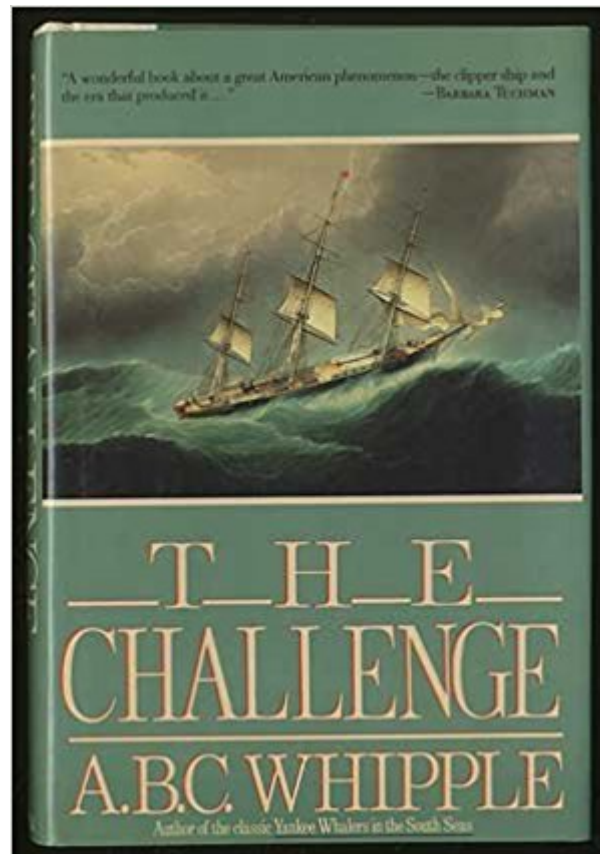




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The Challenge



Book Information

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: William Morrow & Co; 1st edition (May 1987)

Language: English

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Customer Reviews

Though their heyday lasted little more than a decade in the mid-19th century, the magnificent clipper ships, for many people, embodied the American spirit in their speed and beauty. But there was a dark side to the glamour of the clipper trade. Experienced, willing seamen were not available; "crimps" collected the dregs of society by force or chicanery and put them on board the clippers, where they suffered under the appalling brutality of the officers. The maiden journey of Challenge, commanded by Captain Robert Waterman and a sadistic first mate, is perhaps the most notorious example of the terrible conditions that prevailed. Whipple, author of Tall Ships and Great Captains, has set the story of that controversial voyage amid a colorful general history of these vessels and the men who built and sailed them. We follow the Flying Cloud on its maiden voyage, with Captain Creesy and his wife Eleanor, an expert navigator. One month later, in 1851, Challenge and Captain Waterman leave New York, hoping to set a new record on the Cape Horn run to San Francisco. Maritime history buffs won't want to miss this one. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is a fine historical read about the infamous CHALLENGE MUTINY. If you like maritime stories of clipper ships then you will be well rewarded for spending time with this book. Well researched and written, makes you realize how difficult it was for the men who lived "before the mast" and the pressures upon the skippers to make fast passages.

This book was an absolute thrill to read. I've always been interested in tall ships so it was fun to really dig into some of the history with *The Challenge*. ABC Whipple doesn't just jump into the main story, which is the story of the Challenge and the Flying Cloud and their race around Cape Horn. Rather, he takes the time to give us background information to the clipper ships, the shipbuilders, the sailors, the captains, and the era that produced all these things. He doesn't just tell you what happened to the two clipper ships, he makes you understand why. Although this is a nonfiction history book, it reads very well. Whipple is a great storyteller and keeps the reader interested throughout the work. I found myself telling everyone around me about what I was reading or about the interesting facts that I had just learned. Whipple really gets you wrapped up in the story and the times. If you're interested in 1850s history, ships, and/or commerce in the US, you must track down this book and read it. And I highly recommend it to anyone looking for a good read.

I knew little about the Clipper Ship era (and frankly had minimal desire to learn about it). I happened upon this book by accident... a fortuitous accident. Whipple relates the events surrounding the Gold Rush, the development of the Clipper Ship and the subsequent expansion of trade routes with the American West. Clipper ships, we learn, were ultra-fast sailing cargo ships designed to round the tip of South America quickly. Bringing supplies and trade goods to San Francisco (and, hopefully, plenty of gold on the return trip), clippers predated both the Panama Canal and the steam ship. "The Challenge" itself refers to races between the top clipper ships to make the harrowing trip around the Cape on ever-faster timing. Included in the edition I have are some astounding photographs. My favorite is a stark picture of the Bay... littered with the hulls of thousands of abandoned ships deserted by crews rushing to the gold fields. This book is a masterful monument to a fascinating era that has been largely overlooked.

Like the other reviewer, I found this book in a second hand bookstore and bought it on a whim. It turned out to be a great read. I'd always known that Clipper ships were the fastest sailing merchants, but I had no idea how hard they were to sail fast. Whipple goes into a lot of the history surrounding these boats, the gold rush, the tea trade, the Paris fashion trade with China. All fascinating stuff and well told. Not a page burner but a good book that I enjoyed reading.

great items presented,,fabulous transaction, HIGHLY RECOMMENDED A++++

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