

# The Mid-19th Century Decline in England's Whaling Trade

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## Overview

This project identifies the reduction of English whaling operations during the mid-19th century and the influence of American whaling activity.



Once import duties reduced in 1843, and as American whale oil became increasingly available, the London fleet continued to decline throughout the 40's and 50's. In 1859, London's last two whalers, the Cowlitz and the Caroline discharged their cargoes in the Commercial Docks of Rotherhithe. Such was the end of London's whaling fleet.

## Conclusions

This topic provides insight into a wide range of subjects, including historical documentation, the effects of human affairs on wildlife, maritime trade, and further business engineering and relations.

## Key Findings

Since the end of the 18th century, London held a steady growth of their South Sea whaling fleet which soon reached its peak of activity in 1821. English whalers fished the Atlantic and much of the Pacific for sperm whales, southern right whales, and seals. At its peak, the fleet was made up of 149 ships. For a short while, London was considered the largest whaling port in the world.

London's South Sea whaling trade aided in charting new seas and coastlines, which further extended Britain's commercial empire. In the late 1820's, however, one fifth of English whaling ships ceased their engagement in the trade as voyages became more strenuous and competition from America and Australia increased.



The Charles W. Morgan, an American whaler launched in 1841. One of America's 2,700 active whaling ships at the time.

## Bibliography/References:

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- 5 *South Sea Whaling*. Museum of London Docklands, London.

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