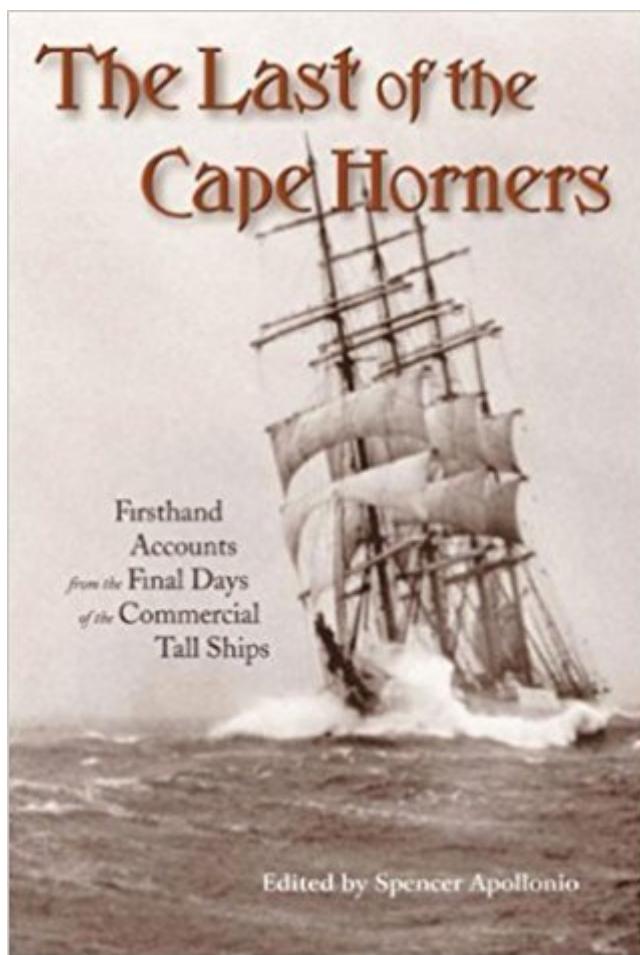


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The Last Of The Cape Horners: Firsthand Accounts From The Final Days Of The Commercial Tall Ships



Synopsis

When we think of commercial sailing, most of us are apt to picture square-riggers as vessels of the nineteenth century or earlier. Yet the graceful, multi-masted beauties of our imaginations actually sailed on into the 1950s before they disappeared from the seas forever. Veteran sailor Spencer Apollonio has selected from little-known sources some of the best-written and most representative accounts of life aboard the last of these ships that sailed around the southern tip of South America --- the fabled "Cape Horners." Written by officers, crewmen, and passengers aboard American, British, and Finnish vessels, they provide a realistic picture of a maritime era the likes of which will not ever be seen again.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Spencer Apollonio is a marine biologist who has sailed a traditional wooden gaff-rigged sloop along the coast of Maine for more than twenty years. Boothbay Harbor, Maine, is his homeport.

Buy it and read it. Then you won't be in a rush to buy a clipper or full rigged ship even if one pops up on eBay. All of the excerpts are well written and interesting. Spencer did a great job of compiling

Good condition, very nice book

Segments written by those who were there. Very good first hand accounts providing tremendous

insights to the difficulty of sail.

Fantastic book -- you are right there with the sailors. Anyone who's sailed as part of a crew will be spellbound by this one. And Apollonio adds helpful comments explaining anything that might baffle a landlubber or the 99% who haven't sailed a square-rigger. Includes endpapers showing the prevailing winds around the world, an illustration of a ship with a key to the sails' names, and a glossary at the end.

I had been looking for a good book describing what it was really like to sail on fully rigged Ships for a long time, and this may be the best book I have found so far. I have read everything from "Two Years before Mast" to the recently published "Flying Cloud", but this is really what I was looking for. It seems that most accounts of sailing the large Ships commercially were not written in the Age of the Clipper, but in the Age of the Windjammer, i.e. from the 1890's until the 1940's. The Book is exactly what the title says it is: First hand accounts by professional sailors, officers, passengers, apprentices and others, in the final days of Sail. These have been put together very well into the form of a Journey beginning at a Port in the U.S. or the U.K. and going first to Australia, then South America, and finally rounding Cape Horn for the return journey. The editing has been done by a Veteran Sailor who clearly knows his sources, and has done an excellent job in selecting them. There are also 21 good photographs, a glossary, and a Bibliography of the sources of the narratives and a list for further reading for those who need more. If you like to read about this sort of thing, like I do, It's absolutely gripping reading, not only because of the subject-matter, but because it's all true. The hardships endured by the sailors, through storms, tough work, loneliness, bad pay, terrible food, etc. is incredible to read about, especially when you take into account their tone in which they write about their experiences. They do not whine, lament and complain. Instead, the tone is matter of fact, nostalgic, respectful, and often humorous. You really get a feel for what it was really like, and I suppose that most readers after reading this will be happy to do their sailing from an armchair, in front of the fire, book in hand.

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This book is detailed and extremely informative. I also just picked up Sailing Ships of New England which is an equally great read. If you're interested in the historical importance of ships, I highly recommend it. It's full of great illustrations, and makes for an interesting follow-up to Last of the Cape Horners.

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