



• 1717 •

# Real Pirates

The Untold Story of The Whydah  
from slave ship to pirate ship

## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



PREMIER  
EXHIBITIONS

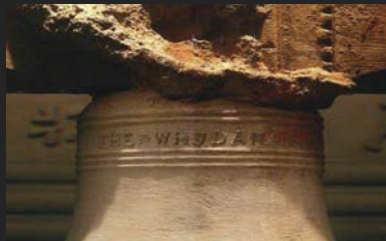
An exhibition from NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC





### Gallery 1: Introductory Theater

An informative video introduces the themes of the exhibit: pirates and their ships, the Caribbean as an economic center, slave trade, and life on-board ships and on plantations.



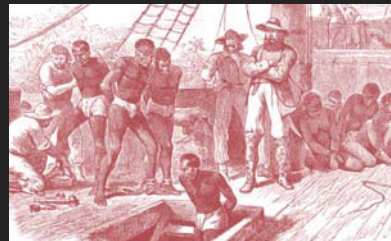
### Gallery 2: The Bell Gallery

The *Whydah's* bell was a significant find, definitive proof that Barry Clifford had located the shipwreck.



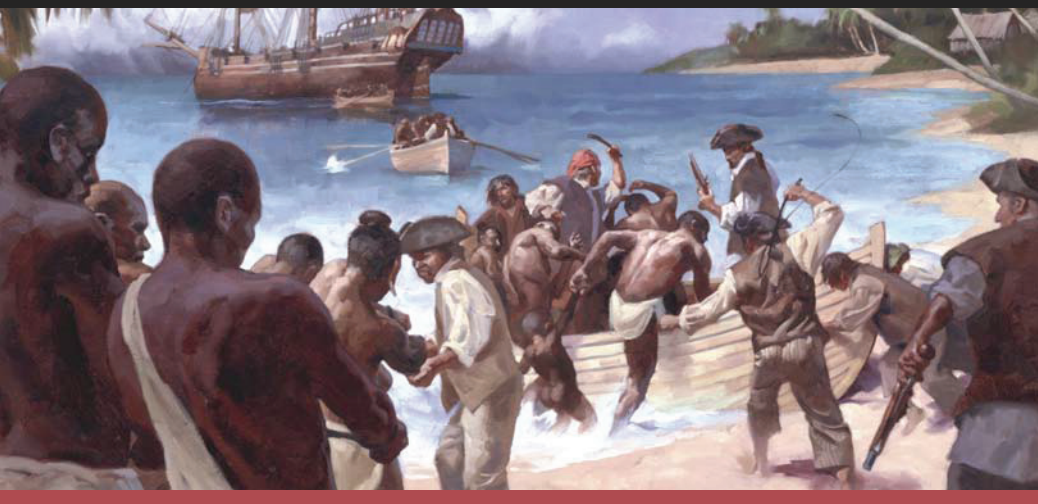
### Gallery 3: The Caribbean

We enter a tavern and meet the pirates, hear their music, and read their Articles of conduct. A map shows the trade routes centered in the Caribbean.



### Gallery 4: The Slave Ship

**Whydah** The *Whydah* is shown loading captives and then traveling the Middle Passage from Africa to the Caribbean. A video describes the slave trade.



# BACKGROUND

## THE CARIBBEAN IN THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY

The **Caribbean** was once the **economic powerhouse** of the Atlantic world. Ships laden with rich cargo traveled the high seas on trade **routes** that linked **Europe, Africa, and North and South America** in the complex webs of an economy fundamentally driven by **slavery**.

Let's trace one common trade route. A ship on the first leg of its journey, from Europe to Africa, would be loaded with **manufactured goods** such as **firearms, cloth, liquor, iron, beads, and tools**. It would work its way down the west coast of Africa, trading manufactured goods for **human captives** and also for **gold and ivory**.

When fully loaded with human cargo, the ship would set out on the next leg of its journey, the infamous Middle Passage, sailing across the Atlantic from Africa to the Caribbean slave markets. Crammed into the stinking hold for two to three months, the captives endured heat, malnutrition, disease, and emotional trauma.

Those that survived were sold as slaves, and the ship took on new cargo, products from the **plantations** in the Caribbean and South America destined for European markets. With the use of **unpaid slave labor**, these vast plantations were able to produce huge quantities of **sugar, tobacco, and coffee** for export at enormous profits.

There was other trade too. **Gold and silver** mined by **Indians** under **slave conditions** was shipped from **South America** to **Spain**. **Rum** from the **North American colonies** was smuggled **illegally** into the Caribbean.

With all this treasure on the open seas, is it any wonder that pirates took advantage?

## THE WHYDAH From Slave Ship to Pirate Ship

The *Whydah Galley* was launched in **London** in **1715**. She was designed as a **slave ship**, and represented the latest technology of the day. Equipped with the most **up-to-date weapons**, she was **fast** and **easy to maneuver**, essential qualities if she were to cross the Middle Passage as quickly as possible to minimize the loss of human cargo. She had a three-masted sailing rig, but was also fitted out for rowing. The lower decks could hold **hundreds** of captives and had large galleys with provisions to feed them. All of these features—**size, speed, weaponry**—made slave ships very attractive to **pirates**.

In time, pirates would turn their attention to the **lucrative slave trade**, attacking slaving ships off the **West African coast**. It was this that eventually led to the pirates' downfall. The navies of the European powers sought to exterminate them. But we are getting ahead of our story.

After leaving London, the *Whydah* sailed to the **west coast of Africa**, trading goods for a total of **367 captives**. Of these, **312 survived** the Middle Passage and were sold at the slave market in **Jamaica**. Weighted down now with valuable cargo, the ship made sail for England. But she was never to reach her home port.

## CAPTURED BY PIRATES

In February of 1717, **Sam Bellamy**, captain of the pirate ship *Sultana*, spied the *Whydah* while she was still in Bahamian waters. Hoisting the **Jolly Roger**, he gave chase for





**Gallery 5: Capturing the *Whydah*** Weaponry fills the gallery—cannon, swords, pistols, grenades. Four banners show the featured pirates, and two murals depict pirate attacks.



**Gallery 6: Entering the *Whydah*** Climb onboard this large scale replica of the *Whydah*'s hull. She is at dock in the Caribbean on a moonlit night.



**Gallery 7: The Captain's Cabin** Here is a close-up look at Captain Bellamy's quarters. After a series of spectacular raids, he is shown examining his charts to set his course for Cape Cod and home.



**Gallery 8: Below Decks** In this glimpse of pirate life, we see a surgeon sawing off a leg; a sailor asleep in his hammock; the quartermaster recording the booty; and the carpenter dismantling the slave quarters.

three days nonstop. When Captain **Lawrence Prince** realized capture was inevitable, he lowered his colors and his sails, and **surrendered** the *Whydah* without a fight.

The pirates lost no time in transferring their loot from the *Sultana* onto their new **prize**. They quickly repositioned more weaponry, placing **cannons** both on the upper deck and below. To make the ship less top heavy, the pirates probably **leveled** the upper deck by clearing off cabins and other structures. **Thus was a slave ship transformed into a pirate ship.**

As was their custom, the pirates **invited** the crew of the *Whydah* to join them. A few did, but those who declined were freed with Captain Prince to sail away, unharmed, on the *Sultana*. This may seem surprising, but there is much about the pirate way of life that runs counter to the modern stereotype, as we will soon see.

## Bellamy's Voyage

On a spectacular **looting** voyage through the Caribbean, Bellamy captured more than 50 prizes. Laden with booty—perhaps as much as **4.5 tons of treasure**—the *Whydah* set course for **New England**, where legend says Bellamy intended to pick up his lady-love, Maria Hallett. But on **April 26, 1717**, a violent **nor'easter** off the coast of Cape Cod sent the pirate ship to a watery grave where its treasures remained undiscovered for nearly **300 years**.

## LIFE AT SEA Sailors, Seamen, and Pirates

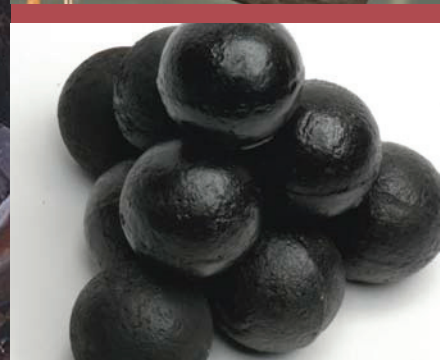
This was the so-called "**Golden Age of Piracy**," from about **1660** to **1730**, a brief but action-packed period of history. Pirates were **outlaws** who pledged allegiance to no country and ravaged ships of all nations **indiscriminately**. They



were **ruthless opportunists** with nothing to lose—except their lives. The penalty for piracy was **hanging**.

## Onboard Democracy

Yet these outlaws evolved a kind of **seagoing democracy** at a time when it was unknown in Europe and the colonies. Upon joining a pirate crew, new recruits signed the **Ship's Articles**. They swore an oath of loyalty and agreed to a code of conduct. In return, they were given an **equal vote** in electing







### Gallery 9: The Treasure Gallery

A large dramatic case holds a chest overflowing with coins, just some of the loot recovered from the *Whydah*. Around the gallery, more cases display featured coins.

### Gallery 10: The Loss of the *Whydah*

### Gallery 11: The Pirates' Fate

When captured, pirates faced trial and death by hanging. A full-size replica of a gibbet where their bodies were left to rot as a warning to others hangs menacingly in the room.

### Gallery 12: Recovery/ Discovery

We learn how Barry Clifford spearheaded the discovery of the *Whydah*, and how his team is ensuring that artifacts are conserved. High tech equipment essential to the process is shown.

**ship's officers**, an almost equal share of the loot (the Captain and quartermaster got a larger share), and **compensation** for injuries or loss of limbs. By contrast, on merchant and naval vessels, there was a strict **hierarchical order** and pitifully low wages.

To a motley crew of **multinationals** consisting of blacks, whites, and Indians, these were **rights and privileges** unheard of at sea or on land. It is no wonder that many willingly signed on.

The pirates also created onboard living conditions far superior to those on **merchant** or **naval** ships. Because they had crews of as many as a **couple of hundred**, the **workload** was lighter than on merchant ships typically worked by only **12–15** men. **Food and clean water** on a merchant ship were in short supply, and diseases caused by **malnutrition** were rampant. The officers fared much better than the crew, however. On a pirate ship, everyone ate and drank equally. With frequent raids to restock supplies and with more leisure time to catch fresh food, the pirates ate (and drank) well.

## THE RECOVERY OF THE WRECK OF THE WHYDAH

Pounded by **40-foot waves**, the *Whydah* ran aground, and was battered to bits. This kind of **"exploded"** wreck is very difficult to recover. In addition, the sea floor off of Cape Cod has a **shifting sandy bottom**, so the ship and its contents were not only scattered but also **buried** under 10 to 30 feet of sand. The area is treacherous and over 3,000 ships have gone down there in a 400-year period. The site was also used as a firing range

during World War II, adding even more debris to the seabed.

**Barry Clifford** is not put off by challenges. He had been fascinated by the tale of the *Whydah* since childhood, and in 1983 began searching for the wreck. It was not until 1985 that he brought up incontrovertible evidence that the wreck was indeed the *Whydah*—**her bell**.

### Technology and Conservation

The **recovery process** has required the use of some high tech equipment such as **lasers**, **CT scans**, **x-rays**, a **proton precision magnetometer**, and **diving gear**. The work is painstaking, and like an **archaeological dig**, the area is divided into grids. Clifford and his crew investigate one square at a time and carefully record their findings.

They have also been careful to **conserve** what they recover. Metal objects such as cannons and coins, for example, are encrusted with **concretions**, formations that occur over time when metal disintegrates and combines with sea salts to make a **concrete-like mass**. Concretions preserve the artifacts as long as they are kept wet. Further conservation requires a long process called **electrolytic reduction** to break down the salts without damaging the artifacts.

The *Whydah* is the first authenticated pirate shipwreck ever found. Barry Clifford and his team continue making new discoveries. Their dedication has provided us with a **window into the past**, a glimpse of the little known life aboard ship in the Golden Age of Piracy. As Clifford said, "It's not what you find, it's what you find out."



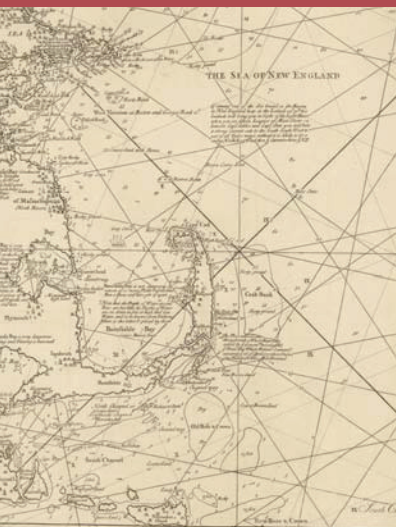


# COME PREPARED

Be ready for a rich and exciting experience that engages visitors from their very first step into the exhibit. Young visitors are especially enthralled, drawn to the authentic artifacts presented in a range of media. Try to build some flexibility into your planning to allow students to follow their own interests for at least part of the visit.

The exhibit may be viewed from many different perspectives and thus lends itself naturally to interdisciplinary studies. You may want to decide on several focus points for your class, or you may prefer to let them range widely and absorb the concepts more broadly. Some of the content areas you will discover embedded in the exhibit include: geography, history, and social studies; science and technology; art and music; language arts; math and measurement.

Students always get more out of a museum visit when they are prepared and know what to expect. You can generate enthusiasm by previewing some of the galleries using the map and illustrations provided, discussing major concepts, or examining some of the pictured artifacts with the class. Please see Pre-Visit Activities for suggestions.



# ACTIVITIES

## PRE-VISIT

1. Discuss the commodities traded between Europe, West Africa, the Caribbean, and North America in the early 1700s. Distribute copies of the insert map, **Map of the World 1719**. Ask students to draw these trade routes on the map.
2. Examine the **artifacts** pictured on the insert.
  - Speculate on what they are, how they were used, the stories they might tell, and why there were important enough to be included in the exhibit.
  - Set up a Treasure Hunt Activity to take place during the visit. Ask students to try to find all the artifacts and also to answer some of the questions about their usage, historical importance, and personal stories.
3. (Optional) Use the descriptions of the exhibition galleries to preview highlights of what the class will see. Show the students the website <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/mission/real-pirates/> and encourage them to explore the "Pirate and Slave Ship Features" section.
4. On the way into the exhibit, you will receive a copy of the **Ship's Articles** (a code of conduct for pirates). If time, read and discuss the Articles before entering the exhibit.

## DURING VISIT

1. Carry out the **Treasure Hunt Activity**.
2. Observe, critique, and appreciate the murals, photos, videos, music, and artifacts throughout the visit.
3. Focus on **trade in the Caribbean**. Trace the flow of goods, money, and human captives. Find out:
  - What kinds of raw materials were shipped, from where to where? What kinds of manufactured goods were shipped?
  - What were they traded for? Who were the slaves?
  - What were the conditions on board a slave ship?
  - What was the Middle Passage?
4. Four pirates are featured at different points throughout the exhibition. Who are they and what can you find out about each of them?
5. **Who were the pirates?** Find out more about:
  - Their ethnicity. Their code of conduct. Their life on board ship as compared with life on a merchant or naval vessel. Compare and contrast their food, drink, clothing, quarters, amusements, hours, and pay.
  - The roles, duties, and rights of different crew members such as the captain, quartermaster, surgeon, and carpenter
  - How the "Golden Age of Piracy" ended
6. **How was the *Whydah* recovered?**
  - The technology involved in recovering the wreck: the magnetometer, the mailbox, x-rays, and CT scans
  - The importance of concretions, and the science involved in their formation and removal

## POST-VISIT

1. **Summarize some of the main themes of the exhibit** by discussing or by writing and illustrating (perhaps with a mural in the style of the exhibit):
  - What was the legacy of the “Golden Age of Piracy”?
  - What was the importance of the Caribbean in the 18th century?
  - What does the *Whydah* tell us about life at that time?
2. **Write a profile of:**
  - A pirate.
  - A naval or merchant seaman.
  - A human captive
3. **Tell the story of your favorite artifact.**
  - Why is it important?
  - What evidence does it give of the history of the time?
4. **Do further research on the science and technology of the recovery and conservation of historical artifacts.**  
Find out about other underwater archaeological sites.
5. Search the web for information on **Olaudah Equiano** who wrote a first hand account of his experiences as a slave.
6. **Measure out the dimensions of space typically allotted to human captives on a slave ship.** For men, 6 feet by 1 foot 4 inches. For women, 5 feet 10 inches by 1 foot 4 inches. Then lie down in the space. Describe what it must have felt like to be shackled in that space for months while crossing the ocean.



**NATIONAL STANDARDS**  
The content of the exhibition covers many curriculum subjects. Please visit the following websites for links to topic-specific national standards.



**Science**  
National Science Education Standards  
<http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/nse/>

**Mathematics**  
Principles and Standards for School Mathematics  
<http://standards.nctm.org/>

**Social Studies**  
Expectations of Excellence  
[www.socialstudies.org/standards/](http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/)

**History**  
National Standards for History in the Schools  
<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards>

**Geography**  
The National Council for Geographic Education: Standards  
[www.ncge.org/standards/](http://www.ncge.org/standards/)

**The Arts**  
ARTSEGE: Standards  
[artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm)

**Language Arts**  
The National Council of Teachers of English: Standards  
[www.ncte.org/about/over/standards](http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards)



# RESOURCES

## Websites

National Geographic Society. *Real Pirates: The Untold Story of The Whydah from slave ship to pirate ship:*  
[www.prxi.com/exhibitions/real-pirates](http://www.prxi.com/exhibitions/real-pirates)

New York Public Library, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. *Lest We Forget: The Triumph Over Slavery:*  
<http://digital.nypl.org/lwf/flash.html>

## Books

W. JEFFREY BOLSTER, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.

BARRY CLIFFORD and KENNETH J. KINKOR with SHARON SIMPSON, *Real Pirates: The Untold Story of the Whydah from Slave Ship to Pirate Ship*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2007.

BARRY CLIFFORD with PAUL PERRY, *Expedition Whydah: The Story of the World's First Excavation of a Pirate Treasure Ship and the Man Who Found Her*. New York: Harper Collins, 1999.

DAVID CORDINGLY, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life Amongst the Pirates*. New York: Random House, 2006.

PETER EARLE, *The Pirate Wars*. London: Methuen, 2003.

OLAUDA EKIQUANO, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*. New York: Penguin, 2003.

ROBERT HARMS, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade*. New York: Basic Books, 2003.

COLIN A. PALMER, *Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Colonial America, 1700–1739*. Chicago: University of Illinois, 1981.

MARCUS REDIKER, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*. New York: Beacon, 2005.

# CREDITS

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# MAP OF THE WORLD 1719

Draw the trade routes that carried goods and people between Europe, West Africa, the Caribbean, and North America in the early 1700s





# ye ARTICLES of ye GENTLEMEN of FORTUNE

*Every Man has a Vote in Affairs of Moment; has equal Title to the fresh Provisions, or strong Liquors, at any Time seized, and may use them at Pleasure, unless a Scarcity make it necessary, for the Good of all, to vote a Restriction.*

*Any Man who defrauds the Company to the Value of a Dollar in Plate, Jewels, or Money, Marooning is the punishment.*

*No person to Game at Cards or Dice for Money.*

*The Lights and Candles to be put out at eight a-Clock at Night: If any of the Crew, after that Hour, still remain enclined for Drinking, they must to it on the open Deck.*

*Every Man to keep their Piece, Pistols, and Cutlash clean, and fit for Service.*

*To Desert the Ship, or Quarters in Battle, is punished with Death or Marooning.*

*No striking one another on board, but every Man's Quarrels to be ended on Shore, at Sword and Pistol.*

*No Man to talk of breaking up our Way of Living until Each has Shared a Thousand Pounds.*

*If any Man should lose a Limb, or become a Cripple, he is to have 800 Dollars out of the publick Stock, & for lesser Hurts, proportionably.*

*The Captain & Quarter-Master to receive two Shares of a Prize; the Sailing Master, Boatswain, & Gunner, One Share & a half and other Officers one & a Quarter.*

