1800-1850*. Single handed, he has scoured various New England sources to produce exceptionally detailed lists of known