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Into the Deep: America, Whaling & the World Is Definitely a Ric Burns Documentary

PBS' "American Experience" presents a new documentary by famed filmmaker Ric Burns. It is titled *Into the Deep: America, Whaling & the World* and it gives an extensive view of the American whaling industry.

It begins with the pilgrims coming to this country in 1620 and soon after beginning to butcher the whales that washed up on the coast of New England. When they saw how much use they could make of the whale's oil and other portions of its body they began to explore the ocean off the coast and slaughtered the whales at sea.

This whaling process was so successful the industry spread around the world and long, arduous voyages followed. One of these "journeys" is followed closely by Burns. It is the voyage of the good ship Essex and it is a tale of tragedy. The story of the ship and the fate of the crew is reenacted for the show and it is a most effective and affecting portion of the program.

Burns also focuses on the life and career of Herman Melville. Melville worked on a whaling ship so he knew well the life that he described in his epic novel *MOBY DICK*. The irony is this novel was not a success during his lifetime and it pretty much put an end to Melville's writing career.

In this two hour documentary you will learn more about whales and whaling than you would ever hope or want to know. Still it is to Burns' credit that his use of visuals, reenactments, and appropriate music make this an informative and entertaining show.

"Into the Deep: America, Whaling & the World" premieres on PBS, Monday, May 10 at 9PM.

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