

notice, he joined *Stella Polaris* as the ship's photographer. He was assigned to a cabin of six and told not to photograph any passengers unless they made a specific request. Under the circumstances, business was slow. Better times were ahead.

Entertainment officers, Curtis's later role, play a curious role aboard ship. On cruise ships at least four communities sail together. From the bridge, the captain and his officers command the ship. The deck crew keep the vessel neat and tidy and, when necessary, ferry guests ashore in tenders. The engine gang watches over all the ship's machinery, while the hotel staff and entertainment director see to the care and feeding of the guests.

On cruise ships, where pleasure is the goal, aside from a friendly hello or an invitation to sit at an officer's table, most guests are unlikely to have direct contact with the officers, deck, or engine crew. No such separation for the entertainment director. To the guests they are the most visible person on the ship. They stand at the gangway welcoming guests aboard. Later they might give directions to board the tenders and remind guests when they are due back aboard. They manage the evening's entertainment, introducing the various performers. They frequently walk about the ship greeting guests. They listen patiently as guests insist on recounting all their previous cruises. They stand ready to explain why there is not more room around the pool and, in some instances, explaining why tenders cannot be boarded in six-foot seas. For many of the guests aboard, the entertainment director is the "ship."

Curtis's well-chosen subtitle for *Tales from Great Passenger Ships* is *A Jaunt Through Time*. Well informed, Curtis writes with a graceful, sometimes humorous style. The book might have benefited from a proper index and more of Curtis' personal yarns would be welcomed. Nonetheless, when packing your suntan lotion consider bringing along *Tales From Great Passenger Ships*. You may be able to add a story or two yourself.

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Eric Jay Dolin. *Left for Dead: Shipwreck, Treachery and Survival at the Edge of the World*. New York, NY: Liveright Press, www.wwnorton.com, 2024. 320 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$29.99, cloth, ISBN 978-1-324-09308-4.

Left for Dead is the sixteenth work of maritime non-fiction by Eric Jay Dolin. Once again, he skillfully pilots his readers on an absorbing and sometimes harrowing seafaring adventure. The *Robinson Crusoe*-like tale has multiple disasters, intrigue, and perfidy set against a wild South Atlantic background

– the West and East Falkland Islands – together with their lesser-known flora and fauna.

The author notes in his introduction that, while many of the incidents described in the book are dramatic and gripping, they have largely been forgotten in history. Few people have chosen to write about them since most of the characters were not especially historically noteworthy. The book is nonetheless a riveting glimpse of the dangerous and unpredictable world of maritime commerce and transport during the Age of Sail, when individuals under great hardship had the choice of acting nobly, immorally, or could occasionally vacillate between these two extremes. The action is set in an infrequently visited location and during the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain.

Dolan begins his tale with background knowledge, helping to make the castaways' stories that follow quite graphic. The first part of the book describes the geography and geology of the paired Falkland Islands, which are separated by the Falkland Sound. This is followed by natural history descriptions of mammals, including fur seals, sea lions, elephant seals, sea otters, Norway rats, boars, and warrahs (Antarctic foxes). There is abundant bird life, such as a variety of penguins subspecies, albatrosses, geese, and annoying caracaras or rooks (carrion hawks). Although there were almost no trees, other flora, like sea cabbage, marram, tussac and scurvy grasses, wild celery, strawberries, mosses, and massive kelp forests, were in abundance. Add to this a singular quasi-hero of the adventures, a nondescript hard-working and loyal ship's dog named Cent.

Next comes the story of the first group of castaways. The *Isabella*, a Royal Navy ship, was transporting a group of families and some servants, in addition to a contingent of Royal Marines. These passengers were being transferred to a remote island as punishment for crimes committed in England and as a means of populating some of the Crown's distant territories. Five of the men had had relatively conspicuous social positions before being convicted and considered themselves to be in command of the ship. The vessel was wrecked on a rock known as "eagle island," on the extreme southwest corner of today's East Falkland Island. Thus, we have the beginnings of a long story of survival featuring ingenuity, bravery, jealousy, immorality, and frank treachery. The first possibility of rescue came from the *Nanina*, an American merchant brig.

The *Nanina* was small and could not accommodate all the shipwreck survivors, but they tried to take as many as they could onboard. Then word reached them that the British and Americans were at war. Although the Americans humanely tried to rescue the survivors, they were outnumbered and, with the contingent of Marines, they were easily subjugated. According to the rules of contemporary maritime warfare, a seized American vessel such

as the *Nanina* could be a valuable prize in an admiralty court. Perhaps the Americans should first have learned how many people needed to be rescued. Because of the political war situation, they perhaps should have sailed off and left the shipwrecked people behind, even if doing so went against every humane impulse and certainly international maritime convention. Five of the men, separated from the main party, survived as Falkland castaways, both together and apart, for 543 days.

This complex tale evolves into many sub-plots: a mini rescue via *Young Nanina* (*Nanina's* shallop), minor sexual dalliance, deceit, marooning of members of the parties, and detailed accounts of hunts. Added to this are clever survival tactics, moral relapses, reprieves, and forgiveness. Also an arduous voyage to Uruguay, followed by a rescue out of Argentina via *Nancy*, a Royal Navy brig, but with a potential substantial monetary reward as an incentive. This multi-faceted story, with a sizeable *dramatis personae*, comes to a reasonable and largely just wrap-up. In a thought-provoking epilogue, the author brings the multiple story lines to their real-life conclusions.

The primary sources for this meandrous tale were Charles Barnard's logbooks of the *Nancy* and *Nanina*, plus Barnard's 1829 published narrative of his sufferings and adventures at the Falkland Islands, a journal of Henry Igman Defrees, and Richard Lundin's narrative of a voyage published in Scotland in 1846. This unusual story is captivating and, like Dolin's many other works, erudite and well-written. Some of the undertakings where the men are moving from island to island and harbor to harbor are difficult to follow. This may be a function of the map that shows multiple names for places, some of which are entirely missing. One might assume this is a function of the centuries-old sources that Dolan had to edit into modern prose. The reader would be well advised to remember that it was the taxing survival events that were important and not necessarily their exact geographic locations. *Left for Dead* is a fascinating if somewhat disheartening segment of the maritime history that took place in one of the world's most remote and inhospitable lands.

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Reuben Keith Green. *Black Officer, White Navy. A Memoir.* Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, www.kentuckypress.com, 2024. 236 pp., illustrations. US \$30.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-98590-029-5.

I encourage minority service members and veterans to write their own stories. History needs these stories. - R.K. Green

Green's *sea story* about his formative years and naval service career has