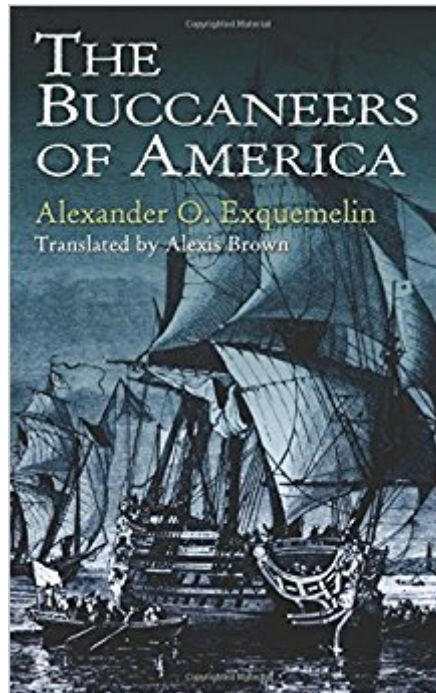




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The Buccaneers Of America (Dover Maritime)



Synopsis

A cross between genuine privateers, commissioned to defend a country's colonies and trade, and outright pirates, buccaneers were largely English, French, and Dutch adventurers who plied the waters among the Caribbean Islands and along the coasts of Central America, Venezuela, and Colombia more than 300 years ago. The activities of these bands of plundering sea rovers reached a peak in the second half of the seventeenth century, when this remarkable eyewitness account was first published (1678). Alexander Exquemelin, thought to be a Frenchman who enlisted with the buccaneers for a time, chronicles the bold feats of these raiders as they ravaged shipping and terrorized Caribbean settlements. Exquemelin provides fascinating details of the French presence in Hispaniola (now comprising the island nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic) describes the features of that country and its inhabitants, and comments at length on the origin of the buccaneers, vividly recounting their rules of conduct and way of life. These bold plunderers come across as shrewd strategists, crack shots, fine navigators, wild debauchers, and greedy adventurers who frequently engaged in vicious acts of cruelty. Among the figures in his rogues' gallery, none stands out more than the infamous Henry Morgan, whose exploits culminated in the seizure and burning of Panama City. A bestseller in its own time, *The Buccaneers of America* will fascinate any modern reader intrigued by piracy and by the often sordid history of European conflicts in the Caribbean and on the Spanish Main.

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Customer Reviews

This work by the Dutchman Alexander Exquemelin (or Esquemeling) was first published in the Netherlands in 1678 as "De Americaensche Zeeroovers" and later translated into English as "The Buccaneers of America" of which this book is a reprint. Exquemelin was himself a buccaneer and claimed to have collected these tales of piracy on the high seas as an eyewitness. It has proven to be one of the only accounts of the 17th century buccaneers of the Spanish Main. Here collected for the first time were the tales of such famous (and infamous) buccanneers like Pierre LeGrand, Francis L'Ollonais, and Henry Morgan. The buccaneers started out fairly innocuously enough as hunters on the Spanish controlled island of Hispanola. But as they grew more numerous, they were ruthlessly persecuted by the Spanish authorities and driven onto the island of Tortuga. This treatment fueled an unparalleled hatred for the Spanish and gave rise to some of the cruelest acts of violence in the history of piracy. Of the pirates discussed here, many, like the dread pirate L'Ollonais, were known for their almost unrivaled cruelty in the treatment of captives. L'Ollonais was said to have cut out the hearts of Spanish captives and eaten them to frighten the others into revealing information he wanted. Of all, Captain Henry Morgan is by far the most famous and remembered of the buccaneers. Morgan was known for his daring acts against the Spanish and for his capture and sack of Panama, then the rendezvous point for the Spanish gold fleet. Later, he went on to fame and fortune as the governor of Jamaica. The buccaneers passed into history with the close of the 17th century. The Golden Age of piracy was to peak in the early 18th century, by which time the older buccaneers had faded away, and with them the days when the Spanish ruled the New World. But Exquemeling's work will forever capture the spirit and adventure of these days long gone. Highly recommended.

This book is a great read for those that are interested in pirates. It takes you through the days when the Bucaneers ruled the waters around Hispanola. The author goes into detail of life on the islands around Hispanola in the 16th century. He describes the plants, animals and landscape of the islands that were used by the Bucaneers. Some may find all the description hard to get through, but if you have an interest in how life was as a Bucaneer this is a must read. If you stick with it through the descriptions the second half of the book goes into the raids and atrocities of the Bucaneers. He gives a detailed account of some of the more famous Bucaneers and their horrible acts against those that lived in the towns that they raided. The book is easy to read and it will for the most part entertain you throughout. Well worth the time and money.

BUCCANEERS OF AMERICA was fascinating. It is an easy-to-read narrative about the real-life

environment and adventures of the first pirates of the Caribbean - and it's written by a 17th-century buccaneer! The first part of the book concentrates on describing how the buccaneering lifestyle was established, as well as included an in-depth description of the flora and fauna of Tortuga and Hispaniola. Having been to the Dominican Republic on Hispaniola, I really appreciated the rich detail and history of what the island was like in the 17th century. I can't believe Hispaniola had so many animals back then - if you go there today, you'll find all the wildlife was killed for food long, long ago. The second part of the book mostly covers the exploits of Henry Morgan, probably the most famous buccaneer of them all. One of the fascinating chapters is about the sack of Panama, which includes all the hardships the buccaneers endured in order to pillage Spanish cities and fortresses. This was a neat little book that kept my attention from chapter one onward. I also stopped quite often just to read different passages aloud. If you are going to travel to the Dominican Republic or Haiti, I'd recommend reading this book or taking it along as your "beach book." It's too bad there aren't really any touring trips to Tortuga, the infamous pirate haven that is referred to quite often in *BUCCANEERS OF AMERICA*, as it is nowadays an uninhabited island. The only part of this book I didn't enjoy was the Introduction, which was pretty dry to read. If you bypass it completely and just start with the first chapter, you'll be fine! **** Another fascinating pirate book to read is *UNDER THE BLACK FLAG* by David Cordingly. ****

This is a book about buccaneering written by one of the participants. Esquemeling was a Dutch physician who went to the Caribbean during the heyday of the Spanish Main. He was the surgeon to Henry Morgan's expedition against Panama City. Like many educated men of his time, he tried to be a scientific observer of the New World. As a result, you'll see descriptions of flora and fauna of the Americas mixed in with anecdotes about the famous and near famous of the period. The phraseology can be stilted in places, but that is how people spoke at the time. Is it worth reading? I certainly think so! It's valuable in the same way that Bernal Diaz's account of the conquest of Mexico is valuable, it gives a flavor for how the participants saw themselves. So, if you want real, this is it.

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