

Moonlighting Banned On The High Seas

19th Century Lightship Workers



In dark dangerous waters, men men worked aboard whaling vessels to provide light at night for ships. In time, Lightship workers in Nantucket, Rhode Island began to weave baskets, which became prized items with tourists.

“Lightship duty...probably 90 percent boredom and a lot more than 10 percent sheer terror. Duties first, then...time killing activity was the norm. Basket Weaving was a New England past time.

[Lightship] pay was poor [making baskets] became a source of both income as well as a means to pass long boring days and nights...," according to a U.S.Coast Guard Lightship Sailors International historian.

Unfortunately, by early 1900s, the workers, considered to be federal employees, were ordered to cease basket weaving because the activity, government officials ruled, was considered to be moonlighting.

References

Nantucket Lightshp Basket Museum.org
<http://tinyurl.com/ks3vrzr>

U.S. Coast Guard Sailors International, Inc
<http://www.uscglightsailsailors.org/>

Youtube

Home Book Review: Lightship Baskets of Nantucket by
Martha R. Lawrence, Martha Lawrence
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_cVvDVL-ts

What Loneliness Wroug

Riedel, Catherine

Periodical | Yankee. Jul/Aug2007, Vol. 71 Issue 4, p62-62. 1p.
1 Color Photograph.

The article offers information on baskets made by seafarers who manned the lightships ...

Periodical | Forbes; 9/21/1998, Vol. 162 Issue 6, p288-289,
2p, 3 Color Photographs

Informs of Nantucket lightship baskets. Origin of the intricately woven baskets.