

Reviews

Pioneers of the Pacific: Voyages of Exploration, 1787-1810 by Nigel Rigby, Pieter van der Merwe, and Glyn Williams (Univ. of Alaska Press, 2005, 144pp, illus, maps, biblio, ISBN: 1-889963-76-3; \$26.95hc)

The commanders of the expeditions "in the wake of Cook" sailed with orders that were ambitious and multi-faceted and which placed extraordinary burdens on these individuals. *Pioneers of the Pacific* profiles six of these men: Arthur Phillip, Jean-François Galaup de Lapérouse, William Bligh, Alejandro Malaspina, George Vancouver, and Mathew Flinders.

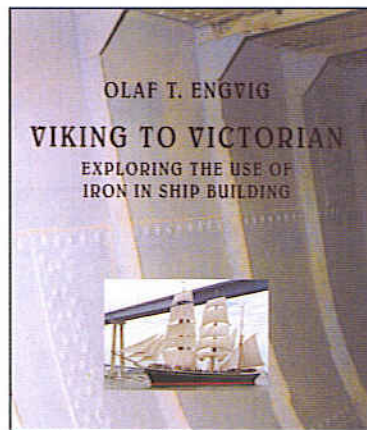
Most of these explorers wished to resume mapping the Pacific and spend more time in areas where Cook had little time to investigate fully (continuing the search for the Northwest Passage, for example). The governments for whom they sailed were particularly interested in further scientific study, especially botanical collections and astronomical calculations, as connected to commerce. These commanders were also charged with laying the groundwork and claims for future colonies and trading partners—a delicate business after Cook's murder, which had slashed their 'noble savage' idyllic vision of the Pacific islands. The expedition leaders had to keep all of this in mind, while trying to keep their crews healthy and content, despite the ambitions of officers, shifting political climates at home, and the influence of powerful men ashore.

Pioneers of the Pacific does not seek to deliver the detail or intrigue of a text like Alexander's *The Bounty* or Hughes's *The Fatal Shore*, nor does it aim to develop new theses. It is simply a well-written, beautifully illustrated reference book to accompany an earlier volume entitled *Captain Cook in the Pacific* (2002). Both were published by the National Maritime Museum, London, and serve to highlight their extraordinary collection. *Pioneers of the Pacific* includes a useful bibliography, a timeline, and references throughout, so chapters can be read out of order. For anyone beginning studies of the region and the genre of the great explorers, it is an excellent starting point, suitable beside works like *America and the Sea* and other secondary-source textbooks on maritime history.

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Viking to Victorian; Exploring the Use of Iron in Ship Building by Olaf T. Engvig (Themo Publishing, Los Angeles, 2006, 176pp, illus, biblio, index, ISBN 978-0-9655451-6-7; \$49.95hc)

In this engrossing work, Captain Engvig recounts his personal voyage of exploration, pursuing the use of wrought iron in shipbuilding from its introduction as a fastening in Viking ships through to the iron ships, both sail and steam, that closed out the story in the 1800s. By 1900, steel had replaced wrought iron as a shipbuilding material, but ships built with iron hulls proved remarkably durable, witness the survival of Brunel's great iron steamer *Great Britain* (1843), now preserved in



Bristol, England, and San Diego's doughty immigrant barque *Star of India* (1863), which still periodically ventures out under sail. Engvig's quest led him from sailing his own Norse longboat of 1863, grateful for the tough, resilient wrought-iron rivets that held the flexing wooden hull together in cresting seas, to restoring the iron schooner-rigged steamer *Hansteen*, built in 1866, which makes regular trips in Norway today.

Engvig takes us with him in his discoveries, from cleaning the bottoms of old ships in drydock to the adventurous sailing of his own longboat in the North Sea, unfolding the seafaring story of the last thousand years as he goes. Along the way, he befriends NMHS founder Karl Kortum in San Francisco, and in the book pays tribute to Karl's work in old iron, including the re-discovery of both *Great Britain* and *Waver-tree* and his leadership in saving these and other iron ships around the world. As this issue of *Sea History* goes to press, Engvig is

in Norway, overseeing the restoration of the iron steamschooner *Vaedalen* of 1891,

which he reports never had a plate replaced in her 85 years of active service. The guiding principle that informs his work is one he and Karl agreed upon: "Old hammer iron and salt sea seem to work well together."

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The Fish and the Falcon: Gloucester's Resolute Role in America's Fight for Freedom by Joseph E. Garland (The History Press, Charleston, SC, 2006, 314pp, illus, notes, biblio, ISBN 1-59629-007-2, \$34.99pb)

Joseph Garland's *The Fish and the Falcon* is a revision of his 1975 book *Guns Off Gloucester*. In his current work, Gloucester's historian added newly found data, which clarifies some of the late eighteenth-century events that occurred in or near Cape Ann, and improved his presentation of the historical context. The book's title came from an August 1775 battle in Gloucester harbor in which local fishermen attacked the British naval vessel *Falcon*. The text presents a history (political, economic, social, and religious) of the American Revolution as seen from the shores of a strategically located seaport. Garland's writing style can be brilliantly alliterative, onomatopoeic and metaphorical, for example: "The boats surged on, hardly a sound save for the click-clacking of the sweeps in oarlocks, the gurgle of the hulls, the swish of dripping blades on the backswing." Or, "A pungent ground fog of gunsmoke crept over the water and enveloped the wharves, insinuated through the alleys and into the open windows of summer, and the waterfront reeked and sneezed with the sharpness of it."

The many long tedious (yet still worthy of note) transcripts from the historical record and a myriad of references to local minor figures tend to detract from the book's main focus, and *The Fish and the Falcon* is unabashedly parochial in its approach toward the history of America's War of Independence. Nonetheless, it provides a unique perspective and a thus a valuable contribution to the historiography of the conflict. I recommend it to those interested

