

EXCERPT FROM: **Stuart M. Frank, *Biographical Dictionary of Scrimshaw Artists***
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Stetson, Francis H. (1814-1869). An otherwise plain, polished but undecorated sperm whale tooth is inscribed and signed in ink in a cursive hand to Captain Elisha Handy of Mattapoisett from “F. Stetson” (reported by William Feeney). Elisha B. Handy (1816-1895) was master of three whaling voyages out of Mattapoisett (1854-64) and two out of New Bedford (1865-69).^{*} Francis Horton Stetson’s parentage and early whaling career remain as yet undiscovered, but he and Elisha Handy were nearly the same age and may have been shipmates in early days on some whaling voyage from which no proper crew list survives. After Stetson had gone at least two or three whaling voyages, and in accordance with the customary rule-of-thumb that a whaler had neither the career security nor the financial means to support a wife until he achieved the rank of second mate, once he received an appointment as second mate he married Sarah M. Boyd (1812-1879), daughter of whaling captain Joseph Whelden. He then went as second mate of the ship *Heroine* of New Bedford (1843-45) and afterwards as first mate of the bark *Barclay* of Westport (1847-48). In 1850 he and Sarah were childless and boarding in Fairhaven, with his occupation listed as mariner; by 1860 they had moved to San Francisco, where he appears to have worked in that city’s burgeoning seaborne trade. He died there and was sent home for burial in Fairhaven.

^{*} Elisha B. Handy was born in Rochester, Mass., on Dec. 9, 1817, the son of Captain Levi Handy (1776-1817) and Melora Blossom (1794-1831). He married Joanna F. Barstow (1817-1886) in 1840 and had two sons who died in infancy. He died in Mattapoisett on Apr. 8, 1895.