

in their pre-publication format at the Canadian theses site of the Library and Archives Canada, [Theses Canada](#).

These volumes bring together an impressive compilation of information from primary sources, so impressive as to have use as reference works. One barrier to their use as such is the absence of an index in either volume. This lack is offset to a limited extent by the use of a very detailed outline / table of contents which eases the task of finding where a particular aspect might be found.

Overall, these two studies should be considered among the more important works published in any language on the maritime history of Quebec. Their rich detail enables the reader to use them to move far beyond the concentration on pilotage and they provide, as does the river St. Lawrence itself, a channel leading to a better understanding of the nautical history of the entire region.

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**Frederick C. Leiner. *Prisoners of the Bashaw: The Nineteen-Month Captivity of American Sailors in Tripoli, 1803-1805*. Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, [www.westholmepublishing.com](http://www.westholmepublishing.com), 2022. x+311 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$35.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-59416-386-9.**

For nineteen months between 1803 and 1805, over 300 American sailors and marines were held captive in Tripoli as a result of their frigate, the USS *Philadelphia*, running aground at the entrance to that port's harbour, and its eventual surrender, amid a conflict referred to as the Tripolitan War or First Barbary War. Though this long-forgotten struggle in America's early days as a naval power has attracted recent attention from scholars, the experiences of these captives have gone largely untold. Engagingly written and thoroughly researched, this book has much to offer. It vividly reconstructs the events leading up to the captain's momentous decision to give up his ship, its crew's lives in captivity, and their various outcomes, all within a broader consideration of the Barbary War and nineteenth-century American foreign policy and seaborne power.

A primary attraction of this study is its well-seasoned author, for Leiner demonstrates a clear command of the topic and source materials. His second study to focus on America's conflict with the Islamic Barbary powers, this latest contribution nicely complements his previous scholarly treatment of America's return to North Africa in 1815 in a successful campaign to end once and for all what had become a decades-long struggle. This examination provides additional context for the latter episode, while delving deeper into

the story of America's first hostage crisis. It is further informed by Leiner's important work on America's Quasi-War with France that took place a few years prior to the events covered here. That conflict resulted in a shift to a more aggressive foreign policy that led to America's navy-building program, and opposed, at least in principle, the payment of tribute and ransoms. Among this book's strengths is its questioning the accuracy around the oft-cited statement that "the United States does not pay ransom for hostages," as it examines the policy within the context of the first test case presented to the nation: the surrender of one of the subscription warships commissioned in 1798, the *Philadelphia*. Leiner clearly reveals that, although the United States negotiated a peace with the Bashaw that did not require the payment of an annual tribute, ransom money indeed played a significant role in that negotiation and the eventual release of the captain and his crew.

Another significant feature of this study is its critical yet evenhanded analysis of the ship's captain, William Bainbridge, and his conduct prior to the decision to surrender his ship to the enemy. Though ultimately cleared of negligence in a naval court of inquiry following the war, his actions are shown to have not been in keeping with standard operating procedure, nor were many of his sailors pleased with his performance. Leiner questions, for example, Bainbridge's inaction when kedging was posed as a possible way to pull the ship off the reef, or his decision not to stand firm and use the ship's defensible position and several hundred well-armed crew to buy time, or the failure by Bainbridge to destroy his sailing orders and letter book before being boarded. His capitulation to the Bashaw of Tripoli was to be sure a difficult choice, but hindsight also allows historians to place this decision within a broader context of Bainbridge's woeful maritime service record and reputation. This was not the first time Bainbridge had surrendered his ship, in fact he held the rather ignominious distinction of being the first officer of the United States Navy to do so when forced to give up the schooner *Retaliation* to the French off Antigua in 1798. Bainbridge, quite simply, had friends in high places, as well as the shrewdness and political acumen necessary to ascend the naval chain of command. His officers tended to side with him rather than become his enemies, but what appears certain is that he held much less respect and loyalty among those of the lower deck.

Of most value to maritime historians is this study's focus on those held captive in Tripoli, for it was the accounts of imprisoned American sailors circulating far and wide in the United States that helped propel the nation to go to war against the Barbary powers in the first place. Such narratives continued to rivet the public's imagination during the war, particularly after the *Philadelphia* was lost. Leiner powerfully relates how enlisted American sailors were treated as slaves while in captivity, performing forced labour, suffering

beatings and some perishing. Due to the existence of seamen's protection certificates, we only know the identities of about a dozen of these sailors, all American citizens and all white. It is a useful reminder that the vast majority of captives were foreign, foreign-born, or Black, a reflection of the typical composition of early- nineteenth century American naval crews. Finally, Leiner demonstrates that it was the published tales of the captive sailors' lot that served to not only further galvanize American sentiment against North Africa, but also fuel calls among some to recognize the absolute hypocrisy at home regarding the institution of African slavery.

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**John Quirk. *Quirky History: Maritime Moments Most History Books Don't Mention*. Leamington Spa, UK: Fernhurst Books, [www.fernhurst@fernhurstbooks.com](http://www.fernhurst@fernhurstbooks.com), 2022. 128 pp., illustrations. UK £17.99, cloth; ISBN 978-1-91262-142-2. (E-book available.)**

Funny, informative, and above all quirky, the artist, raconteur and certainly opinionated illustrator, engineer, and world traveler, John Quirk, invites us behind the stage and into the wheelhouse of 25 maritime events in his new book *Quirky History: Maritime Moments Most History Books Don't Mention*. He prods, entertains, and startles us with implausible stories which he manages convince us were not altogether impossible. His vignettes are particularly rich with geographic diversity and humour.

Quirky, as he calls himself, manages to give readers the sense that rather than simply being served venison, we have been invited to stalk, flush, hunt, shoot, dress, carry, prepare, marinate, spice, cook, and serve the deer. Herein you will find tales of Viking long ships, botany, plague ships, submarines, espionage, honeyed arrow-heads, French ships invading France, humble plans that become grandiose and the inverse, and staples such as stout rowboats, hardened pilots, and of course, adverse currents and fog.

The layout of the book is straight-forward and clearly designed to hold the attention of readers young and not-as-young. Each of the twenty-five chapters includes three to four pages of text, and each page has a colour illustration. These images are action-packed, highly imaginative, and often suggestive – even the medical section shows partially-clad patients being cured using milk from Blossom, the cow.

Quirk's childhood wonderment at the planet, followed by a down-to-earth career as an engineer lends the book credibility, even though he takes us behind the scenes to D-Day on a four-poster bed, by oxen and barge across the East African plains to Lake Turkana, and tells us how to hide the Suez Canal and Alexandria from German bombers. There are forays into medical science, the