

General History of the Robberies & Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates

By Charles Captain Johnson

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Originally published in 1724?and now with an introduction and commentary by David Cordingly, best-selling author of the pirate classic *Under the Black Flag*?this famous account of the most notorious pirates of the day was an immediate success. Written by the mysterious Captain Johnson, it appeared in the book world at a time since described as the “Golden Age of Piracy” and vividly captures the realities of the savage seafaring existence?detailing specific events, including trials, of the day's most feared pirates. Indeed, this book has become the main source for scholars seeking to learn more about the female pirates Mary Read and Anne Bonny, and was largely responsible for the posthumous fame of Blackbeard and Captain Kidd. In the 270 years since its first publication, it has come to be generally regarded as the classic study of one of the most popular subjects in maritime history.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"I presume we need make no Apology for giving the Name of a History to the following Sheets, though they contain nothing but the Actions of a Parcel of Robbers."

A "Parcel of Robbers" they may be, but pirates have long held a special place in our imaginations. The iconography of piracy--peg legs, eye patches, pieces of eight, squawking parrots, the Jolly Roger--was first codified in *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates*. This collection of brief biographies reads like a *Who's Who?* of piracy, with entries on Captains Kidd, Rackam, and Roberts, women-in-disguise pirates Anne Bonny and Mary Read, and the infamous Edward Teach, a.k.a. Blackbeard, "that courageous Brute, who might have pass'd in the World for a Heroe, had he been employ'd in a good Cause."

First published in 1724, *A General History* is the book that launched a thousand pirate stories--inspiring Robert Louis Stevenson's Long John Silver, J.M. Barrie's Captain Hook, and Rafael Sabatini's Captain Blood. Though it had been attributed to a shadowy character named Captain Charles Johnson since its date of publication, the book has now been convincingly (though not incontrovertibly) attributed to Daniel Defoe. The 18th-century text, reproduced here complete with the awkward sentence construction, capitalization of nouns proper and common, and frequent italicizing typical of its era, sometimes makes for rather difficult reading, but Defoe's prose still manages to sparkle. With a new introduction by Richard West, author of *Daniel Defoe: The Life and Strange, Surprising Adventures*, *A General History* is a must-read for armchair swashbucklers. --C.B. Delaney

From Library Journal

Despite varying titles, these are essentially the same book. Published in 1724, Defoe's chronicle of the scourges of the sea was a smashing success, finding a wide audience eager for tales of those cutthroat sailors who flew the skull and crossbones. The Dover edition is more scholarly, including several essays on Defoe, indexes (ships, names, and places), photos, and a postscript. If you don't need any of that, save a couple of bucks and go with the Carroll & Graf edition.

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From the Back Cover

Originally published in 1724—and now with an introduction and commentary by David Cordingly, best-selling author of the pirate classic *Under the Black Flag*—this famous account of the most notorious pirates of the day was an immediate success. Written by the mysterious Captain Charles Johnson, it appeared in the book world at a time since described as the "Golden Age of Piracy." With his dramatic writing style, which vividly captures the realities of their savage existence, the author documents specific events, including trials, in the lives of a number of the most feared pirates. Highly detailed, these accounts ensure that the pirates were accurately depicted in all their gruesome glory.

Indeed, this book has become the main source for scholars seeking to learn more about the female pirates Mary Read and Anne Bonny and was largely responsible for the posthumous fame of Blackbeard and Captain Kidd. In the nearly 300 years since its first publication, it has come to be generally regarded as the classic study of one of the most popular subjects in maritime history.

Users Review

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John Sorrells:

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Amy Nichols:

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