

their initiatives in response.

Though a thick book, it is a fairly easy read. The index of authors is helpful. There is no general index or bibliography but, given the composition of the book, they are little missed. Issues changed over the years of publications as problems associated with low water levels were replaced by those of high levels. Depending on your interests, some essays will be fascinating while others can be skimmed over. Each reader will pick those that most appeal. The Lake Michigan shore up to Door County is the region of Wisconsin with which I am most familiar. I enjoyed reading about places that I have visited, such as historic Port Washington, the Ports of Sturgeon Bay and Manitowoc and Washington Island's unique way of life. One essay that I found to be fascinating is "The Niagara Escarpment: A Unique Wisconsin Coastal Resource." The escarpment, that rocky rim of an ancient sea stretching from Door County, Wisconsin through Michigan, Ontario, and New York, including Niagara Falls, is a powerful reminder that the world has not always been as we see it now. For others, the Lake Superior shore or some industry, or environmental challenge will captivate your attention. Even if another Great Lake is your favorite, they share many experiences. I recommend *Great Lakes Chronicle* for anyone for whom waters, Wisconsin, or the Great Lakes are important parts of their world.

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Margaret E. Leshikar-Denton. *Cayman's 1794 Wreck of the Ten Sail. Peace, War and Peril in the Caribbean*. Tuscaloosa, AB: The University of Alabama Press, [www.uapress.ua.edu](http://www.uapress.ua.edu), 2019. xix+289 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$64.95, cloth; ISBN 978-0-8173-2045-4. (E-book available.)

The eastern, windward, shore of Grand Cayman Island is a graveyard of wrecked ships, the victims of the treacherous waters which conceal the numerous scattered reefs found up to a mile from land. The most significant singular wrecking event in the history of this ill-fated shore is that of nine British merchantmen and their frigate escort, *HMS Convert*, in the early hours of 8 February 1794. *Convert* (originally the French frigate *L'Inconstante*) and its full convoy of 58 merchantmen bound for various ports in Great Britain, represented the widespread nature of warfare between the major European powers at the time. In particular, the duality of naval ships acting as both aggressors of the enemy, and protectors of allied maritime interests, operating across the vastness of the world's oceans. Further, the wreck demonstrates most fruitfully, that while the Cayman Islands themselves were relatively lightly inhabited, their location within the Caribbean ensured their ongoing importance to regional and international history. It is these complex webs of local, regional, and international history that Leshikar-Denton seeks to weave together to place the wreck of the Ten Sail into its full context.

To provide the foundation for her analysis, Leshikar-Denton devotes her initial chapter to modern-day Cayman Islander oral histories relating to the wreck. Through these, she contends that while the exact details of the wreck and its aftermath have largely become distorted, the colourful nature of the stories themselves is significant. While the stories have modified history from the supposed hard facts that historians prefer to work with, they have also become cultural touchstones that the people of Grand Cayman Island have incorporated into their ongoing oral tradition. In this manner, the Wreck of the Ten Sail survived roughly 150 years of being largely forgotten by the European world, before it would help to spawn modern

nautical and maritime archeology in the Cayman Islands in 1979. The second chapter helps contextualize the place of the Cayman Islands in regional and European history. Here Leshikar-Denton demonstrates that the islands were heavily overshadowed by their agriculturally richer Caribbean neighbours in the British Empire, and yet still benefitted from existing along key shipping routes in the region. As conflicts grew, particularly between France and England, the British holdings saw increased communication and commerce with their mother state. The quasi-backwater Caymans also saw these increases and came to be seen as holding some value – though not the indispensability of other colonies in the region. More importantly, they were being drawn more tightly into the web of global empires.

The core five chapters turn their gaze onto the *Convert* herself seeking first to put her into the context of naval warfare at the time that she was launched in 1790. Ships the size of *Convert/L'Inconstante* were by this time coming to be increasingly outclassed and outgunned, as the focus in naval warfare was on maximizing the size and number of cannons to the overall maneuverability of the ship itself. Thus, the ship was primarily expected to act in roles where speed was most desirable, particularly, as Leshikar-Denton indicates, because based on modern archeological surveys its armament was about a third below where it likely should have been. The Revolutionary French government would deploy *L'Inconstante* in 1792 to Saint-Domingue, and it would be during this duty that late in 1793 the British seized the ship, renamed it *Convert*, and assigned it convoy duties. Leshikar-Denton provides detailed descriptions of both the British and French versions of the seizing of the ship to demonstrate how contentious the practice of capturing prize ships could be in this period.

In her final chapter, the author lays out a detailed discussion of the history of modern surveys of the wreck site, beginning with the work of Roger Smith and Texas A&M's Institute of Nautical Archaeology in 1979 and 1980. This was followed by Indiana University's Charlie Beeker in the mid-1980s and the work of the author herself in the 1990s. In discussing these efforts, she makes it clear that while knowledge on the wrecks and their story has grown with better techniques and technology, there is still much to be learned. In many ways, this final argument encapsulates the purpose of the book. The wreck was forgotten by the larger world for over a century and a half, and its full historical place has yet to be established; the more that is learned about it, the greater the benefit to both the local and international communities.

As director of the Cayman Islands National Museum and a historian who has worked on the wreck for thirty-some years, Leshikar-Denton is uniquely positioned to bring the story further into contemporary maritime historical thought. More importantly, she has provided a text that can easily be used for multiple educational purposes. Whether focusing on the importance of maritime archeology in advancing maritime history, the techniques for properly documenting, interpreting, and contextualizing an underwater site, or simply discussing often overlooked components of imperial wars, this book is most applicable. While the Caymans may have often been overshadowed by their sugar-island cousins, this book surely will help to ensure that their importance of place in maritime history does not continue to suffer the same fate.

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