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*The Fading Gleam of a Golden Age: Britain's Battle Against Piracy in the Americas in
the Early 18th Century*

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History 450

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Trial records pertaining to the pirate captain Thomas Green contain the following statements: "A pirate is in a perpetual war with every individual, and every state, christian or infidel. Pirates properly have no country, but by the nature of their guilt, separate themselves, and renounce on this matter, the benefit of all lawful societies."¹ Pirates had no king, served no master, and did not sail under a universal flag. As a result of these tendencies, maintaining order and solidarity in times of danger proved difficult. During their prime, pirates assumed a predatory status by intimidating merchant vessels. They were ruthless and experienced fighters and generally outnumbered their opponents in strength of men and guns. However, once the British Navy was deployed the tables quickly turned. As the hunter became the hunted, the pirates proved no match for the military might of an empire, and in the end this loose conglomeration of ignoble and murderous men doomed themselves to perish.

During the brief cessation of warfare brought about by the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, many colonial ports were left teeming with unemployed and starving sailors, who in turn joined the thousands who had already embraced piracy. Numerous letters from various colonial governors and merchants were sent to the British Crown, begging for some assistance against this growing murderous horde. These letters serve as disturbing proof of how the pirate threat to trade and commerce had grown into a formidable problem. Sir Nicholas Lawes of Jamaica wrote to the Council of Trade and Plantations, Aug 29th 1717,

Many depredations have been committed by pirates of all nations who infest those seas; and are so powerfull, that the merchants ships have been, and are obliged to stay after their being loaded till one of H.M. ships of war could or

¹Hans Turley, *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash: Piracy, Sexuality and Masculine Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 44.

can see them out of the danger of them; to the great loss of traders, owners of vessels, and H.M. Revenue.²

Through such correspondences with its colonies, Britain finally realized the economic threat that pirates posed if left unchecked.

By 1726, while piracy had not been totally eradicated, the problem which had taken thousands of vessels and claimed the lives of hundreds of innocents came to a very abrupt end.³ One might question how the horrific lawlessness which plagued the Caribbean and North American coast for over a century, an area threatened by as many as 5,000 criminals during piracy's "golden age," was essentially eliminated in such a short period of time.⁴ Piracy's golden age spanned roughly from the 1690s to the late 1720s, and proved to be the greatest period of success for these maritime criminals.

Unfortunately the scholarship regarding piracy is somewhat neglectful in its detailing of the waning of this golden age. Several historians, including Marcus Rediker, have become preoccupied with presenting pirates in a peculiar light, one by which their actions are viewed as subversive and revolutionary.⁵ In doing so, this recent scholarship neglects the realities of the pirate life. A pirate paid allegiance to no one but himself. His lustful pursuit of profit dominated his ethos and, blinded by unabashed preoccupation with self-interest and greed, he failed to either participate in or create much of a community at all. Not only is the current historiography of piracy misguided, but it also fails to acknowledge how this desperate lifestyle contributed to their downfall.

²Cecil Headlam, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies: Volume 30*. Reprint, (London: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1964), 17, no. 54. (later referred to as CSPC)

³Statistics on the number of pirates active at various times were meticulously compiled by Marcus Rediker via primary source documents. Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and The Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2003), 256.

⁴*Ibid.*, 254-55.

Thus, around the beginning of the 18th century, after realizing that the trade and safety of their empire was in considerable danger, Britain waged war upon the pirates which roamed the waters of the Caribbean as well as the North American Coast. Britain's expedient success in ridding the waters of these criminals stemmed directly from a multifaceted and comprehensive approach of suppression which included: royal pardons to pirates, the passage of relevant naval law, increased deployment of the Royal Navy, and replacement of corrupt colonial officials. By steadfastly adhering to this comprehensive strategy, one which relied upon the weak and disjointed nature of the so-called pirate community, Britain quickly made the seas of the Caribbean and the Atlantic safe once again.

It is important to understand the nature of pirate attacks during this time in order to better comprehend the task which Britain had to face. The elimination of piracy throughout the Caribbean and along the North American coast was by no means an easy undertaking. In general, most pirate ships were relatively small in size, which allowed them to navigate safely in relatively shallow waters that were oftentimes riddled with dangerous reefs and bars. The other main advantage of smaller ships was speed. Should pirates encounter a ship of considerable force, such as a warship of the British Navy, or any opponent they could not easily overpower, it was important that they could swiftly escape. Furthermore, smaller boats were easier to careen, a process by which the crew beached the boat in order to make repairs. In tropical climates such as the Caribbean the careening of ships was essential, because it increased the hull's longevity and allowed the ship to sail at greater speeds.

As far as prey, pirates of the early 18th century had many factors in their favor. The average merchant ship of the time was sparsely crewed, and even vessels of formidable size were typically manned by as few as twelve sailors.⁵ Pirates, on the other hand, frequently crowded their ships with sailors. While this often made life on a pirate ship a cramped and miserable experience, it allowed them to easily overpower weaker opponents. The ultimate goal of pirates was to persuade their victims that resistance was futile. Most merchant crews found themselves horribly outnumbered, and many of the sailors had no desire to engage pirates in battle, knowing that they were often seasoned veterans of bloody conflict, notorious for their cruelty. A crucial resource in the pirate arsenal of intimidation was the black flag, commonly referred to as the Jolly Roger. The term likely evolved from the phrase Joli Rouge, meaning *beautiful red* or perhaps the term *Old Roger* a British nickname for the devil.⁶ Notably, the first pirate flags were often simply a bright red banner. Eventually these flags were either supplemented or replaced with black ones which sometimes featured symbols such as skulls, skeletons, and hourglasses. Many of the most notorious pirate captains designed their own specific flags which also helped to intimidate the enemy. The fact that vessels could easily identify the specific criminal whom they were about to face, was undoubtedly to the advantage of the most notorious pirate captains.⁷ In addition to alerting victims to the fact that the approaching vessel was a pirate ship, these various flags also served another

⁵ The authorship of Captain Charles Johnson's *The History of The Pyrates* currently remains disputed. To read the argument which credits authorship to Defoe, consult Schonhorn's introduction. Captain Charles Johnson, [Daniel Defoe] *A General History of The Pirates*, ed. Manuel Schonhorn (1724, 1728; reprint Mineola, N.Y., Dover Publications, 1999 [Schonhorn poscript]), 705. [Later referred to as Johnson]

⁶ Jan Rogozinski. *Pirates! Brigands, Buccaneers, and Privateers in Fact, Fiction, and Legend*. (New York: Facts On File Inc, 1995), 174.

⁷ For a description and explanation of Black Bart's flag, consult Philip Gosse, *The History of Piracy*. (New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1932; reprint, Glorieta, NM: The Rio Grande Press, Inc., 1990), 188.

very important purpose. The black flag, but especially the red flag, was universally understood to stand for "no quarter," meaning that should the victim engage in battle, no mercy would be offered by the pirate crew.

The elusive nature of pirates was yet another characteristic which hampered British efforts to capture them. Pirates always sought easy prey, but since every attack was somewhat of a gamble, they were inclined to run if they sensed the outcome might not go in their favor.⁸ When in danger, pirates made haste, raised sail, and relied upon their expansive knowledge of the geography of the Caribbean and North American coast. As pirates perpetually roamed the seas, they became familiar with many of the thousands of small uninhabited islands in the Caribbean. These islands offered an abundance of fruit, fish, and turtles essential to pirates, whose naval stores were rather unsteady since they were often unwelcome in many traditional ports of call.

Yet another advantage that pirates of the 18th century significantly exploited was the predictability of trade routes due to the navigational limitations of the time, specifically captains' inability to determine longitude. In the preface of Captain Charles Johnson's *History of the Pyrates*, he carefully explained the predicament facing ships making the voyage to the colonies. "Latitude is the only Certainty in those Voyages to be found, and then they sail due West, till they come to their Port, without altering their Course. In this West Way lye the pirates... so that if the Merchant Ships bound thither, do not fall a Prey to them one Day, they must another..."⁹ As a result, this rather consistent sea traffic allowed pirates to easily locate potential targets. Ships headed towards the colonies were generally the most sought after prizes for pirates during this

⁸Details including a map can be found in, Johnson, *History of the Pyrates*, 31-34.

⁹Ibid., 5.

time period, because they were usually heavily laden with goods which the pirates could in turn sell at a high price. While a great many merchants and sailors suffered and died at the hands of pirates, it is also important to acknowledge that there were many who reaped significant financial gain from cooperating with pirates and purchasing stolen goods.

One of the greatest problems with which Britain had to contend was the illicit trade throughout the empire that encouraged piracy to thrive. Throughout the West Indies and New England, many merchants often collaborated with pirates in order to avoid the harsh constraints of mercantilism. In regards to the various English Navigation Acts, Lord Chatham wrote, "The only use of American Colonies, is the monopoly of their consumption, and the carriage of their produce."¹⁰ Resentful of this exploitative economic system, many merchants succumbed to the temptation to do business with and even provide safe harbor for pirates. Historians George Francis Dow and John Henry Edmonds address the subject directly in their work, *The Pirates of the New England Coast: 1630-1730*. Throughout their careful examination of relevant state records they offer numerous references to this illicit trade. Dow and Edmonds emphasize the extent of this dilemma by stating, "The profits of piracy and the irregular trade practiced at that time were large, indeed, and twenty-nine hundred per cent profit in illicit trade was not unusual...."¹¹ This corruption had become so blatant by the end of the 17th century that the English Crown finally realized that something had to be done. In the late 1690s, Edward Randolph received the position of Surveyor-General of Customs in the American Colonies and by the order of the Lords of Trade and Plantations departed for the colonies

¹⁰George Francis Dow and John Henry Edmonds, *The Pirates of the New England Coast: 1630-1730*. With Introduction by Captain Ernest H. Pentecost. (Salem, MA: The Marine Research Society, 1923; reprint, Mineola NY: Dover Publications, 1996), 16.

¹¹ Ibid., 19.

in order to investigate this matter. After surveying the problem, he offered numerous complaints regarding the practices of local merchants in a letter entitled, *A Discours About Pyrates, With Proper Remedies To Suppress Them*.

The chief places where Pyrates Resort & are Harboured, are, as follows: ... Pennsylvania: Severall of those pyrates... were, upon an acknowledgement of the Govrs. Favour, permitted to settle & Trade there. ... Rhode Island Has bin many Years, and still is the Chiefe Refuge for Pyrates. ... Boston... Some of the Govrs, have Enrichd themselves by the Pyrates.¹²

His last accusation was a gross understatement considering that Governor Benjamin Fletcher had a personal relationship with the notorious pirate, ^gThomas Tew, who even dined from time to time in the Governor's home.¹³ Randolph concluded his letter with several remedies for this rampant corruption, including, "That no person be made Govr. In any of the Proprieties, until he be first Aprovd of by his Majesties Order in Council, as by the *Act for preventing ffrauds, and Regulating abuses in the Plantation Trade*, It is Enacted."¹⁴ Passed in 1696, this act marked the beginning of concerted precautionary efforts by the British Government. Platoons of officers arrived in the colonies in order to enforce this law, and the revision of Vice Admiralty Courts provided for a more efficient legal system capable of trying those responsible or aiding and abetting pirates. Governors notorious for collaborating with pirates, including William Markham of Pennsylvania, Benjamin Fletcher of New York, and Nicholas Trott of the Bahamas were all promptly removed from office, and the King issued a circular letter to

¹²Gosse, *The History of Piracy*, 320-321.

¹³Dow, *The Pirates of the N.E. Coast*, 17.

¹⁴Gosse, *The History of Piracy*, 320-321.

all other colonial governors warning them that if they failed to cooperate and obey the law, they would suffer the same fate.¹⁵

Despite Britain's efforts to battle corruption and destroy this extensive black market, pirates remained a considerable threat to British commerce. Various officials flooded the crown with letters complaining that pirate control over trade remained significant, and that their numbers and audacity continued to increase. The composition of many of these letters was the same, and in general they requested the protection of British naval vessels.¹⁶ The British Royal Navy categorized its ships by size referring to a rating system, the largest ships being first rate ships of the line, and the smallest being sixth rate. The smaller ships of the line were actually more aptly suited for the hunting and capture of pirates. As mentioned before, smaller ships could sail at faster speeds and navigate through shallower waters. Furthermore, these smaller ships were more appropriate for convoy duty. Since pirates often succeeded by ambushing solitary ships, merchant captains eventually realized the advantage of traveling in convoys, large groups of ships protected by naval escorts. By examining British naval records one can observe the noticeable change in Britain's attitude towards the nature and composition of its peacetime naval force. Under King William's reign, the larger ships of the line increased from 59 to 68, whereas the number of smaller ships more than doubled in number from 49 in 1689 to 108 in 1702.¹⁷ Despite this increase in shipbuilding, the greatest success against the pirates failed to occur until the reign of King George I, who finally began deploying these vessels, with specific orders to police the seas.

¹⁵Robert C Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), 150.

¹⁶*CSPC*. Volume 30, 425- 435, no. 800; *CSPC*, Volume 30, 260-264, no 551.

¹⁷ Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, 157.

In addition to its growing naval force, under the reign of King William III, Parliament passed an act in 1700 which it hoped would revitalize the cumbersome and somewhat outdated manner by which it prosecuted pirates. This act, entitled *An Act for the more effectual Suppression of Piracy*, offered several important revisions pertaining to traditional British Naval Law practices. The most important modification was the authorization of vice admiralty courts to be established in the colonies, thereby eliminating the old requirement that all prisoners accused of piracy be shipped to Britain for trial. Britain realized that many sailors chose to become pirates because they felt that, "they shall not, or at least cannot easily, be questioned for such their Piracies and Robberies, by reason of the great Trouble and Expence that will necessarily fall upon such as shall attempt to apprehend and prosecute them for the same."¹⁸ As a result the act detailed a revised manner by which a pirate trial was to be held. The act authorized a court of seven to conduct proceedings and if deemed necessary administer the penalty of death. Guilty pirates "shall be executed and put to Death, at such Time, in such Manner, and in such Place upon the Sea, or within the ebbing or flowing thereof..."¹⁹ These instructions were important in that they made punishment a public spectacle, specifically in a place where sailors could clearly witness the grim fate which awaited them should they choose to break the law. The act also dramatically addressed the fate of those who aided pirates in the unlawful smuggling and trading of stolen merchandise.

That all and every Person and Persons whatsoever, who... knowingly or willingly set forth any Pirate, or aid and assist, or maintain, procure, command, counsel or advise any Person and Persons... or receive or take into his Custody any Ship, Vessel, Goods or Chattels which have been by any such Pirate... are hereby likewise declared, deemed and adjudged to be accessory to such Piracy

¹⁸Original document is reprinted in Alfred P. Rubin, *The Law of Piracy* (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 1988) 362.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 364.

and... shall suffer such Pains of Death, Losses of Lands, Goods and Chattles....²⁰

Lastly, the act of 1700 acknowledged the fact that the pursuit of pirates was a dangerous endeavor and promised to reward those who risked their lives in order to apprehend these criminals. Rewards were to be granted to "Commanders, Masters, and other Officers, Seamen, and Mariners, as shall either bravely defend their own Ships, or take, seize and destroy Pirates...."²¹

While various colonial officials promptly took advantage of these new legislative and judicial procedures, the trade and commerce of Britain's colonies still remained in danger. During the early 1700s, the capture of pirates and their subsequent trials and hangings occurred somewhat infrequently. The plague of piracy continued after the act of 1700, and in various areas it grew even worse. Documentation from the time proves that many colonial subjects were still very discontented with Britain's efforts against these criminals. One governor who displayed remarkable fervency regarding this matter was Alexander Spotswood of Virginia. His persistence and devotion towards the capture of pirates was extraordinary, and his letters provide a great deal of insight into the progress of British efforts regarding piracy. In a letter dated July 3rd, 1716 he wrote, "The whole Trade of this Continent may be endangered if timely measures be not taken to suppress this growing evil. I hope your Lo'ps will, therefore, judge it necessary that another Ship of Force be speedily sent hither to Cruise on this Coast for ye protection of our Merchantmen; And... to attack those pyrates in their Quarters before they grow too

²⁰Ibid., 366.

²¹Ibid.

formidable."²² In another letter written only a year later he warned, "The number of Pyrates is greatly increase... it is high time some measures were taken to reduce them, either by force or by an offer of pardon...."²³ A month later he remarked, "[it is] my humble opinion that some additional Strength of Men of War would be absolutely necessary to be sent to these Plantations for the Security of Trade. Experience has shew'd how just my fears were. Our Capes have been for these six Weeks pass'd in a manner blocked up by those Pyrates...." He concluded by stating that he hoped "some care will be taken to remove the danger which threatens the Trade of all his Ma'ty's Plantations, and will certainly become the more formidable by being longer neglected."²⁴

Finally, the consistent bombardment of passionate letters forced the King and the Board of Trade to aggressively address the problem in earnest. In 1717, the king released *A Proclamation, For Supressing of Pirates*. While many of the key points of King George's Proclamation of 1717 were simply a reiteration of those already detailed in King William's suppression act of 1700, King George's proclamation provided important additional warnings and in general served as a pertinent reminder of established British Law. The King's proclamation was printed widely and in the September 15th issue of the *London Gazette*, the King's address began with the following remarks which displayed the inadequacy of British efforts to quell the pirate threat prior to 1717:

Complaint having been made to His Majesty, by great Numbers of Merchants, Masters of Ships, and others, as well as by the several Governours of His Majesty's Islands and Plantations in the West-Indies, that the Pirates are grown so numerous that they infest not only the Seas near Jamaica, but even those of the Northern Continent of America; and that unless some effectual Means be used, the whole Trade from Great Britain to those Parts will not only be

²²Alexander Spotswood, *The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood: Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1710-1722* (Richmond, Va: The Society, 1882-85), 168-69.

²³*Ibid.*, 264.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 249-50.

obstructed, but in imminent danger of being lost: His Majesty has, upon mature Deliberation in Council, been graciously pleased, in the first Place, to order a proper force to be employed for suppressing the said Piracies; which Force so to be employed as follows....²⁵

Following this statement was a detailed list of ships, including their rate, number of guns, number of men, stations and patrol areas. The King further declared that this naval force was specifically "for annoying the Pirates, and [for] the Security of the Trade...."²⁶ Furthermore, in the years following the declaration of 1717, Britain's commitment to this endeavor remained strong. Historian David Cordingly organized information from naval records from 1718 to 1720 in order to display Britain's devotion to the protection of its colonies. Examination of the year 1718 provides a typical glimpse of the Royal Navy's deployment under the reign of King George I. In 1718 there were twelve ships stationed in either the Caribbean or North American Coast, of which, the *Ludlow Castle*, *Swift*, *Scarborough*, *Seaford*, *Pearle*, *Lyme*, and *Phoenix*, were specifically ordered to correspond and act in concert against the pirates. This was a considerable increase from the typical assignments of the past few years.²⁷ After King George I detailed the naval might sent to engage the pirates, the King began his proclamation by offering a generous alternative to these criminals. He extended a pardon to all those willing to accept it. They needed only to surrender to the local governor, and they would be absolved of all their crimes. To all those who refused to accept this

²⁵"By the King, A Proclamation, For suppressing of Pirates. George R.". *The London Gazette*, Issue Numb 5573, [From Saturday September 14 to Tuesday September 17, 1717]. Early English Newspapers, microfilm reel 1716-1719.

²⁶Ibid. A reprint of this information with minor differences in spelling is available in Johnson, *History of The Pyrates*, 38-41.

²⁷David Cordingly, *Under The Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life Among the Pirates*. (New York: Random House, 1996), 251-252.

gracious pardon, the king warned that it was not only the duty of every naval and military officer but every subject of the crown to aid in the seizure and capture of pirates.

The effectiveness of pirate pardons, however, was highly questionable.

Bartholomew Roberts's crew once remarked that, "They should accept of no Act of Grace; that the King and Parliament might be damned with their Acts of Grace."²⁸ Captain Charles Johnson offered the reminder that while several pirates eagerly took such certificates, many did not abandon the lifestyle. "The greatest Part of them, returned again, like the Dog to the Vomit."²⁹ While King William III had been vague in regards to rewards, King George I was quite specific. To further entice his subjects, the king enumerated the following monetary rewards for all those who either seized or aided in the seizure of pirates: "For every Commander of any Pirate Ship or Vessel the Sum of One hundred Pounds; for every Lieutenant, Master, Boatswain, Carpenter, and Gunner the sum of Forty Pounds; for every inferior Officer the Sum of thirty Pounds; and for every Private Man the Sum of twenty Pounds,"³⁰ Furthermore, British authorities cleverly appealed to the greedy nature of pirates by exclusively offering them the same rewards, as well as an additional one hundred pounds for the capture of pirate commanders. Lastly, in the September 15th issue of the *London Gazette*, the king's proclamation was followed by an article which conveyed news that many of the king's subjects, particularly Alexander Spotswood, had longed to hear for years. The king finally committed a force to clean up what had often been referred to as "the vile nest of rogues"³¹ in the colony of New Providence, in the Bahamas.

²⁸Johnson, *History of the Pyrates*, 217.

²⁹Ibid., 41.

³⁰*London Gazette*, Issue Numb 5573.

³¹Spotswood, *Letters V.2*, 168.

The island of New Providence posed a considerable threat to the British Empire, in that lawlessness thrived there and as a result it had served as a refuge for pirates for many years. Several colonial governors, particularly Alexander Spotswood, warned that it would produce disastrous results if left unchecked.³² The British Empire finally agreed to put an end to this potential "pirate commonwealth" by sending over a new governor, who they felt could reorganize the island and rid it of droves of men of questionable character. The man who eagerly accepted this formidable task was former privateer Captain Woodes Rogers. Rogers had been made famous by his circumnavigation of the globe which took place between 1708 and 1711. It was during this voyage that Rogers rescued a marooned sailor named Alexander Selkirk who later served as the inspiration for Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe*. Rogers arrived at New Providence on July 26th 1718, and he brought with him the King's royal pardon to all pirates who would willingly surrender, pledge allegiance to the crown, and swear to cease their actions as pirates. The scene before Rogers was a rather daunting one. The island was populated by over 300 pirates, leaving him and his small company of officers grossly outnumbered. None the less, all of the pirates besides the infamous Charles Vane willingly accepted the king's pardon.³³ Vane and his crew of ninety men refused to surrender and sailed off defiantly, firing cannon as they went. In response, Rogers promptly commissioned a ship to hunt Vane and continued to work diligently to rebuild the island, especially its only defense, a dilapidated fort. Despite the great hardships at hand, Rogers persevered, and he deserves credit for essentially single-handedly bringing stability to New Providence.

³²Ibid.

³³*CSPC Volume 30*, 372-381, no 737.

When discussing Britain's war against the pirates, it is crucial to acknowledge that the steadfast support of various colonial subjects bolstered their campaign. In addition to capturing the pirates, Britain also hoped to persuade sailors to avoid becoming pirates in the first place, essentially to convey to them that piracy was a fruitless and dangerous endeavor. As a result, the efforts of two groups in particular should be recognized, the colonial legislatures which tried and executed a great number of pirates, as well as the work of various members of the clergy throughout New England.

Following the proclamation of 1717, many governors throughout the colonies transmitted the king's information by issuing similar proclamations of their own. Not only did these proclamations show the inhabitants that the colonial government took the cause seriously, but also helped bolster interest in the cause, by reminding colonists of the potential profits to be gained by aiding in the capture of pirates.³⁴ Spotswood took the issue one step further by privately commissioning the ships HMS *Pearl* and HMS *Lyme* specifically for the purpose of hunting down and capturing the infamous Edward Teach, more commonly known as Blackbeard.

Blackbeard, a legend even in his own time, was a renowned and fearsome pirate, and through many documented accounts, actually proved worthy of his vicious reputation.³⁵ After Teach essentially blockaded the harbor of Charles-Town, and made a fool of the governor, various members of the colonial legislature sought to take action against him. Lieutenant Maynard, commissioned by Spotswood, eventually caught up with Teach near Ocracoke inlet and after a bloody battle, Teach was finally vanquished. Maynard decapitated Teach and mounted his head upon the bolt sprit of his ship, a grisly

³⁴"By His Excellency Robert Hunter... A Proclamation" (New York, 1716. *Early American Imprints*, microfilm, number 1990)

³⁵Johnson, *History of The Pyrates*, 84-85.

reminder that even the most fearsome of the pirates faced justice. Just as Blackbeard's head served as a poignant visual reminder to those who witnessed Maynard's triumphant return home, other colonial governors provided similar warnings via the process of gibbeting. After their trial and execution, many of the famous pirates' bodies, including Rackam, Fly, and Vane's, were dipped in tar and suspended in chains in a public place near the sea. Regardless of the fate of their bodies, the public nature of pirate hangings and the frequency with which they began to occur throughout the colonies served simply as an impressive reminder that piracy was by no means a glamorous profession. Between 1716 and 1726 alone, over four hundred men were hanged for piracy.³⁶ During these many trials and public executions, the clergy found large audiences whom they could warn of the loathsome nature of piracy.

As mentioned before, an overall goal related to eliminating the plague of piracy was to deter sailors from deciding to join pirate crews. One group of men who played an important role in this process was the clergy throughout the North American colonies. Many influential ministers, particularly the Reverend Cotton Mather, took it upon themselves to convince sailors that piracy was neither a fruitful nor worthwhile endeavor. Mather devoted himself to saving men whose last speeches "Sadly Bewailed the Vile Speeches, with which they have discovered Souls full of Rottenness."³⁷ By reviewing newspaper articles and early broadsides of the time, historians have found that members of the clergy played an integral role in the trials of pirates, and provide us with some of the scant evidence of actual remarks from pirates of the time. In many cases prior to the

³⁶ Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 283. Consult his footnotes for an explanation of his figures.

³⁷ Cotton Mather, "Useful remarks: An essay upon remarkables in the way of wicked men. A sermon on the tragical end, unto which the way of twenty-six pirates brought them; at New Port on Rhode-Island, July 19, 1723. With an account of their speeches, letters, & actions, before their execution." (New London (Conn) T. Green, 1723. Early American Imprints, microfilm, 245), 26.

actual execution, both in prison cells and during the various trials, reporters were allowed to talk to the condemned prisoners and take note of their endeavors and past transgressions. Such dictation helped Captain Charles Johnson compile his *History of the Pyrates*.³⁸ Examination of the trial of John Quelch and crew helps illuminate this issue. A pamphlet published soon after the trial, told that

The Ministers of the Town had used more than ordinary Endeavours, to Instruct the Prisoners, and bring them to Repentance. There were sermons Preached in their hearing, Everyday, And Prayers daily made with them. And they were Catechised; and they had many occasional Exhortations. And nothing was left that could be done for their Good.³⁹

One of Cotton Mather's main assertions was that these sailors, often of a very young age, succumbed to a vile life due to evil company. "They died in Youth, because, their Life was among the Unclean!"⁴⁰ By talking with literally hundreds of sailors he found that many were simply young and foolish and that they often made hasty decisions, quite frequently while intoxicated, which they deeply regretted later in life. One pirate found the problem so common that he wrote a letter to his brother warning, "I hope you will as far as you can, & may, keep them [his brother's children] from going to Sea. Let them take Warning by me not to go astray from God while young."⁴¹ Mather further shed light upon the nature of this motley bunch by encouraging the captured pirates themselves to elaborate upon the grim realities of their lives. One pirate named John Brown offered several precautionary words of advice in the form of a prayer in which he declared "Whatever you do, Neglect not the Publick & Private Worship of God, & your

³⁸Consult Schonhorn's introduction for information regarding Defoe's life.

³⁹ "An Account of the behaviour and last dying speeches of the six pirates, that were executed on Charles River, Boston side, on Fryday June 30th. 1704." (*Early American imprints*, microcard 39402)

⁴⁰Mather, *Useful Remarks*, 40.

⁴¹Ibid.

Undertakings will always Prosper. Always choose good company." Furthermore, he uttered another warning common to many a repentant pirate which was to beware of the deplorable nature of drunkenness. "Live Soberly, and let not yourselves be overcome with Strong Drink. For Doubtless, the great Innumerable Sins and Transgressions, of my Life, Have brought me to this Untimely End. And that these Sins... brought me to fall into the Hands of Pirates."⁴² Miserable working conditions, lack of work, and lust for wealth tempted seaman to join in with the pirates. In the last words of another condemned pirate we hear a similar warning. "And as for Sea faring Men, my earnest desire is That they may be kept from falling into the Hand of Pirates, & if they be taken by them, that they mayn't turn to them...."⁴³

By considering the trial of a pirate named John Quelch one gains a sense of the typical atmosphere at a pirate trial in the early 1700s. Pirate hangings drew throngs of people, and knowing this, preachers were quick to take advantage of the chance to address such large audiences. One of the ministers, quite possibly Mather himself, addressed the crowd at Quelch's trial. "Oh! But shall our Sea faring Tribe, on this Occasion, be in a Singular manner affected with the Warnings of God! Lord, May those of our dear Brethren be Saved from the Temptations which do so threaten them! so ruine them!"⁴⁴ These remarks served as powerful and vivid evidence regarding the realities of a pirate life. Young sailors in attendance, who dreamed of the glamour of an easy life, filled with riches, drinking, and whoring, were rudely awakened by the lamentations of desperate men as well as passionate ministers.

⁴²Ibid., 32.

⁴³Ibid., 38.

⁴⁴*An Account, Early American imprints*, microcard 39402.

When considering the scholarly research regarding piracy, a thorough and well articulated discussion of the end of piracy's "golden age" is somewhat hard to find. While several historians mention Britain's efforts, it is often either in passing, or embedded throughout lengthy discussions concerning the most famous pirates. For example, while pirate historian Philip Gosse's work, *The History of Piracy*, is regarded as one of the best works on piracy, it offers only a few scattered pages detailing Britain's efforts to curtail the pirate menace. Fortunately, some of the more recent scholarship offers better detail regarding the end of the golden age. Author Robert Ritchie details Britain's efforts in his work, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates*. However, while Ritchie offers documentation of Britain's policies, his discussion is interspersed throughout a narrative which pertains exclusively to Captain Kidd. While not the primary focus of his book, historian David Cordingly also discusses the policies and politics of the British Empire in his work, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and the Reality of Life Among the Pirates*.

Many contemporary historians of piracy have focused their efforts towards debunking the romanticized status which these criminals have garnered throughout art, literature, film, and even historical texts of the past. Author David Cordingly judiciously tackled the traditional glorification of pirates in his book, *Under the Black Flag*. Despite the violent and dishonorable tendencies commonly displayed by the pirates of this era, however a daring and adventurous mythos continues to surround the historical reality of piracy's golden age. Conveniently removed from the realities of the 18th century society, a very selective and distorted view of the pirate life has persisted throughout fictional accounts of piracy. We see this concept echoed in the latest pop culture appearance of

piracy, Disney's epic film, *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Actor Johnny Depp exemplifies this veneration of the pirate life when he dramatically conveys his passion for his pirate ship, *The Black Pearl*. "Wherever we want to go, we go. That's what a ship is, you know. It's not just a keel, and a hull, and a deck and sails. That's what a ship needs. But what a ship is, what *The Black Pearl* really is, is freedom."⁴⁵ One should remain skeptical of such a statement. This freedom brought with it the harsh realities of discomfort, disease, hunger, and the constant threat of a violent death. The famous 18th century British author Dr. Samuel Johnson offers an interesting comment regarding this issue. He stated, "No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail with the chance of being drowned.... A man in jail has more room, better food, and commonly better company."⁴⁶ The ending of the film *Pirates of the Caribbean* displays the traditional and essentially idiotic romanticization common to nearly all pirate fiction. Captivated by Captain Jack Sparrow's eccentricities and honorable nature, Will Turner risks his own life in order to save Captain Jack from the gallows. Upon recapture, the Governor reprimands Turner for his actions, remarking of Sparrow, "He's a pirate!" Turner responds, "And a good man. If all I have achieved here is that the hangman will earn two pairs of boots instead of one, so be it. At least my conscience will be clear."⁴⁷ Captain Jack Sparrow, whom William Turner initially hates due to his status as a pirate, magically gains his respect and admiration. The film even goes so far as to imply that William Turner, who in the final scene of the film appears fully adorned in typical pirate regalia, has chosen to become a pirate himself. Perhaps

⁴⁵*Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, dir Gore Verbinski, 143 min., Walt Disney Pictures, 2003, DVD.

⁴⁶Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 258.

⁴⁷*Pirates of the Caribbean*, 2003.

most absurd of all, Captain Jack's crew has kindly decided to stick around in the harbor and pick him up after his clever escape.

The trial of Captain John Auger and his crew paints a much more realistic picture of how actual pirates behaved in a similar situation. Due to his shortage of men in New Providence, Woodes Rogers was forced to trust pirates in order to rebuild the island upon his arrival in 1718. He quickly commissioned Captain John Auger and crew to sail to nearby islands and acquire supplies. Like so many other pirates who had accepted royal pardons in the past, Auger and his men simply sailed out of the harbor and practiced piracy as soon as the opportunity presented itself. Upon hearing word of Auger's choice, Rogers commissioned another pirate to hunt down and seize him for his crime. Captain Benjamin Hornigold apprehended Auger and brought him back to New Providence for trial. Thanks to revision of stagnant naval law, brought about by the act of 1700, Auger and his counterparts needed not to be sent back to England for trial, but stood trial under a tribunal headed by Rogers in New Providence. Determined to make an example of Auger, Rogers had him and his men convicted and hanged publicly in front of the hundreds of pirates who still inhabited the island. Upon the gallows, Rogers allowed each of the crew to make last remarks.⁴⁸ The words of one crew member named Dennis Macarty were particularly significant. He "look'd cheerfully round him, saying, he knew the Time when there were many brave Fellows on the Island, who would not have suffer him to die like a Dog; ... he exhorted to People, who were at the Foot of the Walls, to have compassion on him, but, however willing, they saw too much Power over their

⁴⁸For more information concerning Rogers's efforts in New Providence as well as the actions and trial of Auger and others, consult, Johnson, *History of the Pyrates*, 626-660.

Heads to attempt any Thing in his Favor."⁴⁹ Instead, the pirates, who grossly outnumbered the new governing body, did nothing, and Auger and his men suffered a short drop and a quick stop.

Historian Philip Gosse ended his work *The History of Piracy* by remarking "Yet there will always be a sympathetic response in the human heart to the appeal of the adventurer who dares go to far and dangerous places and in defiance of all organized respectability take his courage in both hands to carve out his fortune."⁵⁰ Unfortunately, examination of contemporary research on piracy shows that various historians are unable to shake free from the vestiges of this age old tendency toward palliation. The horrific realities of the pirate lifestyle are gilded with new idioms which portray them as outcasts and radicals, whose behavior is viewed as daringly egalitarian. A recent review of historian Marcus Rediker's soon to be released work entitled *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, is alarmingly appropriate. "Marcus Rediker knows pirates, and he knows how to tell a story. *Villains of All Nations* is a must read; don't wait for the movie!"⁵¹

Rediker implies that pirates "carried out a strange experiment... [and that the], social constellation of piracy, in particular the complex consciousness and egalitarian impulses... [allowed for], aspirations and achievements that under normal circumstances were heavily muted, if not in many cases rendered imperceptible altogether."⁵² Essentially, Rediker claims that pirates as a defined communal organization of men chose to challenge the conventional power structure of the era by freeing themselves from the

⁴⁹Ibid., 659.

⁵⁰Gosse, *A History of Piracy*, 299.

⁵¹Robin D. G. Kelly, "Book Description," <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0807050245/qid=1083916914/sr=1-4/ref=sr_1_4/002-7876699-9802407?v=glance&s=books>, May 2004.

⁵²Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 286.

constrictive and seemingly fruitless severity of traditional seamanship. The obvious predicament, however, which Rediker neglects to address, is the fact that their liberating break from society revolved entirely around criminal activity. Seemingly in order to solidify his assertions, Rediker briefly interjects the statement: "Theirs was probably a contradictory pursuit. For many, piracy, as a strategy of survival, was ill-fated."⁵³ He does not, however, end his work with this conclusion, but instead concludes with more glorifications of his maritime revolutionaries. In reality, his statement should read, theirs was a contradictory pursuit. For *most*, piracy as a strategy of survival was ill-fated.

In a book review of Marcus Rediker's work, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, author Graham Hodges surmised that by examining pirates, we can see "The origins of a maritime class conscious... [and that pirates] responded with a unity of culture and resistance."⁵⁴ This concept is further echoed in Rediker's work, *The Many Headed Hydra* which he co-authored with Peter Linebaugh. Rediker and Linebaugh imply that pirates rebelled against the status quo by gaining "The autonomous power to organize the ship and its miniature society as they wanted."⁵⁵ Granted, all sailors of the 18th century faced desperate conditions however, it is a stretch to assume that anything more than desperation motivated them to turn to a life of crime. Furthermore, there is little evidence to prove that their behavior was an intentional subversive effort to question societal norms. In an article discussing this historical viewpoint, author Lawrence Osbore commented "A society is not a marauding vessel roaming from port to port consisting of

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Graham Hodges, review of *Between the Devil and The Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*, by Marcus Rediker, *The American Historical Review* 95 (October 1990): 1164.

⁵⁵Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, Beacon Press, 2000), 156.

a few dozen men.... It is merely tempting to see them as such."⁵⁶ Lastly, historian Simon Smith questioned the value of this recent scholarship by noticing "Their connection to revolutionary ideology is pure speculation" and warning that historians "like to look back and rewrite the histories of the marginalized."⁵⁷

Only by judiciously considering first hand accounts of pirate activity found in trial documents, as well as the confessions of pirate victims who managed to escape death, we gain a truer sense of the actual nature of pirates, a desperate group of men whose chances at success were rather grim. Evidence of pirate cruelty, greed, and desperation can be found in abundance. While there is little to no evidence that pirates forced victims to walk the plank, there are numerous accounts of captives who faced even grimmer fates including various forms of mutilation. Perhaps worst of all was the practice of keelhauling, a practice by which the victim was tied to ropes and dragged along a ship's keel, often covered with a great many barnacles which severely flayed the skin. As far as specific references to heinous pirate crimes, the wealth of evidence proves rather disturbing. Captain Low commonly murdered nearly every captive he ever encountered, often torturing them first by cutting off various body parts.⁵⁸ Captain Condent's gunner once tore out the heart of a mutineer, cooked it, and ate it.⁵⁹ Captain Bartholomew Roberts once took a slave ship, and "Finding that unshackling them cost much Time and Labour, they actually set her on Fire, with eighty of those poor wretches on board...."⁶⁰ One night while drinking, Blackbeard shot his sailing master Israel Hands in the knee

⁵⁶Lawrence Osbourne, "A Pirates Progress: How the Maritime Rogue Became a Multicultural Hero," *Lingua Franca* 8, no. 2 (1998): 42.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸Johnson, *History of the Pyrates*, 326.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 581.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 236.

without any sort of provocation. When asked why he did such a thing, he simply replied that, "If he did not now and then kill one of them, they would forget who he was."⁶¹ It should not be surprising that these men whose desperate lust for wealth caused them to readily engage in sadistic behavior, also allowed any kind of solidarity to be sacrificed to frivolity, greed, and self-interest.

Often a drunk and degenerate bunch, pirates tended to succumb to rather idiotic and counterproductive tendencies. Author Alexander O. Exquemelin, who sailed upon pirate ships as a surgeon, offered first hand evidence of this frivolity when he wrote, "They are busy dicing, whoring and drinking so long as they have anything to spend. Some of them get through a good two or three thousand pieces of eight in a day - and next day not have shirt to their back."⁶² Furthermore, pirates' drunkenness sometimes resulted in disastrous consequences. The capture of both Blackbeard and Bartholomew Roberts, often considered two of the most successful pirates of the time, was aided by the fact that both of their crews had been drinking heavily and were in no state to fight. Roberts's crew had been in particularly bad shape, his captor remarking that "The greatest part of his men were drunk, passively courageous, unfit for Service."⁶³ After being captured by pirates and observing their tendencies, Captain William Snelgrave remarked, "I could not have imagined, human Nature could ever so far degenerate, as to talk in the manner those abandoned Wretches did."⁶⁴ Another victim of piracy who dared to ask to be released, received the following response from Captain Fly:

⁶¹Ibid., 84.

⁶²Alexander O Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*. Translated by Alexis Brown. With an introduction by Alexis Brown. (London: W. Crook, 1684; reprint, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications Inc., 2000), 82.

⁶³Johnson, *History of the Pyrates*, 243.

⁶⁴Captain William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and The Slave-Trade*. (London: The Crown, 1734; reprint, London: Frank Cass and Co. 1971), 217.

May G---d strike me dead, and may I drink a Bowl of Brimstone and Fire with the D---l, if I don't send you head-long to H---ll, G---d, d---n me; and so there needs no more Arguments, by G---d for I've told you my Mind, and here's all the Ship's Crew for Witnesses, that if I do blow your Brains out, you may blame no Body but your self, G---d d---n ye.⁶⁵

Nonetheless, historians argue that during this period of history, the democratic nature of life aboard a pirate ship was truly a unique experience. Various scholars have suggested that by fleeing the harsh discipline and poor pay inherent in both the naval and merchant service, these men attained some sort of control over their own destiny. In spite of the vulgar nature of pirates, some historians insist that egalitarian order was established by adherence to a pirate code.⁶⁶ Examples of such articles are common throughout the historiography of piracy and Captain Bartholomew [Black Bart] Roberts's articles are frequently cited as a common template for this code. Pirates intended their articles to supply some sort of order and discipline. Common issues included: the division of plunder, acceptable conduct above and below deck, penalties for desertion, stealing, or quarreling, and even sometimes a crude form of insurance by which pirates wounded in conflict received an extra share of the riches. However, the universality of pirate articles and, more importantly, pirates' adherence to said articles remains somewhat uncertain. While historians often cite Roberts's articles, readers should consider that Black Bart himself was in many ways an atypical pirate. Roberts steadfastly abstained from alcohol, strictly forbid gambling aboard his ship, and even instated a curfew on board, which demanded that all lights had to be extinguished by eight o'clock.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Johnson, *History of The Pyrates*, 611.

⁶⁶These references refer to a practice common among pirate crews in which the entire crew came to universal agreement upon a set of articles to which every pirate would swear his oath. Examples of said articles are common throughout the literature of piracy. Captain Bartholomew Roberts's articles are commonly cited and can be found in Captain Charles Johnson's *History of the Pirates*. Johnson, *History of The Pirates*, 211-12.

⁶⁷Gosse, *The History of Piracy*, 186.

After examining several documents, particularly Captain Charles Johnson's extensive work, there are several instances in which pirates either ignored or simply broke these articles. Many pirate articles spoke of the judicious division of plunder as well as regulations regarding desertion and terms of service. But, shortly after Blackbeard's successful raid upon Charles-Town, he marooned seventeen members of his crew simply in order to increase his share of the riches.⁶⁸ Articles often forbade the mistreatment of women and many declared that they were forbidden on board altogether. While seemingly noble, this rule was most likely due to sailors' superstitions which regarded women aboard a ship as bad luck. Regardless of such superstitions, various pirate crews mistreated women, even bringing them on board. There is an account of Captain Charles Vane which specifically displays this contradiction. After taking a ship off the coast of Jamaica, Vane and his men plundered the sloop and used it to rid themselves of the passengers from an earlier prize named the *Kingston*. The captain and all passengers of the *Kingston* were cast aboard the recent prize, "Except the two Women, whom they kept for their own Entertainment, contrary to the usual Practice of Pyrates, who generally sent them away, least they should occasion Contention."⁶⁹

When considering Britain's success in their war against the pirates, one must consider the weaknesses inherent in the so-called pirate community. While nearly all pirates shared common traits - distaste for authority, the dismal nature of the naval profession, and a lust for freedom and wealth - merely sharing similar aspirations and attitudes did not create community. A community depends not only upon shared values but also upon order and the reciprocation of respect. For pirates, the only semblance of

⁶⁸Johnson, *History of The Pyrates*, 75.

⁶⁹Ibid., 620.

order was their inconsistent adherence to their varying articles or code. While many historians refer to pirate articles, as if they were emblazoned on stone, there is little reason to believe that these articles were either obeyed at all times or that they established union among rebels.

In the end, pirates led a very desperate lifestyle saturated with uncertainty and violence. Their inability to establish and cohere as a functioning brotherhood of thieves aided the British Royal Navy in their systematic hunting and execution of hundreds of these criminals. Finally by the early 1700s, Britain recognized the danger and complexity of the problem facing their colonial investment and tackled the pirate menace through a variety of methods, the culmination of which insured success. In addition, Britain benefited from the weaknesses of its opponents, who were nothing more than base and wretched sailors who failed to coalesce against the might of an empire. Despite their charming mystique, pirates were merely thieves and murderers who practiced a countless number of atrocities upon their unlucky victims. Captain Charles Johnson, author of the book, *A General History of the Pyrates*, the most comprehensive primary source on piracy, offered a pertinent admonition: "Thus it was these Wretches passed their Lives, with very little Pleasure or Satisfaction, in the Possession of what they violently take away from others, and sure to pay for it at last, by an ignominious Death."⁷⁰

⁷⁰Ibid., 86.

Primary

Johnson, Captain Charles [Daniel Defoe?]. *A General History of The Robberies and Murders of The Most Notorious Pyrates*. With introduction and postscript by Manuel Schonhorn. London: Bible and Crown, 1724. Reprint, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications Inc., 1999.

The source on pirates. It is debated whether or not the author was in fact Daniel Defoe. The editor of this addition provides significant evidence regarding its validity as well as an argument for listing Defoe as its author. None the less, this lengthy work gives a great deal of information about nearly every famous pirate.

Exquemelin, Alexander O. *The Buccaneers of America*. Translated by Alexis Brown. With an introduction by Alexis Brown. London: W. Crook, 1684. Reprint, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications Inc., 2000.

One of the most famous primary sources regarding piracy, second only to Captain Charles Johnson's account. Exquemelin witnessed / participated in numerous pirate voyages as a maritime surgeon. His account specifically details the origins of the first buccaneers (a specific term for pirates of the Caribbean) and offers a detailed account of Captain Henry Morgan's activities, including his burning of Panama City.

Headlam, Cecil, ed. *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies*. (44 volume set I review portions of volumes 18, 20, 30-34) London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1912. Reprint, London: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1964.

Lengthy volumes which include nearly every correspondence relevant to the British colonies in America and the West Indies. Matters pertaining to pirates are numerous. Invaluable resource.

Jameson, J. Franklin, ed. *Privateering and Piracy In The Colonial Period: Illustrative Documents*. New York: The Macmilan Company, 1923. Reprint, New York: Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, 1970.

Offers several different primary source documents including testimonials and trial records

Mather, Cotton. "Useful remarks: An essay upon remarkables in the way of wicked men. A sermon on the tragical end, unto which the way of twenty-six pirates brought them; at New Port on Rhode-Island, July 19, 1723. With an account of their speeches, letters, & actions, before their execution." New London (Conn) T. Green, 1723. Early American Imprints, microfilm, 2451.

Lengthy speech by Mather, warning seaman of this desperate profession.

Rogers, Captain Woodes. *A Cruising Voyage Round The World*. With introduction by G.E. Manwaring. London: Printed for A. Bell and B. Lintot, 1712. Reprint, London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1923.

The introduction [secondary source] offers a well written account of Rogers's life.

Snelgrave, Captain William. *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and The Slave-Trade*. London: The Crown, 1734. Reprint, London: Frank Cass and Co. 1971.

Chapter 3 "A Relation of the Author's being taken by Pirates, and the many Dangers he underwent." Detailed account of his capture by the pirate Captains Davis and Cocklyn in 1719, who operated throughout the world including the Caribbean

Spotswood, Alexander. *The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood: Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1710-1722 Volume 2*. Richmond, Va: The Society, 1882-85.

Personal letters of Alexander Spotswood, who played a key role in the war against the pirates. This volume offers numerous letters displaying the pirate threat during the golden age.

"An Account of the behaviour and last dying speeches of the six pirates, that were executed on Charles River, Boston side, on Fryday June 30th. 1704." *Early American Imprints*, microcard 39402.

Dying confessions of Captain John Quelch and crew along with sermon.

"By the King, A Proclamation, For suppressing of Pirates. George R.". *The London Gazette*, Issue Numb 5573, (From Saturday September 14 to Tuesday September 17, 1717). *Early English Newspapers*, microfilm reel 1716-1719

Very important document regarding Britain's war with the pirates.

"By His Excellency Robert Hunter... A Proclamation" New York, 1716. *Early American Imprints*, microfilm, 1990.

Example of colonial governors issuing proclamations similar to the kings.

"London, Jan 2" (News of the West Indies). *The Boston Gazette*. April 18, 1770. *Early American Newspapers*, microcard, Mass-512.

General brief information on pirates.

"The Tryals of Five Person for Piracy" Boston: Fleet for Gerrish, 1726. *Early American Imprints*, microfilm, 2818.

Pirate trial examined for content.

"The Tryals of Sixteen Person for Piracy" Boston: Joseph Edwards, 1726. *Early American Imprints*, microfilm, 2819.

Pirate trial examined for content.

"The Trials of Eight Person for Piracy" Boston: Green for Edwards, 1718. *Early American Imprints*, microfilm, 2003.

Pirate trial examined for content.

Secondary

Baldwin, William and Knapp, Andrew. *The Newgate Calendar: Comprising Interesting Memoirs of the Most Notorious Characters Who Have Been Convicted of Outrages Upon the Laws of England...* London: J. Robins and Co., 1824.

Debatably a primary source, depending on the trial this offers minutes, quotations and observations by those involved with trials at Newgate Prison.

Cordingly, David. *Under The Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life Among the Pirates*. New York: Random House, 1996.

Very thorough and well written account of piracy. Along with perhaps Rediker, Cordingly is considered the foremost authority on piracy today. In my opinion Cordingly deserves this honor since he offers a much more rational account of the subject, free of the arrogance inherent in Rediker's work.

Dow, George Francis and Edmonds, John Henry. *The Pirates of the New England Coast: 1630-1730*. With Introduction by Captain Ernest H. Pentecost. Salem, MA: The Marine Research Society, 1923. Reprint, Mineola NY: Dover Publications, 1996.

Well researched work with some valuable primary source documents in the appendices.

Earle, Peter. *The Pirate Wars*. London: Methuen, 2003.

Book looks at piracy throughout the world as well as over time. Chapter on The Golden Age provides some good information.

Gosse, Philip. *The History of Piracy*. New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1932. Reprint, Glorieta, NM: The Rio Grande Press, Inc., 1990.

Book features the history of piracy throughout the entire world and over hundreds of years. Gosse is respected as one of the greatest authorities on the subject. Valuable primary source information can be found in the appendices.

Gosse, Philip. *The Pirates Who's Who: Giving Particulars of the Lives & Deaths of the Pirates and Buccaneers*. London, Dulau and Company, 1924. Reprint, Glorieta, NM: The Rio Grande Press, Inc., 1990

Well researched encyclopedia of pirates.

Hodges, Graham. Review of *Between The Devil and The Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*, by Marcus Rediker. *The American Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (1990): 1164-65.

Book review examined for content.

Karraker, Cyrus H. *Piracy Was A Business*. Rindge, NH: Richard R. Smith Publisher, Inc., 1953.

This work offers some information regarding the economic implications of piracy. However, it focuses primarily on the actions of the red sea men, pirates who operated in the East. Regardless, it follows the "American" colonial interest in smuggling as it transgressed into something which plagued American shipping in the early 1700s.

Kelly, Robin D. G. "Book Description." <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0807050245/qid=1083916914/sr=1-4/ref=sr_1_4/002-7876699-9802407?v=glance&s=books>. May 2004.

Review of Rediker's next book which deals exclusively with piracy, entitled *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*. Used to exemplify the perseverance of societies romantic fascination with pirates.

Linebaugh, Peter and Marcus Rediker. *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston, Beacon Press, 2000.

Work which includes some discussion of pirates. Rediker continues the theories regarding pirates that he developed in his earlier works.

Little, Bryan. *Crusoe's Captain: Being the Life of Woodes Rogers, Seaman, Trader, Colonial Governor*. London, The Hullen Street Press, 1969.

Biography of Rogers who was sent to be governor of Providence (Bahamas), a pirate haven, to rid the place of these criminals.

Osbourne, Lawrence. "A Pirates Progress: How the Maritime Rogue Became a Multicultural Hero." *Lingua Franca* 8, no. 2 (1998): 35-42.

Offers several insightful critiques of the contemporary scholarly debate on piracy.

Marley, David F. *Pirates and Privateers of the Americas*. Santa Barbara, CA: Abc-Clio, 1994.

Encyclopedia of relevant terms and pirates. Very well done. Mainly focuses on the time period preceding the golden age.

Rankin, Hugh F. *The Golden Age of Piracy*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969.

Concise book regarding the time period, makes several references to Johnson.

Ritchie, Robert C. *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986.

One of the most recent and scholarly explorations of the subject. Most of the material pertains entirely to Captain Kidd.

Rediker, Marcus. *Between The Devil and The Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Rediker is debatably the leading historian in the field of maritime history. While this book primarily deals with merchant and navy seamen, it offers a chapter on piracy. This chapter was taken almost verbatim from the following essay. One should be very cautious of Rediker's conclusions since he seems prone to generalize as well as make bold and somewhat unfounded remarks.

Rediker, Marcus. "Under the Banner of King Death: The Social World of Anglo-American Pirates, 1716-1726". *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 38, No. 2 (April, 1981) 203-227.

Rogozinski, Jan. *Pirates! Brigands, Buccaneers, and Privateers in Fact, Fiction, and Legend*. New York: Facts On File Inc, 1995.

Encyclopedia of terms relevant to the subject. Of questionable value, Marley's similar composition is a better resource.

Rubin, Alfred P. *The Law of Piracy*. Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 1988.

Law text on naval affairs, provided the text of Britain's 1700 act for suppression.

Sherry, Frank. *Raiders and Rebels: The Golden Age of Piracy*. Lincoln: iUniverse.com Inc., 2000.

Narrative account, somewhat hard to use and of questionable value.

Turley, Hans. *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash: Piracy, Sexuality and Masculine Identity*. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

Book offers an average background on piracy. The author's discussion of sodomy is rather strange since he admits there is close to no evidence it occurred, yet he continues to discuss it throughout the book.

Woodbury, George. *The Great Days of Piracy in the West Indies*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1951.

Provides a decent background on the time period, general information regarding piracy.

Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, Directed by Gore Verbinski, 143 min. Walt Disney Pictures, 2003, DVD.

Recent film. Used to show the popularized view of pirates, in relation to scholarly research.