



Black Bart & Howell Davis: Mastering Piracy

Charles River Editors

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*Weaves the lives and piracy of the two famous pirates into one entertaining and educational narrative.

*Explains how the myths and legends of the pirates helped create the instantly recognizable pirate stereotypes today.

*Includes pictures depicting the pirates and important people, places, and events in their lives.

*Includes contemporary accounts of the pirates written by Captain Charles Johnson

*Includes Bibliographies

"Roberts himself made a gallant Figure, at the Time of the Engagement, being dressed in a rich crimson Damask Wastcoat and Breeches, a red Feather in his Hat, a Gold Chain round his Neck, with a Diamond Cross hanging to it, a Sword in his Hand, and two Pair of Pistols hanging at the End of a Silk Sling, flung over his Shoulders (according to the Fashion of the Pyrates;)..." - Captain Charles Johnson

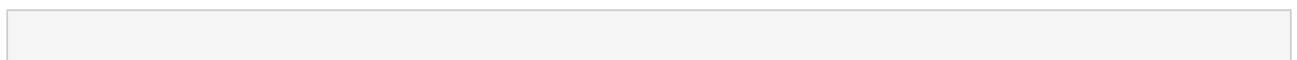
Despite having one of the shortest careers of history's most famous pirates, Captain Howell Davis had one of the most colorful and important years during the Golden Age of Piracy. Though little is known about his life before July 1718, when he joined a pirate crew after they captured the slaver ship he was working on, it's a testament to his abilities that he became the captain of one of the pirates' ships very quickly after they had commandeered his ship. It also didn't take him long to earn a reputation for being devious and cunning, and more than once he was able to lie and bluff his way to taking a ship that probably could have defended itself against him.

It was during one of his most daring escapades that one of his ruses was undone on the island of Principe, a Portuguese holding at the time. Though Davis didn't know it, one of his deceptions was unmasked, and the island's governor put his own plot in motion, setting Davis up for an ambush that left him and some of his men dead. But even in death, Davis remained influential; he had taken a pirate named Bartholomew Roberts under his wing, and Black Bart would succeed Davis as captain upon his death.

Black Bart may not be as well known today as other pirates of the era, but he was truly the gold standard during the Golden Age of Piracy. Despite the fact he was initially reluctant to become a pirate and had to be talked into it, Roberts and his crew captured nearly 500 ships in just a few years, making him the most successful pirate in history. As tales of his exploits made their way around Europe and the Americas, Black Bart became a legend in his own time

Although he was the most successful pirate of his time, he suffered a fate typical of the era's legendary pirates. In a battle with a Royal Navy ship in February 1722, Black Bart was killed by artillery on deck and his ships were captured, but not before his crew had tossed his body overboard, never to be seen again. Black Bart's death in battle was so important that pirate historian Marcus Rediker would later write, "The defeat of Roberts and the subsequent eradication of piracy off the coast of Africa represented a turning point in the slave trade and even in the larger history of capitalism."

While Black Bart's success and infamous demise were both important parts of his story, the main reason he has endured is that he gave rise to some of the best known pirate stereotypes. In addition to making his crew swear to and uphold a pirate code, Roberts was known as a colorfully courageous commander who looked the part with extravagant costumes. It is thus no surprise that Roberts has been depicted as one of the foremost pirates of the age in literature and film, including in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. *Black Bart and Howell Davis* looks at the lives and legends of the famous pirates, attempting to separate fact from fiction while analyzing their lasting legacies. Along with pictures, bibliographies and contemporary accounts, you'll learn about the two famous pirates like never before.



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