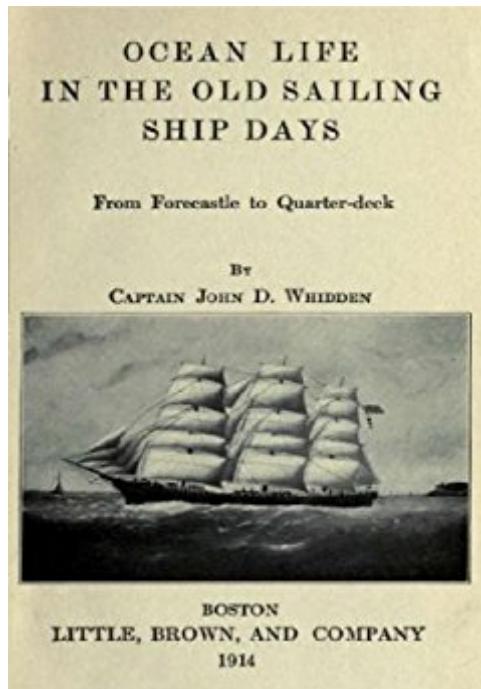


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Ocean Life In The Old Sailing Ship Days, From Forecastle To Quarter-deck



Synopsis

Ocean life in the old sailing ship days, from forecastle to quarter-deck

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This was very interesting. More interesting in the beginning of his career when he got into more mischief but over all it was a riveting read. He covers quite a bit about the life of a 19th Century merchant sailor. Life on board ship including positive and negative interactions with shipmates, ship board work, how sailors went from ship to ship, how he eventually became a captain and his experiences as one, etc. I enjoyed his travelogues as well, he went all over the world. He wrote quite a bit about shore visits and activities. I took some time to read about spots he stopped in and some of the historical facts he mentions...for example the 1853 yellow fever epidemic in New Orleans, his ship made a stop there in the middle of that. The book is well written, goes at a steady pace, includes lots of detail...after finishing this book I was a bit baffled that it cost only a dollar while the 1878-79 cruise report for the U.S.S. Ticonderoga cost three times as much and was three times shorter. This book is a "steal". If your interested in 19th Century merchant sailing life, I don't think you'll be disappointed with this book.

Great book, in spite of it's age and apparent simplicity. Written by a fellow who worked the REAL SAILING SHIPS, and sailed London to San Francisco, etc over and overâ ¡.no engine, no radio, no satellite GPSâ ¡no doctors, no helicopter pad on board, etcâ ¡just a story about the MEN who carried on international trade for centuries with muscle and brains. Read this one if you have ever sailed or hope to.

This is non fiction, so pay no attention to the way forces one to review non-fiction in terms used for fiction. Story of a Whidden, who started out in the foc'sle and eventually became a sailing ship's Captain. Descriptions of many ports world-wide, and a lot of nautical terms (but not as much of that as in, for instance, Two Years Before the Mast). A little long; 2/3 of this book is about a good read; then the descriptions seem rather repetitive. I've mostly read the book on my phone while waiting in airports, and it has served to pass the time.

This book delivered what I was looking for. Many pictures of sailing ships portray wonderful cloud like flying ships scudding across the waves almost like magic. But the lives of those who hoisted those sails and maintained the world in which they spent years of their lives must have been something less than magical. After reading this book I found that to be true. Although the main character started off with a wanderlust, he gradually fell into the tedium of "just another job". His enthusiasm remained but the starry eyed adventurous boy matured into a more solemn "man of the sea". Slow at times but full of excellent insights through the eyes of someone who has been there and lived the life. On a more personal note, I have always been enraptured by the sea, upon seeing it for the first time as a child I had a burning desire to get out upon it (again). The nostalgia I felt while reading this book is from another time.

A must read for anyone who loves to sail and feels that they were born 200 years too late. I would like to give it a four star rating, but I reserve the that for books you simply can't put down. And a five star is really rare. The book is very well written and takes the reader through an entire career at sea. From a very young Ship's Boy to the retirement of a seasoned Ship's Captain. If you want to travel the world by sea, read this book!

I really enjoyed this book. It is an autobiographical account of 25 years that the author spent in sailing ships in the late 1800s, when steam ships were just starting to appear and sail was still king on the oceans. Whidden started out before the mast, as a ship's boy and ended up a captain. It

includes many entertaining descriptions of life at sea and on shore in ports of call and between voyages. His writing style is a bit dated but enjoyable and lively. Patrick O'Brian is one of my favorite fiction authors and Whidden's prose compares well, although his characters are a bit less well developed compared to O'Brian.

The book reads like what it is: simply an account of a seaman/captain's journeys over many years at sea. It's basically "we went here, we went there, we had a storm..." and then we did it again. There was no particular plot and no significant amount of descriptive material regarding details of how the ships were designed, built, or operated -- nor was there much detail about life aboard the ships. It was sort of interesting and got me through a cross-country and CA-to-Maui trip by air, but it wasn't particularly compelling.

I am voracious reader of nautica of all types. This was an excellent authentic chronicle of the life in ships of a Yankee merchant mariner who worked his way from cabin boy to skipper in America's golden age of sail. Written in plain, abbreviated, unadorned prose that would not be out of place in a log book, this account gives fascinating insight into the day to day operations of the U.S. ocean shipping business in the mid-19th century, before the dawn of the steam revolution. It reminds us that sea captains of the day had to worry not only about finding a ship, foul weather, unruly Jack Tars, obtaining cargos for the homeward passage, but also obscure but priceless tidbits like giant boot-eating cockroaches infesting the vessel when hauling jute from India. A very interesting section was the discussion of being caught between the contending sides in the Civil War: dodging on the one hand Confederate privateers, and, on the other, having the US Government dragoon the ship upon making an East Coast port. Apparently, many Yankee ship owners sought refuge by reflagging their ships as British in order to be able to continue operations, only to find that they could not return to the US flag after the war ended. Good stuff, well told!

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