

*Nimrod* or Not:

**A Report on the Cannons Recovered in 1998**

**by the Kendall Whaling Museum**

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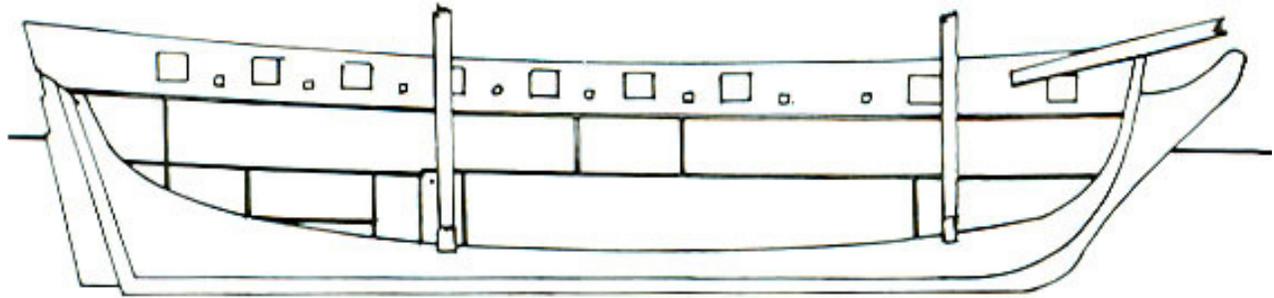
This report documents preliminary research into the origins of several cannons that were recovered in 1998 from the sea off of Round Hill in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. Specifically, it was hoped that proof could be found to support the theory that the cannons recovered came from the *HMS Nimrod* which, in 1814, was likely the most feared British vessel in New England waters. She was also the vessel that was the most visible reminder that the United States was at war with England at this time. *Nimrod* sailed New England waters for just over one year but in that time she was involved in most of naval battles and attacks that occurred in New England during the war. When several cannons were discovered in the late twentieth century, it was assumed that they belonged to the *Nimrod* and that they had been jettisoned when she ran aground in 1814. During the course of researching the cannons that are now held by various historical societies in southern New England, it was discovered that the cannons likely did not come from the *Nimrod* at all but that they may represent an even more important find- potentially the remains of a Revolutionary War British sloop or American Naval vessel.

This report documents what is known about the *Nimrod*, how she was likely outfitted, what her history was in New England waters and why it is extremely unlikely that the cannons came from her. It is hoped that this report, when distributed to the societies that currently hold the cannons, it will help them better understand what they presently curate.

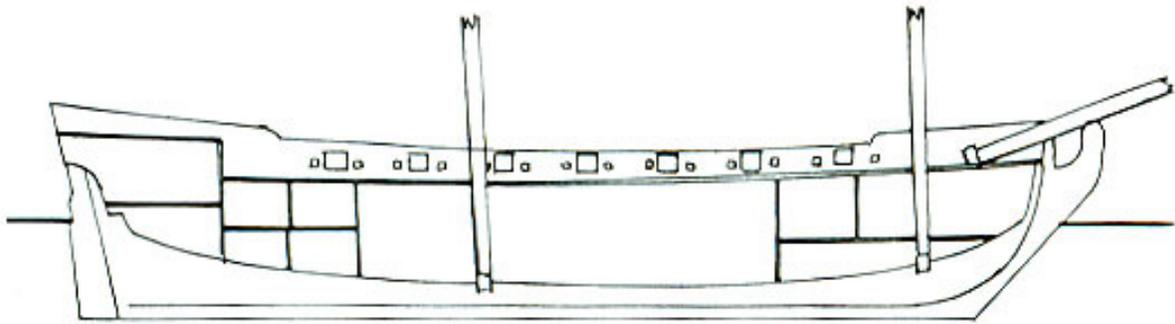
### **Introduction**

The hunter silently sails along the New England coast in 1813. She is named for the great hunter, Nimrod, of the Old Testament and she has been commanded to seek out and harass or destroy the American privateers so hated by the British. *Nimrod*. The name struck chords of fear and anger among New Englanders during the War of 1812. *Nimrod* was involved in many of the major Naval and coastal engagements in New England during the “war” and as a result she symbolized the hard feelings that the young America had towards their former King and country. She may have been feared by mariners, by the privateers that she chased and attacked. She was fast and armed for close engagement, designed and built for her job.

*Nimrod* was an 18 gun brig sloop or sloop-of-war. Brig sloops are defined as small vessels with a single gun deck which carried between ten and eighteen cannons (**Figure 1**). A brig sloop had two masts and a ship sloop had three, because a brig in those days was a one or two masted vessel. *Nimrod* likely looked similar to the United States naval brig, the *Erie*, built in 1812.



Larger brig-rigged sloop



1740 brig-rigged sloop

Figure 1. Examples of brigs

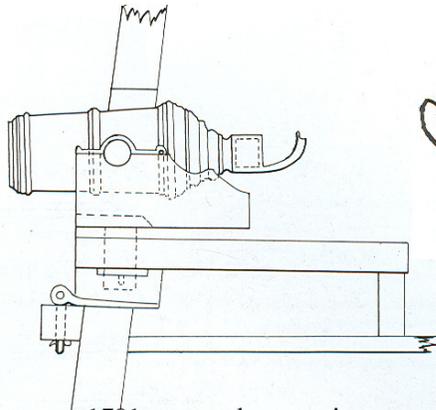
*Nimrod* was a new ship when she was ordered to America in 1813 soon after her construction was completed in Ipswich, England in 1812 and fitting out occurred in Sheerness. As she was a new ship she was likely fitted in the manner recently ordered by the British Royal Admiralty which had evolved out of the defeats suffered by the Royal Navy during the American War of Independence. During the war, the Americans with their larger more heavily armed frigates had inflicted heavy damage on the Royal Navy's ships. This led to the adoption of carronades, short, light cannons of generally large bore that were used for close quarter fighting, as standard armament by the 1812 (**Figure 2**). By the 1820s and 30s most ships, especially ships of the line, the main battle ships, were armed almost exclusively with 32 pounder carronades of different lengths and weights. But, in 1815, most ships still had the traditional armament of full-sized guns except those that had their guns replaced or were newly built.

### **The Carronade and the New Royal Navy**

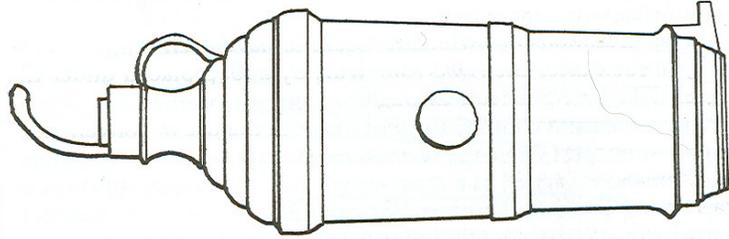
The use of the carronade really marks a major change in how the British would prosecute naval war. Carronades were first developed by the Carron Iron Works, founded 1759, in Stirlington Scotland (Lavery 1987: 104). Carron produced its first cannons in 1761 and by 1765 had begun to sell cast iron cannons to the Royal navy. Unfortunately, these early cannon had a tendency to explode or burst during firing. As a result, the Royal Navy ordered that Carron would produce no more long guns until 1795. As a way of recovering from this economic set back, Carron began to explore ways to produce full bore cannon at a smaller size and in 1776, cast their first 6 pounder which weighed half the normal weight of a traditional 6 pounder. Three men pooled their resources and expertise to work on the development of a shorter, lighter gun that could provide the armament required by the navy's new tactics of war. General Robert Melville provided the military expertise, Charles Gascoigne, a partner in Carron company was in charge of gun founding, and Patrick Miler, an Edinburgh merchant who supported the use and the possibility of being a partner in the sole company that could provide the new guns for the Navy (Lavery 1987:105). These men worked to develop a shorter, lighter gun that was up to 1/4 the weight of a full size gun of comparable caliber. The development, successful testing and winning of the favor of the Royal Navy meant a lucrative contact for the men. For the Navy it meant that because the new warfare placed an emphasis on short range fighting, less powder would be needed to fire a projectile of 32 or more pounds and more devastating shots could be inflicted on an enemy at a lower cost.

The first carronades were manufactured in autumn of 1778. These were used to arm the Carron company ships that traveled from Scotland to London. These first carronades were a fairly simple gun that combined attributes from the howitzer and cohorn mortars as well as common naval swivel guns (Lavery 1987:107). The early weapons were short and light with a handle or tiller extending back and up from the button on the rear of the barrel that helped to facilitate quick reloading. The barrel rested on trunnion extending from the midpoint of the side of the gun which pivoted on a swivel that would be attached to the railings of ships. This style lasted from 1778 to approximately 1780 and was defiantly gone by the end of the American Revolution. The reason for its demise was the fear that it was too short and as a result it could set the rigging on fire. This fear was not a reflection of the Admiralty's support for the adoption of carronades on its ships though.

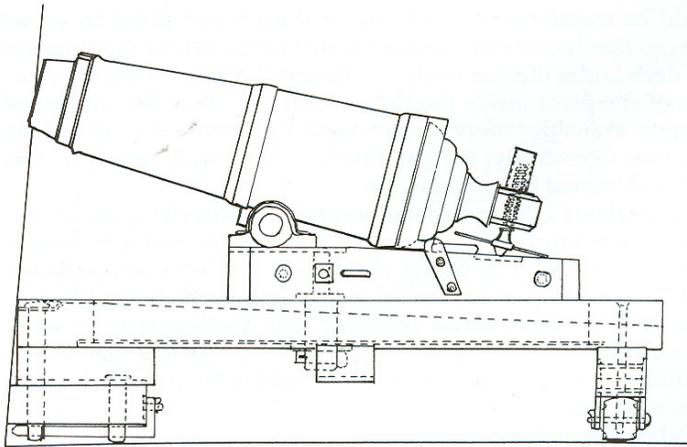
By 1779 smaller ships such as sloops and frigates were instructed to carry carronades on their quarterdecks, eventually coming to replace rather than supplement long guns on these ships. When the *Nimrod* was fitted out, she was likely carrying a full complement of 16 32-pounder carronades as well as two long 6 pounders. This was the Admiralty's orders during the War of 1812 for brig sloops, and generally the smaller the vessel the more carronades she carried. Before this though the carronade a slightly rocky road to general acceptance (Lavery 1987:109). It was well liked by private ship owners and after being advertised as for sale in 1778, many were ordered by such persons. The popularity of



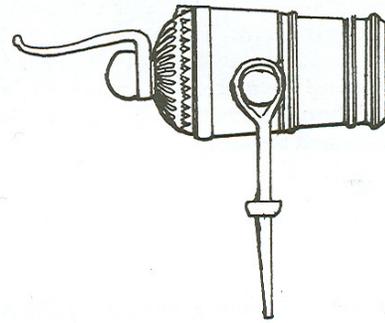
1781 carronade mounting



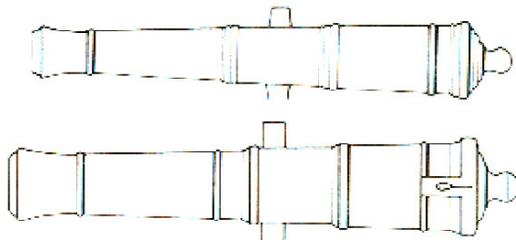
Early 18-pound carronade dated 1780



18 pound "joint" carronade ca. 1790



Early 4-pound carronade dated 1778



Three and four pounders

Figure 2. Carronades compared with three and four pounder long guns

carronades by private individuals caught the King's attention by 1779 and trials were ordered to determine their potential for the Royal Navy. After the trials it was decided that these guns would serve well on the poop decks of all ships and the quarterdecks of others such as frigates, as these were often unused spaces. Unfortunately by the end of 1779, the board retreated from its decision due to complaints from captains that they interfered with the rigging. They were determined to be of little use to the Navy in 1780 and were to be put on ships at the Captain's discretion. This ruling was soon changed and by 1800, carronades were becoming increasingly popular with the Navy. This was likely due to an increased variety of forms offered by Carron and the benefits of lightened weight and powder savings.

Nathaniel Mitchell was the first Captain of the *Nimrod* in 1812. The first engagement that she was involved in was in July of 1813 when *Nimrod*, which was accompanying *Maidstone* and *Pointers*, captured the American 20 gun privateer ship *Yorktown* in one of her first cruises.

### ***Nimrod* in New England**

*Nimrod* arrived in New England waters some time in the fall of 1813. Just the threat of Royal Navy ships cruising the coasts and preying on privateers was enough to cause alarm in all the towns bordering Buzzards and Narragansett bays, Long Island, Block Island and Nantucket sounds. For example, New Bedford received word of the coming of British ships and immediately began strengthening the garrison at Fort Phoenix in Fairhaven and stationing men in New Bedford at Clark's Cove, the place where the British landed and invaded New Bedford in 1778 during the Revolution. The *Nimrod* cruised the coast as part of a squadron commanded by the Commander Paget of the *Superb* and including the *Recruit* and the refitted captured American vessel *Retaliation*. This squad began preying on boats early in October of 1813 along Cape Cod (**Figure 3**).

The first ship that is reported to have been stopped by the *Nimrod* was the schooner *Hitta Franklin*, captured on December 6, 1813 off of Westport. Soon thereafter *Nimrod* captured *Chili* out of Nantucket which carried 1240 barrels of oil from a whaling trip to the South Seas. It appears that the British squadron soon established Tarpaulin Cove on Naushon Island as their base of operations. Tarpaulin Cove was well known to privateers and whalers alike due to the inn that was located here. It was reported by the inn keeper, one Mr. Slocum, that on January 13, 1814 he overheard the crew of the *Nimrod* planning an attack on Falmouth with the objective being to capture two brass cannons held by the town. Falmouth was alerted and prepared for attack.

Much of the Massachusetts coastline was under patrol by various British ships during the war. This seems to have been especially true of Cape Cod and Buzzards Bay. The *Spencer*, a 52 gun vessel was stationed in and around Provincetown Harbor, the admiral's flagship *Newcastle*, was anchored off of Truro, while the *Nimrod* and *Superb* cruised Buzzards Bay (Deyo 1890:76). On January 14, 1814 the *Nimrod* and *Superb* attacked Falmouth. Captain John Crocker, a resident of Falmouth at time of *Nimrod's* arrival, wrote the following account in a letter to the *New England Palladium* the day after the attack:

"I desire you to notice in your paper that yesterday morning the *Nimrod* Brig came under sail from Tarpaulin Cove and at 10 o'clock anchored near this town. Shortly after she sent on shore a flag, and demanded the two field-pieces, and a sloop lying at the wharf, and in case of non-compliance threatened to bombard the town. Their demand being refused, the captain then gave notice that at 12 o'clock (noon) he should begin the bombardment. During the interim the flag frequently passed; the militia was fast collecting; the town in utmost confusion; the inhabitants removing the sick, the women, children and furniture.

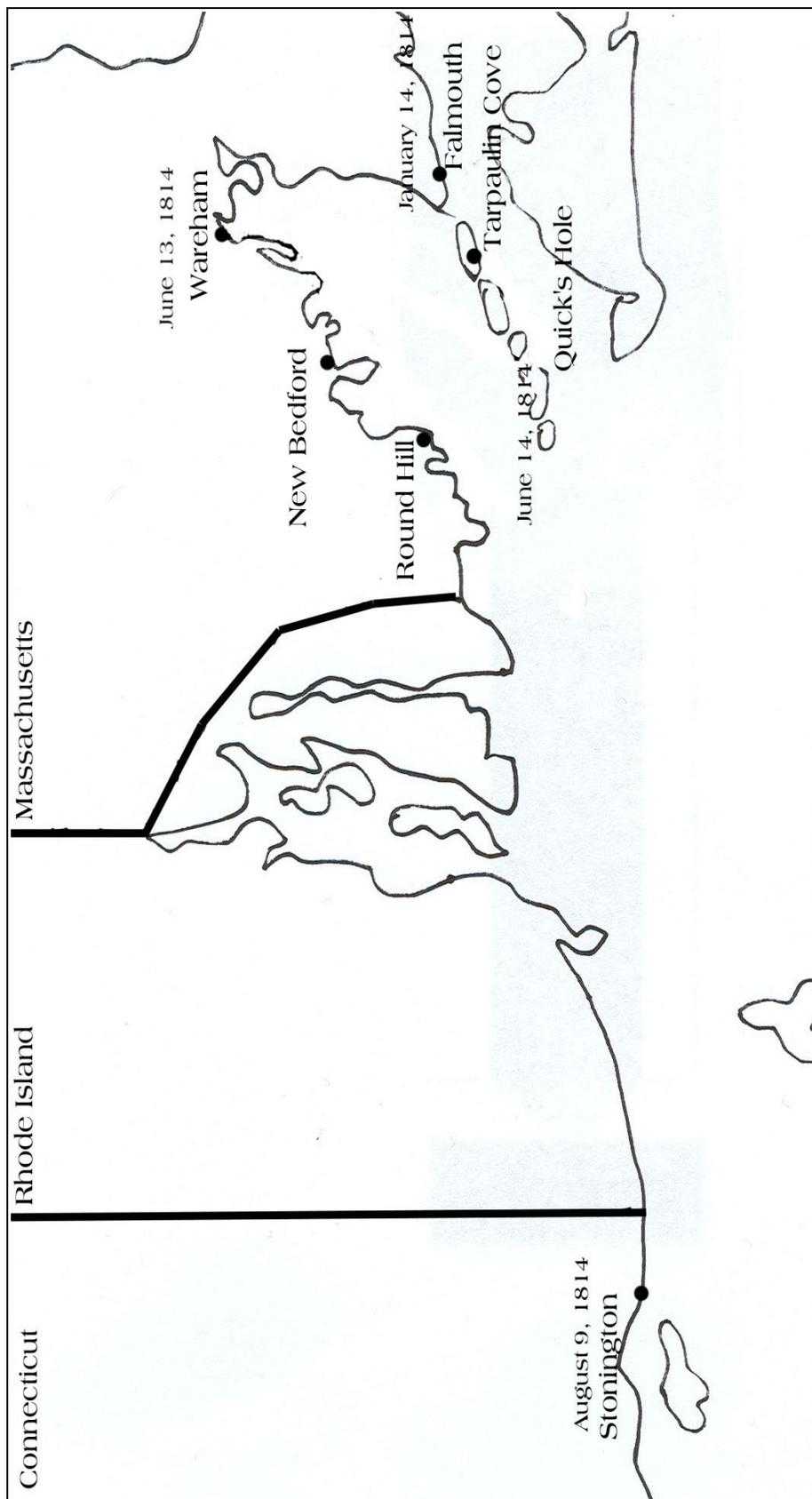


Figure 3. Nimrod's movements in New England waters

"About the time set the cannonading began, and continued with very little intermission till night, and several guns in the night, making in all about three hundred from their thirty two pounders, besides their smaller ones.

"This morning, at sunrise, she sailed westward, supposed to join a ship of war said to be in Tarpaulin Cove. Fortunately no lives were lost and no person hurt.

"The damage done to houses, outbuildings and salt-works has been considerable, the amount of which is not now known. The greatest sufferer was myself, having eight thirty-two pound shot through my house, some through my outbuildings, and many through my saltworks. The greatest part of the furniture in the house was destroyed. The other principal sufferers were Elijah Swift, Silas James (Jones), Thomas Bourn, Jehabad Hatch, Rev. Henry Lincoln, Shubael Hatch, Jr., etc. etc., in damage done houses, salt-works, etc."

### **Stonington, Connecticut**

On August 9, 1814 the *Nimrod* was part of a five ship squadron commanded by Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy which was tasked with the taking of the town of Stonington, Connecticut. Harding was the commander of the *HMS Ramilles*, a 74-gun ship of the line, which, along with the *Nimrod*, the *HMS Pactolus*, a 44-gun frigate, the *HMS Dispatch*, a 22-gun brigs, the *HMS Terror*, a bomb-ship, and various barges and launches, and transports bearing Royal Marines, began the assault on the town on that day. At approximately 5:30 P.M. Harding contacted the town and stated that one our would be granted for anyone to leave who was an "unoffending inhabitant". The town asked for negotiations, and when these were denied, they reportedly stated, "We shall defend the place to the last extremity; should it be destroyed, we will perish in its ruins!". The militia was called out, cannons brought forth and defenses raised. At 8 P.M. the *Terror* began the bombardment of the town by firing 13- and 15-inch explosive shells as her escorts fired Congreve rockets. This bombardment continued unabated until midnight when Royal Marines were ordered to take the town under cover of darkness. Their approach was spotted by those of Stonington and they were resoundingly beaten back.

The morning of August 10 saw the *Terror* begin bombardment anew, this time with carcasses, large incendiary projectiles. *Terror* was accompanied by the *Dispatch* which exchanged fire with the town's 18 pounders. *Terror* and *Dispatch* were joined on August 11 by the *Ramilles* and *Pactolus* which added an additional 120 guns to the bombardment. The attack continued until noon and by 4 P.M. all ships had left the harbor for the sound. It is believed that the British had fired over 50 tons of cannonballs, shells and rockets into the town during the course of the bombardment. In the end, the British are reported to have lost 20 men with over 50 wounded while Stonington losses consisted of two dead horses, seven men wounded and 40 damaged houses. While the *Nimrod* was reported to have been part of the squadron, she is not reported to have played a significant role in the battle.

### **Attack on Wareham**

June of 1814 saw the *Nimrod* focusing her attacks on Buzzards Bay, especially on the area of the Bay between New Bedford and Wareham. The *Nimrod* was commanded by Lt. George Hilton in 1814 when she was stationed off New London with the squadron under Capt. Charles Paget in the *Superb*. Captain Paget learned that a ship letter of marque (a government permitted and insured privateer) and a brig privateer were at Wareham at the head of Buzzard's Bay, he detached *Nimrod* through Quick's Hole with two of *Nimrod's* boats and two from *Superb* under the direction of Lieut. James Garland first officer of the *Superb*, to destroy them. Because of the intricate navigation through Quick's Hole and in Buzzards Bay, it was necessary conduct the operation in daylight hours. A few days before the June 13 attack on Wareham, the *Nimrod* took three schooners from the town (Root-Bliss 1888:159). As the

*Nimrod* sailed towards Wareham, she captured two Wareham residents, Bumpas and Miller in Westport and then proceeded to sail up Buzzards Bay to West Island then to Mattapoisett and finally to Wareham (Lovell 1970: 115). On the morning of June 13, the *Nimrod* appeared off of Fairhaven, alarming the citizens and causing them to draw out a small cannon and follow the ship along the coast towards Rochester, where they felt she was bound. But the *Nimrod* did not stop anywhere along the coast until she reached Wareham. Here, at about 11 A.M. she off loaded six barges with between 200 and 220 men which sailed under the white flag of truce and subsequently landed at Long Wharf where Narrows Bridge is today (Jerome 1977:149).

While Wareham was never attacked during the Revolutionary War, British troops, claiming that Wareham was a haven for the privateers preying on British ships, attacked the town and burned several ships. In fact, 20 Wareham vessels were taken during the course of the war (Rider 1989:124). Wareham, like most coastal towns, was involved with privateering efforts during the war. For example, the 10 gun sloop *Hancock* was fitted out in Wareham as a privateer vessel, Capt. John Kendrick of Wareham commanded the *Fanny* and the *Count d'Estaigne* and Capt. David Nye commanded the *Sea Flower* (Jerome 1977:121).

As the Royal Marines from the first of the barges to land disembarked, British sentries stationed in the village, fired three muskets, and declared that they would not burn any private property, but he would destroy public property which did not belong to the town, requesting that the property or vessels from Falmouth be pointed out. The townspeople quickly did this and the British landed the remainder of their troops, lowered their white flag and set fire to a vessel under construction, possibly at William Fearing's shipyard, five others at anchor and one Plymouth vessel. The ships burned were identified as the *Fair Trader*, 444 tons, pierced for eighteen 12-pounders and the brig *Independent*, 300 tons, pierced for 14 guns and on the stocks ready for launching. The schooners *Fancy*, *Elizabeth* and *Nancy*, all of Falmouth, were also brand new. The townspeople reminded them of their promise to burn no private property, complaining that they were being taken advantage of by false promises. The British reply was to threaten to set fire to the village, and put the inhabitants to the sword if any attempt was made to extinguish the fires. They then landed men at the cotton factory and attempted to burn it with a Congreve rocket. The British returned to their barges with 12 hostages and stated that if they were attacked they would put the hostages to death. The flag of truce was again raised but the second in command swore that "it was a damned shame and disgrace to any nation to enter a village under a flag of truce and commit the greatest outrage and depredation possible, and then return under a flag of truce" (Wareham to Commodore Perry 1814) initially refusing to raise the flag. The hostages were released approximately three miles below the village and the *Nimrod* left. The inhabitants, including Archippus Leonard who was later paid by the town for standing guard while the British were in town, prepared defenses and a militia company was stationed at Pig Point (Pinehurst) with trenches being dug within gunshot range of the river, just in case the *Nimrod* returned (Jerome 1977:152). It appears that soon after the Wareham Incident, or perhaps because of the Wareham incident, the *Nimrod* left New England waters, as there are no further reports of attacks by her.

### **Aground in Quicks Hole**

There is a confused history concerning the *HMS Nimrod* and her groundings in Buzzards Bay in 1814. The popular story is that the day after the June 13, 1814 attack on Wareham, *Nimrod* sailed south in Buzzards Bay and got stuck on a ledge or bar. The high tide was not sufficient to free the ship so the captain made the decision to jettison several of the cannon to lighten the load. Sufficiently lightened, the ship was able to free itself and sail away. Unfortunatley, this story appears to be an amalgamation of two separate events. The first event is recorded in the sips log by Captain Vincent Newton (see appendix).

After the tremendously successful attack on Wareham, the *Nimrod* sailed south in Buzzards Bay, her destination, Cape Cod. In order to get there she would have to pass through the shallows at Quicks Hole. This was not a problem for her Captain Newton had been through there many times, in fact he had just sailed her through Quicks the day before to get to Wareham. At 6 am she weighed anchor at the head of Buzzards Bay, unfurled and put out her sails and set a course for the south. By 11:30 she had hauled up her anchor and was headed for the hole and by 12:30 she was beginning to enter it. Unfortunately the tide was low and Vincent underestimated the water depth on her starboard side. She struck the shore at the northwestern edge of Nashawena just to the south of North Rock. Vincent ordered that the sails be shortened and furled to keep the ship from being driven further into shore and because the bow and starboard side were stuck, ordered an anchor be put out from the stern. Vincent hoped that after the anchor stuck fast, the ship could be hauled backwards off the shore by hauling the anchor in. Grounding on the shore here was not the worst thing that could happen, it was just annoying. If only he had steered a course just a little to the west, if only the tide had been a little further in, if only they had left a little sooner, any of these things could have avoided this. But it happened and now the hunter felt like one of the whales that one sees beached along the Cape Cod shores, helpless and open to attack by the American. At least the *Superb* was nearby to chase off any would be attackers. In fact, a boat from the *Superb* was now coming to the *Nimrod's* assistance.

The stern anchor did not seem to be getting the job done. At least they weren't drifting into shore any farther. Perhaps if they lighten the load they could hove her off. After consultation with the *Superb's* boat, Vincent decided to unload some of the cannon and shot into their boat and then reload them after the *Nimrod* was free. No use just dumping the cannons into the sea for the Americans to get. Luckily the *Nimrod* carried carronades and only two long 6 pounders. The carronades could fire a full 32 pound shot but they only weighed a quarter of the weight of a full long 32 pounder cannon. They could be easily detached from the carriages, hauled up with the boom and lowered into the *Superb's* boat. By 3:30 the cannon had been off loaded from the starboard side of the ship, the tide had risen and they were able to hove her off. The *Nimrod* put out a small bower or bow anchor a safe distance off in Quicks Hole channel and proceeded to reload her carronades. At 6 pm she weighed anchor for the second time that day and stood towards the *Superb* which was waiting at the south side of Quicks Hole. The two ships then set a course for Gay Head on Martha's Vineyard and at 7:30, anchored there for the night.

The second incident that contributed to the popular history of the grounding may have also occurred in 1814. In this case, *Nimrod* had chased an East Indiaman from Philadelphia called the *Harmony* in Buzzards Bay. The *Harmony* had William Slocum of Naushon Island as a pilot and he was able to deceive the *Nimrod* into running aground on Great Ledge off of Round Hill. When the *Harmony* reached New Bedford she was observed to bear sails that were full of holes. She was docked at Rotch Wharf and then brought past the bridge and moored in the river. *Harmony* was said to have been off loaded in a snowstorm, indicating this story may have happened in the winter (Ellis 1892:180). George Taber reported in the late nineteenth century that his father related to him that when *Nimrod* went aground he rode down Sconticut Neck and found a number of people gathered on the shore watching the stranded *Nimrod*. The ship then came off safely at high tide (Ellis 1892:169).

These two incidents appear to have been combined to create the notion that the *Nimrod* went aground off Round Hill on June 14, 1814 and had to lighten her load by dumping some of her cannons and shot. Some may try to make the case that the two incidents were one and the same, that the *Nimrod* ran aground on June 14 after attacking Wareham and while chasing the *Harmony*. Unfortunately, the two incidents appear to be separate and unique for several reasons the most foremost being that after the attack on Wareham, *Nimrod* sailed south towards Quick's Hole while during the *Harmony* chase she

sailed north towards New Bedford. Also, only the grounding at Quick's Hole is recorded in the log for this day, not the *Harmony* chase. Finally, Ellis's history states that the cargo of the *Harmony* was offloaded in a snowstorm, strong evidence that the incident did not happen in June. This legend and not a careful reading of the history led investigators in the 1980s to identify the site of the grounding and to note the presence of several cannons in the water off Round Hill in Dartmouth.

### **Archaeological Interlude: 1996 Recovery of the Nimrod's (?) Cannons**

In 1988 a reconnaissance permit was granted by the Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archaeology for the Kendall Whaling Museum for the purpose of documenting the presence of several cannons in the water off Round Hill. This reconnaissance survey led to the creation of a site map showing the locations of the cannons and other iron objects encountered during their metal detector survey of the project area. Surveying indicated the presence of four visible cannons that were eroded and covered by concretion that was 2"+ thick (Reid 1990). These cannons were all located within 60' of each other and spread in a linear pattern northwest to southeast. Also identified with the cannons were several other iron objects. These included the following:

- 1 cannonball approximately 4" in diameter
- 12 unidentified metal objects that were either totally or partially buried in the sand and not investigated
- 1 possible small mortar
- 2 three foot long "cylinders" with a thin concretion layer, possibly indicating more recent deposition not associated with the cannons
- 1 sash weight possibly from a marker buoy used in an earlier identification of the site

In 1996 an excavation permit was obtained by the Kendall Whaling Museum to raise the cannons discovered on the sea bed to the east of Round Hill. These cannons were believed to have been thrown overboard by the *Nimrod* when she was grounded. Eventually several cannons were raised including one very early style carronade dated 1778 (the possible small mortar identified during the survey) and four three pounder cannons. One additional cannon may have been recovered but this has not been confirmed. When the Kendall Museum went out of business in the late 1990s, the cannons were distributed to several local historical societies with ties to the *Nimrod*. These are the Stonington, Connecticut Historical Society, the Wareham Historical Commission, the Fairhaven Historical Society, the New Bedford Whaling Museum and the Falmouth Historical Society (**Figure 4**). The New Bedford Whaling Museum was the institution principally charged with curating the cannons. They subsequently loaned out all of the cannons except for the carronade to the other institutions for curation and display. All the cannons that were recovered measure 54" long and the bore of the Wareham and Falmouth examples is just under 3". These are the same measurements for three pounder cannons in the late eighteenth century. The cannon in the possession of the Stonington Historical Society has undergone extensive professional restoration and stabilization and can now be displayed out of the water. The remaining cannons are all being stored submerged in a water and chemical mixture. All the cannons appear to be identical with the one in the possession of the Fairhaven Historical Society has a short length of rope attached to the ball at the rear of the barrel, likely from the cannon's tackle.

Unfortunately, no independent verification that these cannons were or were not from the *Nimrod* was conducted at the time that the site was identified and the cannons raised. This, compounded with the confusion caused by two separate groundings of the *Nimrod* in 1814 makes it difficult to say with certainty that these cannons actually came from the ship. In order to determine the likelihood that they were from *Nimrod*, the cannons themselves must be consulted to determine what they can tell us. Analysis of the cannons focused on the sizes of cannons present and their popularity of use during the War of 1812 as well as any markings that have been observed on the cannons themselves. Regarding



Figure 4. The Falmouth canon recovered from the site

the second line of investigation first, only the Wareham cannon and the carronade in the possession of the Whaling Museum have any markings visible at the present time. The Wareham cannon has a "6" stamped on the barrel just forward of the touchhole. This number is a founders mark indicating the weight of the cannon itself. The 6 means that the cannon weighed 6 hundredweight (one hundred weight being 112 pounds) or 672 pounds. The Whaling Museum carronade has the date 1778 stamped on the right trunnion and an "xx" on the left trunnion face. This date is the date of manufacture, corresponding to the earliest production of this type of cannon. The other mark is unidentified at this time. The type of cannon recovered all appear to be 3 or less likely 4 pounders (**Figure 5**).

Three pounders were the smallest of what were called "Dutch guns" and while popular in the seventeenth century, their use declined as the century progressed. The use of three pounders was revived after 1743 when it began to be used on quarterdecks of small frigates and sloops and cutters. Three pounders in the eighteenth century were between 4'6" and 6' long weighed between 4 and 9cwt. After 1743 they were invariably 4'6" and weighed 7cwt. In the early 1750s, 28-gun frigates were commonly equipped with four three-pounders on their quarterdecks. These were later replaced with 6 pounders in 1770s/ 80s. Twenty and 22-gun frigates commonly carried 20 9- pounders on their main deck and 2 3- pounders as well. Few of these vessels were built though.

Sloops of the 1750s were armed as follows: ship-rigged sloops with three masts carried 8-14 guns

sloops of 8 guns carried 3 pounders

10-12 gun sloops carried 4 pounders

14 gun sloops carried 6 pounders.

By the 1770s, 16-18 gun sloops were also introduced, all of which carried 6 pounders until the introduction of the carronade, and most carried swivel guns on quarterdeck in equal number to main complement.

### **Death of the Hunter**

The War of 1812, like all wars, eventually came to an end on December 24, 1814 with the Treaty of Ghent. *Nimrod* continued in service for a number of years, but her death appears to have mirrored her life. On 14 January 1827 when on her way from Cork to the river Clyde, *Nimrod* was sheltered in Wholewheat Bay during a gale from the N.N.W. but was driven ashore, stranded and stuck and bilged. Assistance was sent round from Plymouth but, owing to adverse winds, did not arrive until *Nimrod* had been got off by the exertions of her own commander, officers and crew. After being judged to be too badly damaged she was sold.

The *Nimrod* is rumored to have been in service as a merchantman as late as 1840 when George Tabor reported that when he was a mate on the ship Samuel Robertson he saw *Nimrod* taking on cargo in Mobile Bay.

### **Conclusion**

There appears to be only a slight likelihood that the cannons recovered off of Round Hill by the Kendall Whaling museum actually came from the *HMS Nimrod* in 1814. The facts are confused as to how and when they could have come to be deposited there and generally they are of the wrong type and date to be associated with a ship such as *Nimrod* without resorting to an endless stream of what ifs. It is much more likely that they belong to either an American privateer or naval ship of the American Revolution or War of 1812 or possibly more likely to a small British ship, possibly a sloop, associated with the attack on Dartmouth on September 5, 1778. The cannons may have come to rest at the site as the result of this unknown ship striking Great Ledge at low water and having to drop cannons as a way of freeing herself, or they may be part of a complete wreck. The latter possibility has to be considered

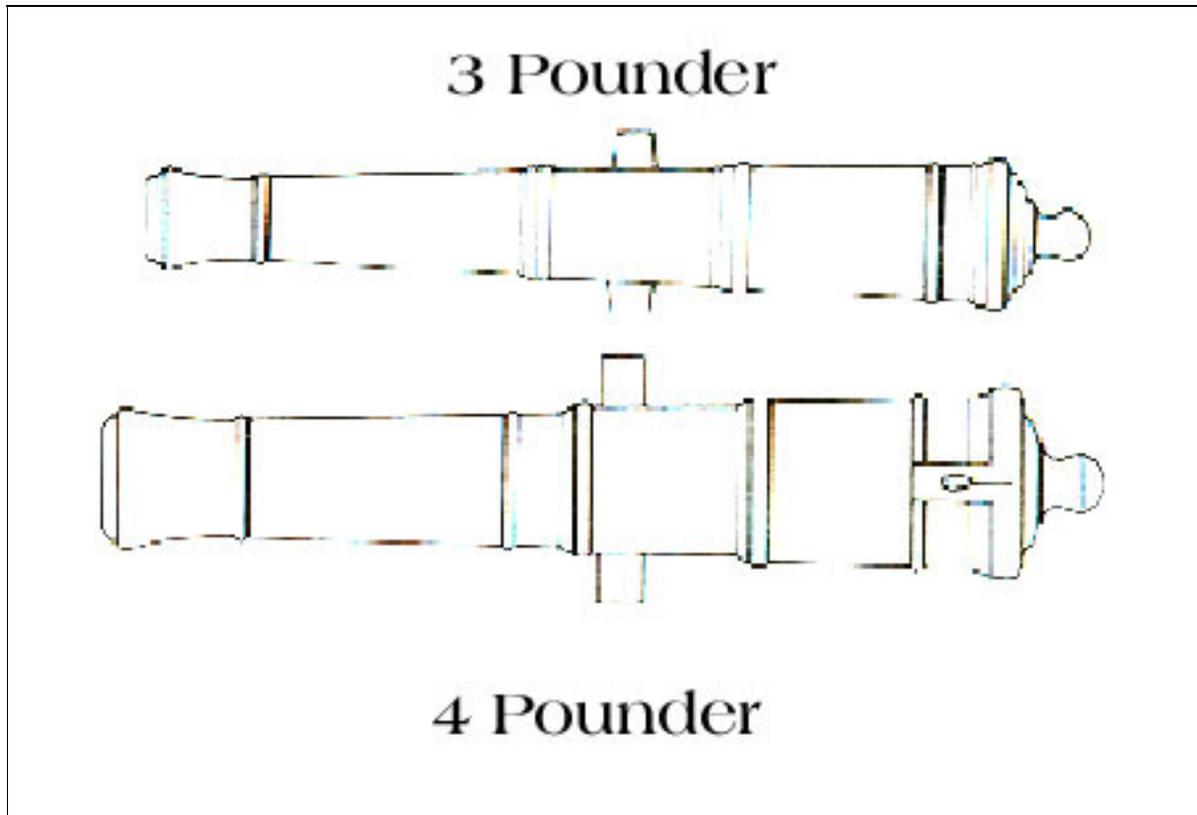


Figure 5. Examples of three and four pounders

due to the superficial investigation done at the site and the overwhelming focus of the investigators on only the visible surface cannons and not on any of the buried metal objects. It is quite possible that a complete wreck may lie buried and thus far has not been identified as such due to the presumptive nature of the earlier investigations. They saw cannons, had heard that *Nimrod* dropped cannons to free herself after she got stuck, they surveyed in cannons on the floor, they raised the cannons, all because they assumed that these cannons were associated with the *Nimrod*. By beginning the investigation with their conclusions already drawn, we see cannons, these must be the *Nimrod's* and since it was not mentioned that she dropped anything other than cannons and cannonballs, we will only focus our recovery on these cannons, earlier investigators ignored alternate possibilities.

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## Appendix I Timelines of the Voyages of the Nimrod

1812-13 Nathaniel Vincent Captain

December 6, 1813 captured *Hitta Franklin* the previous Sunday night off Westport

December 6, 1813 captured Chili

1814 Vincent Newton Captain

January 27, 1814 Tarpaulin Cove

January 29 1814 bombed Falmouth

April 5, 1814 took the Sally Hallett

August 9, 1814 attacked Stonington

June 5, 1814 ordered Swedish brig *Carolus magnus* back to New Bedford

June 6, 1814 Nimrod barge captured pilot boat Number 1 in Buzzards Bay

Jun 9, 1814 captured sloop *Polly* off Westport

June 12, 1814 barges attempt to land at New Bedford

June 13, 1814 sited off Bird Island Mattapoisett

June 13, 1814 attacked Wareham

7:30 am weighed (anchor) ran up Buzzards Bay

11:30 am anchored at head of Bay and sent boats to Wareham

12:00 at single anchor in Buzzards Bay

4:30pm boats returned after destroying 17 ships

8:30pm *Superb's* boats left for the *Superb*

June 14, 1814 struck shore captain Vincent Newton

6:00 am weighed anchor (from head of Buzzards Bay) running towards Quicks Hole

11:30 hawled up for the Hole (moved into position to go into Hole?)

12:30 struck shore, shortened and furled sails

3:30 hove off and anchored with the small bower (anchor carried at bow of ship)

6:00 pm weighed and stood towards *Superb*

7:30 anchored off Gay Head

August 5, 1814 captured sloop *Eagle* off Point Judith, RI

August 6, 1814 5 open boats taken off Watch Hill

September 4, 1814 schooner *Maria* taken

September 10, 1814 4 New Bedford boats taken off Point Judith

January 14, 1827 grounded off Holyhead Bay England, sold

1840 possibly still in service as merchantman as George Tabor reported that when he was a mate on the ship Samuel Robertson he saw Nimrod taking on cargo in Mobile Bay as a merchantman.

**Appendix II**  
**grounding of the Nimrod as reported in the Captain's log**

14th June At 5 Weighed— running towards Quick's Hole. At 11:30 hawled up for the Hole. At 12:30 observed the Brig [Nimrod] to strike the shore. Shortened and furled the sails. Employed getting anchor out astern to Heave her off. Boat from Superb came to our assistance. Got out several of the Guns and Shot. At 3:30 Hove her off & anchored with the Small Bower. At 6 Weighed and stood towards the Superb. At 7:30 anchored off Gay Head.

### Appendix 3 Accounts of the 1814 Attack on Wareham

160: New England Palladium  
Fairhaven June 14

Yesterday morning we were alarmed by the appearance of the brig Nimrod with 7 barges with her manned from the 74 now lying at Quick's Hole. About 8 o'clock she bore away up the Bay and as we supposed was bound into Rochester. We therefore with a party of men proceeded with a small cannon to assist the citizens, but the brig had come to an anchor and manned 6 barges with about 150 men and proceeded to Wareham where they arrived at 12 o'clock and destroyed 12 or 13 sail of vessels, among them a new ship and a brig. They set fire to a factory and left it soon, when the people collected and put it out.

Boston Daily Advertiser  
June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1814

A gentleman from Plymouth states that on Monday about 200 men in 6 barges from a 74 and the Nimrod brig came into Wareham and set fire to seven vessels, three or four of which were consumed. The others and a factory which was likewise set on fire were extinguished.

Columbian Centinel  
June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1814

We learn by gentlemen from Wareham that the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. Several British barges landed about 200 men at that place about noon. They proceeded to set fire to a large ship and an elegant brig on the stocks, which they said was intended for a privateer, and several other vessels. They threw a rocket into a cotton factory which they said they considered public property. They did not molest the fishing craft, and seeing the name of Washington on the stern of one of the vessels, one of them ordered it to be burnt. One officer exclaimed- 'Not a hair on the head of this vessel be scorched,' and she was spared.

New Bedford Mercury

To the editor of the New Bedford Mercury

"Sir- Yesterday morning we were informed of the approach of the enemy, and at about 11 o'clock A.M. they landed at the village called the Narrows, with a flag. There were six barges containing two hundred and twenty men. They demanded (before the proper authority could arrive) all the public property; and declared, that in case they were molested, every house within their reach should be consumed. We were not prepared to make any opposition, and promised not to. To prevent a violation on our part, they detained a number of men and boys as prisoners for their security; declaring that if any of their men were injured, they should be put to immediate death. Having stationed sentries back of the village, they proceeded to fire the vessels and cotton factory. Twelve vessels were fired, five of which were totally destroyed; the remainder were extinguished after the enemy departed. The cotton factory was also extinguished. Damage estimated at 20,000 dollars. It is supposed that the enemy came from the Nimrod brig, and Superb 74.

Banja. Bourne selectmen of Wareham  
Banja Fearing

Inhabitants of Wareham to Commodore Perry  
Wareham June 21, 1814

"To commodore Perry. Sir- The following is a correct statement when the British landed at this place with their barges the 13<sup>th</sup> of this inst. June. We the undersigned do testify and say, that on the 13<sup>th</sup> of this inst. June, about 11 o'clock, A.M. we saw the British with six barges approaching this village with a

white flag hoisted in one of them at which time our flag was not hoisted, but Thomas Young was carrying it down the street towards the wharf, where it was afterwards hoisted. We the undersigned do further testify and say, that on the landing of the commanding officer from the barge where our flag was hoisted, he and the commanding officer did agree that if he was not fired on by the inhabitants that he would not destroy any private property belonging to the inhabitants; but he would destroy public property which did not belong to the town, and requested one of us to point out the Falmouth property or vessels, which we agreed to do, and one of us went into the barge with the second in command, and then they took down their flag of truce and proceeded to set fire to the Falmouth vessels. They then landed a part of their men, and in violation of their agreement proceeded to set fire to private property, by setting fire to a vessel on the stocks and five others which were at anchor and a Plymouth vessel. They were reminded of their agreement, and that they had taken advantage of us by false promises, but they threatened to set fire to the village, and put the inhabitants to the sword if any resistance was made to put out the fires, also they landed a party of men and set fire to a cotton manufactory. They then returned to their barges, took twelve of the inhabitants with them on board their barges, and said if they were fired upon by the inhabitants they would put them to death. Then the commanding officer ordered the flag of truce to be hoisted, and the second in command swore it was a damned shame and disgrace to any nation to enter a village under a flag of truce and commit the greatest outrage and depredation possible, and then return under a flag of truce, but on orders being again given by the commanding officer the flag of truce was hoisted. Our men were landed about three miles below the village, and the barges proceeded on board the brigantine Nimrod, then lying in the bay.

David Nye, Jr. Noble Everett

Abner Basset We. Barrows

Isaac Perkins Perez Briggs

Josiah Everett We. Fearing

P.S. This is known only by the undersigned, no other person being present, that is, that the British fired three muskets under the flag of truce before the agreement.

Abner Bassett

David Nye, Jr.