Anne Bonny and Mary Read – The “Lady” Pirates of the Caribbean

Dr. Tom

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Women Not Allowed Aboard Ship

He [the captain] is not to allow of any woman being carried to Sea in the Ship without orders from his Superior Officers, or the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. . . . **—Article XIV from *Regulations and Instructions Relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea*, 18085**

Women on board a ship Equaled Bad Luck

A Woman on board a ship when it was at sea would Anger the sea gods

Figureheads or mastheads of a Woman fixed to the prow of the ship to “shame nature” and keep the waves away

Superstitions

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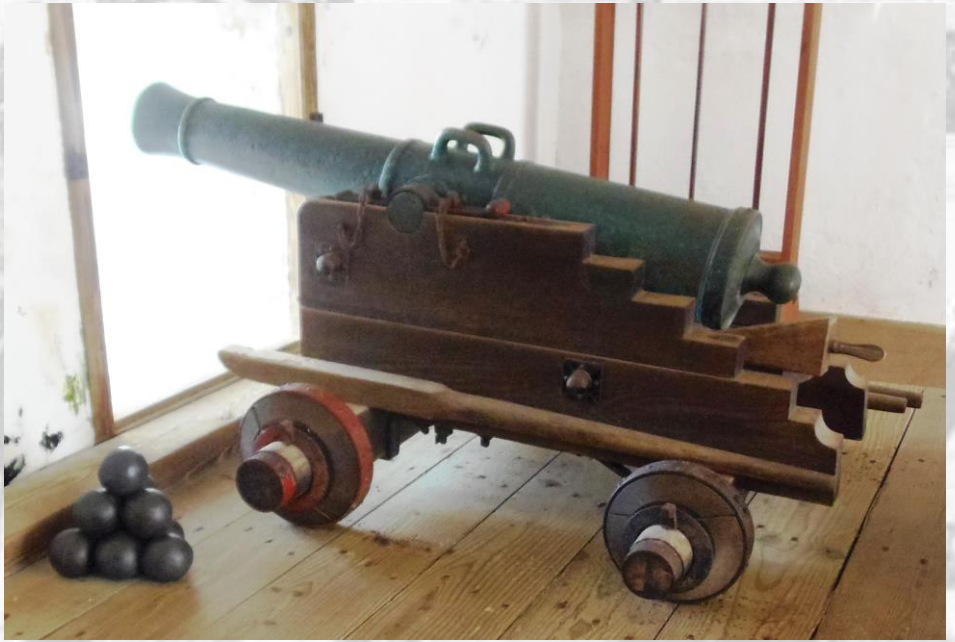
Women would try to pass themselves off as men to get aboard ship

When discovered, they would try to be a “girlfriend” of an officer

Women snuck onboard

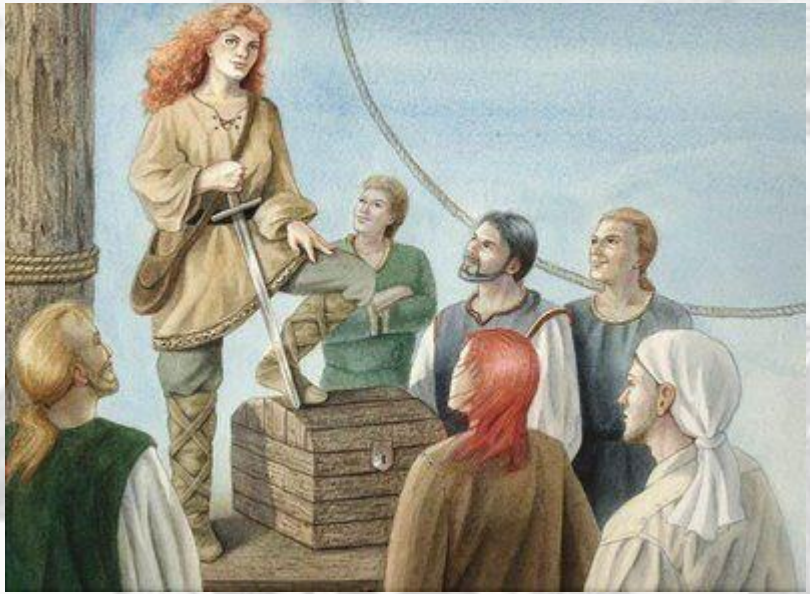
Lots of Legend Involved



Sayings

Shake a Leg – Perhaps meant that when the Boatswain's Mate woke everyone up, the Lady's would stick their leg our to be left alone

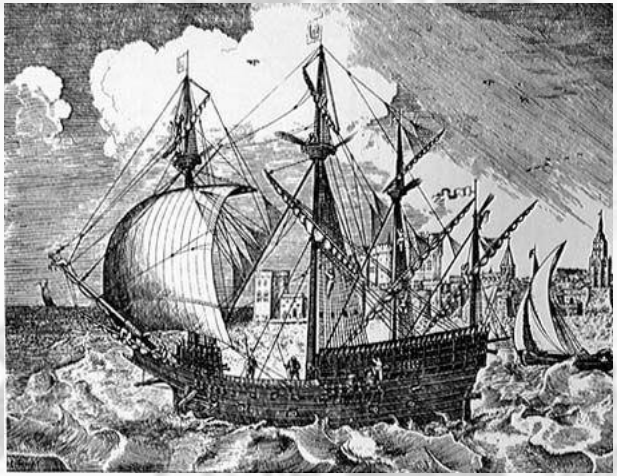
Son of a Gun – Pregnancies happened on board. Birthing was done by the cannon or a cannon may be shot to speed up birth



Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Ingela Gathenhielm: Swedish privateer in the service of King Charles XII of Sweden. Married to the privateer and pirate Lars Gathenhielm, who'd received permission from the king to attack and plunder ships from enemy nations on the Baltic Sea, beginning in 1710.

When Lars died in 1718, Ingela took over this unusual little family business (Privateering and his alleged Pirate empire). Swedish privateering officially ended after a peace treaty with Denmark in 1720 and Russia in 1721.



Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Lady Mary Killigrew – Ireland & England – 1570: Mary's husband Sir Henry Killigrew, a former pirate himself, was one of Queen Elizabeth I's Admirals in charge of suppressing piracy. Whenever her husband went to sea and possibly with the Queen's knowledge, Mary engaged in piracy using the staff of her castle Arwenack in Cornwall as crew.

Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Captured a Spanish ship while the Captain was visiting her and being entertained by her staff

Caught and pardoned by QE I as it was not fit to execute a Lady

Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Charlotte de Berry - Circa 1650, left Spain (or was it England) for the Caribbean. Married a pirate sailor, boarded ship with him disguised. Killed an officer and escaped and kidnapped by another captain. Convinced the crew to Mutiny and became captain. Pirated for unknown years before jumping overboard to avoid being killed.

Rumors soon spread about her ferocity and cruelty. One claimed she had sewn shut one captain's mouth.

Perhaps Myth

Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Rachel Wall (1760-1789) In cahoots with husband George. Starting 1781, disguised their ship as if it barely survived the passing storm. When unsuspecting ships came closer to inspect them they could only see ship in poor condition and Rachel who called them for help. After the ship boarded, they stormed it and robbed it.

12 ships that one year

She was the last woman hanged in Massachusetts.

Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Rachel Wall (1760-1789)

12 ships that one year

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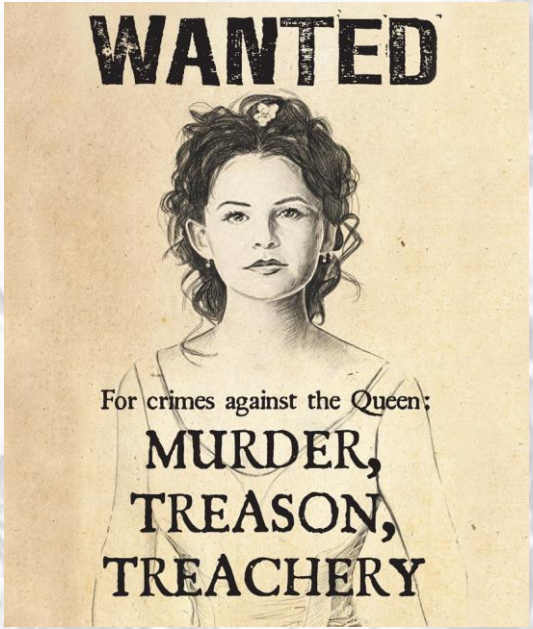
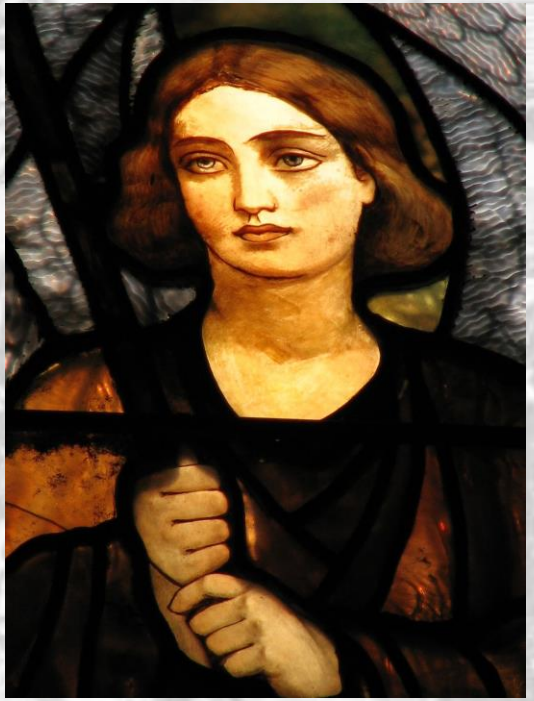
Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Flora Burn (1741-1751) – Captain of the Burn Rose Fleet, Commanding the Phantom, East Coast. Came from a family of Pirates. eLittle lese is known





Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Grace O'Malley (Granuaile) (1530-1603)

After her husband dies, she led a fleet of her father's Galleys (30 oarsmen)

Waylaid merchant ships headed to Galway. Charged tolls and offered "safety"

If refused, she pillaged the ship

What's Wrong with this Picture?

Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Grace O'Malley (Granuaile) (1530-1603)

The Sea Queen of Connach

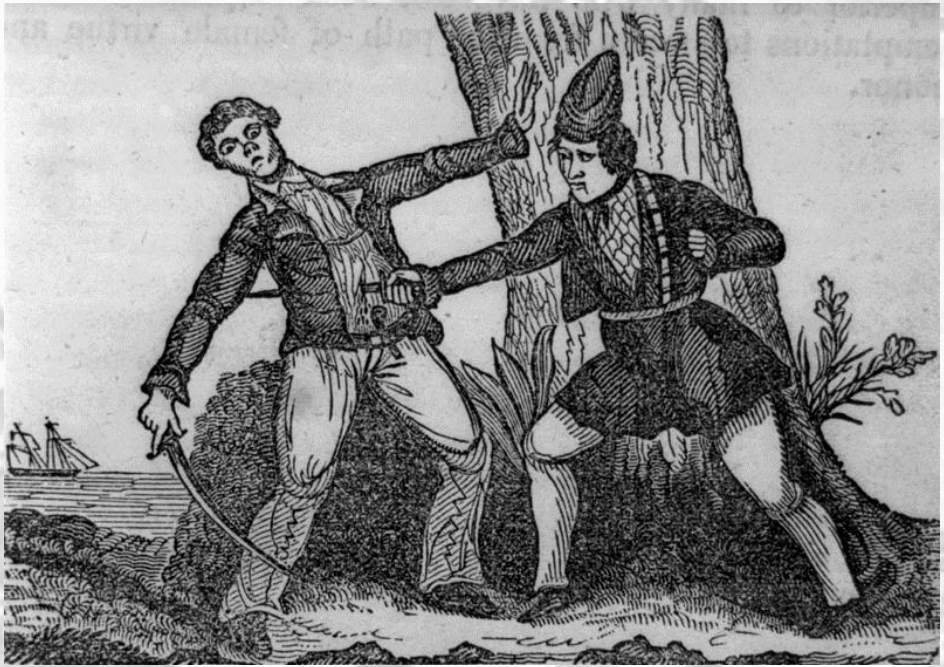
Arrested 1586 sentenced to hang. Her son-in-law was hung in her place

Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Madame Cheng/Ching/Shih Yang (1775-1844) – Married Cheng I in 1801, joined him in piracy
Commanded over 300 junks & 40,000 pirates
“The Terror of the South China”
Imposed levies and taxes on settlements
Rape of Female prisoners – Beheaded. Desertion – Ears lobbed off

Non Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Took over his business on his death (1807)
Commanded 1,800 ships & 70,000 pirates
Demanded protection money from coastal communities, attacked ships in the South China Sea and once even kidnapped seven British sailors
Defeated Chinese Fleet & British and Portuguese forces
Accepted Amnesty in 1810 for herself and her Captains
Commanded part of the Imperial Fleet, received a Palace and retained her Fortune

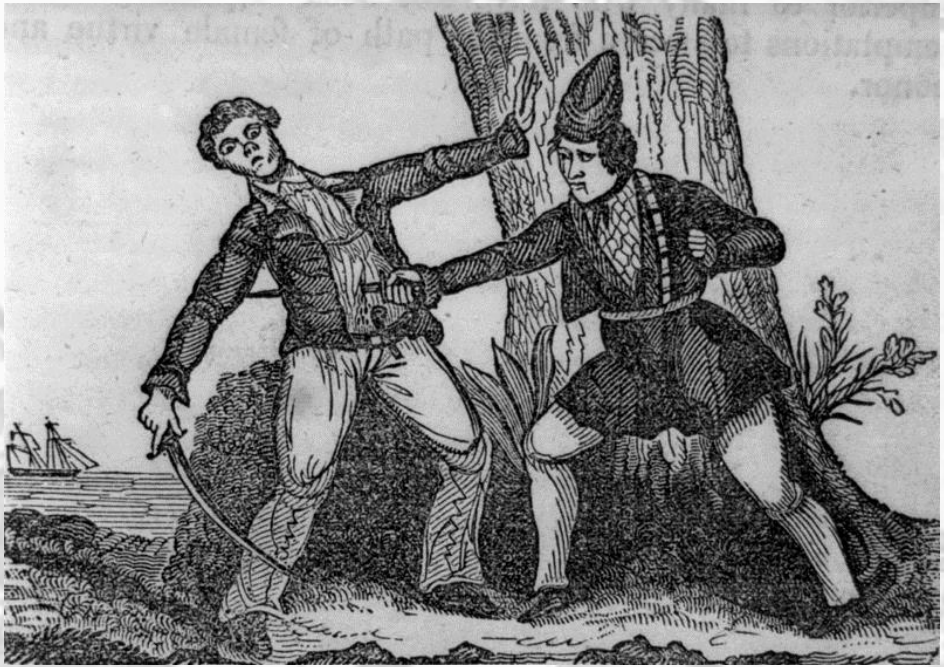


Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Mary Read (Reade) 1695-1721

Illegitimately born in England to the widow of a sea captain

Mother Disguised her as a Boy after her Legitimate Brother Died (keep receiving support)

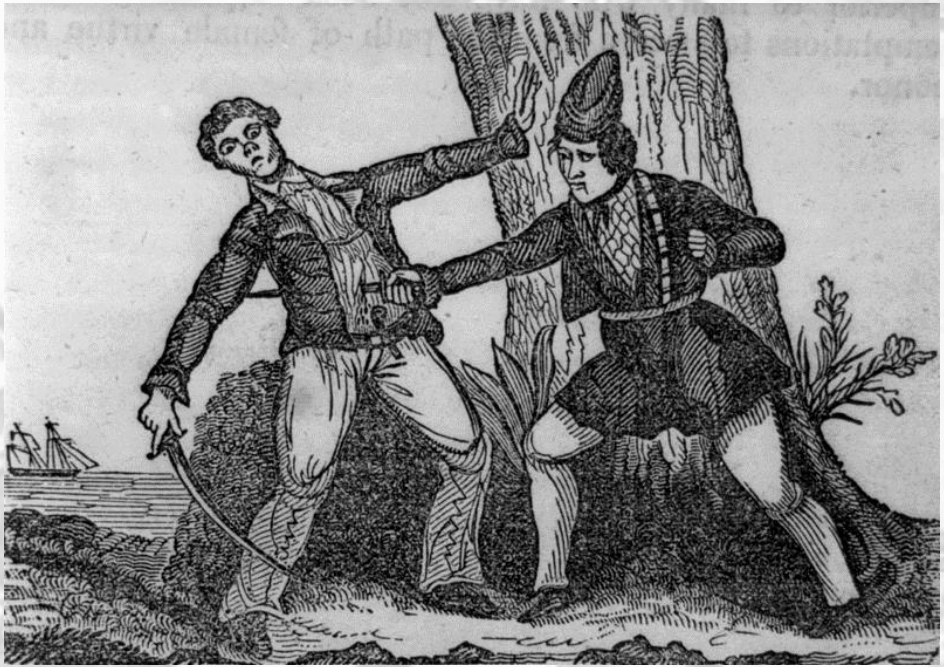


Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Mary Read (Reade) 1695-1721

As a Teen worked as a Foot-Boy (male servant – more pay), then on Ships

Disguised as a Male, enlisted in a Foot Regiment, then a Horse Regiment in Flanders



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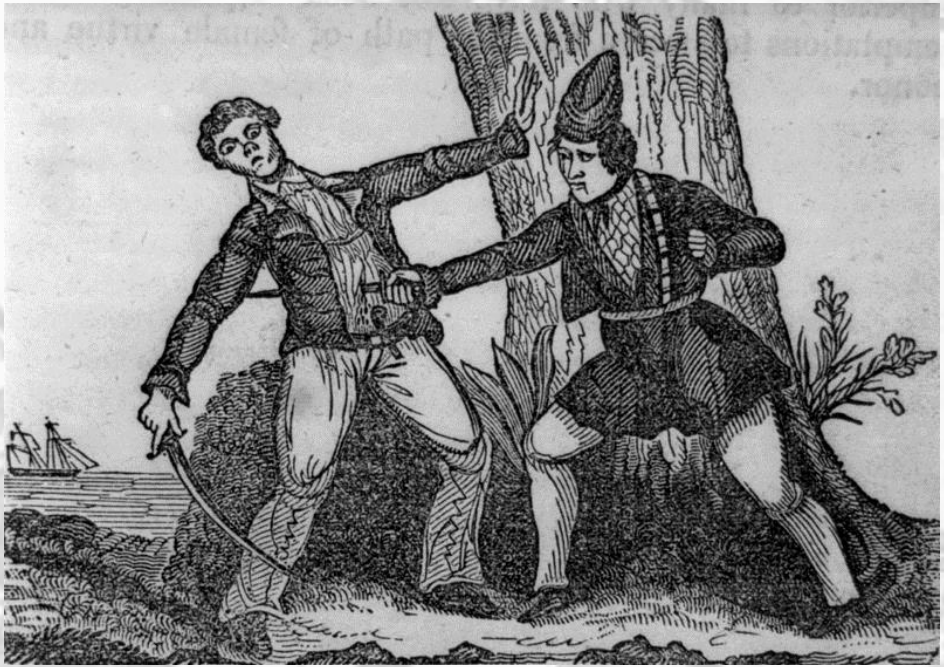
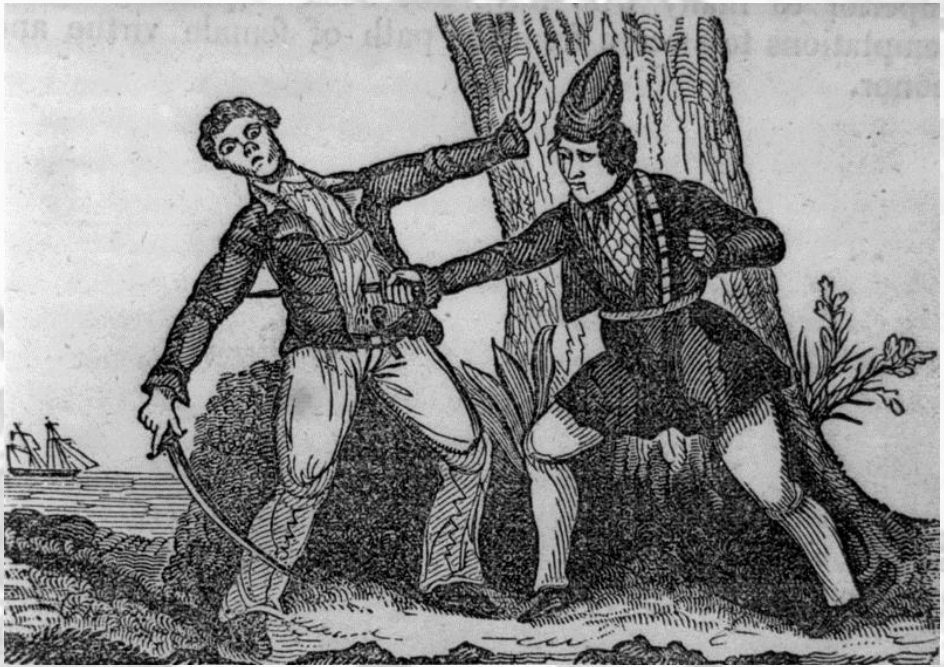


Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Mary Read (Reade) 1695-1721

Fell in Love with a Fellow Soldier, began dressing as a Female

They were Inn Keepers in Holland for a short while – Husband died

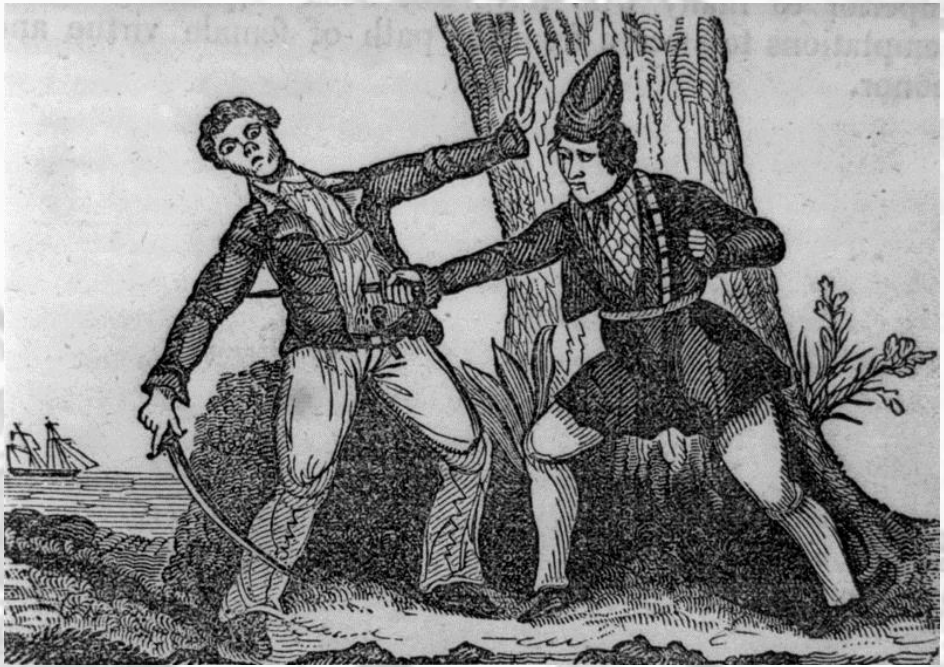


Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Mary Read (Reade) 1695-1721

Reverted back to men's clothing

Went to Sea on a Dutch Merchant Ship headed to the Caribbean

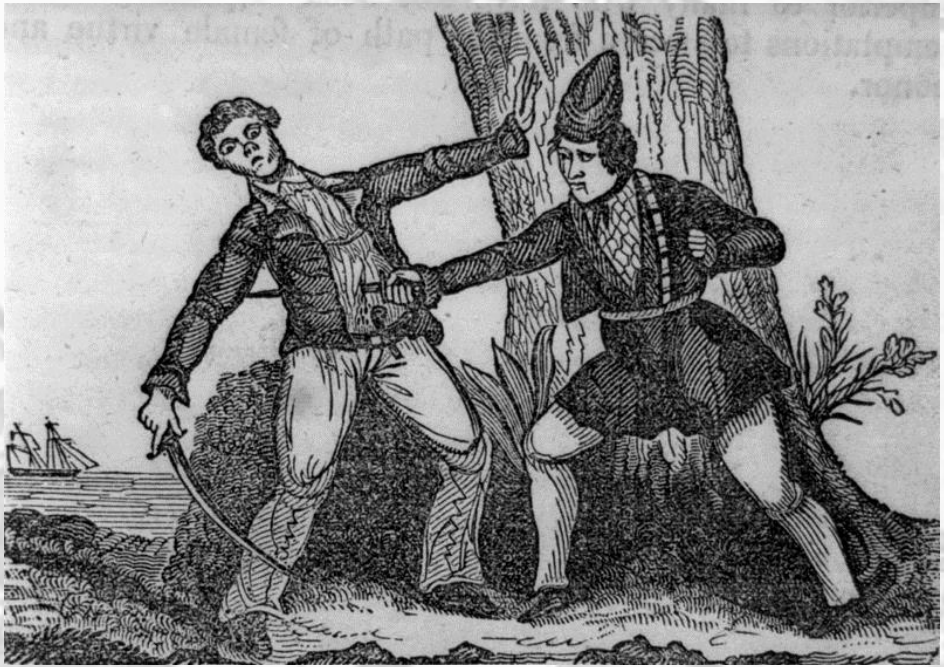


Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Mary Read (Reade) 1695-1721

Ship Commandeered by English Pirates, whom she joined

Crew received Pardon in 1718 and sailed as Privateers

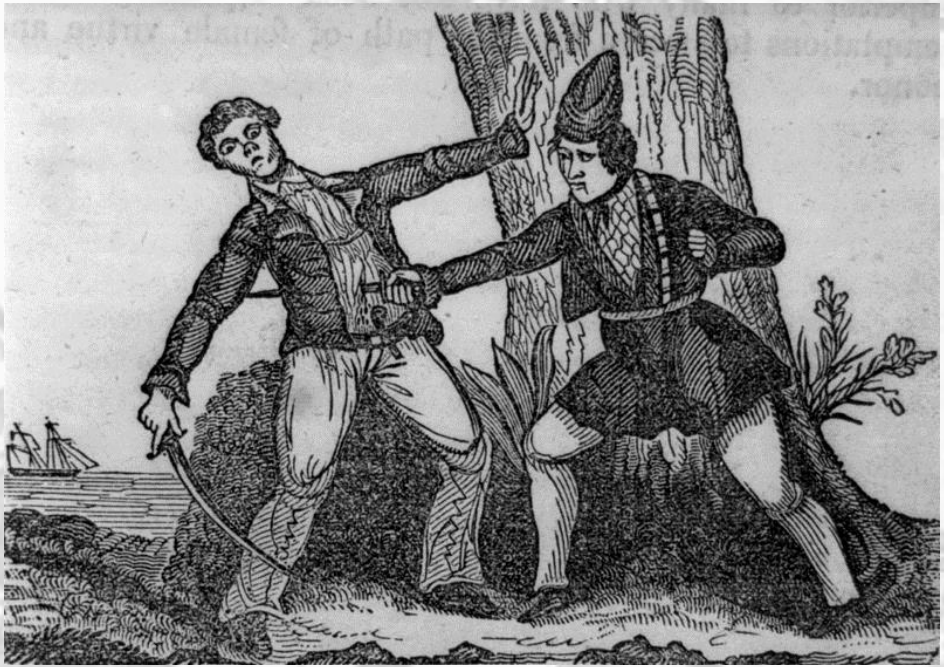


Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Mary Read (Reade) 1695-1721

Ship Overran by Captain Jack Rackham

Tired of the Straight Life, she reverted to Piracy

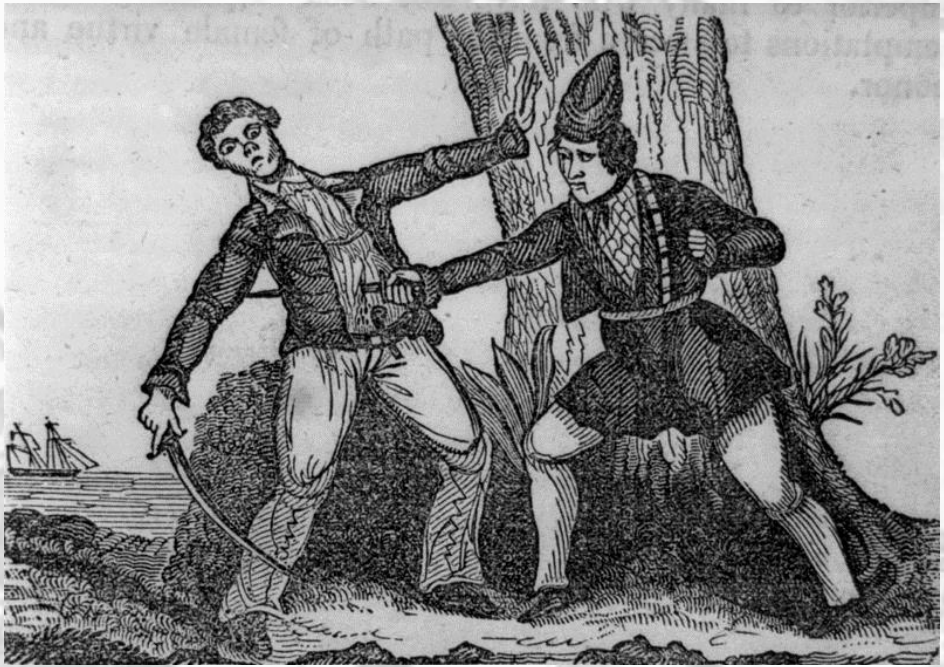


Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Mary Read (Reade) 1695-1721

Anne Bonny already on board

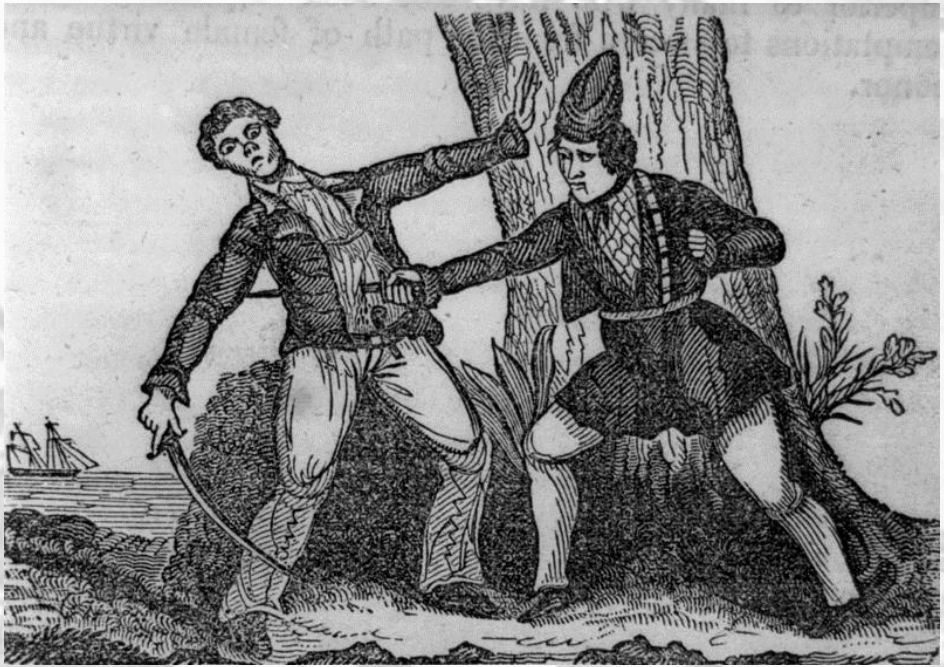
Discovered each other's cross dressing and became friends



Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Mary Read (Reade) 1695-1721

Mary found a lover on board - saved his life by protecting him from a threatened duel
She picked a fight with his opponent and with deadly use of her sword and pistol, ended his life before he could harm her husband-to-be.

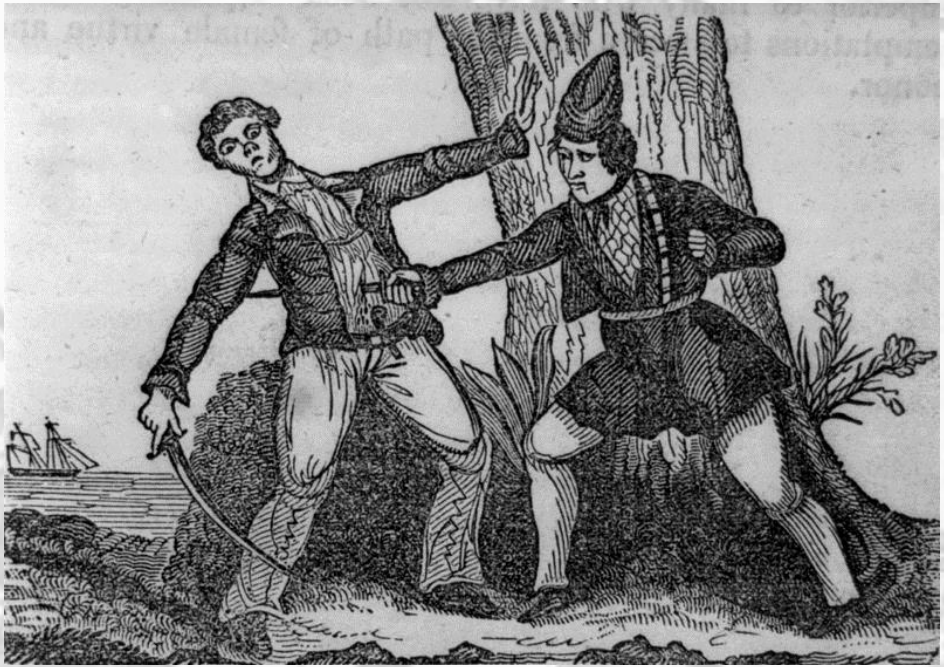


Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Mary Read (Reade) 1695-1721

Anne and Mary were known for their violent tempers and ferocious fighting

fellow crewmembers knew no one else was as Ruthless and Bloodthirsty as these Two



Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Mary Read (Reade) 1695-1721

1720 – their Ship was Boarded by British Navy – Captured

Tried November 16, 1720 – Sentenced to hang, "Mi'lord, we plead our bellies."

Died of a Fever the next year – Perhaps faked her death and escaped under a shroud

Caribbean Lady Pyrates

Anne Bonney, born in County Cork, Ireland between 1679 – 1700 – died 1782
Illegitimate daughter of Irish lawyer William Cormac and a maid
Betrothed to a local man, but married a sailor (1718)
Her Husband became an informant to the Governor of Bahamas

Caribbean Lady Pyrates – Anne Bonny

Disenchanted by her marriage became involved with pirate John (“Calico Jack”) Rackham

He offered to pay her husband to divorce her - John Bonny refused.

Caribbean Lady Pyrates – Anne Bonny

Abandoned her husband

Assisted Rackham in commandeering the sloop *William* from Nassau Harbor

Unusual because Women were Bad Luck onboard

He was keen on her Ferocity (tales about her)

Caribbean Lady Pyrates – Anne Bonny

Governor responded by sending Privateer Jonathan Barnet after them

4 months later, caught the Pirates

Caribbean Lady Pyrates – Anne Bonny

Tried and Convicted

"Mi'lord, we plead our bellies.“

Perhaps her wealthy father bought her release and married her off to a Virginian, Joseph Buerliegh and she gave him 8 children

Any Questions or Comments?

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