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Blackbeard's Sunken Prize: The 300-year Voyage of Queen Anne's Revenge

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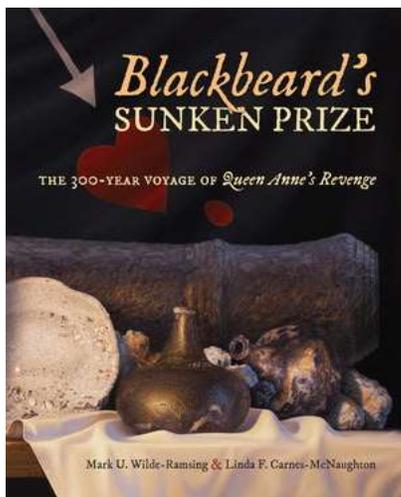
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I recommend this book to public, academic, and seminary libraries! There are fascinating notes beginning on page 319 and an index beginning on page 359.

Carol Walker Jordan
Librarian and Consultant

Blackbeard's Sunken Prize: The 300-year voyage of Queen Anne's Revenge. Mark U. Wilde-Ramsing, and Linda F. Carnes-McNaughton. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-4696-4052-5 (Hard). \$28.00. 224 p.



In November 1996, salvage divers found the resting place of Queen Anne's Revenge (QAR), the flagship of Blackbeard, America's most infamous pirate, off the coast of North Carolina. Foundering on a sandbar while trying to negotiate the Beaufort Inlet, the vessel capsized and sank in 1718. Although no riches were discovered through the subsequent ongoing excavation, the treasure trove of artifacts so far recovered provide a fascinating glimpse of life on board a pirate ship. Mark Wilde-Ramsing and Linda Carnes-Naughton, archaeologists who have been with the state sponsored QAR shipwreck project since its inception, combine entertaining vignettes on pirate history and lore with details about the excavation and artifact conservation in their book *Blackbeard's Sunken Prize: the 300-year Voyage of Queen Anne's Revenge*.

Giving context, the authors relate the tumultuous history of the notorious Edward Thache (Teach), a.k.a. Blackbeard, beginning with his capture of the French slave ship the *Concorde* in the Caribbean, which he renamed the Queen Anne's Revenge. Relieving it of most of its crew and slaves, he outfitted it with forty plus cannons, eventually heading up the North Coast with several vessels under his command. After audaciously blockading Charleston, South Carolina, he sailed north and ran aground while trying to navigate the Beaufort Inlet.

Historical accounts tease the possibility that Blackbeard planned the shipwreck with the aim of taking the ship's wealth and swindling his partner, Steve Bonnet, and other crew. After marooning fellow pirates who demanded a stake he went to Bath, NC to request the King's pardon. However, not content with the quiet life, he once again took to piracy, coming to an ignoble end when he crossed swords with Lieutenant Robert Maynard and his men, commissioned by the Virginia Governor to engage and dispose of Blackbeard.

From the excitement of the shipwreck find to the trials of securing the site and handling the publicity, the QAR project faced unique challenges and surprising breakthroughs. Coordinating the archaeological marine investigations with the conservation and interpretation teams was integral to its success. To date, only sixty percent of the wreck has been excavated. Three chapters of the book are devoted to discussing the recovered artifacts. Some of the significant finds include two bronze ship bells, a brass mortar and pestle, a urethral syringe used to treat syphilis and various pewter plates. Weaponry, of course! Cannon, simple grenades, various blades and firearm parts have been discovered, as well as ammunition. Only four coins and a smattering of gold dust have been recovered, lending credence to the belief that Blackbeard kept the hoard for himself.

The authors marshal their expertise at marine excavation and archaeological interpretation of artifacts to provide cultural context for that era of piracy and relevance to historical records regarding Blackbeard. With detailed maps, graphs and tables, as well as a comprehensive index and list of notes, this book serves as a resource for the serious scholar and history buff alike.

Recommended for academic and public libraries.

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