



The Whydah: A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked, and Found

Martin W. Sandler

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The exciting true story of the captaincy, wreck, and discovery of the *Whydah* the only pirate ship ever found and the incredible mysteries it revealed.

The 1650s to the 1730s marked the golden age of piracy, when fearsome pirates like Blackbeard ruled the waves, seeking not only treasure but also large and fast ships to carry it. The *Whydah* was just such a ship, built to ply the Triangular Trade route, which it did until one of the greediest pirates of all, Black Sam Bellamy, commandeered it. Filling the ship to capacity with treasure, Bellamy hoped to retire with his bounty but in 1717 the ship sank in a storm off Cape Cod. For more than two hundred years, the wreck of the *Whydah* (and the riches that went down with it) eluded treasure seekers, until the ship was finally found in 1984 by marine archaeologists. The artifacts brought up from the ocean floor are priceless, both in value and in the picture they reveal of life in that much-mythologized era, changing much of what we know about pirates."

The Whydah: A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked, and Found Details

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From Reader Review The Whydah: A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked, and Found for online ebook

Sarah says

Okay, so this book had two of my pet peeves within the first two chapters, which irritated me enough that I didn't want to dedicate my reading time to finish it. But I did. First, the author had word choice issues, like on page 13, "He had to get to know that girl." I know this is a children's/young adult nonfiction book, but I would still like to think that kids are smart enough to know that there are better ways to write that sentence, especially as it's closing out the paragraph.

I also wasn't a fan of the huge sidenotes and I've noticed this in other nonfiction. A sidenote should be just that--a snippet of information located off to the side of the main text. Set it apart with a textbox or something! But when a snippet lasts three complete pages, that, my friend, is a chapter. All it does is disrupt the text and piss readers like me off. The first snippet was used correctly--at the end of Chapter 1. But the next one, "The Articles of Agreement," were just thrown into the middle of Chapter 2 with no rhyme or reason other than the author had mentioned the agreement in the text. That's all and good, but "The Articles" take up three pages in the middle of a sentence of the text--horrible placement. Did the author even have a say in where that went? or was that a book designer's decision?

I also wanted more visuals. The author stressed that the Whydah's uniqueness was a "long platform on its deck for captives who could not..." Well, then, what did that long platform look like? Because I can't picture it. Surely there is an illustration somewhere of it? Or one like it?

There are source notes at the end, as well as a MLA 7th edition bibliography, and photo credits.

Cindy Vallar says

Originally constructed for a member of parliament involved in the slave trade, the Whydah was bound for England when Samuel Bellamy and his fellow pirates attacked her in February 1717. In 1984 Barry Clifford and his team of divers discovered what remained of her off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Born in 1689, Englishman Samuel Bellamy found himself unemployed after his stint in the Royal Navy during the War of the Spanish Succession. He eventually journeyed to New England, where he hoped to seek his fortune. He met Paulsgrave Williams, son of an influential Rhode Island family, and the two decided to try their hand at diving on the Spanish treasure fleet that had sunk off the Florida coast in 1715. The fortune both sought failed to materialize, so they went on the account in hopes of finding adventure and wealth. Along the way they encountered other infamous pirates, such as Benjamin Hornigold, Olivier Levasseur, and Edward Teach. Bellamy also came to captain his own pirate ship, which led him to acquire new crew members. Among these were John King (the youngest known pirate), John Julian (a Moskito Indian), and Tom Davis (a carpenter forced to join). They captured many vessels, but the Whydah finally delivered what Bellamy desired most – an ideal pirate ship loaded with treasure. But tragedy struck when she and all but two of her crew sank during a violent storm.

In the aftermath of the wreck, many sought the treasure, but locating the Whydah proved elusive. Centuries passed before she finally gave up her secrets. This volume, written for middle-grade readers, recounts the

story of this ship, the pirates who attacked her, and the hunt to locate the first verified pirate shipwreck. Sandler also includes the legends surrounding Bellamy; what the recovered artifacts have taught us about piracy during the early eighteenth century; and the establishment of a museum to showcase these artifacts.

This fascinating tale is recounted in twelve chapters, each of which includes a feature that further illuminates some facet pertaining to the information in the chapter. Among these historical sidepieces are discussions on the slave trade, pirate life and tactics, the history of diving, and preserving artifacts. To further enhance the reading experience, Sandler incorporates quotations from period documents or people involved in the hunt and discovery of the shipwreck, black-and-white illustrations, and maps.

The inclusion of an index makes this history of the Whydah more accessible than Clifford's own books that often lack this important feature. Sandler clearly mentions any alterations he makes, such as rewording passages from Captain Johnson's *A General History of Pyrates* into modern-day language for easier reading, and points out when the historical record remains silent about a particular aspect of the story, such as the legend of Maria Hallett. The inclusion of lesser-known facts, such as two of the divers who helped in the search, will surprise many. The chronological unfolding of events and the smooth flow of the narrative make this an inviting tale that snares the reader's attention. This might be a book aimed at young pirate readers (ages ten and up), but adults will find it an equally intriguing adventure.

Cindy Mitchell *Kiss the Book* says

Sandler, Martin W. *The Whydah : A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked & Found*, 176 pages. NON-FICTION. Candlewick Press, 2017. \$20. Language: PG (2 swears); Mature Content: G; Violence: PG (discussion of amputations and wounds).

In the early 1700s, a pirate named Black Sam Bellamy "traded up" to a slave ship called the Whydah. It was a huge pirate ship, with room for lots of men and lots of booty. It was a fast ship, heavily armed and easy to maneuver, so it made pirating (attacking other ships and stealing their stuff) profitable. They plundered as many as 4 ships in a day. Besides telling the story of Bellamy and The Whydah, the reader is educated on the history of pirates, the rules of piracy (called The Articles of Agreement), and jobs on a pirate ship - did you know they had musicians who played aggressive sounding music during battles, to frighten the opponents and urge on the pirates? The Whydah sank and was lost under the ocean off Cape Cod for over 200 years, until it was discovered again in 1984. The final chapters tell of the discovery/recovery process, and the technology used to find the wreck.

I loved all the information about pirates! This was so fun to read, and kids who are Pirates of the Caribbean fans will eat this up. The format had some major issues for me. I felt the historical sections, slipped in when it was happening in the story, broke up the text too much. I found them very informative, but the placement was weird. Also, the period maps were difficult to read - maybe it's my old eyes but there was so much tiny text in them they weren't all that helpful except in a general sense. Full of drawings, pictures and maps, this well documented resource includes a long bibliography and an index.

MS, HS - ADVISABLE Lisa Librarian
<https://kissthebook.blogspot.com/2018...>

Michelle says

Born in 1689 in Plymouth, England, Sam Bellamy loved the sea. He learned to sail from an early age and was not yet twenty when he joined the British Navy. But by the age of twenty-four, the War of Spanish Succession had ended and Sam found himself unemployed. He sailed for America and decided to make his fortune as a treasure hunter. But when that scheme failed, he found his true calling as a pirate. He became known as Black Sam. His success as a pirate made him legendary and his capture of the slave ship Whydah made him rich.

This title recounts both the story of the pirate Black Sam and the history of his ship the Whydah. When it sunk off the coast of Cape Cod in 1717, it was carrying a fortune in gold and looted goods from merchant ships. After searching historical documents and much research, Barry Clifford and his crew of the Vast Explorer began their search for the wreck of the Whydah. The search and eventual discovery of the Whydah is documented along with the thirty-year process of reclaiming from the sea what was once lost. Sandler recounts a riveting tale but is quick to differentiate the realities of sea/pirating life from the romanticized version. Sidebar information that is sometimes two to three pages long does slow the flow of the text. Otherwise, this is a well-researched, quick read. Maps, photographs, source notes, and a bibliography are included.

Lisa says

In the early 1700s, a pirate named Black Sam Bellamy “traded up” to a slave ship called the Whydah. It was a huge pirate ship, with room for lots of men and lots of booty. It was a fast ship, heavily armed and easy to maneuver, so it made pirating (attacking other ships and stealing their stuff) profitable. They plundered as many as 4 ships in a day. Besides telling the story of Bellamy and The Whydah, the reader is educated on the history of pirates, the rules of piracy (called The Articles of Agreement), and jobs on a pirate ship - did you know they had musicians who played aggressive sounding music during battles, to frighten the opponents and urge on the pirates? The Whydah sank and was lost under the ocean off Cape Cod for over 200 years, until it was discovered again in 1984. The final chapters tell of the discovery/recovery process, and the technology used to find the wreck.

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Cross posted to <http://kissthebook.blogspot.com> CHECK IT OUT!

Kelsey Buckley says

What I Liked:

-It is interesting nonfiction (especially the first half).

-Some of the things we believe about pirates are actually MYTHS thanks to the book Treasure Island. Most

pirates didn't bury their treasures. A lot of their booty was actually ordinary trade items - not gold and jewels. Walking the plank wasn't actually a thing. Pirates probably spoke the same way most other lower-class sailors spoke. Those fun phrases like "Ahoy, matey," "Shiver me timbers," and "Arrrr?" Myths. I wish I would have known this when I taught Treasure Island!

-Source notes, bibliography, photography credits, and primary sources!

-What they learned from the artifacts of the Whydah. Unlike merchant of navy ships, these pirates enjoyed more diverse diets, they had plates and silverware, and they dressed in wealthy and stylish clothes.

-The author presented the arguments that some have against Barry Clifford's methods. This would be nice to use as a mentor text for argumentative writing with upper middle school or high school.

-They have been recovering the Whydah since the year before I was born, and they are still doing it. Wow.

What I Didn't Like:

-The multiple page SIDEBAR texts that interrupted mid-sentence and story and continued for sometimes multiple pages. Yes, they were interesting, BUT it made for some awkward reading. I would skip them, finish the chapter, and come back to them. If it was awkward for me, you can bet it'll be awkward for its intended audience of middle school students as well. Yikes. I don't understand why they couldn't put them at the end of each chapter.

-The second half kind of fizzled at times. The recovery efforts just didn't interest me as much.

-This book probably won't have universal appeal. It will take the right reader - probably someone with an interest in nonfiction or pirates. I will definitely need to push this book with a few kids that I think might like it, or it could sit on our nonfiction shelves too long.

Overall, a strong nonfiction selection minus the sidebar text issues.

3.5 stars. Rounded up to a 4 because I'm a sucker for interesting nonfiction for middle school kids, and I think it would be awesome to read with Treasure Island for a nonfiction/fiction unit in a high ability class. But then again...most of my students didn't appreciate Treasure Island like I thought they should, so it probably wouldn't be that awesome in reality...Still, I can dream, right?

Linda says

After reading this book, I know that Martin W. Sandler, with so many other historical non-fiction authors, has written TRUTH, with sources, footnotes of explanation and extraordinary care to point out stereotypes that are not true.

For example, the notion that pirates buried their treasure and created maps to remember where was created by Robert Louis Stevenson in his book Treasure Island, and has been kept alive in other books through the years as well as in movies. It is a myth that has never been proved.

Another myth also shown to be incorrect is the way pirates spoke. The book states; "It's simply not true. . . one man can be credited for having created the fictitious pirate speak--the British actor Robert Newton. In

1950, he played Long John Silver in the movie version of Long John Silver and went on to play him in a television series in which he popularized the accent and many of the sayings that are commonly associated with pirates today." No more "ahoy, matey" or "Arrrrr".

Not only is this a wonderful look at pirates of long ago, how they became pirates and how they really lived, but it traces the history of the pirate who acquired the biggest fortune ever with his fleet of ships, and it carries the history forward with the exciting find of this large ship, the Whydah which sank in the treacherous waters of Cape Cod. This was a ship with a treasure so large it is hard to believe the tales. Archaeologists use the artifacts to show the lives of pirates on board and to see the goods stolen. They were not only gold, but goods transported to the new world that were needed, like fabric, tea, spices and wine.

Sandler begins with a description of this famous ship that started its career as a slave ship and then tells the tale of its final owner, Black Sam Bellamy. Some of his actions earned him the name Robin Hood of the Seas, but he was not only that. He began with a love of the sea and joined the British Navy, but soon became a bigger adventurer because his higher goal in life was to become rich. With some compatriots, he went off to find the treasures from ships.

Within various chapters lie "extra" pieces that add to the pirates' tales and later to modern day treasure hunters. One of these extra parts explains the "Articles of Agreement" that all pirates signed in order to be on a ship's crew. If you agreed, you were "on the account" and expected to follow all the rules. If not, you could lose your life or be put ashore on a deserted island.

Another part explained what historians believe is the origin of the "Jolly Roger" that pirate's flag we all know. Toward the end of the book, we are moved to modern times and talk of the artifacts and how they are preserved, what they tell us of the "truth" of pirate life.

The book is an extraordinary look at this early part of our history in America, the lives of various parts of society, but especially how people lived as pirates and what people thought of them. Thanks to Candlewick Press for this advanced copy!

How wonderful it would be to have a student read this book, or to read parts of it with a class and to discuss the research to discover the truth of pirates. And then to extend that to what they hear, what they read and how to find their own truths.

Stan Prager says

Review of: The Whydah: A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked and Found, by Martin W. Sandler
by Stan Prager (11-19-17)

I don't typically read or review "Young Adult" books, but The Whydah: A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked and Found, by Martin W. Sandler, came my way via an Early Reviewer's program and—full disclosure—I did not realize it was YA when I requested it! Of course, the "Young Adult" genre has come a long way since my own youth, when it tended to only run to the lowest common denominator of the youngest readers. In contrast, just about any adult non-specialist could peruse The Whydah and perhaps not even realize it was written for a YA audience.

Pirates are the stuff of both myth and history, an enduring legend that dominates the imagination in pulp fiction, swashbuckling films, and even Halloween costume parties and amusement park rides. The reality, of course, was starkly different from the romanticism, as revealed through both historical scholarship and—especially in recent decades—its partnership with the increasingly sophisticated technology of underwater archaeology. Sandler, a prolific author of books for adults and children (his Iron Rails, Iron Men,

and the Race to Link the Nation: The Story of the Transcontinental Railroad was previously reviewed on the Regarp Book Blog.*), artfully brings this marriage of history and archaeology to bear in this well-written work that focuses on noted pirate captain Black Sam Bellamy, his flagship vessel Whydah, and the culture of early eighteenth century piracy—as well as the recovery of the wreck and interpretation of the artifacts. Born in England, like many young men of his era Sam Bellamy went to sea in the British navy. A veteran of naval combat in the War of Spanish Succession, at twenty-four Bellamy found himself out of a job when that conflict ended in 1714, and tens of thousands were released from service. His next stop was Provincetown, on the tip of Cape Cod, where he partnered up with a fellow-adventurer and returned to sea, this time on his own terms. When a promising salvage venture went sour, Bellamy instead turned to piracy, where he proved himself a highly successful raider along the east coast of America. One of his greatest prizes was the Whydah, a slaver that had recently traded its human cargo for vast riches that became the bountiful plunder of Sam Bellamy and his crew, and was transformed into Bellamy's flagship. In what amounted to but a single year, Black Sam distinguished himself as one of the most successful pirates of all times—before he fell victim to equal parts greed and the treacherous seas off of Cape Cod that sank the Whydah in 1717, and drowned Bellamy and most of his mates. The wreck—and a bounty of artifacts—were not recovered until 1984.

Sandler's thin volume is rich with detail, not only for his subjects but the milieu of piracy these inhabited. Pirates, it turns out, could indeed live up to the lore that has portrayed them as brutal and ruthless, but they also lived by a code of honor that was rigorously upheld. Most extraordinary in this code was its stark element of democracy. In a time when all the world was organized by hierarchy and class, all pirates, regardless of their specialized roles aboard ship, were essentially equals; the captain was little more than a first among equals, although he received two shares of plunder rather than the one due to an ordinary seaman. Nearly every aspect of their communal existence was governed by consensus, and determined by an equal vote from each member of the crew. When they raided other ships, their treatment of those who manned the prize was determined largely by the level of resistance. If the ship under attack surrendered without a fight, pirates typically showed great lenience, sparing the lives of officers and crew alike, who would be released to the sea with provisions on small boats if the ship was taken. Those who gave battle, on the other hand, often saw no quarter, ending their lives in a sometimes-horrific fashion marked by outsize cruelty. Thus, it was little wonder that the majority of ships beset by pirates often promptly surrendered. More surprising, perhaps, was that the surrendered crew was frequently offered a chance to join up with the very pirates that had overrun them—and that many availed themselves of this opportunity!

The last third of the book is devoted to finding and excavating the Whydah—which has continued for decades—as well as exploring the art and technology of diving and underwater archaeology. Here too the author presents the material in a competent, engaging fashion that holds the interest of the reader of all ages. Sandler aptly demonstrates how the artifacts recovered from the Whydah have contributed to a renaissance in the interpretation of what life must have been like on a pirate vessel three centuries ago.

Yet, this otherwise laudable work is unfortunately marred when it credulously repeats the fanciful notion that has Alexander the Great as an early pioneer in underwater exploration, here depicted in a medieval painting being lowered beneath the sea in a primitive glass diving bell, in the fourth century BCE! [p125] This ahistorical myth belongs to the literature of the so-called “Romance of Alexander” that was imagined many centuries after his death, and that to my knowledge has no scholarly support. (Endnotes include a reference to a defunct URL, but further research on the reference itself lends it little credence.) There was also a glaring error of historical interpretation in Sandler's Iron Rails, Iron Men, and the Race to Link the Nation, this one regarding slavery and the Civil War, which makes me wonder about his reliability as a historian.* Sandler has many books and projects and awards to his credit, much of them focused on history, as well as a background as an educator, so these uncharacteristic flaws seem especially incongruous. Of course, both author and publisher should be taken to account for such carelessness.

Despite this imperfection, The Whydah has much to recommend it overall to a popular audience of both the young adult and their parents. This is fascinating material, and Sandler's skill as a writer who can weave

multiple themes into a coherent account shines throughout the narrative. All of this is further enhanced in the presentation, which includes a number of sidebars, illustrations and maps. The Whydah demonstrates that the real story of pirates can be as enthralling as their swashbuckling legends.

[*See my review of Iron Rails, Iron Men, and the Race to Link the Nation: The Story of the Transcontinental Railroad, by Martin W. Sandler, at: <https://regarp.com/2015/11/29/review-...>]

My latest review, of "The Whydah: A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked and Found," by Martin W. Sandler, is live on the Regarp Book Blog at: <https://regarp.com/2017/11/19/review-...>

Chris Demer says

This is a fascinating book about a ship, The Whydah, which was involved in the triangle trade. After delivering slaves to the West Indies, it was loaded with cargo and headed back to England when it was attacked by one of the most famous pirates of the time, Black Sam Bellamy. A fast and sturdy ship, it was made the flagship of the pirate and his crew, and plied the seas attacking ships and confiscating their cargoes and sometimes their crews as well.

The most interesting part of the book was the description of the lives of the pirates. Many came to the "occupation" voluntarily for the adventure and the riches, neither of which they would have achieved if they had stayed home! Others were coerced, usually because they certain skills needed by the ship and crew, or because they decided a pirates life was better than death. Most stayed. The life on board was remarkably democratic. While there were leaders who made specific decisions, work, food, drink and most importantly, booty, was shared equally. The crew could vote on some aspects of their lives aboard ship.

Crews were generally composed of men of different ages, ethnic backgrounds and races. It was apparently one of the few places where these differences did not affect how they were treated, as long as they abided by the code of conduct as expected and did their jobs. Actually, since the "job" was dangerous, a pirate could easily lose a limb or an eye in conflict, as they attacked other ships. These injured men were given specific amounts of money depending on their level of disability.

Many pirates retired and lived in wealth and comfort as a result of their ill-gotten gains.

Loaded with booty from the capture of several ships off the New England coast, the Whydah ran aground and sank in a storm in 1717. Only two of the crew survived.

Locals tried in vain to find the wreck. Although some booty was recovered from the shore, the ship was not located until 1984, when it was identified by its bell by marine archaeologists.

Priceless artifacts were recovered, and even more important, a wealth of historical evidence that has changed the way most people thought of pirates.

I highly recommend this book!

A. says

Pirates! I learned so many interesting things about pirates from reading this book. In fact, I guess I knew almost nothing about pirates before reading it, since it turns out that most everything from Pirates of the Caribbean and popular culture is wrong. The Whydah was one of the most famous pirate ships of its time (the early 1700s, the golden age of pirates), and it is the only pirate shipwreck every to be recovered. It was shipwrecked off the coast of Cape Cod (even though it spent most of its time plundering in the Caribbean, of course) and was finally discovered in 1984 with treasure from the ship still being excavated today.

The bottom line is that pirates are awesome. They were rebels who rejected the corrupt monarchs who ruled over Europe and were expanding into Africa and the Americas, and found their own way in the world by stealing from wealthy merchants, slavers, and empires. Sure they perhaps killed a few more people than necessary along the way, but they also had pretty awesome adventures, stole from a lot of wicked people, and lived like princes on the high seas ruled only by their own code of conduct that was actually a lot fairer than most people were treated on land.

If I'm ever up near Cape Cod, I would definitely stop into the Whydah museum to take learn more about the pirates that lived on this ship and see the amazing plunder that they've pulled out of the wreck.

Simran says

“The Whydah,” by Martin W. Sandler is a truly adventurous story based on the captaincy, wreck, and discovery of the only pirate ship ever found and excavated, known as The Whydah, and the incredible mysteries it revealed. Sandler begins his book by introducing the golden age of piracy – the 1650s to the 1730s – when fearsome, frightful pirates like Blackbeard ruled the waves seeking treasure, at the same time, large and fast ships to transport it. The Whydah was a similar ship, with a purpose to ply the Triangular route - connecting England and other European countries to the coast of West Africa and to the Caribbean, until one of the greediest pirates of all, Black Sam Bellamy, started to commandeer it. Filling the ship to its maximum capacity with treasure, Bellamy hoped to retire with his bounty, but unfortunately, the ship sank in a storm in 1717. The disaster the storm brought to the ship eluded many treasure seekers for more than two hundred years, until it was finally discovered in 1984 by marine archeologists. The artifacts gathered from the wrecked ship were priceless, both in value and in knowledge, the revelation of life in that significant-mythologized era, changing our perspectives about pirates.

In this book, Sandler has woven a timeline of The Whydah and by focusing on one ship, he is able to dive in deep into every detail of piracy and has the opportunity to share insights into contemporary underwater research techniques. The structural organization of this book has made it more comprehensive/understandable to the audience and more captivating with the suspense it evokes, earning a greater level of interest with every page. The way myths and legends about pirates have been debunked with logical proofs, it makes me question about other legends we all have been hearing since childhood.

Despite its thin volume, the book is an entire library of knowledge and shocking facts. "The Whydah," is a true, historical narrative of the ship's journey. This book is highly recommended to an audience who loves the history of pirates and piracy.

Homewood Library says

I love nonfiction books, especially young reader nonfiction books because they pack in a lot of information and are much shorter. This is a very cool account and I learned a lot about pirates during the late 17th/early 18th centuries. - Miss Angela

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

Who doesn't like to read about pirates? I'd never heard of Black Sam Bellamy, though, or his ship, the Whydah. The Whydah was originally a slave ship, and Bellamy and his crewmen captured it because slave ships were bigger and roomier than merchant ships, and he wanted plenty of storage room for all the booty he intended to capture in his pirating. I guess he decided to rob the rich merchant ships to give to the poor--himself and his crew! At any rate, Bellamy became highly successful, and the Whydah was filled with riches when it sank in a storm off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, killing Bellamy and most of his crew. The first two thirds of the book is all about Bellamy, his career, and the sinking of the ship. The last three chapters describe how treasure hunter Barry Clifford found the wreck, recovered thousands of artifacts, and established a museum to house them all. It was all so interesting that I hated to see the book end. Clifford has written several other adult books about the Whydah and other wrecks he's found, all of which are now on my reading list. This book is bound to grab the interest of any kid who loves pirates. Highly recommended, me hearties!

Angie says

This is a fascinating account of the life and times of 18th century pirates, specifically Black Sam Bellamy and the ship they Whydah. Black Sam Bellamy was an infamous pirate of the Atlantic and Caribbean. His ship the Whydah was full of treasure when it sunk off Cape Cod. Bellamy and most of his crew drowned in the shipwreck and treasure hunters looked for his sunken treasure for almost 300 years. It wasn't until the 1980s that Barry Clifford finally located the wreck and found part of the treasure.

This story is fascinating and Sandler did a great job researching. There are some really interesting bits here like the Articles of Agreement all pirates signed and the myths about pirates. What I didn't like was the format of this book. Kids nonfiction books should be really readable and eye-catching. The story here is readable and exciting, but this book is not set up to catch the reader's attention. The illustrations are all black and white and they are few and far between. This book could have been really helped by some color and a lot more illustrations. When Sandler talked about the different kinds of ships or the ports of call for pirates some pictures would have been helpful. There are also really long sidebars that take up multiple pages just stuck in the middle of chapters. There is no rhyme or reason for where these are placed and almost every single one is in the middle of a sentence or paragraph. Sidebars should be short bits of information. These are basically small chapters within chapters and the format should have been redone. It was annoying to say the least.

Joan says

More of a 3.5 but gets the extra half star for writing something boys will pick up and read. I disagree with it being considered YA as well. It certainly can be YA and the reading may be a bit challenging for grade 5-6, but that is all to the good if the kid is interested. This is a description of an infamous pirate ship that foundered off of Cape Cod, apparently a notoriously treacherous area for ships. It tells about the events leading up to the shipwreck; how one person stubbornly kept looking for the wreckage and his method for seeking it; and about what was found and what the found items tell archeologists. What I love about Sandler is that he finds exciting stuff that boys especially will pick up and then quietly lead them into an exploration of related academic fields such as archeology and marine exploration. There is a fascinating section about the development of sea bells for underwater diving. They are considerably older than I had any idea!

I have to admit I wasn't entranced by the subject but that was more my personal lack of real interest in pirates than because of any deficit in the writing. I do wish that Sandler had annotated the various maps more since I had trouble following the maps.
