

Single Titles



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BAKER, Julie. **The Great Whaleship Disaster of 1871**. 144p. diags. maps. photos. reprints. bibliog. chron. index. notes. Web sites. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. 2007. PLB \$27.95. ISBN 978-1-59935-043-1. LC 2007002807.

Gr 6 Up—A compelling tale of survival. In 1871, at the peak of whale hunting, a fleet of 32 ships was trapped in Arctic ice, and the 1200 men, women, and children onboard faced a long winter with limited supplies. A decision was made to abandon the ships with devastating financial results. Baker begins by giving background information on a whaleship, the crew, provisions, and how the animals were hunted, skinned, and processed for oil. Readers are given a picture of the hazards of whaling and the endurance required in the best of conditions. In the final chapters, the events leading up to the disaster are described—the formation of the ice, cracking ships, and the possibility of being trapped in the Arctic throughout the winter. Seeking a way to survive, the passengers set out on small boats, braving the icy sea to find larger whaleships in which to return to Hawaii and, eventually, home to the United States. The account is presented in an easy-to-follow, attractive format with concise chapters and ample diagrams, full-color reproductions, illustrations, and maps. The historical significance of the whale industry, along with the impact of lost ships is stressed, leading readers to a better understanding of what made this event such a disaster.—Denise Moore, O’Gorman Junior High School, Sioux Falls, SD