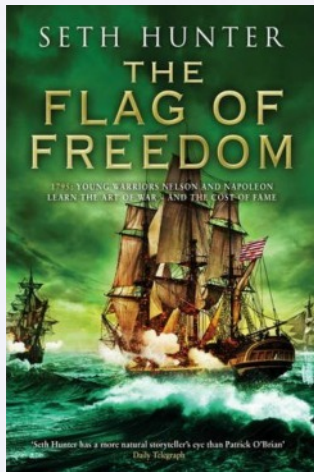
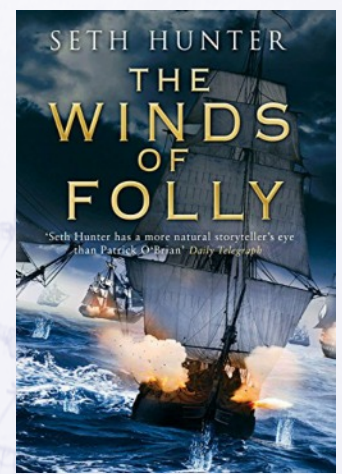
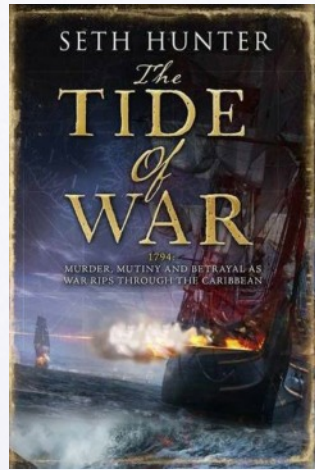
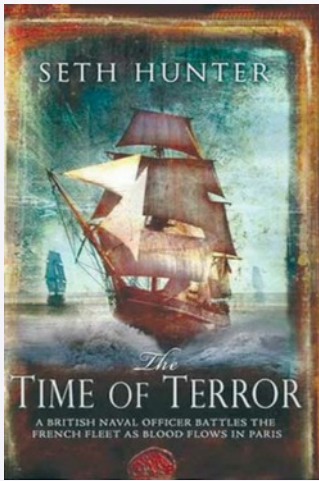


QUARTERDECK

★ Maritime Literature & Art Review ★

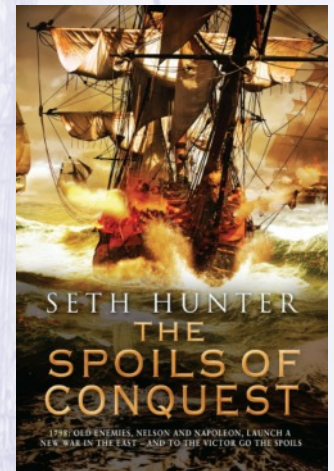


SUMMER 2026



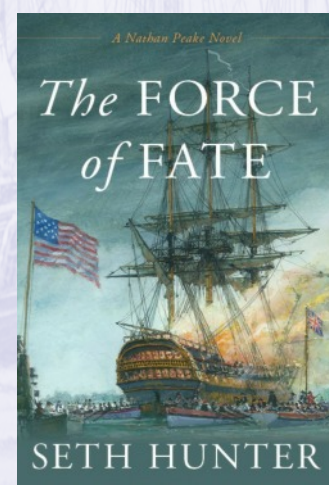
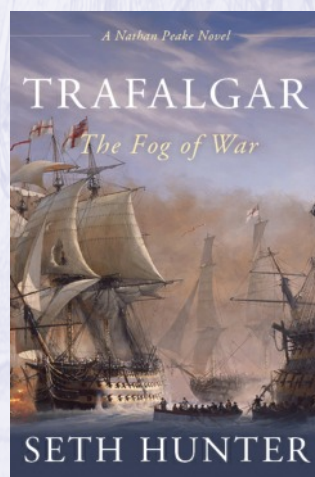
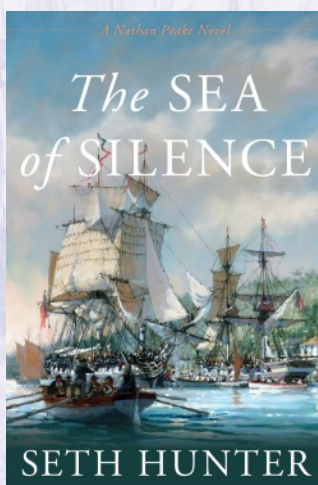
“Seth Hunter has a more natural storyteller's eye than Patrick O'Brian.”

—Daily Telegraph

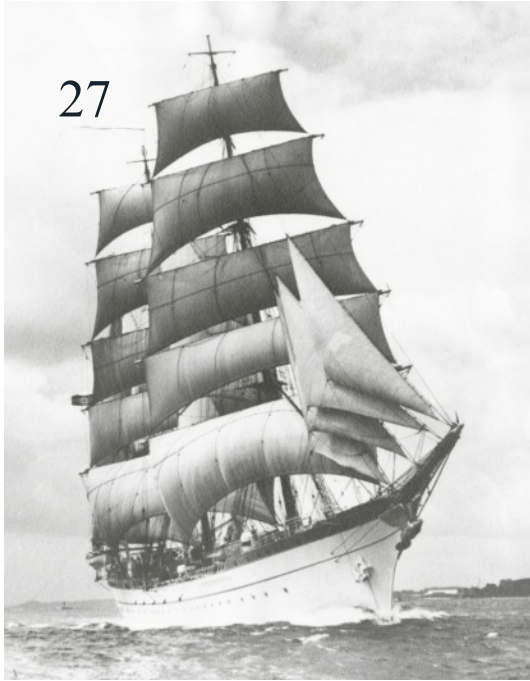


NATHAN PEAKE NOVELS

BY SETH HUNTER



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★ QUARTERDECK ★

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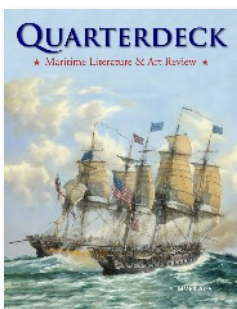
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*USS Constitution vs.
HMS Guerriere* © by
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Geoffrey Huband.

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EDITOR'S LETTER

America officially celebrates its 250th anniversary this summer. The official date is July 4, the day the founders signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776. On page 18, we interview New England historian and novelist Cynthia Elder. *Tales of the Sea*, her two-part novel about a Cape Cod seafaring community in the mid-1800s, is truly a classic American story.

In *By George!* On page 6, we remember Alex Skutt, who founded McBooks Press in the 1990s and was singularly responsible for bringing a broad selection of naval fiction to America's shores. Jed Lyons, CEO and Chairman of the Globe Pequot Publishing Group, recalls his long business relationship with Alex.

We pay tribute to Tyrone Martin, *USS Constitution's* 58th commanding officer, who crossed the bar earlier this year at age 95 in Scuttlebutt. On CDR Martin's watch, the Navy restored Old Ironsides' historical accuracy and provided for future renovations.

Julian Stockwin, author of the Thomas Kydd naval adventures, writes about his admiration for English marine artist John Chancellor among the sea painters "who so ably captured the majesty and awe of Nelson's Realm and the boats and ships that sailed upon his waters." Cynthia Barrett, author of *Three Sheets to the Wind*, provides a primer on the origins of everyday expressions derived from sailors' superstitions on page 16.

Finally, in new books, we share a selection of titles related to America at 250, along with recent fiction and nonfiction offerings.

George

George Jepson, Editor

SCUTTLEBUTT

Maritime literature, art, and museum news

CDR Tyrone G. Martin

On February 26, 2026, Commander Tyrone G. Martin, USN (Ret.), crossed the bar in Tryon, North Carolina. He was 95. Martin was the USS *Constitution*'s 58th commanding officer. The Navy decorated Martin for his command tour, the first *Constitution* skipper to be so honored since 1815.

As the *Constitution*'s commander, he oversaw a major historically accurate restoration. And on his watch, the Navy established standards for future renovations. He also guided the ship through the nation's bicentennial. On July 12, 1976, Martin hosted Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip aboard *Constitution* during the bicen-

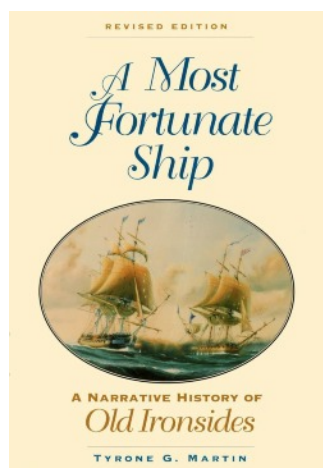
tennial celebration. Two days earlier, the *Constitution* led the parade of tall ships in the harbor.

After retiring from the Navy, Martin served as an advisor to the USS *Constitution* Museum in Boston.

Over the years, he contributed book reviews to *Quarterdeck*. As a naval historian, he authored four books about

the *Constitution*: *A Most Fortunate Ship*, *Undeclared*, *Creating a Legend*, and *A Signal Honor*. *A Most Fortunate Ship* is considered *Old Ironsides*' definitive history. He also wrote articles for the US Naval Institute's *Proceedings* and *Naval History*, and for the *American Neptune* magazine.

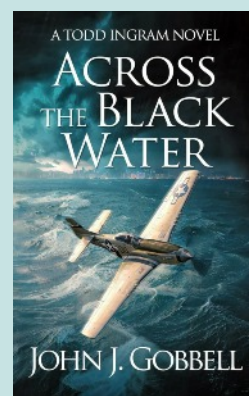
In 1983, Martin received the James Monroe Award from the National Maritime Historical Society. The award is presented annually to a deserving maritime historian, deep-water mariner, preservationist, author, artist, or educator. More recently, he received the Commodore Dudley W. Knox Naval History Lifetime Achievement Award from the Naval Historical Foundation for his significant contribution to naval history research. ■



Above USS *Constitution* flying Old Glory in Boston Harbor. The 15-stripe flag was originally flown during the War of 1812. **Inset** Commander Tyrone Martin during his commission as commanding officer of USS *Constitution*. Photo by Nush Grabowski.

Coming in December . . .

John J. Gobbell's ninth Todd Ingram novel, *Across the Black Water*, will be launched in December by Severn River. A new Cold War ignites in the Pacific—and the Ingram family is caught in the cross hairs once again. Lieutenant Commander Noah Ingram, grandson of the legendary Todd Ingram, commands a P-3 Orion patrol bomber hunting submarines across the South China Sea. When he discovers a secret Russian submarine hidden aboard a Chinese cargo ship, enemy fighters blow his aircraft from the sky. Dragged to a mainland prison and facing brutal interrogation, Noah's only escape is a desperate gamble: steal a fully fueled WWII P-51 Mustang and fly seven hundred miles across hostile ocean toward freedom.



ALEX SKUTT

The McBooks Press founder sparked a resurgence of nautical fiction in the United States that lives today.



© McBooks Press.

In the late 1990s, Alex Skutt, the bespeckled publisher of McBooks Press, who passed away last November, sparked a resurgence of nautical fiction in the United States—a legacy that lives today.

At the time, Patrick O’Brian was making waves among literary circles on both sides of the Atlantic. Richard Snow, writing in *The New York Times*, had called his Aubrey and Maturin canon “the best historical novels ever written.”

Alex once told me that he “read the whole series through and liked it.” Smitten by O’Brian’s stories about the British Royal Navy during the Napoleonic Wars, he plunged into the Richard Bolitho sea adventures by Alexander Kent “and liked them.”

By 1998, his entrepreneurial spirit sailed in a new direction. McBooks’s primary focus shifted to publishing nautical fiction series, starting with the Richard Bolitho novels.

Although Patrick O’Brian’s first Aubrey and Maturin novel, *Master and Commander*, had been published in 1970, his books had been out of print in America for a decade until W. W. Norton released its trade paperback edition in 1990.

The Bolitho novels, written by former British naval

officer Douglas Reeman under the pen name Alexander Kent, started with *To Glory We Steer* in 1968, and achieved a faithful following in America. Reeman had also published a series of naval stories under his own name, beginning with *A Prayer for A Ship* in 1958.

By the 1990s, though, no US publishers had the rights to his books.. That changed in 1997, when Alex wrote to Reeman in England. “It struck me as strange that books this good were not available,” he said.

Kimberley Reeman, the late author’s wife, recalled the eventful connection: “Douglas believed in fate, and it was surely fate that brought Alex Skutt and McBooks into our lives at the very time when relations with [American publisher] G. P. Putnam’s Sons had reached a nadir, and by Douglas’s own choice Reeman and Kent books were no longer in

print in the USA.”

In London, new Richard Bolitho novels regularly appeared on *The Sunday Times* definitive bestseller list.

“Alex’s letter to Douglas came out of the blue,” said Kim. “A small imprint with nothing but courage and daring and vision and a great love of nautical fiction, who approached one of the most famous sea story writers of the twentieth century. ➤

By George!





“And that sincerity and vision impressed Douglas enough to put the whole thing in motion. From that great leap of faith by both author and publisher, Alex, never forgetting what he owed Douglas, turned McBooks into arguably the greatest publisher of nautical fiction in the world.

“Alex came out of nowhere, introduced himself and McBooks by letter, and offered to buy the rights to a selection of Alexander Kent novels. ‘I liked his style immediately,’ Douglas said of this can-do approach. ‘It was a small firm few had heard of, but Alex was committed and completely dedicated, and so were his people, and that was it. I knew we could work together.’

“Alex never failed us. He brought the Bolitho novels, and later some of the Reemans, back to American readers, and he had Douglas’s deep respect and gratitude. As he has mine.”

Alex signing Douglas Reeman landed a best-selling author, who was writing two books a year, one under his own name and another as Alexander Kent. The Kent backlist, which Skutt rapidly returned to print, immediately drew readers to McBooks, establishing the imprint in the marketplace. And as each new Bolitho manuscript was available, McBooks published it in hardback.

As a lifelong bibliophile and book dealer, used and rare shops were familiar haunts for Alex. About the time he founded McBooks

ABOVE Alex Skutt and his longtime assistant Panda Musgrove in front of a display of McBooks Press naval fiction titles at the McBooks Press headquarters in Ithaca, New York.

“Never one to rest on his oars, he launched an online retail bookstore, offering a broad selection of maritime fiction . . .”

Press, he chanced upon a set of old editions by Captain Frederick Marryat, who had served in the British Royal Navy under Lord Thomas Cochrane—the famous fighting captain—during the Napoleonic Wars.

Marryat’s yarns charmed Skutt. “It was kind of like Mark Twain goes to sea,” he said. After acquiring the volumes, which had no copyrights, McBooks initially published two new editions: *Frank Mildmay or The Naval Officer* and *Mr Midshipman Easy*.

The list of naval fiction authors continued to expand. Alex read *Ramage* by Dudley Pope in a used British edition. The naval defense correspondent for the *London Evening News* wrote carefully researched naval history and was encouraged by C. S. Forester to try his hand at naval fiction.

Alex’s keen eye was crucial to his early success. The Lord Ramage novels added eighteen titles to the catalog. Pope joined Reeman and Kent, Marryat, C. Northcote Parkinson, David Donachie, James L. Nelson, Dewey Lambdin, and John Biggins, among other authors, establishing McBooks as the destination for nautical fiction in America.

Never one to rest on his oars, he launched an online retail bookstore, offering a broad selection of maritime fiction available from other publishers, in addition to the McBooks Press editions.

My relationship with Alex began in 1998, when I sourced the Alexander Kent novels from McBooks for Tall Ships Books. And as he expanded the McBooks catalog, our connection grew as we became friendly competitors. We both loved books and shared an affinity for ►

Jed Lyons Remembers Alex

Jed Lyons, chairman and CEO of the Globe Pequot Publishing Group had a long professional relationship with Alex Skutt. After learning of Skutt's passing, Lyons shared his memories of the man with "Quarterdeck."

I met Alex Skutt 25 years ago on a visit to Ithaca, New York where he ran a small bookstore called McBooks. I was in Ithaca to pay my respects to Jeff Cox, a book publisher who ran a firm called Snow Lion, a distribution client of our company, National Book Network (NBN). Snow Lion is one of the leading publishers of books on Buddhism and Ithaca is home to many Buddhists who revere its waterfalls.

While I was there, I stopped in to sell some of NBN's books to Alex and we immediately hit it off. He was very welcoming and engaging, a gifted storyteller and very funny in a quirky and offbeat way. He told me he was publishing books under a newish imprint called McBooks Press. He was going to focus on his beloved Finger Lakes region and on nautical fiction, a small niche category, but one that Alex dearly loved.

Soon thereafter, Alex called to say that his book distributor, LPC, was bankrupt and would NBN take McBooks on? I was delighted to do so. NBN was McBooks's distributor until 2007 when Alex surprised us by moving to a competitor of NBN's. In 2019 he

called again to say he wanted to return to NBN and would we be interested in buying McBooks Press?

By then, Alex was suffering from the effects of Parkinson's Disease. We had a cordial conversation about the future of McBooks Press and agreed on a sale of the business to our publishing company, Globe Pequot, a 75-year-old New England trade publisher based in Essex, Connecticut.

Alex was a complete gentleman throughout the sale process and agreed to assist us in the transition. Luckily, George Jepson, the publisher of *Quarterdeck*, assumed the role of Publisher of McBooks Press and the imprint has sailed on to greater glory ever since.

A couple of years ago Alex called to ask me if we would publish his memoir/history of his hometown in upstate New York. He waxed on about the beauty of the apple orchards in springtime and his memories of his rural upbringing. His musings about this magical place reminded me of Dylan Thomas's *Under Milkwood*. Of

course, I said, we will publish your book and we did not long before Alex died.

He was a brilliant man, a terrific writer, a born entrepreneur and a sentimental dreamer. His nautical fiction books brought countless hours of pleasure to his legion of readers as they joined him on the high seas of swashbuckling adventure and daring derring-do. ■

—Jed Lyons



Jed Lyons

Photo courtesy of Jed Lyons.

British naval fiction.

When the American rights to English novelist Julian Stockwin's Thomas Kydd naval adventures became available in 2005, I encouraged Alex to pursue them—and he did. The author's vivid portraits of life between England's "wooden walls" during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries further strengthened McBooks's position as a safe harbor for nautical fiction.

A year later, when Amy and I decided to close Tall Ships Books, Alex immediately asked me to continue *Quarterdeck*, which McBooks distributed. I still think of his astute copy

editing and penchant for the proper use of commas, which he marked with yellow sticky notes on the page proofs.

In 2019, the Globe Pequot Publishing Group, owned by his longtime friend Jed Lyons, acquired McBooks Press (see his remembrance of Alex above). And as a final gesture, Alex recommended continuing *Quarterdeck* after the acquisition. Today, McBooks Press sails forward under Acquisitions Editor Brittany Stoner.

Each time I crack the pages of a naval fiction title, I remember the man who resurrected the genre in America. ■

—George Jepson



John Chancellor

British seaman turned master marine artist

BY JULIAN STOCKWIN

As an author of maritime fiction I draw on many sources of inspiration—the research of naval historians, my own sea service, the works of fellow wordsmiths. But I owe a special debt to the great sea painters who so ably captured the majesty and awe of Nelson’s Realm and the boats and ships that sailed upon his waters.

I’ve long been attracted to the art of John Chancellor (1925-1984) and proudly display a number of prints of his work in my



John Chancellor

home. My collection began with the purchase of *Victory in Pursuit of Nelson*. I actually first saw this in the wardroom of HMS *Nelson*; such was the real feel of the sea about this work that naval officers admiring it close up would stand leg abrace, as if on the quarterdeck.

One of the compelling aspects about Chancellor’s paintings is the meticulous attention to detail. Come up very close to *Victory in Pursuit of Nelson* and you’ll even see a man using the heads! And the tracery of ➤

TOP *Victory in Pursuit of Nelson* by English marine artist John Chancellor.
All images illustrating this article are © Reproduced by kind permission of Gordon Chancellor unless otherwise credited.

rigging has exactly the right sort of tension curve to be expected at that precise point of the roll.

You can look at this painting as a splendid rendition of a proud ship at sea, or you can see it as Chancellor's frozen moment in time—25 May, 1803, 3 PM The wind is W by S, 45; she's steering S by W, making 67 knots. There's a swell from W by N due to the previous days being dominated by N to NW winds.

To my mind John Chancellor ranks with the finest maritime painters who've ever lived. I regret that he's not as well known as he deserves to be. Sadly he died at the relatively young age of 59, depriving the world of many more works. Born in Portugal the son of a British Anglo-Latin Lawyer, John's earliest memory was seeing the "Grand Bankers" setting off for the Newfoundland and Greenland fishing banks. He showed a remarkable talent for drawing as a child and spent a brief period in his adult life as a commercial artist.

When war broke out he joined the merchant navy and survived two torpedo attacks. Later, in peacetime, he served in deep sea tankers, was master of coastal barges, owned his fishing craft and then developed an innovative hydrographical survey boat, *Exact*, converted from a fishing boat.

In 1970, still chartering *Exact* with himself as coxswain, John painted between commissions and it was during this time that he created the oil painting of the sail training ships *Sir Winston Churchill* and *Malcolm Miller*. The interest in this painting and the enthusiasm of Triton Gallery in Torquay, Devon, persuaded him to give up the sea and develop his talents as a full-time artist.

When John swallowed the anchor he and his wife converted an old sailing barge to make it their home. All four of his children were born and raised on the barge for part of their childhood. They have delightful memories of this time: lopsided birthday cakes when the barge settled awkwardly on a mud berth; the bath on



ABOVE Detail from *Victory in Pursuit of Nelson*.

BELOW The artist at work on a painting.

top of a water tank capable of holding all four children and needing a ladder to get into it . . . Chancellor's paintings are acknowledged as being so detailed and accurate they are historic documents in their own right. Despite his detailed accuracy in the portrayal of sailing craft, his paintings are much more than mere illustrations, Chancellor provides a masterful seaman's eye view of the sea and ships and takes us far beyond the merely photographic. He was not ➤





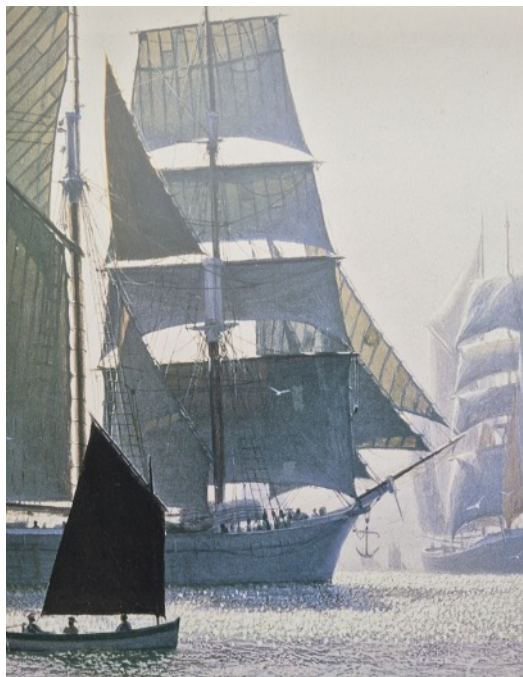
a typical maritime artist. He was prepared to forego the easy option in favor of subjects that stretched him and required a punishing degree of time on research and the need to develop techniques at the easel for weather situations he had not previously tackled.

He poured hundreds of hours into researching sea situations and took particular joy in chronicling what he termed “the unsung heroes,” the small unglamorous barges, brigs, and schooners. Often commercial considerations determined these vessels were tightly manned by a small crew of skilled seamen who spent a lifetime at sea without ever getting into difficulties, owing to seamanship skills which they took for granted. Even his definitive *Victory in Pursuit of Nelson* was not a set piece battle but a poignant moment from a little-known entry in the Captain’s log.

Here are three more of Chancellor’s works that particularly appeal to me:

The Day of the Men

One of John Chancellor’s earliest and most vivid memories was an incident when, as a five year-old living on the north bank of the Tagus,



TOP *The Day of the Men* depicts the French barquentine *Les Terreneuvas* (center) departing from St. Malo.

ABOVE Detail from *The Day of the Men*.

he shared the excitement of the adults around him at the spectacle of a huge fleet of schooners and square riggers setting sail across the Atlantic to fish the Grand Banks.

Years later, researching material for his paintings, this childhood memory drew him to the history of these fishing traditions and he was probably the only highly celebrated maritime artist to have a personal memory of these majestic fleets under sail.

The picture shows the departure from St. Malo of *Les Terreneuvas*, the French Grand Bank barquentine in the 1920s.

Many small craft filled with local people are milling about to bid them farewell. Ahead of them is the long voyage and many months of arduous and hazardous fishing for cod in the little dories which can be seen stacked on deck.

John Chancellor’s reputation as a marine artist owes much to his ability to astonish us with heavy weather scenes. Here, by contrast, is a delightful sunny day, the vessels beautifully lit or partly in silhouette, a wistful albeit poignant moment with so many local men leaving their homes for many months.

From Under Their Noses

At dawn on this bright, brittle morning of 9 March 1797, two British frigates, *San Fiorenzo* and *La Nymphe*, to verify their rather uncertain reconnaissance of the previous evening, carried the last of the flood right up into the Goulet to assess the size of the French fleet anchored in Brest. There, not four miles distant from the enemy, they counted fourteen line-of-battle ➤



ships and sixteen frigates. Such daring probes by British ships into French harbors were almost commonplace at this time.

Mission completed, they tacked and stood out to sea, reefing their topsails to the freshening NNE wind. Shortly after clearing St Mathieu Point, they sighted two sail coming from the WNW. These were the French ships *Résistance* and *Constance*; returning after landing a rather curious expeditionary force on the Welsh coast and, having avoided the Channel fleet, were now standing into their home port. *Con-*

ABOVE From *Under Their Noses*

BELOW Detail: The boarding party pulls away to take possession of *Résistance* strikes her colors.

stance was a 22-gun corvette and *Résistance* a very fine frigate, mounting 44 guns, eight of which were 32-pounders.

The British ships were both originally French and in all probability this completed the illusion that they were friendly, for *Constance* and *Résistance* made no attempt to close with one another and when the British vessels, which had got nicely to windward, suddenly wore and shaped for *Résistance* which was leading, the French ships were a good mile apart and unable to put up a combined defense. This enabled *San*

Fiorenzo and *La Nymphe* to concentrate their combined bombardment on the *Résistance*. Fifteen minutes of this battering was enough and she struck her colors in time for the British vessels to turn their attention to the little *Constance* who was by then coming on the scene. This is the moment of the painting.

The *Résistance* on the right has just struck and let run her topsail halyards and her ensign in surrender. *La Nymphe* (Captain John Cooke), in the left ➤





“In all probability the Resistance surrendered prematurely, confident that help would soon arrive. That no help came is hard to understand.”

foreground having put a party off to take possession, has let fly her jib sheets and backed her mizzen topsail to present her broadside which she is discharging into the little *Constance* on the extreme left of the picture. *San Fiorenzo* (Captain Sir Harry Neale), center background, has backed her main topsail to reduce speed and has brailled her driver and backed her jib to come to starboard to deliver her broadside also into the *Constance*. In a moment both frigates will let draw to pace the *Constance* in a running point-blank bombardment.

The little corvette’s position was quite hopeless, but it was a full ten minutes before she too surrendered. By this time all four vessels were under the lee of St Mathieu Point, not eight miles from the enemy fleet, yet under its nose and the lengthy business of taking off prisoners and putting prize crews aboard was undertaken. Had there not been a spring ebb running out of Brest, the outcome of this engagement might

ABOVE From *Under Their Noses* Detail: *Résistance* strikes her colors.

have been different, for with slack water or a flood tide the enemy ships might well have made it into the Goulet. In all probability the Resistance surrendered prematurely, confident that help would soon arrive. That no help came is hard to understand. Perhaps there was a general lack of preparedness in the French fleet for a swift sortie, but more probably a trap was suspected, for it was known that the Channel fleet was cruising off Ushant. Considering the short period in which the two French ships had been under attack, the extent of their casualties and damage was testimony to the vicious accuracy of the guns of the British vessels, neither of which suffered casualties or serious damage.

The taking of a prize was not a simple affair. The

capturing vessel needed to provide from its complement a sufficient number of experienced people to take command of the prize, without reducing their efficiency too much. Some of the enemy crew would be left aboard to do the bulk of the work, but it was important to judge the right balance of numbers, for the risk that they might overpower the prize crew and retake the ship was always present.

The practice was to shift the officers and the majority of the enemy crew off the prize and crowd the men below aboard the victorious vessel under close guard. At times this was no easy task, particularly in bad weather. In the case of this incident, while they were fortunate that it would be carried out under the shelter of the land, the presence of a huge enemy force so close at hand was a very real peril and lent considerable urgency to the operation—an operation of no mean proportions when one considers that altogether something like 400 men had to be ➤



“On the evening of the 23rd, the wind began to freshen and by midnight was blowing a full gale.”

transferred by boat between the ships.

Perfect Hurricane

Throughout 1798 the little 20-gun *La Prompte*, was stationed in the West Indies. On 21 September, when on passage to Bermuda for stores, she captured a French schooner, *Courier du Cap*, and after taking all her people prisoner and putting a prize crew aboard, both vessels continued towards Bermuda.

On the evening of the 23rd, the wind began to freshen and by midnight was blowing a full gale. The following morning conditions had worsened and *La Prompte* battened down and

ABOVE The artist’s dramatic painting, *Perfect Hurricane*.

sent down her fore- and main-top gallant yards and masts. By now the prize ship was flying a distress signal and closing within hail, it was learned she had sprung a leak. It was blowing a severe gale from the ESE and as there was a heavy sea running. There was little hope of taking the men off her, so it was decided that both vessels should bear up and run back towards New Providence.

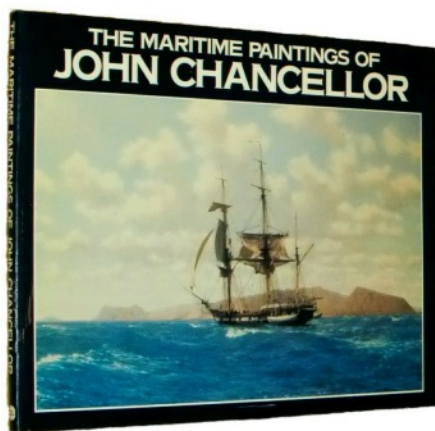
The weather continued to deteriorate into the morning. At 10 o’clock the prizes mainmast was seen to go over the side and at 3 PM she went down with all hands. This was agonizing for those aboard *La Prompte* as the prize ship had ➤

been manned almost entirely by men from *La Prompte*, some of whom had been comrades for four years.

Despite the conditions, she remained in the area hoping for survivors, but she was powerless to get to windward and every minute drove her further from them. Although the situation was hopeless, they could not bring themselves to leave the scene.

At 5 PM, when it was thought the storm was at its height, the wind seemed to explode to double its strength. A hurricane had struck. The storm mizzen staysail at once blew to pieces and although her rig was snugged down, with no top-gallant masts or yards aloft and not a scrap of canvas set, she was held down practically on her beam ends by the weight of wind in her rigging. Now her situation was desperate too, for she was making water and would sooner or later capsize. Immediately the helm was put hard up and an attempt was made to set the storm fore-staysail to get her before the wind, but it blew to atoms before half up. The fore-yards were then trimmed and the foresail loosed, but it instantly burst into a thousand ribbons and the ship still lay beam on, hove down by the wind.

Captain John Spread then exercised a fine piece of seamanship and ordered the mizenmast to be felled. Not only did this reduce the windage aft, but as the ship drifted to leeward of the wreckage, so the remaining cordage still attached helped to tug her stern to windward like



BELOW John Chancellor's drawing entitled *Darwin's shore party returning to Beagle*.



a sea anchor. This is the moment of the painting.

Two books on Chancellor's works have been published by David & Charles:

- *The Maritime Paintings of John Chancellor*, featuring nineteen of Chancellor's paintings, accompanied by text, sketches and enlarged details which highlight his workmanship.

- *John Chancellor's Classic Maritime Paintings* by Rita Chancellor and Austin Hawkins. This second volume of Chancellor's maritime paintings contains much of his finest work, together with an account of his life by his widow and an insight into his technique. Enlargements which show his eye for detail and his own picture notes are also included.

Now out of print, these volumes can sometimes be sourced via the Internet.

My thanks to Gordon Chancellor, copyright holder for his father's works; and Julian Thomas of Art Marine for their kind assistance and permissions. ■

Editor's Note: Art Marine is the leading online gallery of maritime paintings and limited edition prints, and is based in the United Kingdom: artmarine.co.uk.



Visit Julian Stockwin, author of the Thomas Kydd naval adventures, online at: julianstockwin.com.

THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND

THE NAUTICAL ORIGINS OF EVERYDAY EXPRESSIONS



Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea

Superstition

The origins of a remarkable number of everyday words and phrases are anchored in our seafaring past. Cynthia Barrett, author of the book Three Sheets to the Wind:

The Nautical Origins of Everyday Expressions has joined Quarterdeck to share entertaining and revealing maritime roots of common English expressions.

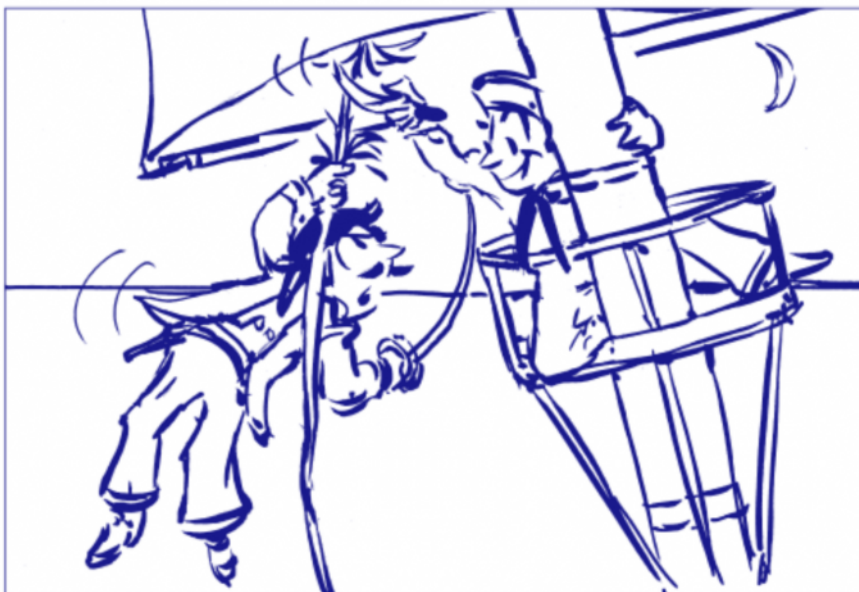
Perhaps no group of people has harbored more superstitions than sailors. At the mercy of wind and sea, they sought to ward off evil by wrapping themselves in magical talismans, gods, and the supernatural. In *Moby Dick*, Melville captures the seafarer's vulnerability as the Pequod weighs anchor and "... blindly plunged like fate into the lone Atlantic." Many nautical expressions we use today are rooted in these fears and superstitions.



Cynthia Barrett

When a ship was becalmed, it was the seaman's belief that he could summon the wind by facing the direction by which he desired the wind to blow and whistling. Nowadays to be "whistling in the wind" is a futile attempt to change something undesirable. We also knock on wood for the same reason that mariners knocked on their ship's massive wooden masts for good luck.

Sailors believed the albatross, with its magnificent wing spans of up to eleven feet, controlled the winds and contained the souls of dead sailors. Killing an albatross brought ill fortune. In Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," the narrator, an old seafarer, is doomed to eternal lament over the fearful consequences of his killing this ►



Your Number's Up

sacred bird. Becalmed in a windless corridor, he and his shipmates suffer scorching heat, thirst, and ultimately, death, “And I had done a hellish thing...I had killed the bird that made the wind to blow.” For us having “an albatross around one’s neck” is to carry a heavy, unshakeable burden.

Today the expression “Davy Jones locker,” is simply a colorful name for the ocean floor. But the original nautical meaning was steeped in dark, mystical superstition. Sailors believed Davy Jones was a sea devil who ruled over the souls of dead sailors on the seabed. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare famously describes those who rest in this mythical place: “Full fathom five thy father lies; of his bones are coral made; those are pearls that were his eyes . . .”

Mariners might curse an unfavorable wind, but they acknowledged that it was a boon to seafarers navigating an opposite route. The expression “It’s an ill wind that blows no good” holds the same meaning today as it did for sailors who coined the phrase centuries ago, what’s bad for you may be good for others. In *Henry IV*, Part 2, Shakespeare precisely captures this meaning. Falstaff asks his old sidekick Pistol “What wind blew you hither.” Pistol answers “Not the ill wind which blows no man to good.”

Since Ancient Egypt, mariners have considered ships living things. They have carved figureheads to imbue their vessel with special powers. In the 1800s the long, sleek clipper ships adopted a full-length human figure. The majority depicted, beau-

tiful, scantily clad women intended to please the gods. Today a “figure-head” is an apparent leader with high visibility but only nominal power and authority.

The expression “Your number is up” is another maritime expression imbued with superstition. It implies that it is someone’s turn for death or bad fortune. The original maritime meaning of this phrase was purely practical. An admiral needing to confer with or reprimand

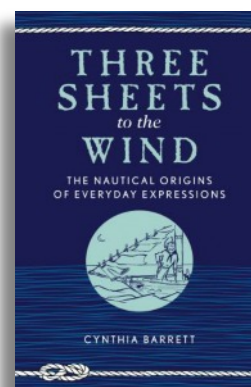
one of the captains in his fleet summoned him by flying the number of that ship. Hence the captain’s number was up.

One of the most hazardous tasks of the crew was caulking the topmost plank of the ship’s side. One false move and a sailor could find himself plunging into the water. This fraught beam of wood became known as “the devil” and the sailor assigned this perilous job was “between the devil and the deep blue sea.” Today someone “between the devil and the deep blue sea” is in a lousy situation with no good options.

Much like their precarious balancing act furling sails on the yards of tall ships, sailors at sea existed on a thin edge between life and death. On the yards and or on the deck, sailors found solace in superstitions. We may not have inherited those superstitions, but we have adopted the language. ■

Three Sheets to the Wind is available online and wherever books are sold.

Lyons Press,
Paperback / e-book
\$16.95 / \$14.99





Cynthia Elder

A cache of eighteenth-century letters, ship’s logs and personal journals inspired the New England author to write a two-volume novel about three generations from a Massachusetts seafaring family in the 1800s.

Three decades ago, author Cynthia Elder—“my friends call me Cindy”—cruised Maine’s Penobscot Bay for a week aboard lifelong sailor Bob Elder’s 38-foot sloop *Restless*. Afterward, she sent him a special ship’s log with a wooden cover containing her daily journal entries from their journey as a thank-you gift. “The plan worked,” says Cindy. “He invited me back, the logbook grew, and before long we tied the knot.” ➤

Above: New England author and historian Cynthia Elder with her two-volume novel, *Tales of the Sea*.
All images illustrating this article are courtesy of Cynthia Elder unless otherwise designated.

Soon after their marriage, Cindy “learned that sailing was in Bob’s blood—literally.” While working on a family history, she came across a transcribed letter from Captain James Jenkins, at sea in the 1800s aboard the merchant ship *Hoogly*, to the woman he loved.

Jenkins was Bob Elder’s great-great-grandfather. “The words struck me to the core,” says Cindy. “Captain Jenkins shared many qualities with the sailor I had just married. His voice echoed through time in the person of my husband. At the time, I thought this was the only letter from James Jenkins that existed.”

Over two decades later, a cache of handwritten letters, ships’ logs, and personal journals stored in boxes for 150 years surfaced. “As I spent time with these documents,” says Cindy, “the idea of transforming their words into a novel grew in my mind.”

By this time, Cindy was herself a seasoned sailor. And the couple’s daughters, Emily and Elizabeth, had grown up sailing Narragansett Bay and farther reaches with their parents. It was a family affair that dated back to the mid-1800s, when Captain James Jenkins’ family went to sea.

Cindy’s research and passion for the Jenkins story led her to write *Tales of the Sea*, a two-part historical novel: *The Journey Begins* and *The Drumbeats of War*. *Kirkus Reviews* called Cindy’s work “A well-developed novel that uses copious historical sources to vividly bring its characters and setting to life.” *Kirkus* gave the novel a “Get It” recommendation.

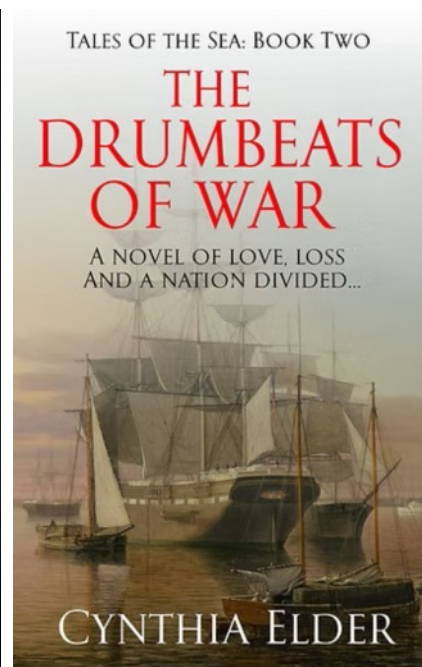
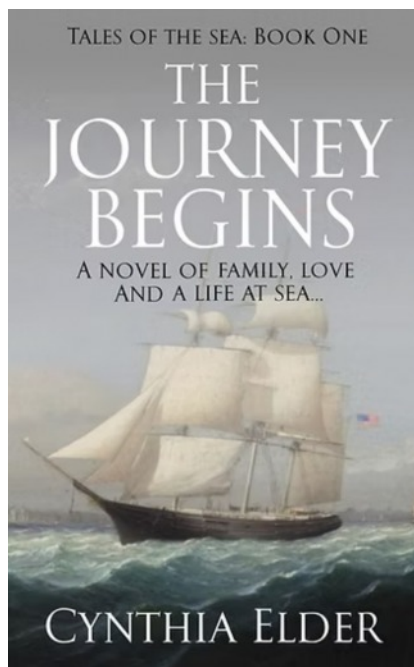
After chancing upon *Tales of the Sea* (see our review on page 25), I was smitten with the narrative that carried me back nearly two centuries to an American seafaring family. So, I contacted Cindy to learn more about the story behind her novel and journey to becoming a writer.

—George Jepson



Have you always been a reader?

Some of my earliest memories involve reading. I recall sitting at my father’s bedside when I was four years old, pretending to read “The Owl and the Pussycat” by Edward Lear. I had memorized the poem, but I wanted to prove to my



“Captain Jenkins shared many qualities with the sailor I had just married. His voice echoed through time in the person of my husband.”

Below: Bob Elder at the helm of the family’s 38-foot sloop *Restless*.

father that I could read, so I turned the pages using the pictures as guides. He was in the final stage of a four-year battle with cancer, and it’s the only clear image I have of our time together.



I fell in love with poetry early on, spurred by the classic, “A Year is a Window” by Richard Jackson, a gift from my aunt. Little did she know it would light the fuse in me to write and publish poetry for the rest of my life. As a pre-teen, I discovered Felix Salton’s *Bambi: A Life in the Woods* when I was recovering from pneumonia. I had never seen the Disney movie version, so I was able to immerse myself in the natural world he created. Fortunately, it took me a few ➤



weeks to recover, which gave me time to read Salton's *Perri* (about a squirrel) and *Bambi's Children*. I kept my mother busy running back and forth from the library.

The love of reading, once instilled in a child, rarely dies. I was fortunate to be surrounded by people who valued literature in all its forms. I can't imagine my life without a good book sitting on the shelf, waiting to be read.

What drew you to become a writer?

Writing might be in my DNA, as our family has more than its fair share of writers. I was encouraged by my grandmother, Emmie Mygatt, a writer of western mystery stories for boys (she had four of her own). She gave me a scrapbook shortly after my father died, and I quickly filled it up with poems and stories.

As time went on, poetry became a safe space for me to write through my growing pains and reflect on what I saw in the world. I flailed about for direction after high school and finally, at my mother's urging, ended up at Roger Williams College (now a university), where they offered majors in creative writing and "career writing"—basically, everything you could do to earn a living as a writer.



Top: The 177-foot barque *Hoogly* in a painting by an unknown artist.

Above: Captain James Hamblin Jenkins in a circa 1860 photograph.

This proved to be the magic double-major for me. I have worked as a journalist, magazine editor, television producer, news radio personality, communications professional and nonprofit executive director. At the same time, I've continued to carve out time for my personal writing projects in between work and family obligations.

What had you written before *Tales of the Sea*?

My previous published work includes poetry in many literary journals, hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles, a nationally syndicated documentary on domestic violence, a book on The Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology's education program, and a book on the history of The Gordon School, one of the country's first open-air schools.

Tell us about the genesis behind the *Tales of the Sea* novels.

I've long been obsessed with family history. In my early 30's, I invited members of my family to contribute a written memory to an anecdotal history book. The contributions ranged from reflections on a first kiss to oral histories, poems and essays.

A few years later, when I married lifelong sailor Bob Elder, I decided to create a similar collection, including both sides of my newly expanded family.

My father-in-law's contribution was a letter from Bob's great-great-grandfather, James Hamblin Jenkins, captain of the 177-foot barque *Hoogly* in the merchant shipping business in the 1800s. Writing to Ruth Fish, the woman he loved and eventually married, his words spoke to me through time.

When Bob's parents died several years ago, we found a treasure trove of letters, ship's logs and personal journals from James Jenkins and his family in a drawer on my in-laws' porch. ➤

With help from my brother-in-law, I transcribed them and lost myself in their stories. They became as familiar to me as my own family. I knew I had to bring them to life.

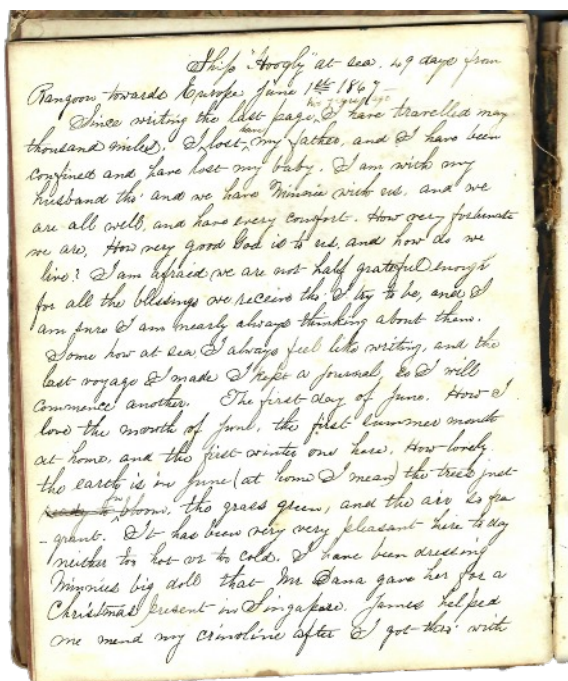
What most appealed to you about the mid-nineteenth century in which your novels take place?

This was a time of technological change, innovation and deepening political division in our country—not unlike our own time. The Age of Sail was rising to its pinnacle, soon to be displaced by steamships. The tension between the North and South was building to a climax that would result in the bloodiest war in our history. And yet, people took time to write letters that would be months in the drafting and longer in the sending—an act of faith and loyalty that helped them stay connected to the people they loved.

These days, communication is instant. No patience is required, and little nuance is expected. I'm inspired by the incredible literacy of everyday working people in the 1800s whose education often ended at twelve years old. They learned to write by reading books. I'm moved by their honesty and introspection, their willingness to make themselves vulnerable by sharing their deepest emotions.

How did you research the novels?

Working with these documents was like stitching together a patchwork quilt. I combed through the details hidden within their correspondence and created timelines to understand what had happened on particular days in their lives. There were still holes, however, so I researched newspaper archives for small towns and big cities where their travels led them. I visited lighthouses and the backrooms of small



Top: Ruth Fish Jenkins, circa 1860s.

Above: Ruth Jenkins' journal entry on June 1, 1867.

museums. I had tea with members of a local historical society and spent many wonderful hours in the Mariner's Reading Room at Sturgis Library in West Barnstable, Mass.

Bob and I accompanied his relatives on a "dead ancestors' tour" to see the sites, many now erased by time, where the people of this family had lived and died. In the summers, I sailed with Bob, watching the quality of light on the water, scribbling in my journal to capture a hundred different types of waves and cloud formations. I even checked the phases of the moon and weather events for specific dates and locations in the 1800s. So, if I say it's a waning crescent moon—trust me, I did the research.

As you initially read the letters between James and Ruth, what were your thoughts? Did they immediately speak to you as characters for a novel?

My first introduction to these historic documents came through James' letters to Ruth. I was floored by his honesty, dry wit and elegant writing. It was much later, when I encountered Ruth's letters and diaries, that I began to envision them as the central characters of a novel. Ruth's relationships with her mother, brother, aunt and friends fleshed out her personality. I began to see both of them as whole people with distinct voices.

I want my characters to have enough substance and inherent goodness that we grow to care about them. I don't mind if they're flawed; in fact, I prefer them that way. I want them to grow over time, to face their demons, to show us how to endure. I found these qualities in Ruth and James.

I was particularly taken by Ruth's recollections of the day General Lee surrendered and the day Lincoln was shot, as seen through the ➤



Alamy

“Lighthouse keepers could anchor us to one common place—the Sandy Neck Lighthouse in West Barnstable—while the world moved around them.”

eyes of a young woman in a small town. Her family, like so many others, suffered great personal loss. Her patriotism was rooted in love.

James’ vulnerability shone through his letters to Ruth, as in this excerpt: “Do you know how difficult a task self-examination is: how hard it is sometimes to search out from one’s own heart the hidden motive of our actions, motives hidden even from ourselves?” It takes a strong man to look that deeply within.

Are all the characters in *Tales of the Sea* real individuals?

Nearly all of the characters are real people whose lives I researched and whose stories hue closely to the historical record. However, this is a work of historical fiction because I have invented a few characters and taken some thoughtful liberties with others to create a story the reader will enjoy.

In the back of each book, you’ll find a list of characters in order, including information on whether they are real or invented. You’ll also find a glossary of terms and

Above: The Sandy Neck Lighthouse at the entrance to West Barnstable Harbor today.

Below: The Sandy Neck Lighthouse, circa 1870s, which plays a significant role in *Tales of the Sea*.



notes on the sources I used in my research. At the end of the second book, *The Drumbeats of War*, I’ve included an epilogue which tells you what becomes of each of the real characters in the book.

Was there a particular challenge in writing the novels?

One of the challenges involved writing a story from multiple perspectives. *Tales of the Sea* is the story of an entire family whose lives were tied to the sea. I chose to use multiple points of view so the reader could see life through the eyes

of men, women and children from generations of seagoing families.

The other dilemma I faced was how to anchor the novel when so many of my characters were sailing around the globe, living on the other side of the world from each other. It hit me one morning after my second cup of coffee. Lighthouse keepers could anchor us to one common place—the Sandy Neck Lighthouse in West Barnstable—while the world moved around them. ➤



descriptions, including the arc of each character. I want to be able to answer the questions: What does this character think they want in the beginning? What do they get? How do they feel about what they get?

Please describe where you write.

When my house is quiet, I like to write in my kitchen where I can look out and see Hundred Acre Cove through the slider. Also, the coffee pot is handy. For longer, more serious stretches of writing, I disappear to my office upstairs, where I have a writing desk, a closet full of archival material, bookshelves, and (when necessary), a folding table to lay out historic documents. I can also write just about anywhere if I can find a quiet, undisturbed space and a surface for my laptop.

What has been the greatest influence on your work as an author?

I adore great historical fiction. Years ago, when I discovered James Michener's epic historical novels, I was hooked. In more recent years, I've gobbled up Ken Follett's Kingsbridge Series and just about everything by Kristen Hannah and Diana Gabaldon. In poetry, I remain attached to Emily Dickenson, Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Maya Angelou and Mary Oliver, while I continue to explore and appreciate contemporary and emerging poets.

Above: Cindy's home office provides a quiet, snug space for writing.

Below: Fresh air aboard *Restless* in the Atlantic off Narragansett Bay provides solitude for Cindy writing phrases that described the waves and clouds.

Do you have a regular writing routine?

I rise most days at about 5:30 am. That's my magic hour—right after the first cup of coffee. My brain is on fire, and it's a good time to do creative work. The world is asleep, so it feels like found time. No one needs me for anything. When I'm on deadline, I can work straight through the day, as long as I can get outside at some point for a walk. I rarely work in the evening—that's my wind-down time when Bob and I debrief on the day and put our feet up.

Where does your process begin when you start a new novel?

My process starts with a spark—something that ignites my interest and catches my attention. That moves quickly to the research phase. I dig into every source I can find, read books, visit museums, whatever it takes to determine if there is enough “there” there to create a story worth reading.

Do you plot out your novels before beginning to write?

I create a rough outline of the plot with flexibility for change if the story should evolve in unexpected directions. I also develop character



Have you ever experienced writer's block?

Like most writers, I've suffered from a lack of confidence at times, but rarely from writer's block. I often have several projects in process at the same time, so if I'm not in the head space for my historical novel, I'll work on a poem or an article, or I'll send out queries or organize my desk. There are always books that need to be read and research to conduct—all of these things draw on different parts of my brain.

At the end of a writing day, were you able to walk away from the characters in *Tales of the Sea*?

I don't think I'll ever walk away from them, because they are literally a part of our family now. I hear their voices ➤



Above: Cindy and Bob Elder aboard *Restless*.

in the words of my husband and children. I kept my promise to bring their story to life, and now their story is part of my own.

During the writing process, there were some characters—like Joseph Nickerson, the lighthouse keeper—who would stay with me, whispering in my ear, telling me what to write next. When I finally had to say goodbye to him, I cried.

Have you been surprised at the positive reaction readers have shown to the *Tales of the Sea*?

Every time I hear from a reader who appreciated the story, it feels like the first time—a glorious renewal of spirit, a reminder of why I worked so hard to complete this project. I've been especially honored by the experienced sailors who have shared their enthusiasm for the novels. They understand this world, so their opinion means a lot. Also, I'll never forget when I received my Kirkus Review. I was in the basement organizing shelves when it popped up on my phone. I was terrified to open the email. With every word I read, I kept thinking, "when does the bad part come?" It never came—*Tales of the Sea* received their "Get It" designation. They called it "a well-developed novel that uses copious historical sources to vividly bring its characters and settings to life." I was in shock!

Are there other historic periods or subjects you would like to explore with your writing?

I have two historical novels in process. One is based loosely on the life of a poor farm boy from Ohio in the early 1900s who serves in World War I and travels the world when the war ends. He becomes a guide on round-the-world cruises in the 1920s and is recruited by the OSS (precursor of the CIA) during World War II to place spies around the world. My grandfather provided the inspiration for this novel. The second project is a time-slip historical fiction novel based on an Endicott-era fort in Rhode Island which I came to know during my tenure with RI State Parks & Recreation. It's checkered past caught my attention.

Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

Without readers, writers would be lost. We think of you all the time. We try to imagine how you will respond. When the right reader finds the right writer, magic happens. Thank you for being the other half of the equation! ■

Visit Cynthia Elder online at
www.cynthiaelder.com.

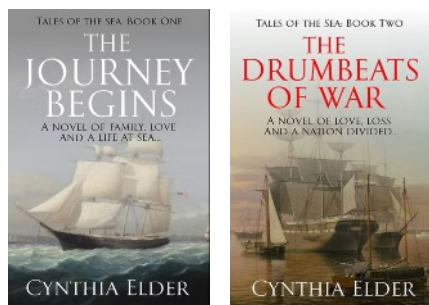
The Journey Begins & The Drumbeats of War

by Cynthia Elder

Holand Press, Paperback / e-book

\$35.00 / \$16.99

Available Now



Cynthia Elder's sweeping *Tales of the Sea* chronicles a New England seafaring community over four decades in the mid-eighteenth century. Based on a treasure hoard of handwritten letters, ships' logs, and personal journals, she offers an original and captivating view into a bygone era.

This exceptional two-part novel comes alive through the voices of three generations who actually lived through those often turbulent times.

The Journey Begins introduces the primary characters who lived in West Barnstable, on Cape Cod, in 1830. Lighthouse keeper Joseph Nickerson, along with the Fish and Jenkins families, relies on the sea to make a living.

Young James Jenkins aspires to a life at sea from an early age. Eventually, he rises to captain merchant ships, delivering cargoes around the world. Once established, Jenkins marries a Barnstable ship captain's daughter, Ruth Fish. Reading James's letters from his voyages, she harbors a fervor to sail with him to distant ports of call.

On Sandy Neck, a dunes-laden barrier beach across Barnstable Harbor, Lighthouse Keeper Joseph Nickerson follows news from the nation and abroad. As a popular figure in the com-

munity, he openly shares his thoughtful and opinionated views.

Elder's eloquent prose, wrapped around the literate voices of historical characters, fosters a sense of connection and interest. The sea story, told mainly through the Jenkins's voices, compares with Richard Henry Dana Jr's narrative in *Two Years Before the Mast*. Elder's descriptions of conditions at sea reflect her three decades of sailing Narragansett Bay and beyond.

The story advances chronologically, creating leaps in time. The reader often knows something that a character doesn't, creating compassion for those waiting for news from or about another person.

The Drumbeats of War, which picks up the narrative in 1860, reflects a time of deep division and emotion in America, as the nation faces the Civil War. Ruth's brother, Josiah Fish, heeds President Lincoln's call to arms with the Union Army. Through his letters, readers experience a soldier's raw experience. In one passage, Josiah describes a chilling encounter with the enemy in a few words: "bullets flew there like hail stones for about an hour." Each letter brings, at least temporarily, relief that he still lives.

At the same time Americans spill blood on battlefields across a young nation, James and Ruth Jenkins sail the oceans aboard the barque *Hoogly*, separated by months from news about home and the war. Their only threat from the conflict was Confederate raiders at large on the seas, like the notorious *Alabama*.

Later, particularly affecting moments emerge in Ruth's letters as she reacts in real time to the Civil War's end and Lincoln's death. And just as powerful are James's fragile emotions through his letters at sea while away from Ruth.

Finally, woven into the novel is the

moving real-life plight of Thomas, the *Hoogly's* cook, a self-emancipated enslaved person.

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary, Cynthia Elder breathes life into a consequential chapter in the American story. ■

—George Jepson

Clay and the Sublime Port

by Philip K. Allan

Independent, Paperback / e-book

\$35.00 / \$16.99

June 2, 2026

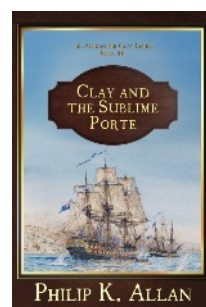
After returning to England from South America, Captain Alexander Clay faces the threat of losing his beloved frigate, *Griffin*, not to an enemy but to a Navy Board official in the Royal Dockyard at Portsmouth.

At the Admiralty in London, Clay encounters leadership changes made while he was away at sea. Greeted by Lord Palmerson, the Junior Lord of the Admiralty, "no older than early twenties," the young man informs Clay that he desires him to join Admiral Collingwood in the Mediterranean.

With *Griffin* requiring serious dockyard attention, Palmerson proffers, "How does a seventy-four sound?" HMS *Hermes*, a French-built 74 captured by the British Royal Navy off San Domingo, awaits a new commander in Portsmouth.

Cracking open *Clay and the Sublime Port* was a happy return to vintage naval fiction. Clay's visit to the Admiralty and his new commission launched a new captivating sea adventure.

On an early evening a few weeks later, *Hermes* slips her moorings at Portsmouth, bound for Gibraltar ➤



and beyond. Once under sail, *Clay and the Sublime Porte* comes alive through Griffin's officers and Jack Tars who make up the bulk of her ship's company.

Allan artfully paints *Hermes* under sail in words, placing readers aboard as she broad reaches toward the chops of the Channel. And adding tension to the story early, Clay can't resist chasing a ship sailing into the night without navigation lights.

A fresh sea breeze blows through Philip K. Allan's crisp narrative. His rich background in naval history and keen understanding of relationships among officers and crew create an authentic shipboard world above and below decks.

At Cadiz, off Spain, *Hermes* raises the Mediterranean squadron, where Clay meets with Admiral Collingwood aboard his three-deck flagship, *Ocean*. There, he learns Britain's Ottoman allies, the Turks, may be on the cusp of "moving into the French camp."

Collingwood orders Clay to sail to Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) to negotiate with the Sublime Porte, the Ottoman government, "and find out what is truly going on."

At London's direction, Collingwood also sends a squadron to the Aegean to await word from Clay and Charles Arbuthnot, Britain's ambassador to the Sublime Porte. And if the Turks switch sides, the Admiral says, "we must prevent it, by force if necessary."

Ahead lies a treacherous passage through the heavily fortified, narrow Dardanelles and into the Sea of Marmara. Once at anchor in Constantinople's shadow, Clay and Arbuthnot, who is ailing, must discover whether the Sublime Porte stands with Britain or Napoleonic France. And that leads the *Hermes* into the city's dark and dangerous back streets.

Twelve titles into the series, Alexan-

der Clay rates with the greatest heroes in historical naval fiction.

—George Jepson

The Wreck of the Mentor

by Eric Jay Dolin

Liveright, Hardback / e-book

\$27.99 / \$14.36

June 2, 2026

On May 21, 1832, just before midnight, the American whale ship *Mentor* ran onto a remote reef about 150 miles northwest of Palau in the Pacific. Thrown on its beam ends, its portside underwater thrust against rough coral heads, the ship had met its end.

Dolin's opening scene describes the striking conditions leading up to the *Mentor's* demise, capturing the nightmarish fury nineteenth-century sailors often faced. Towering, wind-driven seas and relentless rain tore at the ship until she slammed into the unknown reef.

The 22-man crew, who had sailed from New Bedford, Massachusetts, frantically fought to save themselves. Within a day, half had perished. One man disappeared in the murky waters. And a whaleboat carrying ten men capsize in sight of the wrecked ship, with no survivors.

The remaining crew and the *Mentor's* captain, Edward C. Barnard, set out for a small sandy cay in the ship's remaining whaleboat, a badly leaking vessel. Armed with a few weapons, a sextant and compass, a key of water, hardtack, and clothing, they faced an uncertain fate.

Landing on the cay, they found little to sustain them and had to decide what to do next. Either row their battered

boat into the open ocean and hope to hail a passing ship, or head to an island visible in the distance and hope to find friendly natives.

As dawn approached after a night on the cay, a large canoe swept through an opening in the reef surrounding the cay. About twenty heavily armed natives stepped onto the beach. "They were stark naked, with long hair, jet-black teeth and tattoos, especially on their legs," wrote Dolin. It appeared that the decision, at least for the time being, did not include seeking rescue from a passing ship.

The Wreck of the Mentor, Eric Jay Dolin's latest maritime history, flows with a novel's alacrity while anchored by meticulous research and sound documentation. And it reaches well beyond the tale of a shipwreck.

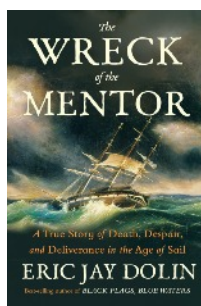
Dolin's compelling narrative connects America's whaling history, which dates back to the 1600s, to the *Mentor*. The New Bedford men were a new generation of whale hunters when they bid their families and friends farewell over a year before the ship foundered.

Beyond the wreck, Dolin focuses on the crew's epic four-year saga in the Palau archipelago. Once the crew abandoned *Mentor*, so too was Captain Barnard's authority. After that, he was simply another survivor, leaving leadership up in the air. Some of the most gripping passages come in the words of those who lived to tell their stories.

These men endured captivity, painful forced tattooing, physical violence, fraught negotiations, and changing alliances among Palauan factions. All the while, they longed for rescue and home.

The Wreck of the Mentor, abundantly well illustrated, is yet another masterful maritime history from Eric Jay Dolin's pen. The book contains more than 100 maps and illustrations.

—George Jepson



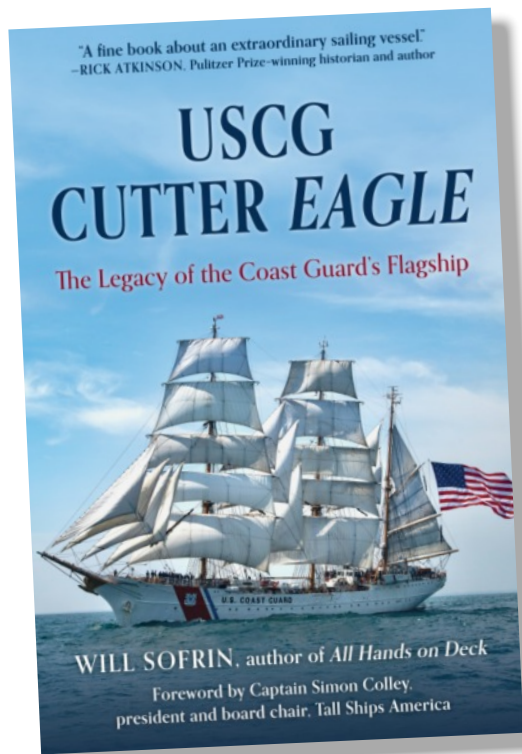


Photo courtesy of Will Sofrin.

Will Sofrin

The USCG Cutter *Eagle* has been an integral part of the United States Coast Guard since her commissioning in 1946, serving as both a training ship and a representation of the Coast Guard's commitment to excellence. Originally built in Germany as the *Horst Wessel* and sailed under the Nazi flag, she was taken as a war prize after World War II and transformed into a vessel that reflects America's democratic ideals.

CHAPTER 1

Bremerhaven

JANUARY 1946: PROCEED BY AIR TO LONDON ENGLAND AND REPORT TO COMNAVEU FOR FURTHER ASSIGNMENT AS PROSPECTIVE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE COAST GUARD CUTTER EAGLE NOW THE GERMAN EX-NAVAL SHIP HORST WESSEL AT THE US NAVAL ADVANCE BASE WESER RIVER BREMERHAVEN GERMANY.

Sharp, icy winds swept in from the nearby North Sea, carrying the faint smell of saltwater mixed with engine exhaust and the remnants of soot and ash from bombed-out buildings. Commander Gordon McGowan surveyed the shattered landscape of Bremerhaven, a former stronghold of the Kriegsmarine, the naval

branch of Nazi Germany's military and a vital hub for Hitler's Atlantic Wall. The once-vibrant city felt hollow, with vast stretches of rubble and ruins where homes, docks, and warehouses had stood. Wooden boards creaked under-foot as he navigated the temporary pathways. There was an occasional cry of a child or the reedy bark of a stray dog. The voices of those walking around were subdued, speaking in hushed tones, their words heavy with the weight of hardship. He heard the scraping of bricks and the pounding of metal, signaling the beginning of reconstruction.

During World War II, Bremerhaven's geographic location had made it a prime logistical hub, allowing Germany to project naval power into the North Atlantic, the English Channel, and Arctic territories, supporting operations in Norway and other occupied regions. It had played a critical role in shipbuilding and repair, its shipyards producing U-boats and other naval warships essential to the Nazi agenda. Its strategic importance, however, made it a frequent target of Allied bombing campaigns, which ➤

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Commissioned in 1936, the *Horst Wessel* was a German navy training ship built to prepare naval cadets for service in the Kriegsmarine. Named after a Nazi Party martyr, the vessel served as a symbol of Hitler's regime and was used for both seamanship instruction and ideological indoctrination. After World War II, she was taken by the United States as a war reparation and eventually became the USCGC *Eagle*, serving as a training cutter for the US Coast Guard. (NATIONAL ARCHIVES, UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER)

caused significant destruction to the city's infrastructure, contributing to its devastation and shaping its postwar recovery.

The city faced widespread unemployment, hunger, and homelessness, as much of its industrial infrastructure had been destroyed or repurposed by the Allies. Rationing was strict, and black-market trading flourished as residents struggled to survive. The port had become a significant hub for repatriating displaced persons, including former prisoners of war (POWs), forced laborers, and Holocaust survivors. The geographic advantages that had bolstered its role in the German war effort had made Bremerhaven equally valuable to the Allies during the postwar occupation and a key location for the American military's efforts to transport troops, equipment, and goods to and from Germany.

Standing atop a mound of rubble, McGowan gazed

across the Weser River, eyes falling on his new command for the first time. Tied to a makeshift dock, he saw what looked like a forgotten vessel from another era resting on her keel in the low water, slightly listing to starboard. The 295-foot (89.9-meter), three-masted training barque, built to endure the harsh forces of the sea, evoked the grace of a nineteenth-century sailing vessel, blending the traditions of old-world sailing with modern maritime engineering. Towering 148 feet (45.1 meters) above the buff-colored deck structures and expansive teak deck, the masts stood naked, their bare yards crisscrossed with an intricate web of wires and lines stretching in every direction like a complex puzzle. The ship's long, sleek steel hull showed the marks of time and neglect, with rust and grime streaking the blistering gray topsides into the water.

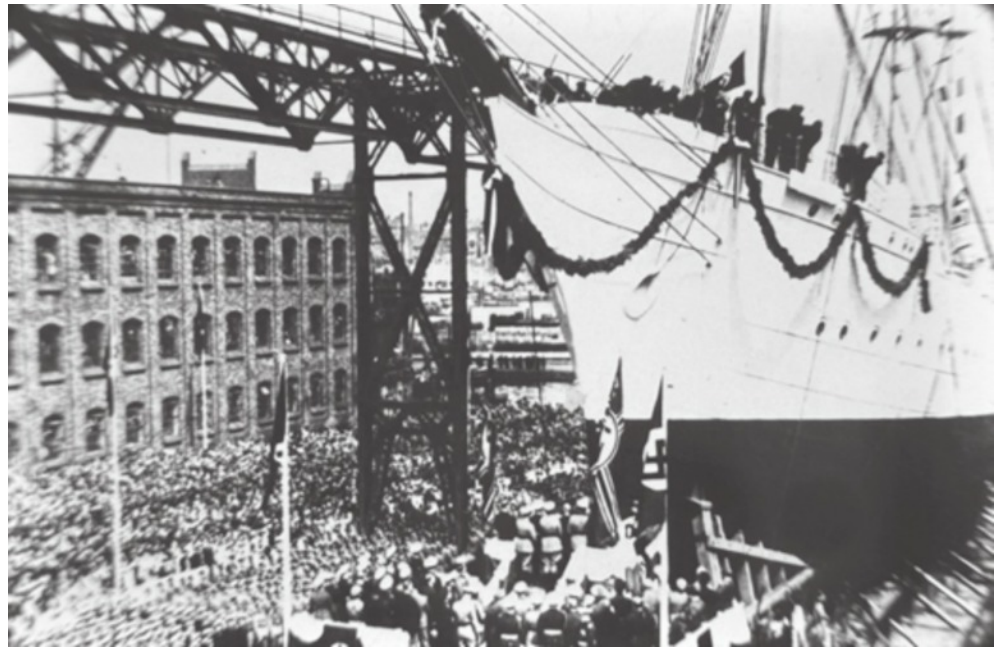
Under the Nazi flag, the *Horst Wessel* had embodied deep political symbolism, solidified by a launch ceremony attended by top officials, including Adolf Hitler. The Blohm & Voss shipyard had built the barque, commissioned on September 17, 1936, immediately before laying the keel of the infamous battleship *Bismarck*. Intended to embody the strength and determination of the Third Reich, the *Horst Wessel* had been the second of five Gorch Fock-class training vessels designed to prepare future naval officers and instill the discipline and ideals of the Nazi state. These five vessels—*Gorch Fock* (1933), *Horst Wessel* (1936), *Albert Leo Schlageter* (1937), *Mircea* (1938), and *Herbert Norkus* (which was never completed due to the outbreak of World War II)—later became known collectively as the "Five Sisters." The second barque was named after *Horst Wessel*, a member of the Nazi SA (Sturmabteilung) who had written "Horst Wessel Lied," the anthem of the Nazi Party. After Wessel's murder in 1930, Joseph Goebbels, head of Nazi propaganda, had elevated his status to that of a martyr, turning him into an enduring symbol of the Nazi cause.

Near the end of April 1945, the Nazi regime ordered the *Horst Wessel* to make her final voyage under its flag, moving westward to an undisclosed destination with her forty-member crew, ten Croatian sailors, and an unknown number of refugees, including women and children. Hitler's death was announced on May 1. The next day, the barque anchored in Glücksburg, near the city of Flensburg, and was officially taken on May 3 by the British Royal Marines under the command of Norman Ricketts, who was involved with divvying up the German fleet among the United States, Britain, and Russia. His orders were to take command of the ships and transfer their ►

control. Among the captured German vessels were the *Horst Wessel*, *Albert Leo Schlageter*, and *Prinz Eugen*. The *Horst Wessel* was ordered first to Kiel and then to Wilhelmshaven, where the barque remained until she was directed to Bremerhaven in early December of that year.

Around this time, the superintendent of the US Coast Guard Academy became aware of the division of the German fleet and, through various channels, proposed acquiring the *Horst Wessel* to become the Academy's new sail-training vessel. His proposal sparked an internal debate over the benefits of traditional sail training (valued for instilling fundamental skills and discipline) versus concerns about whether cadets' time could be better spent focusing on advancements in modern maritime technology.

Sail training for Coast Guard cadets had been a core element of the curriculum going back to 1877 aboard the schooner *James C. Dobbin*, staffed by a captain, two lieutenants, and several petty officers. Its training program emphasized seamanship and navigation during five-month voyages between the United States and Bermuda. In 1878, the 106-foot barque *Chase* replaced the *Dobbin*, expanding cadet cruises to Europe, the Azores, the West Indies, and the East Coast of the United States. Subsequent training ships included the *Itasca*, a former Naval Academy practice vessel commissioned by the Revenue Cutter Service in 1907. The *Alexander Hamilton*, a former naval gunboat launched in 1898, became the cadet training ship in 1922. It remained in service until 1930, after which it was decommissioned and reassigned as a station ship (a



The *Horst Wessel* was launched on June 13, 1936, at the Blohm & Voss shipyard in Hamburg, in a ceremony attended by Adolf Hitler and other top Nazi officials. Assigned Yard No. 508, the next keel laid at the yard was for the *Bismarck* (Yard No. 509), a striking contrast between a symbolic sail-training vessel and a heavily armed battleship. As one of several Gorch Fock-class barques, the *Horst Wessel* allowed Nazi Germany to circumvent the military restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, using maritime training as a front to quietly rebuild naval strength—an effort aligned with Hitler's broader campaign to mold German youth through discipline, indoctrination, and physical conditioning. (NATIONAL ARCHIVES, UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER)

cutter assigned to a specific location for extended duty), leaving the Academy without a dedicated sail-training vessel. From 1930 to 1946, the Coast Guard continued training cadets on smaller vessels such as the yacht *Chase*, a two-masted fishing schooner, and the famed three-masted schooner *Atlantic*.

Initially visiting the United States for the 1939 World's Fair in New York City, the Danish sail-training ship *Danmark* was ordered to remain in US waters to avoid German capture following the outbreak of World War II. The ship's captain offered it for US use and relocated it to New London, Connecticut, where it trained approximately five thousand Coast Guard cadets until its return to Denmark in 1945. This successful experience with the *Danmark* drove the acquisition of the *Horst Wessel* after the war. ■

*“A legendary ship deserves an excellent biography.
Will Sofrin provides that.”*

—Eric Jay Dolin, best-selling author of *Leviathan*, *Rebels at Sea*, and *Black Flags, Blue Waters*



Courtesy of J. Russell Jinishian.

Schooner Yacht MERLIN, Castle Hill Light, Newport, RI, 1906

by Richard Loud
(oil on canvas, 24" x 44")

The 90-foot Schooner *Merlin* was designed by Edward Burgess (1848–1891), the sister to Sachem, built for William H. Forbes in 1889, and the next year she won the Puritan Cup. The owners of these big schooners delighted in racing the fishermen and pilot boats on a breezy afternoon offshore. In the course of winning the New York Yacht Club's Goelet Cup in 1892, as her owner's son related in the *Ditty Box*, *Merlin* had rounded the windward mark, and they were running up the spinnaker, except that "when it was about twenty feet up, the Swede who was hoisting said, 'Ho! Ho! Dat ain't the spinnaker, dat's the awning'"—a proceeding which did not especially please my father who was steering."

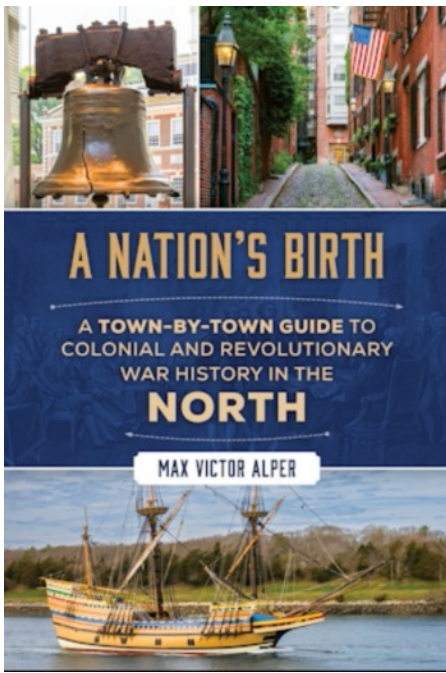
Born and raised on the Adams Shore section of Quincy Bay in Massachusetts, Richard Loud cannot remember a time when his life did not revolve around boats. As the son of a master shipwright who built boats both for profit and pleasure, he was exposed early on to the complexities and beauties of boat design and construction. This early training and passionate love for sailing vessels is evident in his paintings today. His work combines a thorough understanding of a wide variety of vessel types and sea conditions, with a uniquely painterly feeling for light and atmosphere.



Courtesy of J. Russell Jinishian.

Richard Loud

The painting is available and on display at the J. Russell Jinishian Gallery in Stonington, Connecticut.
www.jrusselljinishiangallery.com



A Nation's Birth

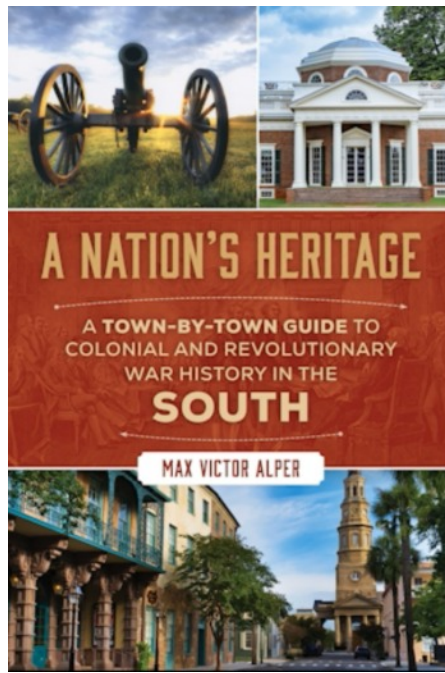
by Max Victor Alper

Globe Pequot, Paperback / e-book

\$29.95 / \$21.99

June 30, 2026

Covering the states of Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, *A Nation's Birth* is a historic travel guide that takes readers to the important sites in Revolutionary War history. Organized by state and city, each chapter details the history relevant to the local era, followed by descriptions of Revolutionary War sites, such as houses, churches, monuments, and battlefields. Along with historical context, find important travel information, perfect for planning your own self-guided tour.



A Nation's Heritage

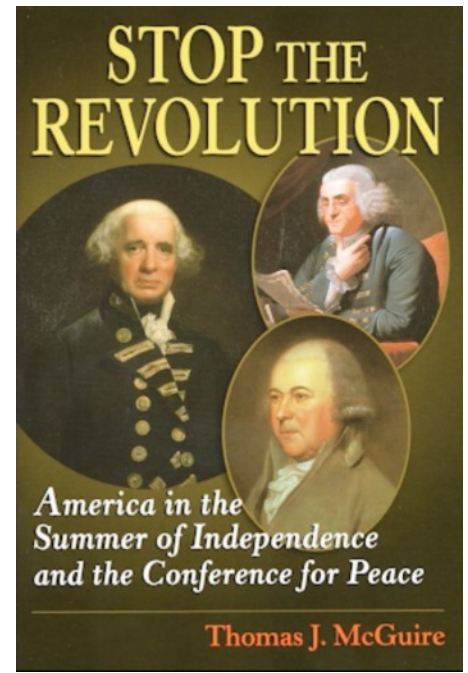
by Max Victor Alper

Globe Pequot, Paperback / e-book

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June 30, 2026

Covering the states of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, *A Nation's Heritage* is a historic travel guide that takes readers to the important sites in Revolutionary War history. Organized by state and city, each chapter details the history relevant to the local area, followed by descriptions of Revolutionary War sites, such as houses, churches, monuments, and battlefields. Along with historical context, find important travel information, perfect for planning your own self-guided tour.



Stop the Revolution

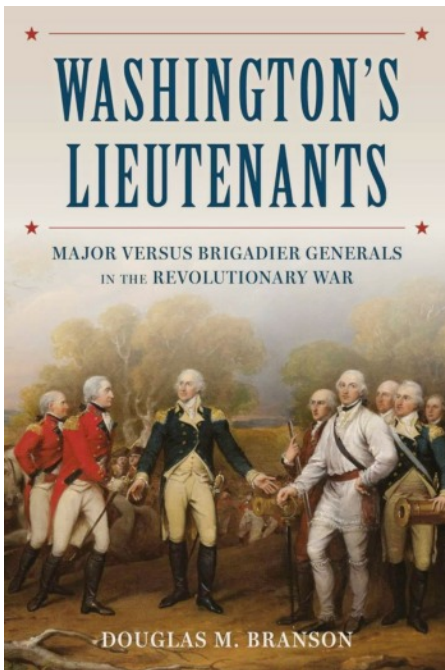
by Thomas J. McGuire

Stackpole Books, Paperback / e-book

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Available Now

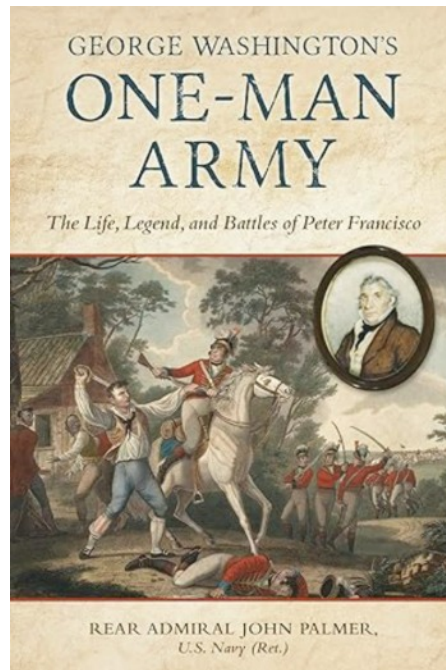
Stop the Revolution is the fascinating story surrounding the British effort to bring the American Revolution to a peaceful end. It details the fateful September 11, 1776, meeting on Staten Island between British Admiral Lord Richard Howe and Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Edward Rutledge. *Stop the Revolution* provides a compelling glimpse into politics, military diplomacy, and American character at the dawn of independence. This book covers early America from the eyewitness viewpoints of a feisty English traveler, a distressed Lutheran pastor, a precocious young lady, two sympathetic British officers, and an assortment of eccentric Founding Fathers.



Washington's Lieutenants

by Douglas M. Branson
Stackpole Books, Hardback / e-book
\$32.95 / \$21.99
Available Now

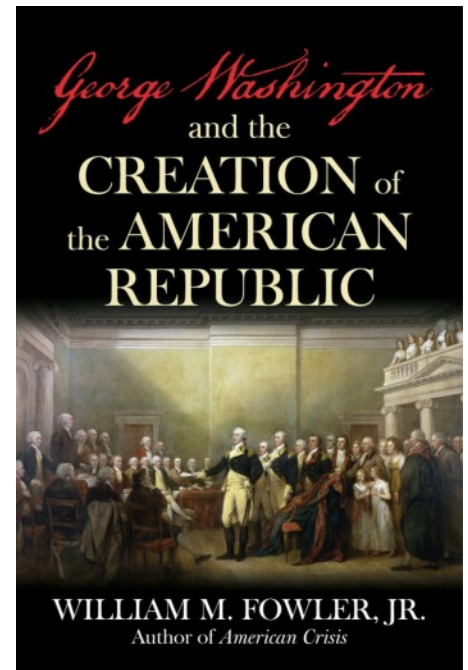
As commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, George Washington developed the strategy that won the Revolutionary War. Still, while Washington directed some battles, his subordinates carried out his strategy. Most battles were won or lost by his subordinates, major and brigadier generals of varying backgrounds, experiences, and abilities. Washington's *Lieutenants* tells the story of the generals who served under Washington from 1775 to 1781. Based on extensive research in a variety of sources, the book finds the brigadier generals a laudable group of commanders. Although some stood out for their military skill, battlefield bravery, and loyalty to Washington, the major generals as a whole were disappointing, marked by their pursuit of personal military and political ambitions and a penchant for infighting and bickering. Only three served for the war's duration, including the great Nathanael Greene and Henry Knox. Ten resigned. Benedict Arnold turned coat. Washington's *Lieutenants* will be essential reading during the war's 250th anniversary and beyond.



George Washington's One-Man Army

by Rear Admiral John Palmer
Stackpole Books, Hardback / e-book
\$32.95 / \$21.99
Available Now

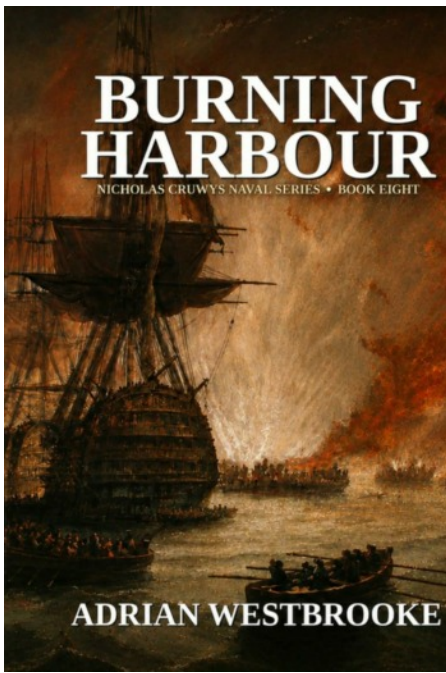
"One-Man Army" was George Washington's *nom de guerre* for Peter Francisco. Abducted from the Azores and deposited in the colony of Virginia at the age of four, little Pedro Francisco was an orphan from a strange land in the New World. Renamed Peter Francisco, the youngster found a home under indenture to Patrick Henry's uncle as a blacksmith. Peter was present for Henry's famous speech, hearing firsthand the words "Give me Liberty or Give me Death." By the age of fourteen, he would grow to six feet, six inches, and 260 pounds. He would fashion himself into an apex warrior, serving both in the patriot infantry and the cavalry. In his capacity as a soldier, Peter Francisco participated in some of the fiercest fighting, witnessed the greatest events, and met an astounding number of luminaries of early America, including generals George Washington, Nathanael Greene, and the Marquis de Lafayette. All told, Peter fought in at least ten battles and received six gruesome wounds. Postwar, he became a planter and businessman.



George Washington and the Creation of the American Republic

by William M. Fowler
Lyons Press, Hardback / e-book
\$34.95 / \$22.99
Available Now

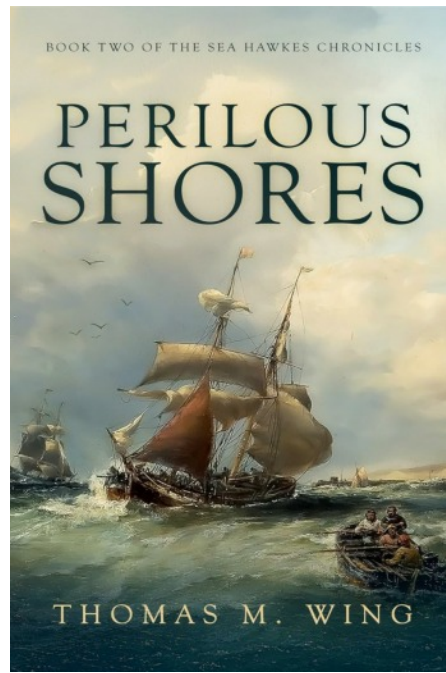
George Washington's biographers now have greater access to the details of his life. However, biographers continue to pay close attention to the years of the Revolution and his presidency, often passing through the period between the Revolution and the presidency. Described by historians as the "Critical Years" (1781–1789), this was a period when the new nation stood on the precipice of anarchy and disunion. During these years, Washington assiduously avoided direct involvement that might draw him into the political fray. Reluctantly, he emerged in Philadelphia to preside over the Constitutional Convention. During these critical years between the end of the Revolution and the formation of the Union, Washington was deeply involved in land speculation, western expansion, scientific farming, canal building, political affairs, and family matters. While careful to husband his influence and maintain his Olympian stature, Washington deftly maneuvered to guide the nation toward a strong central government capable of governing a "rising empire."



8 - *Burning Harbour*

by Adrian Westbrooke
McFarland, Paperback / e-book
~~\$22.00~~ / ~~\$9.00~~
Available Now

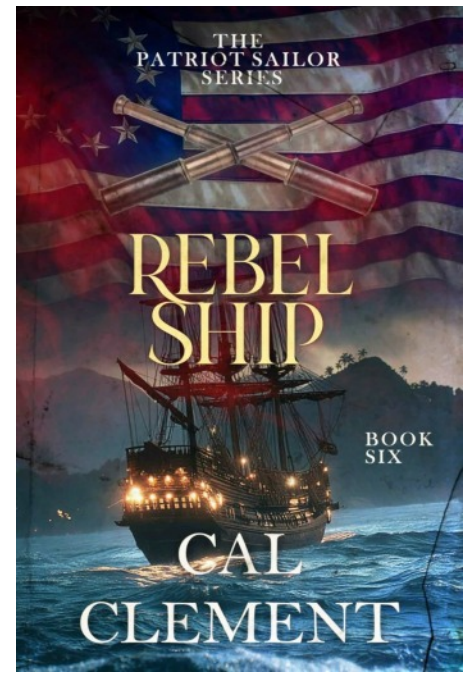
1793. Revolutionary France is collapsing into terror, civil war, and political violence. In the Mediterranean, Admiral Lord Hood and the Royal Navy watch for an opportunity that might change the course of the war. Captain Nicholas Cruwys is sent on quiet and unofficial work along the French coast, moving among royalist sympathizers, uncertain allies, and naval officers whose loyalties are becoming increasingly difficult to judge. What begins as intelligence work soon draws him into a dangerous struggle involving espionage, diplomacy, divided commands, and the fate of the French fleet itself. As armies gather around the great naval port of Toulon, Cruwys finds himself caught between British strategy, French royalist ambition, Spanish alliance politics, and the relentless advance of the Revolution. Around him stand men fighting for very different visions of France's future: British admirals, exiled nobles, republican officers, intelligence operatives, and a young artillery commander named Napoleon Buonaparte.



2 - *Perilous Shores*

by Thomas M. Wing
Acorn Publishing, Paperback / e-book
~~\$16.95~~ / ~~\$9.99~~
Available Now

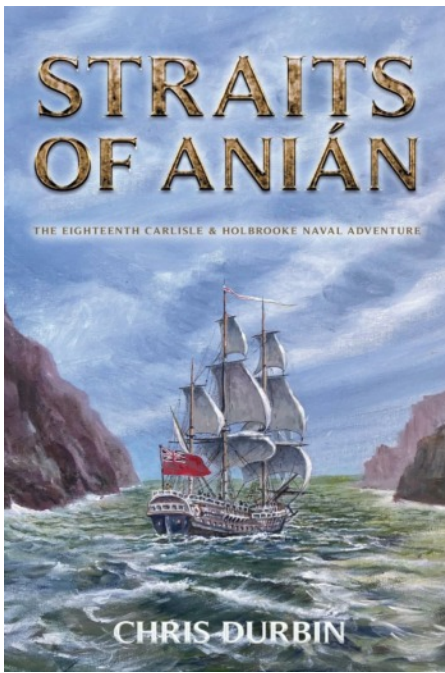
Vengeance is as dangerous to a cause as to the enemy. The murder of his wife at the hands of British soldiers prompts American privateer Captain Jonas Hawke's vow to make Britain pay. A grief-stricken Jonas strikes deep into the enemy's heart, driven by his personal vendetta. When he raids a port city, one of his men crosses an unthinkable line, which forces Jonas to come to terms with the anguish that distorts his definition of justice. Concerned that his wrath will bring irreparable harm to the cause for America's freedom, Jonas grapples with his role as a warrior and as a man. When he learns the Royal Navy is hunting his ship, he fears his deadly decisions may have cost him and his crew everything. It's too late to turn back. Instead, he must continue and face the inevitable perils of war. *Perilous Shores* is a gripping, action-packed, and historically authentic tale of revenge, survival, and one man's relentless pursuit of his country's independence.



6 - *Rebel Ship*

by Cal Clement
Independent, Paperback / e-book
~~\$16.99~~ / ~~\$6.99~~
September 2, 2026

A murdered informant. A hidden traitor. A voyage that sparks a revolution. In 1774, American sailor Jack Horner takes on what should be a simple coastal run. Instead, he discovers a dead man in the hold and a secret that powerful men will kill to protect. As British patrols tighten their grip on the colonies, Jack finds himself hunted at sea and stalked by a killer aboard his own ship. From Boston's crowded wharves to the storm-torn Atlantic, Jack races to uncover the truth before the crew turns against him. Every mile brings new danger, rising tension, and the first sparks of the fight for American freedom. Perfect for readers of nautical adventure, Revolutionary War fiction, and high-stakes historical thrillers.



Straits of Anián

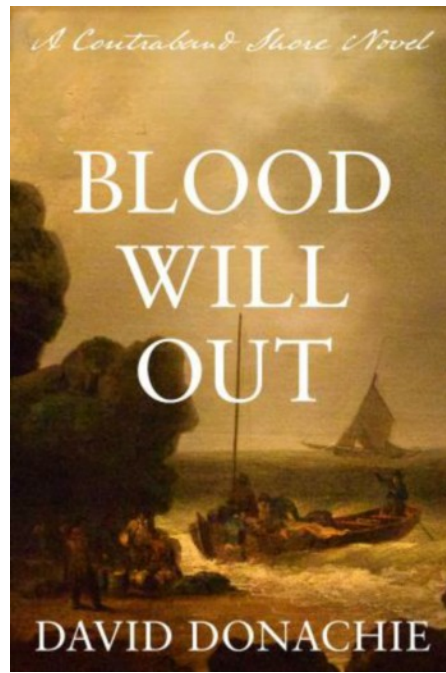
By Chris Durbin

Independent, Paperback / e-book

\$17.62 / \$6.77

Available Now

The wealth of the world flows through the narrow straits between oceans and seas. Gibraltar, Magellan, Hormuz, Dover, Malacca: each has had its day. Yet there is one that has lingered in the imagination of geographers and fantasists, of admirals and money-hungry merchants since Columbus crossed the Atlantic, and it remains stubbornly elusive. It was the fast route around the top of the American continent that might lead to the riches of the Orient. For the English, it was a shortcut that bypassed the lands where the Spaniards, Portuguese, and Dutch held sway. It was the Straits of Anián, reputed to offer an ice-free passage from the Pacific Ocean to Hudson Bay on the Atlantic. George Holbrooke was surprised to be offered a ship during a time of peace, and frankly astonished to find orders to take his frigate *Orion* to the far ends of the earth in search of the fabled Straits of Anián. Sir Francis Drake was the last Englishman to attempt such a mission; that was two hundred years before, and he'd returned having found nothing.



3 - Blood Will Out

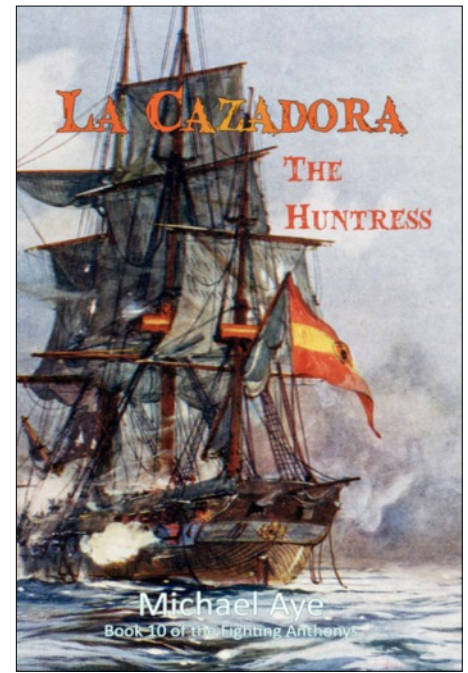
By David Donachie

McBooks Press, Paperback / e-book

\$24.95 / \$5.99

Available Now

1787. Captain Edward Brazier is wounded and in desperate need of medical attention, but those from whom he could seek help have no idea where he is—although neither do his enemies. With his beloved Betsey currently imprisoned by her brother Henry, who is considering committing her to an asylum to take her off his hands, time is running out for Brazier to rescue her and end the tyranny of the local smuggling ring of Deal once and for all.



10 - La Cazadora

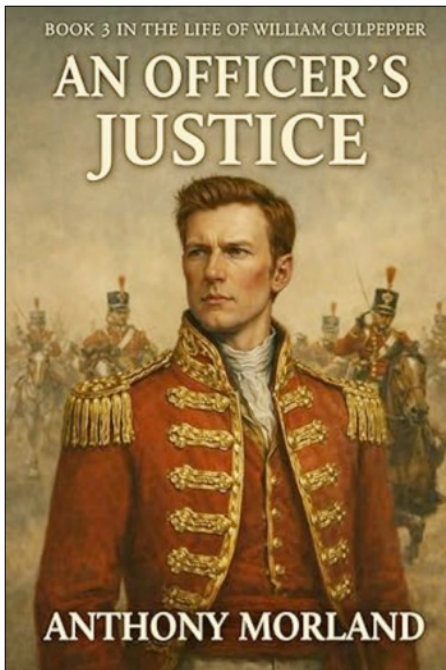
By Michael Aye

Bitingduck Books, Paperback / e-book

\$16.95 / \$3.99

Available Now

It's 1784. The war with the Colonies is over. Recently made a baronet, Gabe Anthony commands a convoy carrying prisoners of war to America. From there, he will assume command of a squadron at English Harbour. It is a seemingly easy task and one he can take some personal time for. However, two rogue ships flying no flag are destroying British ships and murdering countless people. Why and who? Gabe's superiors task him with finding these raiders and putting an end to their death and destruction. When he thought he'd be at peace, Gabe, his men, and ships once again face the thunder of cannons and the stench of death.



3 - *A Officer's Justice*

By Anthony Morland

Independent, Paperback / e-book

\$19.99 / \$5.99

Available Now

Tipu Sultan is dead. Seringapatam has fallen. Mysore, once a single, frightening power in southern India, has been broken. In private, the struggle to control what comes next is only beginning. Victory does not create peace. It creates a vacuum, and every faction with ambition tries to fill it. Loyalists of the old regime drift into the countryside and turn to raiding. Opportunists use the confusion to settle scores. Merchants and village headmen weigh survival against loyalty, paying whoever rides in with the nearest threat. The Marathas press at the edges, ready to exploit any weakness. The East India Company, triumphant on the battlefield, now has to prove it can hold the roads, guard the convoys, and persuade the region that the Sultan's fall was not a temporary storm. Captain William Culpepper of His Majesty's 33rd Regiment of Foot is placed squarely in that gap. At twenty-two, he has already been tempered by hard campaigning in Europe, India, and the brutal assault at Seringapatam. He also carries an uncomfortable inheritance from a vanished mentor, a half-seen intelligence war.



3 - *A Dagger in the Dark*

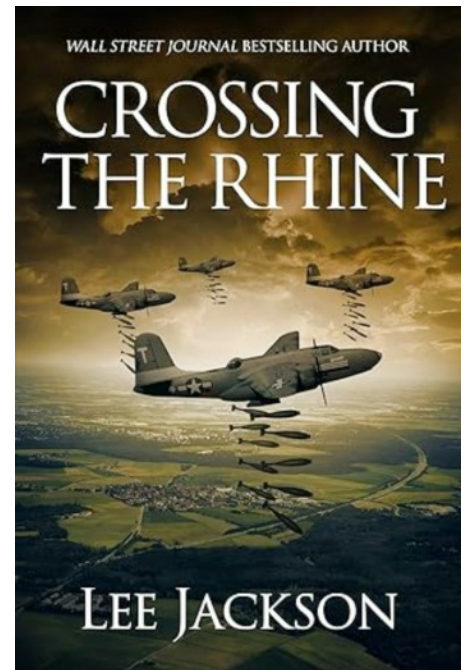
By Cal Clement

Independent, Paperback / e-book

\$14.99 / \$4.99

Available Now

In the explosive third installment of the Rebel Spy series, Ian Blackwell finds himself at the heart of the night that ignites a revolution. When a covert kill threatens to expose his identity and an innocent printer is blamed for his crime, Ian is forced into a deadly race against time, balancing the salvation of one man with the fate of a nation. Lanterns blaze in the Old North Church and riders thunder toward Lexington. Ian must navigate betrayal, battlefield chaos, and the ghosts of his own choices. The war for America has begun, and the most dangerous spy in the colonies is about to face his reckoning.



9 - *Crossing the Rhine*

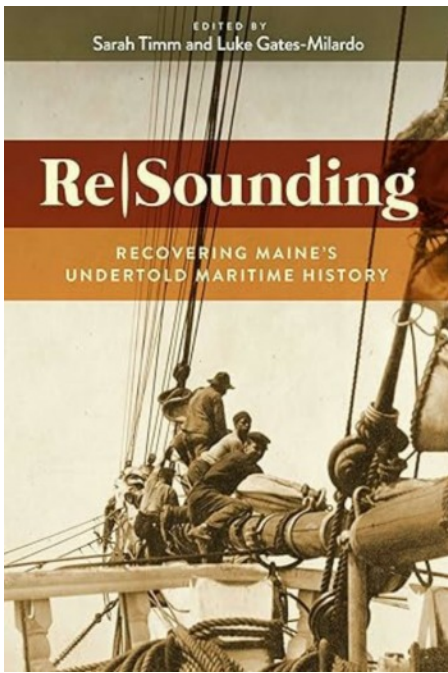
By Lee Jackson

Severn River, Paperback / e-book

\$24.99 / \$9.99

Available Now

In late 1944, as Allied forces grind their way toward Germany's heart, the Littlefield family finds themselves caught at the center of a desperate struggle. Jeremy, the daring pilot, flies dangerous missions across Europe and beyond, risking his life and his heart as he battles a waning and desperate empire. Beside him stands Amelie, the courageous ambulance driver dedicated to saving soldiers' lives at the front—Allied and enemy. She is equally devoted to Jeremy—undaunted by the chaos around them. Claire, the brilliant cryptologist who is stationed at Bletchley Park, races against time to crack enemy codes that could save thousands. Her sharp mind unearths enemy secrets, but she is haunted by the fear that her warnings could be ignored—leading to catastrophic consequences. Paul, the steady and determined soldier, advances through France, uncovering Nazi atrocities as he liberates war-torn villages. The discovery of a hidden Nazi prison camp forces him to confront the unimaginable, fueling his mission to expose the truth and bring freedom to the oppressed.



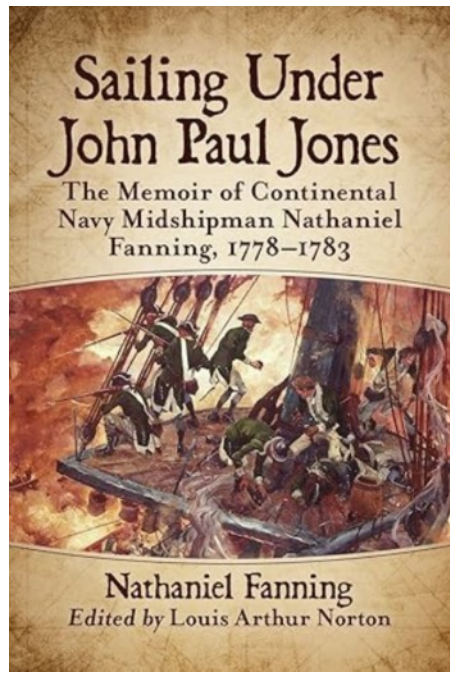
Re|Sounding

by Sarah Timm & Luke Gates-Milardo
Down East / Paperback / e-book

\$29.95 / \$21.99

July 21, 2026

Published in conjunction with the Maine Maritime Museum's exhibit, this book traces Maine's historic roots to slavery. It explores the contributions of Indigenous and Black Americans to the state's rich maritime history. Featured is archival material from the Museum's collection of never-before-exhibited journals, letters, photographs, and maps, to provide context to the untold stories of the state's Indigenous and Black communities and shed light on Maine's involvement in the Atlantic slave economy. Reflective essays by six experts focus on various aspects of Maine's Indigenous and Black maritime history and culture, and the connection between shipbuilding and shipping in northern New England and the slave trade:



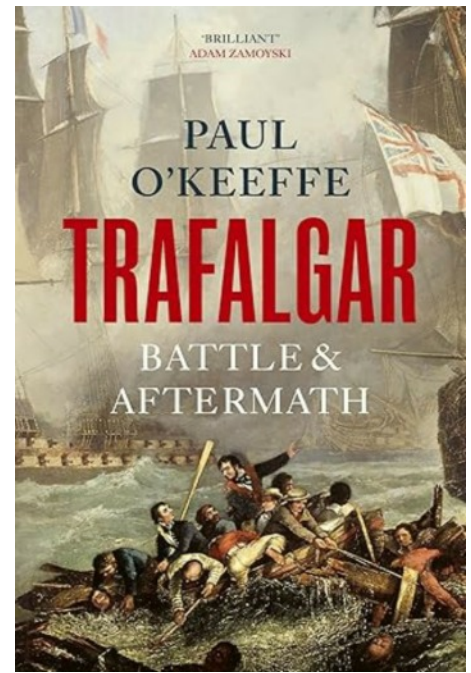
Sailing Under John Paul Jones

by Nathaniel Fanning
McFarland, Paperback / e-book

\$29.95 / \$19.99

Available Now

The British captured Connecticut privateer Nathaniel Fanning (1755-1805) during the Revolutionary War. Upon his release, he joined the Continental Navy. He sailed as a midshipman under Admiral John Paul Jones during his most famous battles. Fanning later obtained his own command, sailing from French ports to prey upon British warships. This new edition of Fanning's memoir—first published in 1806—provides a vivid account of wartime peril and hardship at sea, and a first-hand character study of Jones as an apparent tyrant and narcissist. Vocabulary, spelling, and narrative style have changed in the more than two centuries since Fanning's chronicle, and some details clash with historical and geographical data. The editor has updated and annotated the text for modern readers while attempting to retain much of the original memoir's style.



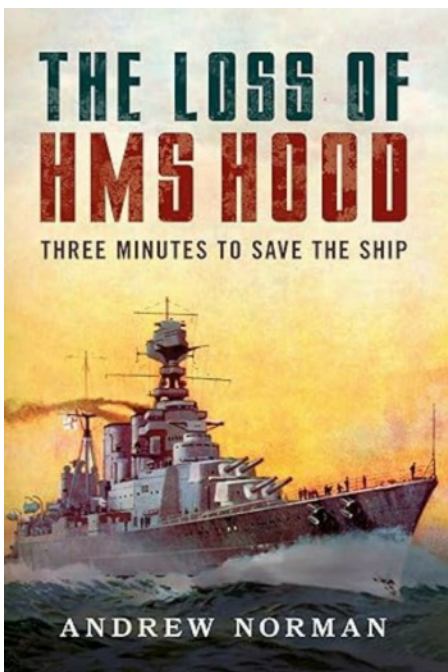
Trafalgar

by Paul O'Keeffe
Bodley Head, Hardback / e-book

\$33.78 / \$18.90

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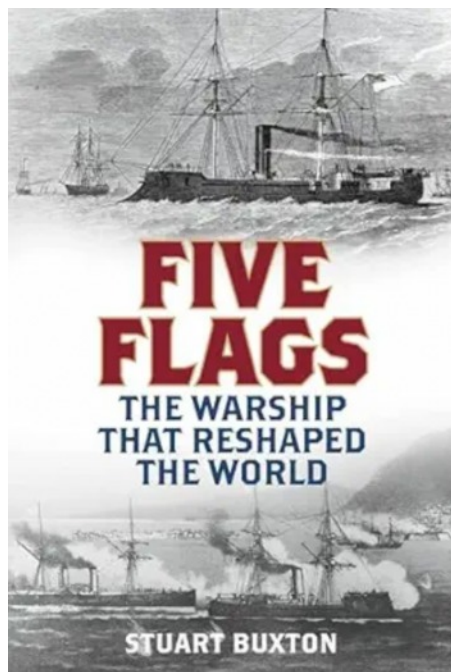
At about 1.15 in the afternoon of 21 October 1805, a 15-millimeter French musket round fired from the French ship *Redoutable* struck Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson some 70 feet away on HMS *Victory*'s quarterdeck. It fractured his left shoulder, pierced his lung, and emerged to sever the spine. In this fresh and vibrant retelling of the battle of Trafalgar, Paul O'Keeffe traces the course of events both before and after that fatal shot: from 6.30 in the morning, as the British ships began their approach towards the enemy fleet, until the cessation of firing that followed the apocalyptic destruction of the French 74-gun *Achille* at 5.45 in the afternoon. We also learn about the battle's dramatic aftermath: how a violent storm destroyed the surviving French and Spanish ships; how news of victory spread, and how throngs celebrated in London; and how the Royal Navy brought Nelson's body home for a spectacular funeral. Paying meticulous attention to little-explored details, O'Keeffe gives us a front-row view of events. Gripping and immersive, this is a unique account of Trafalgar for a new generation of readers.



The Loss of HMS Hood

by Andrew Norman
Pen and Sword / Hardback
\$39.95
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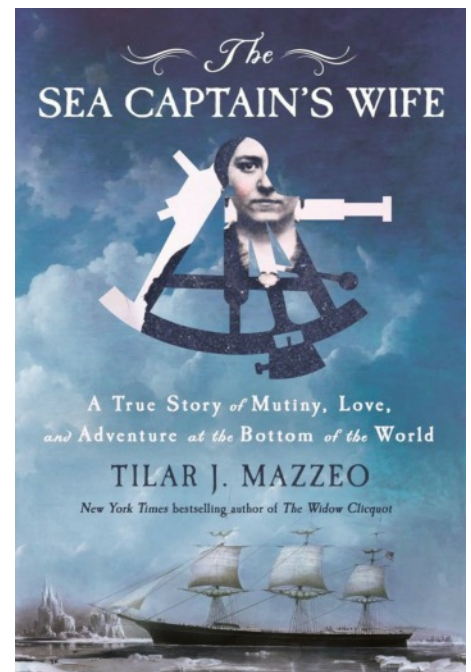
In 1941, the battlecruiser HMS *Hood*—at 860 feet long, with a beam of 105 feet, a displacement of 48,360 tons (fully loaded), and a maximum speed of 32 knots—was Britain's largest and fastest warship. And yet on 24 May, *Hood*, the epitome of British naval power, with an armament which included eight 15-inch guns, was blown up eight minutes after engaging the German battleship KMS *Bismarck* and her consort, the heavy cruiser KMS *Prinz Eugen*. As *Hood* sank into the icy depths of the Atlantic Ocean on 24 May 1941, she took with her the lives of 1,415 brave men—there were only 3 survivors—and a secret that has haunted the maritime world ever since. How could this possibly have happened? *Hood* had seemed invincible, and the hopes of the British Navy in wartime had rested upon her great reputation. Her tragic demise was greeted with disbelief by the nation, and the shock waves reverberated all around the world. Various theories have accounted for her sinking. Norman reappraises these theories after the discovery of *Hood*'s wreckage in 2001 and proposes a new and intriguing theory.



Five Flags

by Stuart Buxton
Stackpole, Hardback / e-book
\$34.95 / \$22.99
Available Now

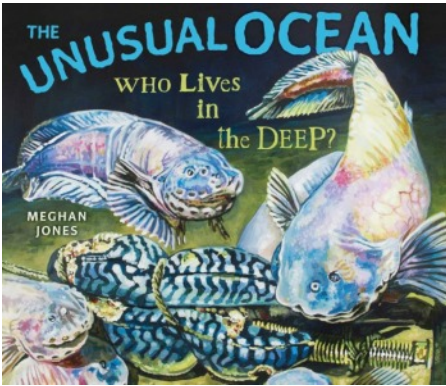
As wooden ships gave way to ironclads, and sail to steam in the nineteenth century, one warship fought through the civil wars that shaped modern America, Germany, and Japan. Strangled by the Union's naval blockade, the Confederacy needed ships and turned to Europe to build them. In 1862, Emperor Napoleon III agreed to deliver a unique new design whose 300 pounder cannon, 5-inch armor, and 20-foot bow ram made her a threat to every warship on earth. Discovered by US agents, the ironclad was sold to Denmark, only to be smuggled back after her defeat by Prussia. Christened *Stonewall*, the ship had to run the gauntlet of Union warships and Spanish courts to escape. The *Stonewall* reached Cuba in May 1865—too late to change the Civil War—before her sale to the Queen of Spain and a handover to a newly reunited America. But the ironclad would not end its career mothballed at the Washington Navy Yard. She led the brutal, harrowing war at sea that secured the Meiji Restoration and set Japan on a path of modernization, industrialization, and expansion culminating in World War II.



The Sea Captain's Wife

by Tilar J. Mazzeo
Stackpole, Hardback / e-book
\$30.00 / \$15.99
Available Now

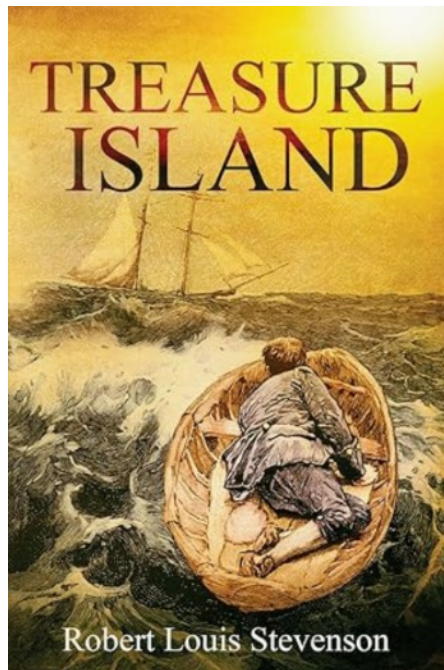
Summer, 1856. Nineteen-year-old Mary Ann Patten and her husband, Joshua, were young and ambitious. Both from New England seafaring families, they had already completed their first clipper-ship voyage around the world with Joshua as captain. If they could win the race to San Francisco that year, their dream of building a farm and a family might be within reach. It would mean freedom. And the price of that freedom was one last dangerous transit—into the most treacherous waters in the world. As their ship, *Neptune's Car*, left New York Harbor and sailed down the jagged coast of South America, Joshua fell deathly ill and was confined to his bunk, delirious. The treacherous first mate, confined to the brig for insubordination, was agitating for mutiny. With no obvious option for a new captain and heartbroken about her husband, Mary Ann stepped into the breach and convinced the crew to support her, just as they slammed into a gale that would last 18 days. Determined to save the ship, the crew, and their future, she faces down the deadly waters of Drake's Passage.



The Unusual Ocean

By Meghan Jones
Muddy Boots, Paperback / e-book
\$17.95 / \$12.99
September 1, 2026

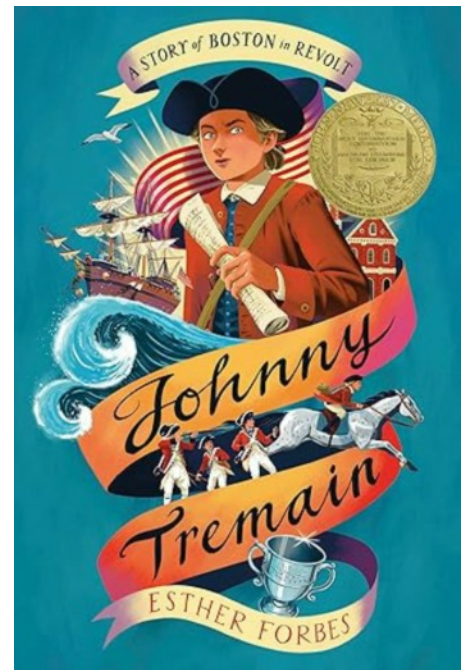
Between four and seven miles deep, the ocean—where pressure is one ton per square centimeter—evokes both mystery and misunderstanding; accessing these depths is challenging for human exploration. Our fear of the dark unknown often conjures images of monsters of the deep, especially in children's minds. Based on current scientific observations and studies, this book demonstrates that reality can be more fascinating than the wildest imagination, as it travels from the shore to the deepest ocean trenches. Along the way, it introduces children to twenty of the most unusual creatures to inhabit the oceans, including bone-eating worms, supergiant amphipods with expanding stomachs, snails made of iron, worms that eat chemicals, and even hagfish that can suffocate on their own slime. This book will excite a new generation of ocean explorers who can take their piqued interest and become a much-needed movement for deep ocean stewardship. Reading age: 8 - 12.



Treasure Island

By Robert Louis Stevenson
Hart Warming Classics, Paperback
\$14.95
Available Now

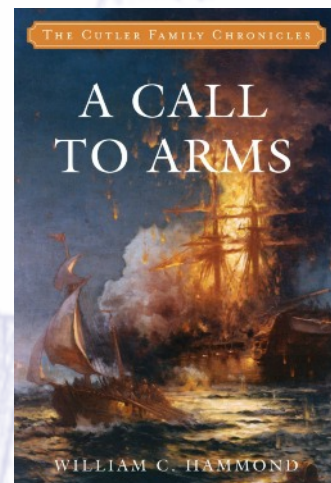
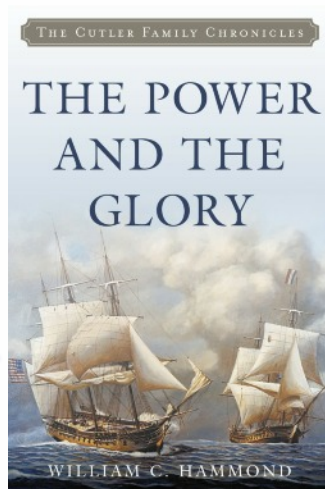
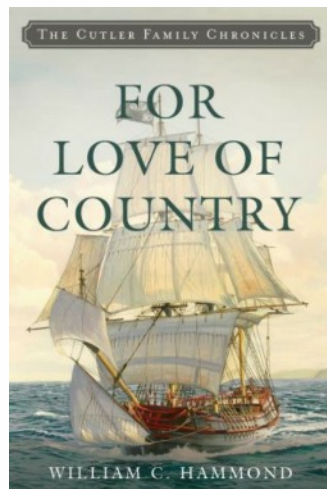
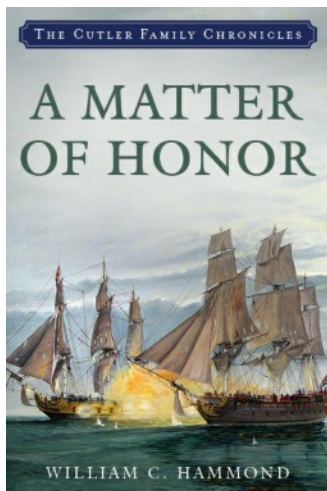
A thrilling adventure novel of pirates, sailing ships, treasure maps, and tropical islands. Published in 1883, it has become part of our culture. A young boy, Jim Hawkins, discovers a treasure map on a dying pirate at the "Admiral Benbow Inn" in England and takes off on a quest to find the prize. One-legged Long John Silver and his gang of cutthroats take over the ship on which he sails and attempt to steal the treasure. Complete and unabridged. Written to entertain his twelve-year-old stepson, *Treasure Island* has entertained millions for over a century. The story and its illustrations have heavily shaped the pirate-adventure genre and the popular image of pirates. Nearly 450 annotations and over 140 illustrations! Reading age: 8 - 12.



Johnny Tremain

By Esther Forbes
Clarion Books, Paperback / e-Book
\$6.18 / \$9.99
Available Now

A classic of children's historical fiction—now with a freshly designed cover! *Johnny Tremain* is a Newbery Medal-winning novel about the Revolutionary War. Fourteen-year-old Johnny Tremain, an apprentice silversmith with a bright future ahead of him, injures his hand in a tragic accident, forcing him to look for other work. In his new job as a horse-boy, riding for the patriotic newspaper the Boston Observer and as a messenger for the Sons of Liberty, he encounters John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and Dr. Joseph Warren. Soon, Johnny is involved in the pivotal events of the American Revolution, from the Boston Tea Party to the first shots fired at Lexington. Powerful illustrations by artist Michael McCurdy help bring this classic novel to life. Reading age: 3 - 7.

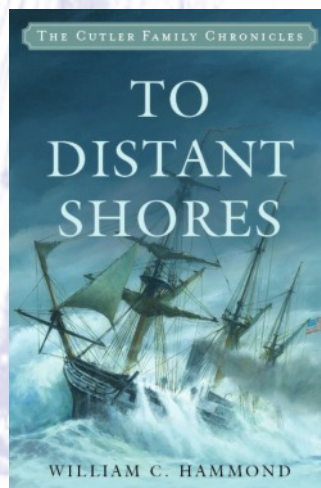
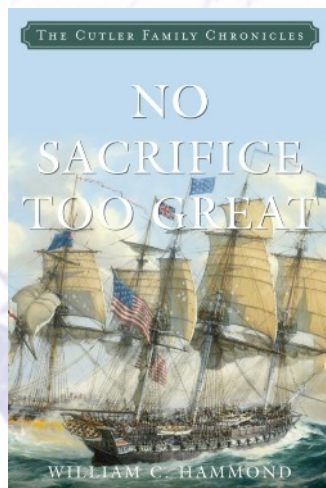
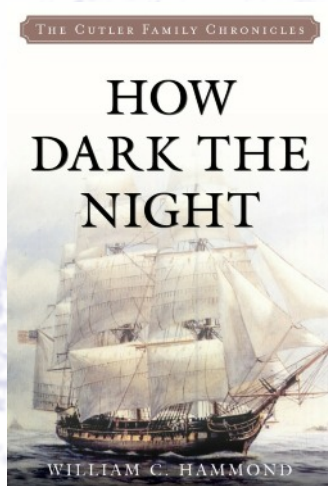


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When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the

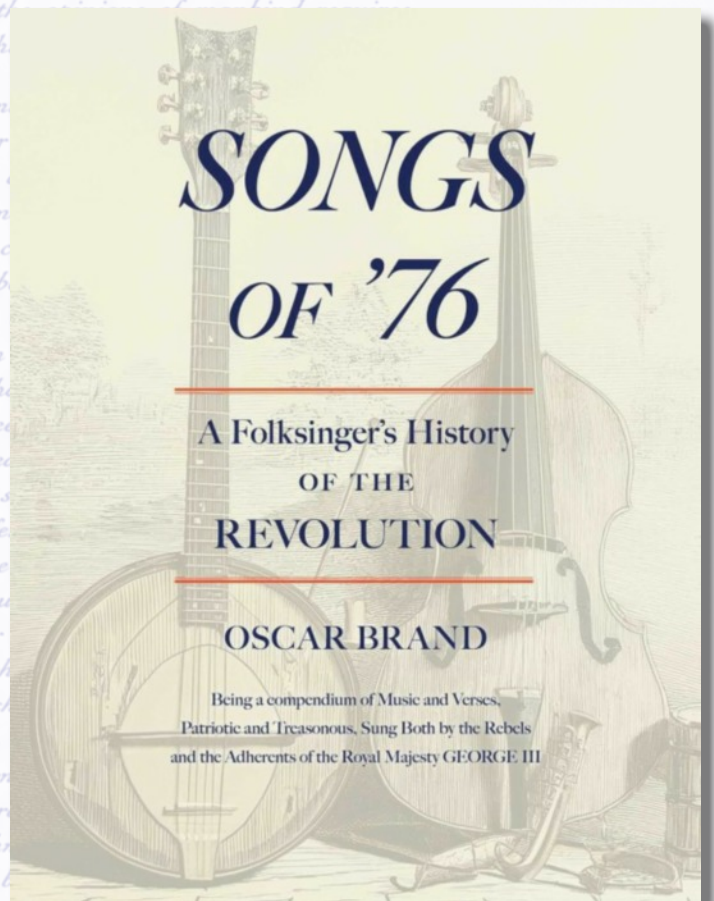


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