

## Zeb Was A Great Seafarer With A Love Of Schooners

by William F. Galvin

Anyone with nostalgia for the days when coastal schooners plied these waters carrying cargo from port to port under sail should make it a point to get to the Cape Cinema on Monday evening to see "Zeb Schooner Life."

The documentary tells the story of one of the most storied coaster captains to sail New England waters. It chronicles Captain Zeb Tilton of Martha's Vineyard and his love affair with the Alice S. Wentworth, the 73-foot schooner he spotted in 1906 and fell in love with in Portland, Maine.

The vessel was built in 1863 in Norwalk, Conn. and was originally named the Lizzie A. Tolles, but when Zeb purchased the vessel in 1921, he renamed her the Alice S. Wentworth after his niece. She was a cargo vessel, with a broad beam and a sharp sheer and used as a bricker, capable of moving 5,500 bricks on deck.

While the documentary focuses on expert seaman, character, and charmer Zeb Tilton and his love of the Wentworth, it goes much further to tell the story of schooners and their value in maritime trade in the late 1800s and early 1900s, before trains and trucking relegated the few remaining vessels to leisure cruises.

At one point Vineyard Sound was the second busiest maritime trade route in the world with hundred of schooners moving everything from wood, coal, granite, and oil along the Eastern Seaboard. Captains made a name out of seamanship and speed of vessel, and Zeb Tilton combined both into a maritime legend.



Zeb Tilton at the helm of the Alice S. Wentworth. Photos courtesy of Detrick Lawrence Productions

The film documentary was produced by Detrick Lawrence Productions of Edgartown and is based on the book, "Zeb, Celebrated Schooner Captain of Martha's Vineyard" by Polly Burroughs. The documentary was written and directed by Gordon Massingham, a former

The Alice S. Wentworth is dock-

Cape reporter who now lives in Tisbury.

Massingham said Zeb was known far and wide, whether it was bringing oysters from Green Point on Long Island to Chatham or delivering coal to Nantucket. The documentary has won the prestigious Best of Show from the California-based Accolade Competition.

The film documentary will be showing at the Cape Cinema on Route 6A in Dennis on Monday, June 1 at 7 p.m. It will also be shown at the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies on Sept. 10, schooner race weekend in Provincetown.

A DVD of the film is available at the Yellow Umbrella Bookstore in Chatham.

