



New England Mariner Tradition, The: Old Salts, Superstitions, Shanties and Shipwrecks

Robert A. Geake

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For over three centuries, New Englanders have set sail in search of fortune and adventure--yet death lurked on every voyage in the form of storms, privateers, disease and human error. In hope of being spared by the sea, superstitious mariners practiced cautionary rituals. During the winter of 1779, the crew aboard the "Family Trader" offered up gin to appease the squalling storms of Neptune. In the 1800s, after nearly fifty shipwrecks on Georges Bank between Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and Nova Scotia, a wizard paced the coast of Marblehead, shouting orders out to sea to guide passing ships to safety. As early as 1705, courageous settlers erected watch houses and lighted beacons at Beavertail Point outside Jamestown, Rhode Island, to aid mariners caught in the swells of Narragansett Bay. Join Robert A. Geake as he explores the forgotten traditions among New England mariners and their lives on land and sea.

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