



The Republic of Pirates: Being the True and Surprising Story of the Caribbean Pirates and the Man Who Brought Them Down

By Colin Woodard

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The untold story of a heroic band of Caribbean pirates whose defiance of imperial rule inspired revolt in colonial outposts across the world

In the early eighteenth century, the Pirate Republic was home to some of the great pirate captains, including Blackbeard, "Black Sam" Bellamy, and Charles Vane. Along with their fellow pirates—former sailors, indentured servants, and runaway slaves—this "Flying Gang" established a crude but distinctive democracy in the Bahamas, carving out their own zone of freedom in which servants were free, blacks could be equal citizens, and leaders were chosen or deposed by a vote. They cut off trade routes, sacked slave ships, and severed Europe from its New World empires, and for a brief, glorious period the Republic was a success.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Woodard (*The Lobster Coast*) tells a romantic story about Caribbean pirates of the "Golden Age" (1715–1725)—whom he sees not as criminals but as social revolutionaries—and the colonial governors who successfully clamped down on them, in the early 18th-century Bahamas. One group of especially powerful pirates set up a colony in the Bahamas. Known as New Providence, the community attracted not only disaffected sailors but also runaway slaves and yeomen farmers who had trouble getting a toehold in the plantation economy of the American colonies. The British saw piracy as a threat to colonial commerce and government. Woodes Rogers, the governor of the Bahamas and himself a former privateer, determined to bring the pirates to heel. Woodard describes how Rogers, aided by Virginia's acting governor, Alexander Spotswood, finally defeated the notorious Blackbeard. Woodard's portrait of Rogers is a little flat—the man is virtually flawless ("courageous, selfless, and surprisingly patriotic"), and the prose is sometimes breathless ("they would know him by just one word... pirate"). Still, this is a fast-paced narrative that will be especially attractive to lovers of pirate lore and to vacationers who are Bahamas-bound. Maps. (May)
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From [Booklist](#)

The early eighteenth century was the so-called golden age of piracy, particularly in the Caribbean. Although much of the romantic musings about "pirate honor" is nonsense, an unusual group of pirates, led by Edward "Blackbeard" Teach and Sam Bellamy, actually set up a functioning government in the Bahamas with pretensions to establishing a form of social justice. Their "republic" attracted deserting sailors who could not tolerate harsh naval discipline, runaway slaves, and impoverished farmers. In this republic, called New Providence, a rough but democratic and egalitarian ethos apparently took hold. But, according to Woodard, the British government saw the existence of this independent entity as an intolerable threat. So, on the theory of sending a thief to catch a thief, they sent Woodes Rogers, a former privateer, to crush the republic. This breezy, fast-moving book is filled with exciting action and colorful characters. It will provide general readers and those with a special interest in the period much enjoyment. *Jay Freeman*
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Review

PRAISE FOR *THE REPUBLIC OF PIRATES*

"Fascinating . . . beyond rip-roaring adventure stories from the distant past, [the book offers] an opportunity to understand pirates as they truly were."—*The New York Times Book Review*

"It's a rollicking tale, filled with rich details of the lives of men who, for their own personal gain, challenged the spread of empires."—*The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Tim Travers:

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