

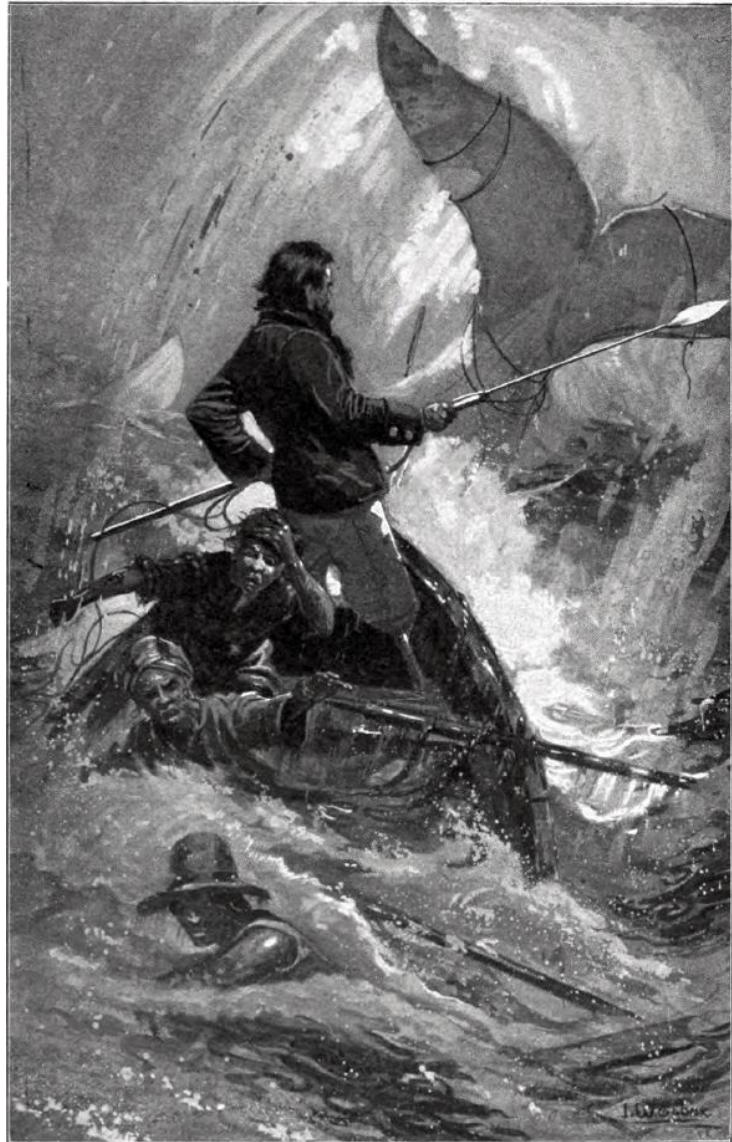
# American Minute with Bill Federer

Herman Melville's classic novel *Moby Dick*, 1851, and how a Hawaiian Missionary rescued an American sailor from being eaten by cannibals

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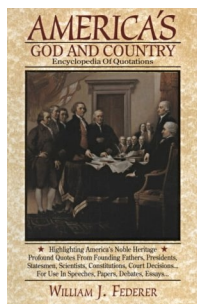
"There she blows!" cried the lookout, sighting the great white whale, **Moby Dick**.

The classic book, ***Moby Dick***, was written by New England author **Herman Melville**, published in 1851 ... [continue reading American Minute here ...](#)



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In the novel, **Captain Ahab**, driven by revenge, sailed

the seas to capture this **great white whale** who had bitten off his leg in a previous encounter.

The crew of **Captain Ahab's** ship, the ***Pequod***, included:

- **Ishmael, the teller of the tale**, which begins the line: "Call me Ishmael"-the name of Abraham's son who was sent away;
- **Chief Mate Starbuck**, a Quaker from Nantucket, for whom the Seattle-based coffee franchise took its name;
- **Second Mate Stubb**;
- **Captain Boomer**;
- **Harpooneer Tashtego**, a native American of the Wampanoag Tribe; and
- **Harpooneer Queequeg**, a tattooed Polynesian from a **mysterious cannibal island** in the **South Pacific**.

"Tattoo" originated from "tatau" or "tatu," which were body markings originally associated with **natives, aborigines, cannibals and headhunters of Southeast Asian islands**, such as:

Polynesia, Micronesia, Samoa, Tahiti, Tonga, New Zealand, New Guinea, Malagasy, and the Marquesas Islands.

**"Tattoo"** was first mentioned by **naturalist Joseph Banks**, who accompanied **Captain James Cook** on the ship ***HMS Endeavour*** as he explored the **Pacific, 1768-1771**:

"I shall now mention the way they **mark themselves indelibly**, each of them is so marked by their humour or disposition."

**Sailors** brought **tattoos** to port cities around the world, where, for a century, they were associated with **salty sailors, rough working men, slaves, convicts,** and **circus sideshows.**

In the 1956 film ***Moby Dick***, actor **Gregory Peck** played **Captain Ahab.**

**Ahab** finally caught up with **Moby Dick** in the Pacific Ocean.

As fate would have it, when the harpoon struck **Moby Dick**, the rope flew out so fast it snagged **Ahab**, pulling him out of the boat.

Entangled in the harpoon ropes on the side of the great whale, the revenge-filled **Captain Ahab** was pulled underwater to his death.

The angered **Moby Dick** then sinks the *Pequod*.

The only survivor was **Ismael**, who spoke a line from the **Book of Job**, “**And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.**”

**Melville** drew inspiration for his novel from the real life fate of a whaling ship from Nantucket, the **Essex.**

In 1820, under the command of **Captain George Pollard, Jr.**, the **Essex** chased an enormous **sperm whale thousands of miles west of South America.**

**The whale destroyed the ship, and killed most of the sailors.**

The remaining sailors, enduring gruesome starvation, attempted to sail their whaleboat thousands of miles to land.

Only eight survived.

**The story of the *Essex*** was written down by its first mate, Owen Chase, and the cabin boy, Thomas Nickerson.

**Nathaniel Philbrick** retold the account in his award-winning book, ***In the Heart of the Sea*** (Viking Press, 2000), which was turned into a movie in 2015, directed by **Ron Howard**.

**Whales** were hunted primarily for their **blubber**, which was boiled down into **whale oil**.

This was the main source of **oil** throughout the early 1800s.

**Whales** were being hunted to the **verge of extinction**.

Fortunately for the whales, in 1859, "Colonel" Edwin Drake drilled "**The Drake Oil Well**" on his **Pennsylvania** farm.

Soon the **petroleum industry** in Pennsylvania and Oklahoma developed which **extracted oil from the earth**, thus "**saving the whale**" from being hunted to **extinction**.

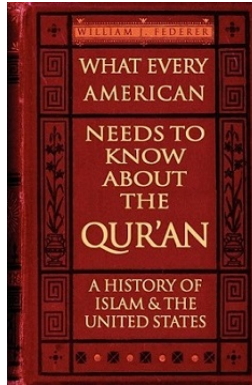
Decades later, **Winston Churchill** switched the British Navy from burning **coal to oil**.

**Britain** had limited sources of oil, such as **one small oil field** located in the **Sherwood Forest of Nottinghamshire**, and another in the **British Crown Colony of Trinidad**.

**Oil** was discovered in the Middle East, and in 1908, the **Anglo-Iranian Oil Company** was formed, which later changed its name to **British Petroleum (BP)**.

In the early 1900s, an **Ottoman-German Alliance** was formed in the to build a **Berlin-Baghdad Railway**.

Competition over access to **oil** in the Middle East, with **Britain-Iran alliance** versus **Germany-Turkey alliance**, was a factor leading up to **World War I**.



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One of the **fears** of sailing distant seas was being **shipwrecked on an island** where there was **cannibalism**.

This was first recorded on **Columbus' second voyage**, and resulted in the naming of the "**Caribbean Sea**."

"**Caribe**" is the Spanish word for "**piranha**," a **razor-toothed carnivorous fish** of South America.

It was also the name given to a **ferocious tribe that migrated from South America**, which **depopulated one island after another, cannibalizing the peaceful native inhabitants**.

In 1495, **Guillermo de Coma** was on Columbus' second voyage. He gave a description **Caribs raiding islands of peaceful natives** and taking:

"... female captives as slaves to their womenfolk, or make use of them to satisfy their lust. Children borne by the captured women are eaten like the captives."

**Shakespeare's** play, *The Tempest*, 1610-11, is set with a shipwreck on an island where there was a cannibal-like character named Caliban.

Cannibalism occurred in the Pacific Islands.



British Captain Cook first landed in Hawaii in 1778.

Soon after, whaling and navy ships stopped there. Some of their muskets and small swivel cannons were stolen or were bartered to natives.

With the help of these, King Kamehameha won his battles to conquer and unite all of the Hawaiian Islands.

His wife, Queen Ka'ahumanu, **ended human sacrifice and ritual cannibalism**. She replaced the kapu-taboo religion and replaced it with Christianity brought to Hawaii by American missionaries.

The story of how missionaries arrived in Hawaii begins in 1807, when the American whaling ship ***Triumph*** left **Hawaii for New England**.

**Two Hawaiian boys** had stowed away aboard the ship, **Henry Opukahai'a and Thomas Hopu**.

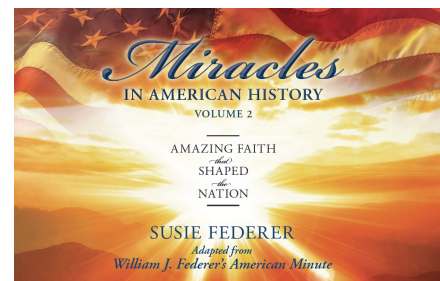
In **New England**, they heard the Gospel and **converted to Christianity**.

Their stories inspired **Hiram and Sybil Bingham** to begin a missionary movement to the **Pacific islands** in 1820.

In 1822, African-American **Betsey Stockton** went to **Hawaii** on the **second ship of Christian missionaries**, being the **first single female missionary sent out from America**.

**Betsey** was the teacher at **the very first mission school in Hawaii** for common people.

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In 1840, the whaling ship ***Acushnet*** left New England.

On board with the crew was the young **Herman Melville** on **his first whaling voyage**.

**Herman Melville**, born August 1, 1819, was the **grandson of a Boston Tea Party "Indian."**

At the age of 12, his father died.

His mother raised him, inspiring his imagination with **biblical stories**.

The ***Acushnet***, after a year and a half at sea, visited the **Marquesas Islands** in the Southern Pacific.

The **Marquesas Islands** are considered by some as **the remotest place in the world**.

They were first visited by **American Maritime Fur Trader Joseph Ingraham** in 1791, who named them **Washington Islands**.

In 1813, **Commodore David Porter** claimed the islands for the United States, but **Congress never ratified it**.

**France** began claiming the **islands** in 1842.

At the **Marquesas Islands**, **Herman Melville** and his friend, **Toby**, jumped ship from the ***Acushnet***, and deserted.

They climbed up high into the **island mountains** to avoid being arrested and carried back to the ship.

His friend, **Toby**, injured his leg in a fall.

They unfortunately fell among cannibals, where **Melville** and his friend were given **sumptuous food** and were befriended by a beautiful tribal maiden.

Tribesman adamantly **forbade** them from trying to **leave the village**.

Just before a big native feast, **Melville's friend, Toby, suspiciously disappeared**.

**Melville** was not allowed to be at the feast.

Afterwards, when **Melville** inquired about **his friend's whereabouts**, the tribesmen quickly changed the subject, leading **Melville** to suspect **he was eaten**.

When a small boat piloted by a passing native providentially came close to shore, **Melville** fought his way into the water and climbed into it, barely escaping with his life.

He wrote of the experience in his first book, *Typee* (1846), concluding:

"These disclosures will ... lead to ... ultimate benefit to **the cause of Christianity** in the **Sandwich Islands**."

These accounts made their way into popular culture.

The movie, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* (2006), has a harrowing scene of escaping cannibals on a Polynesian island.

In 2011, LEGO produced a set of toys titled **Pirates of the Caribbean: "The Cannibal Escape"**.

When Acting Lieutenant Fletcher Christian led **mutiny** on the *HMS Bounty*, April 28, 1789, **Captain William Bligh** sailed for two months in a small life boat 3,500 miles from **Tahiti** past the **Fiji Islands** to **Kupang**, Indonesia, writing in his journal that they **dared not to stop at any land along the way out of fear of being eaten by cannibals**.



In 1853, a native Hawaiian, **Samuel Kauwealoha**, sailed as a **Christian missionary** from **Hawaii** to the **Marquesas Islands** where he planted churches and started schools.

**Titus Coan**, the son-in-law of missionary to Hawaii **Hiram Bingham**, wrote in his 1882 account ***Life in Hawaii*** (ch. 13, The Marquesas Islands ... Hawaiians Send a Mission to Them):

"The missionary at this station was the **Rev. Samuel Kauwealoha**, a native of Hilo ... Pupils recited the Lord's prayer and the Ten Commandments, with some other lessons, in tones and inflections of voice which were soft and melodious."

Another missionary from **Hawaii** to the **Marquesas Islands** was **James Kekela**.

In 1864, **James Kekela** rescued an **American seaman** from death at the hands of angry cannibals in the **Marquesas Islands**.

In gratitude, **Abraham Lincoln** sent **James Kekela** an inscribed gold watch.

**Robert Louis Stevenson** related the story in his book, ***In The South Seas*** when he visited the **Marquesas Islands** in 1888-89:

"During my stay at Tai-o-hae ... a whole fleet of whale-boats came from Ua-pu ...

On board of these was **Samuel Kauwealoha**, one of the **pastors**, a fine, rugged old gentleman, of that leonine type so common in **Hawaii**.

He ... entertained me with a tale of one of his colleagues, **James Kekela**, a missionary in the **great cannibal isle of Hiva-oa**.

... It appears that shortly after a kidnapping visit from a Peruvian slaver, the boats of **an American whaler** put into a bay upon that island, were attacked, and made their escape with difficulty, leaving their mate, a **Mr. Jonathan Whalon**, in the hands of the natives.

The **captive**, with his **arms bound behind his back**, was cast into a house; and the chief announced the capture to **James Kekela ...**"

**Robert Louis Stevenson** continued relating the story of **Mr. Whalon's rescue** from the **cannibals**:

"In return for his act of gallant charity, **James Kekela** was presented by the **American Government** with a sum of money, and by **President Lincoln** personally with a **gold watch**.

From his letter of thanks, written in his own tongue, I give the following extract. I do not envy the man who can read it without emotion.

... 'When I saw one of **your countrymen**, a citizen of your great nation, ill-treated, and **about to be baked and eaten, as a pig is eaten**, I ran to save him, full of pity and grief at the evil deed of these benighted people.

**I gave my boat for the stranger's life ...**

It became the **ransom** of this countryman of yours, **that he might not be eaten by the savages** who knew not Jehovah."

*The New York Times* published the article "**Lincoln and the 'Cannibals'**" by Jeffrey Allen Smith, Feb. 25, 2014:

**"The American whaling ship Congress** from New Bedford, Mass ... dropped anchor ...

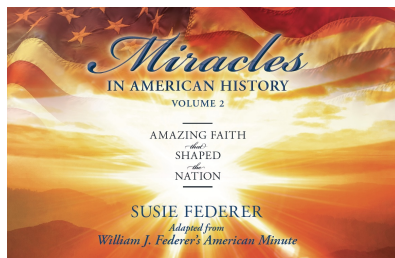
**Sailors** lowered two longboats loaded with trade goods, and a small detachment of men led by the first officer, **Jonathan Whalon**, rowed toward the beach in Puamau Bay ...

Foolishly, **Whalon** went ashore alone with the **Marquesans** ... Once well inside the tree line, the Paumau men seized **Whalon**, stripped him of his clothes and bound him ...

Tribal members reportedly **pinched him, tweaked his nose, bent his fingers back** over his hands, menacingly swung hatchets at him and eventually began **building a fire with which to cook him.**

**A Hawaiian missionary** improbably named **Alexander Kaukau** (Kaukau is Hawaiian pidgin for "food" or "to eat") and **Bartholomen Negal**, a local German carpenter, tried and failed to dissuade Mato, the Paumau chief, **from killing Whalon** ...

... Fate interceded with the arrival of another **Hawaiian missionary, James Kekela**, the **first Hawaiian ordained as a Christian missionary** and Kaukau's senior. He had fortuitously just returned from a neighboring island to reports of a **'white man is about to be roasted ...'**



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**The New York Times** article continued:

"... **Kekela** donned his **black preacher's jacket** and, with **only his Bible in hand**, set off for Mato's village.

The **negotiations were tense**, and at one point **Kekela**

declared **he would trade 'anything and everything he possessed' for the sailor's release ...**

Ultimately **Kekela** purchased **Whalon's** freedom with much less: his **black preacher's jacket** and **prized whaleboat ...**

**Kekela** returned **Whalon** to the waiting *Congress*, which sailed to Honolulu, where tales of **'cannibals' capturing an American sailor** and **Kekela's** heroics prompted the American minister to Hawaii, James McBride, to write a note to **Secretary of State William H. Seward.**

McBride's letter, dated Feb. 26, 1864, detailed the harrowing events in the **Marquesas** and requested that **Seward** 'show to the world ... we have tender regard for each one of our number, and that we highly, very highly, appreciate such favors.'

Taking almost a month to make its way across the Pacific, the letter arrived on **Seward's** desk by April 18, 1864.

Three days later **Seward** replied that he had submitted McBride's account of the rescue to **Lincoln** and that the **President** had 'instructions' for the diplomat.

McBride was directed to 'draw on this department for five hundred dollars in gold' to purchase presents for **Whalon's rescuers ...**

On Feb. 14, 1865, McBride ... sent gifts to the **Hawaiian missionary Kaukau**, the German carpenter Negal and even **the young Marquesan girl** who warned the sailors in the two long boats ...

... He gave **Kekela** two new suits and a **gold Cartier pocket watch with the inscription,**

'From the **President of the United States** to **Rev. J. Kekela** For His Noble Conduct in **Rescuing An American Citizen from Death** on the Island of Hiva Oa, January 14, 1864' ...

**Kekela** wrote a seven-page letter of thanks in **Hawaiian** ... retelling of how he saved 'a **citizen of your great nation**, ill-treated, and **about to be baked and eaten, as a pig is eaten** ...'

... The heartfelt prose in **Kekela's** letter to **Lincoln** moved many, including **Robert Louis Stevenson**, who wrote in his book ***In the South Seas:***

'I do not envy the man who can read it without emotion.'

**Robert Louis Stevenson** recorded the words of **James Kekela**:

"**(The Gospel)** was planted in **Hawaii**, and I brought it to plant in this land and in these dark regions, that they might receive the root of all that is good and true, which is **love** ..."

**James Kekela** concluded:

"**Great is my debt to Americans**, who have taught me all things pertaining to this life and to that which is to come. How shall I repay your great kindness to me?"

Thus **David asked of Jehovah**, and thus **I ask of you, the President of the United States.**

This is my only payment - **that which I have received of the Lord, love-(aloha).**"

**Herman Melville** opened his classic novel, ***Moby Dick*** (1851), with a reference to the Bible story:

"With this sin of disobedience ... **Jonah flouts at God** ...



He thinks that a ship made by men will carry him into countries where **God** does not reign."

In 1983, The U.S. District Court stated in ***Crockett v. Sorenson***:

"Better known works which rely on allusions from the Bible include Milton's Paradise Lost ... Shakespeare ... and **Melville's *Moby Dick*** ...

Secular education ... demands that the student have a good knowledge of the **Bible**."

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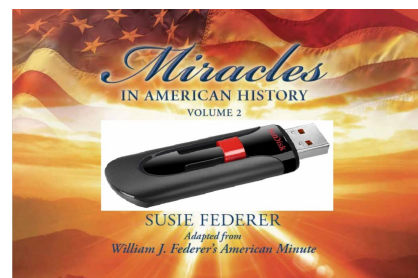
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[wjfederer@gmail.com](mailto:wjfederer@gmail.com)

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