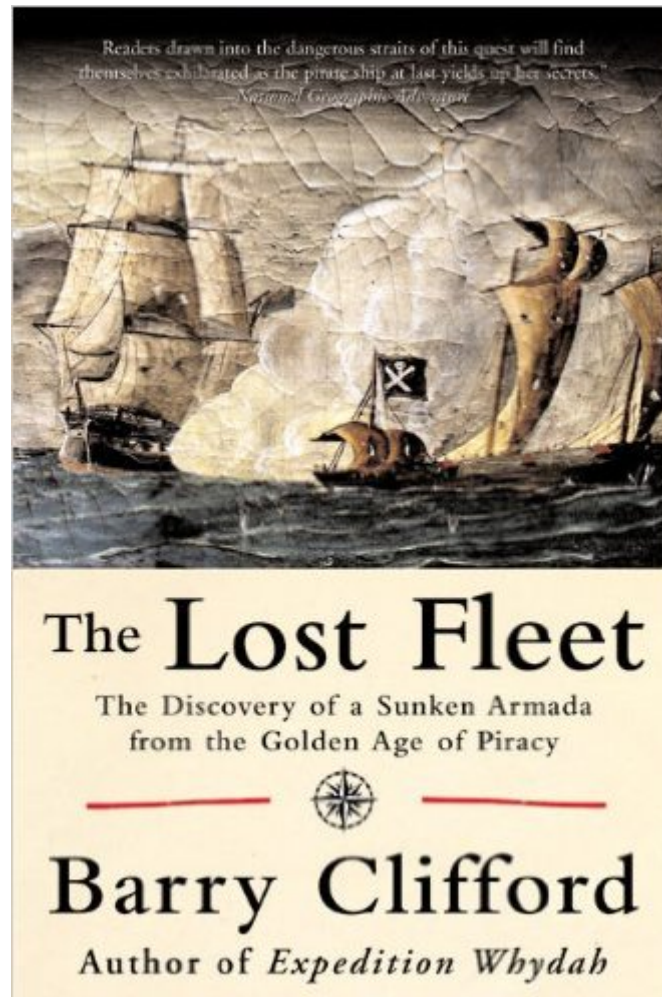


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The Lost Fleet: The Discovery Of A Sunken Armada From The Golden Age Of Piracy



Synopsis

On January 2, 1678, a fleet of French ships sank off the Venezuelan coast. This proved disastrous for French naval power in the region, and sparked the rise of a golden age of piracy. Tracing the lives of fabled pirates like the Chevalier de Grammont, Nikolaas Van Hoorn, Thomas Paine, and Jean Comte d'Estr es, *The Lost Fleet* portrays a dark age, when the outcasts of European society formed a democracy of buccaneers, settling on a string of islands off the African coast. From there, the pirates haunted the world's oceans, wreaking havoc on the settlements along the Spanish mainland and -- often enlisted by French and English governments -- sacking ships, ports, and coastal towns. More than three hundred years later, writer, explorer, and deep-sea diver Barry Clifford follows the pirates' destructive wake back to Venezuela. With the help of a lost map, drawn by the captain of the lost French fleet, Clifford locates the site of the disaster and wreckage of the once-mighty armada.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Another book by the "archeological privateer" Barry Clifford, the oceanic excavator who found the wreck of Black Sam Bellamy's ship the *Whydah* in the sands off Cape Cod. His writing has improved since he wrote "Expedition *Whydah*," though he's still not a master with words. No matter, his subjects are always fascinating enough I don't mind that the prose can be a bit clunky. This one traces his team's discovery and exploration (underwritten by Max Kennedy, the BBC, and the Discovery Channel) of a wreck of an entire fleet of ships--5 French warships and two pirate ships the French fleet hired to assist them in warfare--on the reef of Los Aves off the coast of Venezuela.

In a similar vein to the Whydah book, Clifford intersperses his text with photographs, maps, and drawings, and alternates the story of his expedition with history about the pirates involved in the wrecks. In this case, he does the opposite of the Whydah story (which traced Sam Bellamy's rise to captainship and followed him until his demise), and instead follows the lives of the documented pirates who *survived* the massive wreck at Los Aves, among them a famous and ridiculously lucky mulatto captain named Laurens de Graff, and a New England pirate named Thomas Paine who later went on to return to his home and established himself as a powerful and corrupt politician (not the same Thomas Paine that wrote the "Common Sense" political publication, this was a few decades earlier). The historical portions of the text offer a lot of great insight into the piratical/buccanneer climate (political, economical, etc) of the mid- to late-17th c. in the Caribbean and Spanish Main.

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