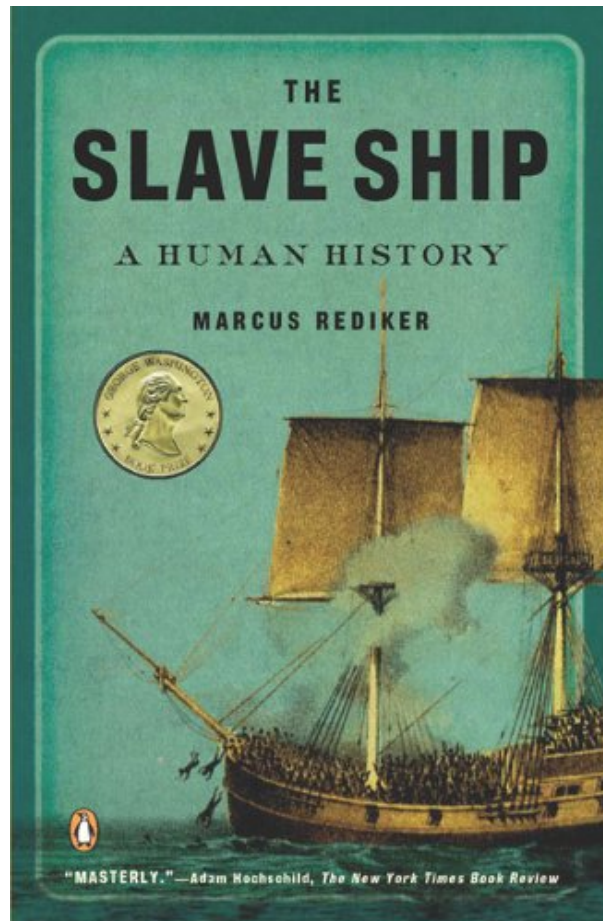
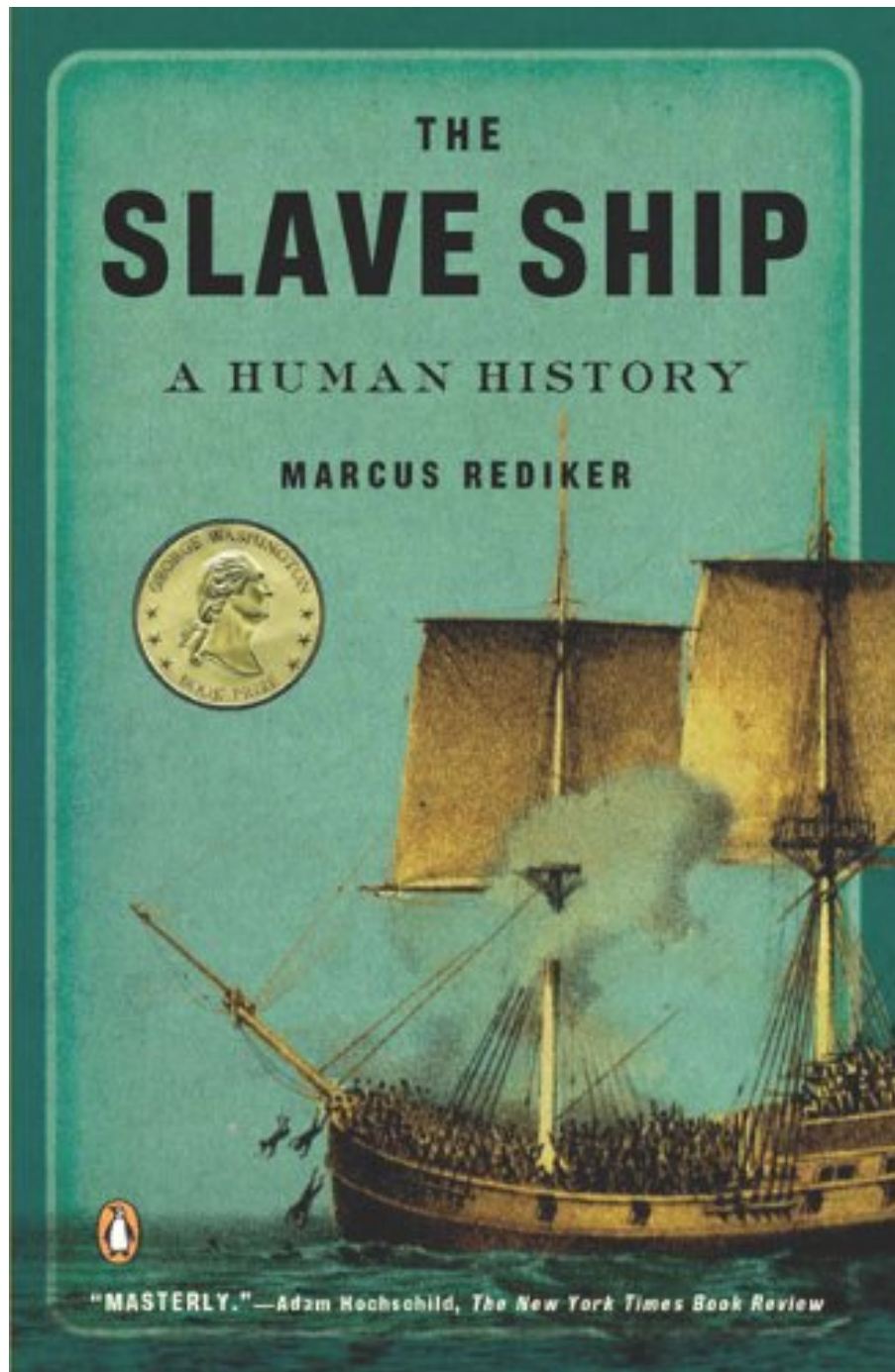


THE SLAVE SHIP: A HUMAN HISTORY BY MARCUS REDIKER



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From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In this groundbreaking work, historian and scholar Rediker considers the relationships between the slave ship captain and his crew, between the sailors and the slaves, and among the captives themselves as they endured the violent, terror-filled and often deadly journey between the coasts of Africa and America. While he makes fresh use of those who left their mark in written records (Olaudah Equiano, James Field Stanfield, John Newton), Rediker is remarkably attentive to the experiences of the enslaved women, from whom we have no written accounts, and of the common seaman, who he says was a victim of the slave trade... and a victimizer. Regarding these vessels as a strange and potent combination of war machine, mobile prison, and factory, Rediker expands the scholarship on how the ships not only delivered millions of people to slavery, [but] prepared them for it. He engages readers in maritime detail (how ships were made, how crews were fed) and renders the archival (letters, logs and legal hearings) accessible. Painful as this powerful book often is, Rediker does not lose sight of the humanity of even the most egregious participants, from African traders to English merchants. (Oct. 8)

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Review

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THE SLAVE SHIP: A HUMAN HISTORY BY MARCUS REDIKER PDF

In this widely praised history of an infamous institution, award-winning scholar Marcus Rediker shines a light into the darkest corners of the British and American slave ships of the eighteenth century. Drawing on thirty years of research in maritime archives, court records, diaries, and firsthand accounts, *The Slave Ship* is riveting and sobering in its revelations, reconstructing in chilling detail a world nearly lost to history: the "floating dungeons" at the forefront of the birth of African American culture.

- Sales Rank: #27304 in Books
- Brand: Rediker, Marcus
- Published on: 2008-09-30
- Released on: 2008-09-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.40" h x 1.00" w x 5.50" l, .87 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 448 pages

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In this groundbreaking work, historian and scholar Rediker considers the relationships between the slave ship captain and his crew, between the sailors and the slaves, and among the captives themselves as they endured the violent, terror-filled and often deadly journey between the coasts of Africa and America. While he makes fresh use of those who left their mark in written records (Olaudah Equiano, James Field Stanfield, John Newton), Rediker is remarkably attentive to the experiences of the enslaved women, from whom we have no written accounts, and of the common seaman, who he says was a victim of the slave trade... and a victimizer. Regarding these vessels as a strange and potent combination of war machine, mobile prison, and factory, Rediker expands the scholarship on how the ships not only delivered millions of people to slavery, [but] prepared them for it. He engages readers in maritime detail (how ships were made, how crews were fed) and renders the archival (letters, logs and legal hearings) accessible. Painful as this powerful book often is, Rediker does not lose sight of the humanity of even the most egregious participants, from African traders to English merchants. (Oct. 8)

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Horrific Account of a Horrific Business

By Bruce Trinke

Marcus Rediker subtitles "*The Slave Ship*" as "*A Human History*", and that is an accurate description of its focus and method -- and its strengths and most evident weakness. The book has as its primary focus British and American slave ships of the 18th century (when the transAtlantic slave trade was at its height and before it was outlawed), and how it shaped and warped those who sailed, voluntarily or involuntarily, aboard those vessels. Rediker constructs his history by drawing upon first-hand accounts, mostly written by seamen and ships' captains, but also some from merchants and even a few slaves. He presents the horrific details of the psychological, social, and cultural impact of such a horrific business. It is said that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Then, slave ships certainly proved -- especially perhaps to their captains -- an enormously corrupting activity. Even those who considered themselves as humane and compassionate people were inevitably stained and warped by the experience. But for all of Rediker's obvious (and sometimes perhaps too obvious) horror at what happened, I think the book could have been even stronger and better if the author had provided more numbers and statistics to help quantify the enormity of the events; he makes passing references to studies of the numbers of Africans enslaved and the number who died in the process, but nowhere are these figures clearly presented for an overall portrait.

The book makes for unsettling reading, with murder, rape, and casual brutality leaping off nearly every page (and, as Rediker demonstrates, the brutality was not confined to use against the slaves alone, but also the crews). One aspect that I had never encountered before was that not infrequently slaves being transported from Africa across the Atlantic were pressed into service to supplement the crew in sailing the ship and even fighting off enemy privateers and often (this reminded me of tales from Holocaust death camps) they acted as "trustees" to keep other slaves in line.

Fans of the recent movie "*Amazing Grace*" will be interested to see that several historical characters from that film make appearances in the pages of this book, including Captain John Newton, Thomas Clarkson, and Olaudah Equiano.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Academically stunning in depth study of slavery and shipping

By Starbright

Academically stunning, and finally an in depth study of the entire merchant system and the ships that made it possible. Multiple viewpoints of the same events, such as the collection of Africans from the coasts of Africa, yields a layered view of how those events unfolded for the different participants. Occasionally repetitive, since quoting the same testimony for different points of view. Since this book is primarily about the ships, and their pivotal mechanism and technology as it was applied to the merchant trade and growth of capitalism not only in the Americas, but also throughout the rest of the Western world, it is appropriate that much of the book's discussion and evidence given, supports the use of the ships in their evil service rather than how the slaves, mates and sailors felt about what was happening around and to them.

My main disappointment (and understandable since the testimony of sailors employed on the ships engaged in the slave trade was more acceptable to Parliament than that of the transported slaves) was that there were precious few quotes from the Africans themselves who experienced the horror of the Middle Passage. Their experiences were reported tangentially through others, such as ship's surgeons, mates and sailors; but rarely in their own words. Regardless of my personal disappointments, the research presented and the depth of the discussion have left a sobering impression, with little doubt as to the disregard, callousness and abject evil of the merchants, governments, traders and the entire plantation system that led to the inhuman transport of more than 12 million souls, against their will, to service the purposes and greed of an entire merchant system without the slightest interest in those humans welfare, only insofar as it serviced their own interests.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A History EVERYONE in America Should Know

By Thanks

If this history were taught in schools and know by blacks and whites alike, it serve well to anger us into unity against the black and white perpetrators that brought the scourge of slavery and racism to the Americas. Instead, our collective ignorance of this history still divides us with hate and vengeance. There is no justification or excuse for the Atlantic Slave Trade, neither is there justification or excuse for us to remain ignorant of the real history. Understanding that history is essential for understanding the development of racism in America, and dissolving it. We are one blood.

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