

consistently focuses on the commanders and crews whose labor, ingenuity, and occasional misjudgments placed these vessels in their historical context. Among the more striking episodes is the account of a Civil War captain who attempted to sell his own warship, a reminder that naval history is as much about personalities and pressures as it is about hardware.

Caiella's book contains many memorable photographs and the author's narrative style, although sometimes tedious, is easily accessible. It is also replete with an extensive bibliography thus making the book valuable to both specialists and general readers who seek a deeper understanding of some of the more unusual vessels and events in America's naval and coast guard histories. It also discusses how the navy transferred many ships to perform service in the navies of our allies in their times of war such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, and the Soviet Union.

Ultimately, *American Naval History in 50 Ships* succeeds in broadening the lens through which naval history is viewed. By illuminating the stories of ships that rarely receive attention, Caiella enriches our understanding of the United States' naval and seafaring heritage while offering a nuanced perspective on the forces – technological, strategic, and human – that shaped it. Therefore, this book is a thoughtful, well-researched contribution to the field, but also provides a reader with an advantage in a game of “naval vessel trivial pursuit.” In summary, this unique work, the author of which has recently passed, is a welcome reminder that history often resides in the overlooked and the unexpected.

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Chapman, Craig S. *The Resurrected Pirate: The Life, Death, and Subsequent Career of the Notorious George Lowther*

Schiffer Military History, 2025

256 pp., photographs, maps

ISBN 9780764369070 (hardcover), US\$29.99

In *The Resurrected Pirate*, Craig Chapman sheds light on the remarkable story of George Lowther, an infamous ex-pirate captain who became a respectable lieutenant in the Royal Navy. Chapman's title hints at a common misconception about Lowther and his fate that contemporaneous pirate sources like Charles Johnson's *A General History of the Pyrates* (1724) falsely record. Despite what these texts claim, Chapman asserts that in 1723, Lowther did not end his life by gunshot while marooned on an island in the Caribbean but escaped

and lived undetected for 16 years in Panama where he deserted his lawless ways for a quieter, more ordinary life as a husband, father, and entrepreneur. Moreover, it was Lowther in 1739 at the outbreak of the War of Jenkins' Ear who chose to step out of the shadows of anonymity to reveal his existence to admiral Edward Vernon, his former navy captain, seizing the opportunity to offer his knowledge and expertise to the Crown in exchange for a royal pardon. Chapman contends that Lowther's surprising decision to risk an inconspicuous life in the Spanish Indies for the noose suggests a tormenting obligation to redeem his past, clear his name, and create a new legacy for himself and his family.

Chapman organizes his book in three main sections in relation to Lowther's life at sea. The first section discusses Lowther's employment in the navy where he initially met and sailed with Vernon. After the navy, Lowther sailed with the Royal Africa Company aboard a slaver to the Gambia, instigating a mutiny amongst his fellow sailors and soldiers stationed at the sickly fort. The second section of Chapman's work follows Lowther's acts of piracy in the Caribbean and North Atlantic in cooperation with the nefarious Edward "Ned" Low, Lowther's purported pirate protégé. This section concludes with Lowther and members of his crew marooned on Blanco Island fleeing from English and Spanish authorities, their derelict ship beached and inoperative. It is in this setting that Lowther's life is shortened by pirate sources that attest to his apparent suicide on the island, depicting his demise as justice for the offences he carried out as a pirate leader. However, the third section of the book refutes this notion by addressing Lowther's life after Blanco Island. Not only did he escape the island, settle in Panama and raise a family, but Lowther rejoined the navy at Admiral Vernon's recommendation, offering intelligence to England about his former residence in the Spanish Main and proposing clever military maneuvers involving both naval and land forces in enemy territory during the Anglo-Spanish war. Unfortunately for Lowther, his apt military strategies often fell on deaf ears – Vernon's especially – which consequently led to failed operations in the Spanish West Indies for both England and Lowther.

Chapman expertly uses a wide array of sources to weave together a narrative that acts as a compelling biography for Lowther – perhaps the first to accurately situate him in his real lifespan. History has an unjust tendency to commemorate inflated individuals like Vernon, erecting monuments in their honour in public spaces like Westminster Abbey. Vernon's failures and shortcomings in the West Indies never tarnished his reputation or popularity, although greater esteem very well could have been his had he listened to Lowther's informed tactics. Chapman reminds us of the importance to recover

overlooked or misunderstood accounts of individuals like Lowther who served their country despite their reputations and associations. To be sure, Lowther was a fierce pirate in his time and committed violent and inexcusable crimes at sea, but to remember him as such, altogether ignoring his contributions during the war, is to do him a disservice to the personal legacy he was hoping to redeem and atone for.

Although Lowther received a royal pardon for his past and did not have to face the noose, his anonymous burial speaks to the part of his life that has not been told until *The Resurrected Pirate*. Laid to rest in St. James Paddington cemetery in London, Lowther died from an unknown illness after resettling in the metropole with his family. He was buried on 25 October 1746. However, like his 16 years in Panama, it appears that Lowther's anonymity continues to transcend time and space as St. James cemetery has since been built over, erasing all traces of Lowther's existence outside of erroneous sources like Johnson's *A General History* (206).

Fortunately, Chapman's book develops Lowther's story and situates it in a global context that persisted past the Golden Age of Piracy. As Chapman illustrates, Lowther is a paradoxical figure. Throughout his life, he proved himself to be a capable, dutiful mariner, family man, entrepreneur, and naval officer while also engaging in wicked behaviours that bolstered his criminal enterprise. Nevertheless, Chapman maintains that Lowther's character becomes clearer when four episodic decision points in his career are analysed: the mutiny in the Gambia, the choice to turn pirate, the so-called epiphany on Blanco Island, and the pursuit of a royal pardon (206). When these phases of Lowther's life are viewed unitarily, Chapman argues that a far more complex man than the sea rover known from pirate lore can be observed (209).

Chapman's book is a significant contribution to the history of early modern piracy due to the unusual facets of Lowther's life. Unlike most pirates, he had a family, property, and steady income after his marauding days, everything he needed for a contented life – except a clear conscience (208). Lowther's choice to rejoin the navy and participate in England's objectives in the Spanish Indies attests to his distinctiveness, as most wanted individuals would have chosen to live out their days in hiding if it meant relative ease and safety. As Chapman's title suggests, Lowther experienced an unusual resurrection of sorts in effectively dying in 1723 as a pirate and re-emerging in 1739 a changed man. He made the surprising choice to harness his seafaring capabilities for the good of the country that once sought to hang him even if it meant periodically leaving his family behind. *The Resurrected Pirate* is a fascinating book for numerous reasons but its fundamental importance to scholarship hinges on

Chapman's continuing narrative of Lowther's life after his purported death in 1723, which not only grips your attention but also rewrites history.

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**Cooper, Iver P. *Work at Sea: The Evolution of Shipboard Technology*
McFarland & Company, 2026**

297 pp., illustrations, appendixes, bibliography, index

ISBN 9781476696539 (softcover) US\$49.95; 9781476654850 (e-book)

Across human history, maritime activity has played a central role in shaping economic systems, cultural exchange, and technological innovation. The development of watercraft, whether for fishing, transport, longdistance trade, or specialized diving and salvage operations, required not only ingenuity in design but also the creation of tools, novel methods, and practices capable of meeting the demands of work at sea. Ships function simultaneously as vehicles and as complex sites of labor involving anchors to be handled, rigging managed, cargoes loaded and secured, and vessels navigated through unpredictable environmental conditions. As maritime networks expanded, effective communication between ships and with coastal communities became essential. The technologies that emerged to support these tasks were shaped by evolving priorities of efficiency, safety, labor management, and, in modern contexts, fuel economy. To understand the thesis of Cooper's work it is necessary to consider the author's unique background as a maritime historian. Having graduated from a prestigious technical university with a degree in physical science, he then obtained a law degree and specialized to become a patent attorney. He went on to become a published historian sharing his historical scientific and mechanical information. The breadth of this far-reaching book takes the reader into areas that many like this reviewer had not considered, such as the most efficient fish nets and why, the origin and evolution of oar propulsion, the history of cargo towage and transport, then on to the components and complex anatomy of various ropes, winches, and windlasses, all the way up through cranes and derricks. As a literary break from this sometimes-colorless chapter he includes wonderfully fitting lines from Willam Falconer's 1762 poem, "The Shipwreck":

Roused from repose aloft the sailors swarm,
And with their levers soon the windless arm
The order given, upspringing with a bound,