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“John Morris is about to tell you all there is to be told about Gloucestermen and their wives and widows and fatherless kids, and ways of life, and of death by the thousands, of good times and of bad, in a masterpiece that’s been waiting for generations to be told.”

-Maritime historian Joseph E. Garland

ALONE AT SEA

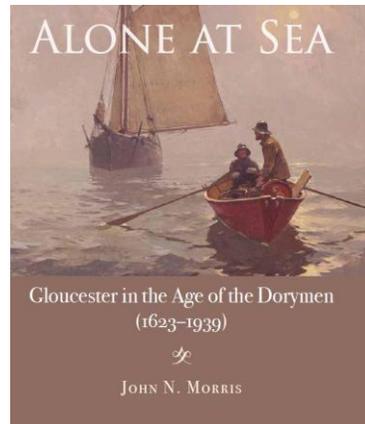
Gloucester in the Age of the Dorymen (1623-1939)

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Contact: Stephanie Schorow, 781-874-0040, sschorow@comcast.net

Two fishermen huddle in a 13-foot dory, with miles of open ocean around them. Buffeted by spray and wind, they drop baited fishing lines into the choppy water, hoping to catch enough cod, haddock or halibut to support their wives and children far away on land. At any moment a freak wave or sudden storm could sweep them away. Yet they love their work, hard though it is, with a passion as deep as the ocean itself.

Such was the life of the Gloucester, Massachusetts dorymen, a life beautifully and meticulously researched by John N. Morris, the grandson of a doryman lost at sea six years before he was born. His new book, *Alone at Sea: Gloucester in the Age of the Dorymen (1623-1939)*, to be released this spring, is the culmination of 10 years of intensive research, sparked by a personal quest to learn more about his grandfather. Beautifully written and illustrated, *Alone at Sea* is the most complete and compelling history of Gloucester fishing ever written.



The issues explored in *Alone at Sea* are newly relevant as stringent and controversial U.S. fishing regulations went into effect May 1. These new limits on fish catches aim to protect diminishing fish stocks, but may also impact struggling present-day New England fishing families. Morris can speak authoritatively on what the rise and fall of fishing stocks in the past tells us about the future of the fishing industry.

While recent books like *The Perfect Storm* and old movies like “Captains Courageous” have depicted the romance and terror of the ocean, *Alone At Sea* delves into the nitty-

gritty of the lives of fishermen and their families, demonstrating the strain and toll it took to put a plate of fresh fish on a dining room table.

Using diaries, business records and interviews with surviving dorymen, Morris paints an indelible portrait of a key New England industry from its emergence in the 17th century to its decline in the 20th century.

With vivid language, *Alone At Sea* chronicles such events as the Great Yankee Gale of 1851, which smashed into the Gloucester fishing fleet off the coast of Prince Edward Island. Morris describes the waves of immigrants – from the Azores, Nova Scotia, Sweden, Norway and Sicily – who went to sea in their quest for the American dream. Morris traces the history of the great Gloucester schooner, the *Oretha F. Spinney*, one of the last working schooners. His own grandfather, Steve Olsson, was working for the schooner when he was lost at sea. The *Spinney* was subsequently purchased by MGM, which used it in the movie “Captains Courageous,” starring Spencer Tracy.

With a glossary of fishing terms and meticulous records of vessels and men lost at sea since 1693, Morris’ book is a valuable resource for maritime buffs and historians, families of fishermen and anyone interested in a good yarn about life on the sea.

John N. Morris grew up in Gloucester, the son of a man whose job was to cut fish and a mother whose job was to pack fish in boxes. He went on to become a renowned gerontologist; he is now Director Emeritus of the Institute for Aging Research at Hebrew SeniorLife in Boston. A chance connection via the Internet launched him on his quest to write *Alone at Sea*.

Please contact Stephanie Schorow to request a review copy or to set up an interview with John N. Morris. Learn more about this title: www.AloneAtSea.com

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Gloucester in the Age of the Dorymen (1623-1939)

By John N. Morris

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