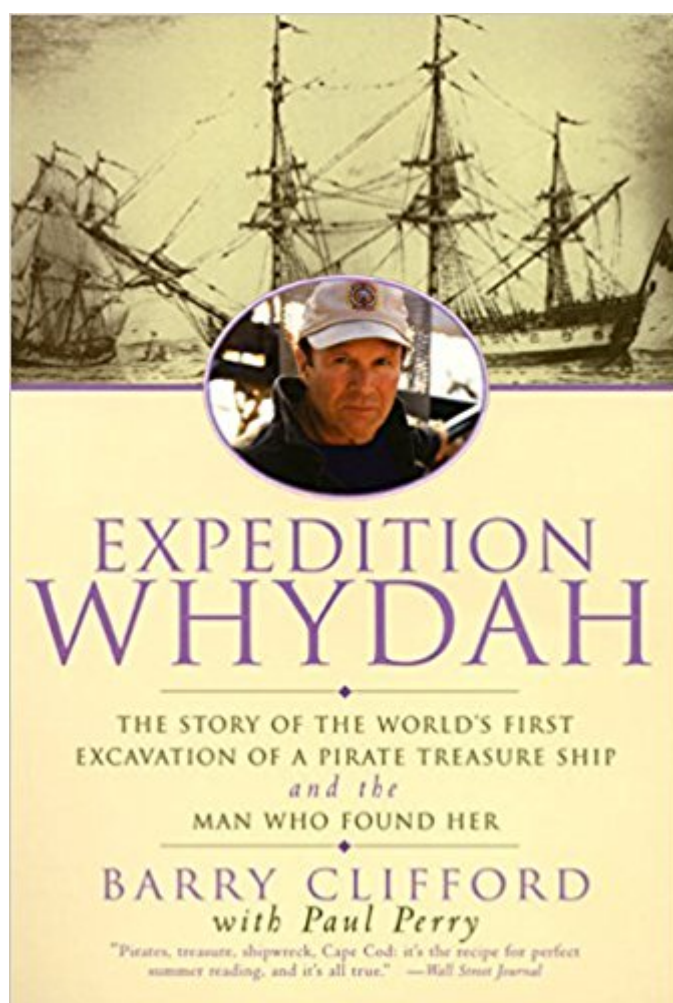


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# Expedition Whydah: The Story Of The World's First Excavation Of A Pirate Treasure Ship And The Man Who Found Her



## Synopsis

A Captivating Account of the Golden Age of Piracy, the Search for Sunken Treasure, and the Business of Underwater Exploration Bored by his successful life and obsessed with a boyhood dream of lost pirate treasure, Barry Clifford began a quest for legendary pirate Black Sam Bellamy's ship Whydah, which had supposedly wrecked off the coast of Cape Cod more than two centuries ago. Ignoring claims that he was a fool and a dreamer, Clifford pressed on, until he unbelievably found the Whydah...and then the real story begins in a spellbinding story that will capture your imagination.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sunk off the Cape Cod shoreline in the eighteenth century, the Whydah represents the only salvaged pirate ship to date. Through meticulous research and frantic fund-raising efforts, Clifford located the site of the Whydah's wreck and has thus far resurfaced more than 200,000 of its artifacts. Clifford balances tales of his own exploits with history and pirate lore, fleshing out the background of the Whydah's captain, "Black" Sam Bellamy, as well as other key pirates of that era. Clifford's insights into pirate culture will engage the lay historian, and his broad overview of pirate life will appeal to readers more familiar with that time period. Readers will also take interest in Clifford's crew, an appropriately salty bunch, yet they may find themselves wishing that Clifford had more fully explored their fractious dynamic rather than glossing over individual contentions. Although Clifford's condensation of historical events leans toward oversimplification, he still

manages to fill his account with a great deal of information that should appeal to readers with fond childhood memories of *Treasure Island* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Brendan Dowling --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Treasure hunter Clifford's (*The Pirate Prince*, 1993, etc.) second account of discovering the remains of the notorious pirate vessel *Whydah* is as overburdened with trivial detail as the wreck is with drifting sand. Co-author Perry is also a member of the expedition team. When the pirate Black Sam Bellamy captured the English slave ship *Whydah*, it no longer had its terrible human cargo aboard, but indigo and lapis, silver and gold, and a ruby rumored to be as big as a hen's egg. Bellamy turned the fleet vessel into his flagship and used it for plunder until a fierce storm sent the *Whydah* to the bottom off Cape Cod. In a conversational tone, Clifford tells the story of his infatuation with Bellamy and the *Whydah*, from his early days on Martha's Vineyard when his uncle would regale him with stories of pirate treasure to be had for the picking, right up through his uncovering of much *Whydah* booty and, more archaeologically significant, identification of the *Whydah*, the only pirate ship ever found. Unfortunately, the life of a treasure hunter is a swath of boredom punctuated by rare incandescent moments. Much of the time Clifford is out grubbing for money to finance the search and, laudably, to preserve the artifacts, but it doesn't make for edge-of-the-chair reading. Likewise, court tussles with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts over disposition of the find are as dull as the eye of a dead mackerel. More engaging, perhaps even than the treasure itself, is Clifford's interest in pirates, and particularly his piecing together of Bellamy's life (though the parallels he insinuates between himself and Bellamy are a stretch). Readers won't have to buy into his suggestion that pirates were warriors in the class struggle to appreciate why many turned to brigandry under the black flag. Despite flashes of excitement when loot surfaces and captivating historical tidbits, Clifford's story lacks drama and excitement. A National Geographic TV special based on the tale airs this spring. (photos, not seen) -- Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In the past few years, thanks largely to Johnny Depp, there has been an explosion of interest in pirates and swashbuckling sea stories. This book came out considerably before all that (1999) but manages to stir up the same degree of interest for those who are drawn to this topic. I recall being fascinated from the first; any sort of buried-treasure tale is enough to get me to pull out my metal detector and go out and dig holes in the lawn, but the mere name of the ship - "*Whydah*" - for some reason embodies the spirit of piracy. I wanted to go out and join the team, in any capacity, just to be

there when they found stuff. In the interests of that, I put aside all other current reading material and absorbed this book. I found it highly readable and very informative about a wide range of topics - the life of a pirate in 1717, the topography of Cape Cod then and now, the construction and appointments of sailing vessels ancient and modern, and the deplorably predictable barricade-building by bureaucracy in any number of ways. Unfortunately, it is built in for pencil-pushers and decision-makers - most of whom are academics only, with no practical knowledge of what they're ruling on - to impede progress, and apparently they impeded Mr Clifford on a regular basis. Barry Clifford, a salvager by trade, was infected by the story of the Whydah at an early age, by his uncle, who lived pretty much within sight of where the ship had gone down over 200 years before. The tale ate away at Clifford through years of wanderings that took him as far as Colorado but which eventually brought him home to the Cape Cod area (actual home base; Martha's Vineyard). A good part of the book is about his struggles to find funding and backers for his decision to go after the Whydah, and it was this part of the narrative I found particularly tiresome; originally he believed \$250,000 would be enough for the project, which even I thought to be airheaded - even allowing for better economic times (1982) and never having contemplated anything of that sort myself. (The research boat alone would eat that up.) It had to be more than trying, admittedly, for Mr Clifford to go before board after board arguing his case and having to constantly deal with the road blocks bureaucracy routinely sets up, but his tone began to be a little unbearable as well. Barry Clifford believes wholeheartedly in Barry Clifford. This is a good thing, when it comes to pursuing a dream to reality, but along the way it's bound to gain a host of detractors. He spends a little too much time insisting on the virtues of private archeology - some of which I do subscribe to - and a little too much time name-dropping (JFK Jr, Walter Cronkite, Prince Andrew, William Styron, etc). It is true that most of those people lived on Martha's Vineyard at the time (few others can afford to now) and were neighbours of Clifford's, but it sounded way too sensationalist to me. Taking the book on its merits, however, Mr Clifford has done an admirable job of outlining the careers of several of the most notorious pirates of the Whydah era. The drawings of the various artifacts brought up from the dig are meticulous and painstaking, right down to the insignia on the everyday dinnerware like spoons, forks, and plates. Everything appears to have been accorded the same degree of respect, right down to carpet tacks; and in his new facility at Provincetown, which houses his finds, he is apparently following all proper procedures of conservation. For that he is to be commended. This was a fast read (finished it in two days, and I am a leisurely reader) and, aside from my minor quibbles with the writing and a bit of the content (presents his case well, but needs a better co-writer to trim away the fat) I got out of it exactly what I

purchased it for - information on the Whydah, which has worked my imagination for years also; entertaining sidebars; and a glimpse into history from someone intimately involved in the process. Worth a read.

I worked as a diver for Maritime Explorations in from 84' to 89' and left out alot of people who's contributions made finding and salvaging the Whydah possible. Mike Andrews who was 1st mate when I started to work for M. E. in 84' ( the year we found the Whydah) should have been praised for his efforts on the project. When Richard "Stretch" Grey didn't know what to do, Mikey stepped up. He set the Vast Explorer II up to function and operate safely and easier than Stretch had done at the start of the project. When Mikey became capt., work on the wreck improved dramatically. There are others who's work made this project possible, but it would take a whole book to tell the full story.

Worthwhile reading... a tru story of discovery of a pirate's treasure. The search was not easy, and the story well told.

Great book

Dr Clifford was once a resident of the town I live in and went to the same school my daughter went to and all my grandkids.I think he did not get enough publicity when he found this ship and deserves all that comes for his hard work.I love history and would like to hold some of the artifacts in my hand.This book is well written and accurate.A trip to Provincetown and the museum would be a good finish to the book.

A very historical read. Exceptionally well written.Robert

My son loved his Christmas gift.

Thanks!

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