CHRISTIAN BOOK REVIEW, In the Heart of the Sea



South Sea Whale Fishery, published 1835

- **TITLE:** *Heart of the Sea.*
- **AUTHOR:** Nathaniel Philbrick
- **YEAR:** 2000
- **PUBLISHER:** Viking Penquin
- **PAGES:** 320
- **GENRE:** Non-fiction, historical
- **INTENDED AUDIENCE:** Readers who are interested in a seafaring story in the early 19th century, packaged with a lot of action and drama. The details of the crew's survial in the open sea is brutal, and may not be appreciated by all.
- **MAIN POINTS :** This story follows the final voyage of the whaleship, Essex, in 1821.
  At this time, whale oil was an important commodity. Petroleum products had not yet replaced whale oil for lighting or lubrication. So the demand was vast. As whales were hunted down, the Atlantic Ocean proved insufficient. Ships from the United States traveled around the Southern tip of South America to increasingly remote

locations in the Pacific Ocean.

The Heart of the Sea is a history book, telling us about the whales, the whale trade, and whaling ships. It is an action story, telling us about the incredible disaster that befell the *Essex* (**Hint:** if you ever read the novel, *Moby Dick,* the story of the *Essex* may sound familiar). And it is a study in human behavior, telling us how the crew of the *Essex* reacted to their predicament; and how they survived. The book concludes with the short biography of each of the survivors.

- **REVIEW:** The story of the of the whaleship, *Essex* is a compelling story, well told by Nathaniel Philbrick. If you are squeamish, the details of the sailors' survival may be told a bit too vividly.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Highly recommended to those for whom it is intended (see above).
- **RATING (out of 5 stars):** ★★★★★