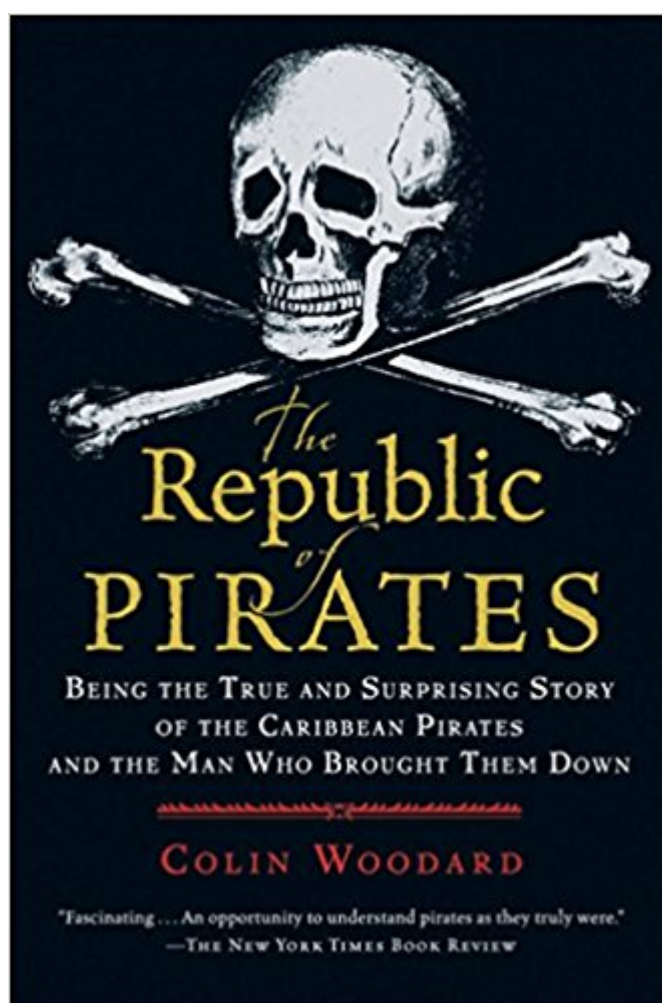


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The Republic Of Pirates: Being The True And Surprising Story Of The Caribbean Pirates And The Man Who Brought Them Down



Synopsis

— The untold story of a heroic band of Caribbean pirates whose defiance of imperial rule inspired revolt in colonial outposts across the world. In the early eighteenth century, the Pirate Republic was home to some of the great pirate captains, including Blackbeard, "Black Sam" Bellamy, and Charles Vane. Along with their fellow pirates—former sailors, indentured servants, and runaway slaves—this "Flying Gang" established a crude but distinctive democracy in the Bahamas, carving out their own zone of freedom in which servants were free, blacks could be equal citizens, and leaders were chosen or deposed by a vote. They cut off trade routes, sacked slave ships, and severed Europe from its New World empires, and for a brief, glorious period the Republic was a success.

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Customer Reviews

Woodard (The Lobster Coast) tells a romantic story about Caribbean pirates of the "Golden Age" (1715–1725)—whom he sees not as criminals but as social revolutionaries—and the colonial governors who successfully clamped down on them, in the early 18th-century Bahamas. One group of especially powerful pirates set up a colony in the Bahamas. Known as New Providence, the community attracted not only disaffected sailors but also runaway slaves and yeomen farmers who had trouble getting a toehold in the plantation economy of the American colonies. The British saw piracy as a threat to colonial commerce and government. Woodes Rogers, the governor of the Bahamas and himself a former privateer, determined to bring

the pirates to heel. Woodard describes how Rogers, aided by Virginia's acting governor, Alexander Spotswood, finally defeated the notorious Blackbeard. Woodard's portrait of Rogers is a little flat – the man is virtually flawless ("courageous, selfless, and surprisingly patriotic"), and the prose is sometimes breathless ("they would know him by just one word... pirate"). Still, this is a fast-paced narrative that will be especially attractive to lovers of pirate lore and to vacationers who are Bahamas-bound. Maps. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

The early eighteenth century was the so-called golden age of piracy, particularly in the Caribbean. Although much of the romantic musings about "pirate honor" is nonsense, an unusual group of pirates, led by Edward "Blackbeard" Teach and Sam Bellamy, actually set up a functioning government in the Bahamas with pretensions to establishing a form of social justice. Their "republic" attracted deserting sailors who could not tolerate harsh naval discipline, runaway slaves, and impoverished farmers. In this republic, called New Providence, a rough but democratic and egalitarian ethos apparently took hold. But, according to Woodard, the British government saw the existence of this independent entity as an intolerable threat. So, on the theory of sending a thief to catch a thief, they sent Woodes Rogers, a former privateer, to crush the republic. This breezy, fast-moving book is filled with exciting action and colorful characters. It will provide general readers and those with a special interest in the period much enjoyment. Jay Freeman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

I have learned a lot more about the pirates of the Caribbean than I ever wanted to know, but now I can be fascinating at dinner tables. For one thing, I didn't know that there were such serious divisions among pirate leaders over the English Succession; Stuart vs. Hanover. It all had to do with royal pardons. Another aspect of pirate life was the need not only to plunder cargoes but to find the ships to do so. We are so accustomed to national Navies that we take their ships for granted; the average pirate king was constantly on the lookout for better transport. Mr. Woodard's book is full of such insights, but I found it a bit tedious, probably because, by definition, the pirates were pretty much free agents, and their histories don't cluster very well. As a result the book sometimes just becomes a chronology, centered around individuals. Not bad bedtime reading, but occasionally a slog.

As someone who grew up in the mid-atlantic, I was surrounded by all sorts of pirate lore growing up.

I always had a desire to find out how much was real and how much was fiction, and *Republic of Pirates* fits that bill. Aside from piecing together all sorts of fascinating stories based on primary sources such as trials, diaries, and testimonies that paint fresh and realistic pictures of the pirates so notorious to history (Blackbeard and Black Sam Bellamy, to name a few), *Republic of Pirates* does its best to explain the forces of history that produced the pirates. After a lengthy beginning that focuses on the injustices and squalor that confronted mariners at the time, basically marking their profession as one that was little better than a death sentence with no hazard pay, the reason for so many turning to piracy becomes clear. The quasi-democratic way pirate ships were run was a sharp contrast to the shifty merchant marines and brutal royal navy ships of the time. It seems no surprise that pirates became folk heroes. Many were after money, but some had grander visions of fighting inequality or affecting regime change at home. The affinity pirates had for the Jacobite cause during King George I's reign was something I had no concept of, but that this book did a thorough job teaching me. Even if it shattered so many of the tall tales I was told growing up in coastal Virginia, this was an informative and entertaining read into how the pirates shaped world affairs at the time and the forces that eventually brought them down.

A very good read. It's rare to find an historical non-fiction that's both engaging and informative. The narrative is both gripping and suspenseful enough to keep you on the edge of your seat, without the author committing the "sin" so many historians do, namely, of omniscience. It's well-researched, and well-written. Reading this, it's easy to see how, if things had gone just little differently at so many junctures, independence could have been declared in North America 50 some years before 1776.

As a fan of the show *Black Sails*, I was interested to learn more about the true history behind piracy. This book is very well-written and provides a great history lesson. More than just what these men and women did, it speaks to the why, how it came about and, eventually, how it ended. You walk away appreciating both how noble and despicable the pirates could be.

Colin Woodward is a great storyteller, and with such colorful histories as those of the men recounted in this book, he makes learning history an enthralling experience. He really has a knack for putting the reader into a story, his descriptions really bring the sights and smells and sounds of 1700's Bristol, London, Jamaica, and Nassau. This was intentionally written not as an academic book, but as accessible history (though all the accounts from this book are taken directly from testimony and written record). There are many arguments to be made about historiography of pirate

histories – that is, the merit or reliability of records from the time of the pirates – but there are plenty of books that go over those arguments (Pirates: The Complete History From 1300 Bc To The Present Day is a good example) and I've thoroughly enjoyed this book from beginning to end. It is as thrilling as the times from whence these tales come.

The Republic of Pirates is an enjoyable read. It's not so much a book as a series of tales. Chapters are centered around a central character, time, location or ship. It's quite interesting, I think mostly accurate and a good source material for Black Sails (which my family really enjoyed).

Just finished this and it is both entertaining and scholarly - obviously the result of a huge amount of research. I've been fascinated by pirate lore all my life and it is great to read about real events, people and circumstances. So interesting to learn of the "democratic" operation of the pirate ships!

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