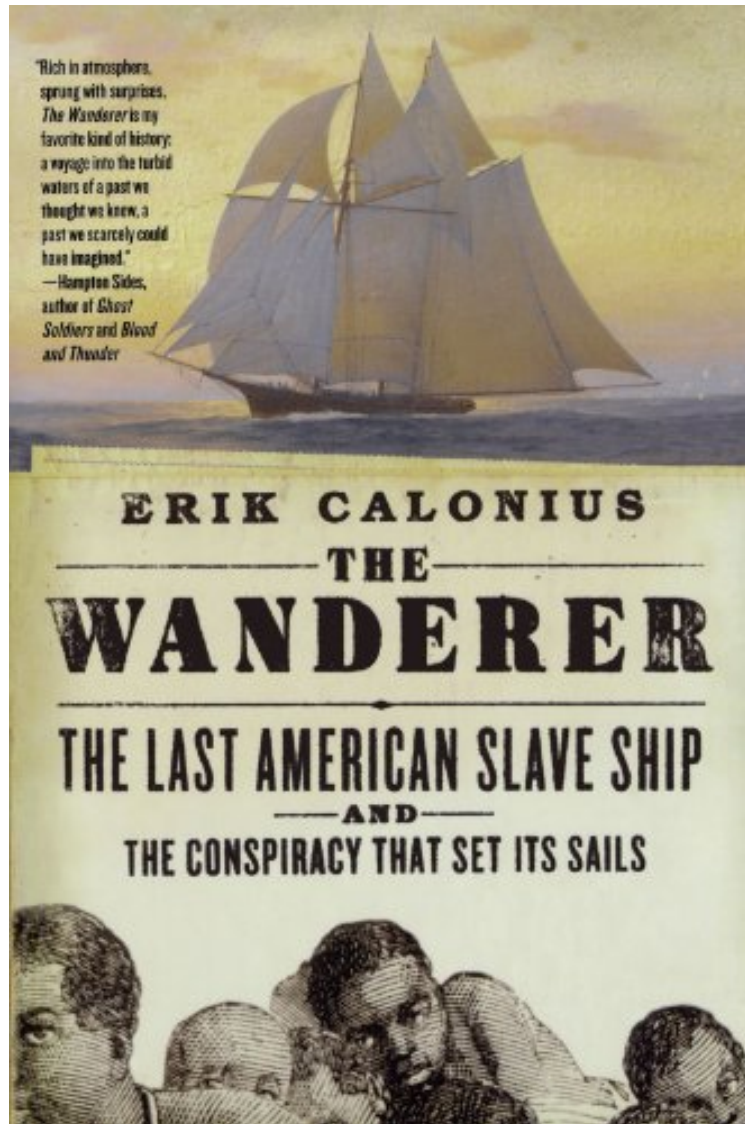


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The Wanderer: The Last American Slave Ship and the Conspiracy That Set Its Sails

Erik Calonius

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#132504 in Books Erik Calonius 2008-02-05 2008-02-05 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .3 x 5.50l, .95 #File Name: 0312343485320 pages Wanderer The Last American Slave Ship and the Conspiracy That Set Its Sails | File size: 16.Mb

Erik Calonius : The Wanderer: The Last American Slave Ship and the Conspiracy That Set Its Sails before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wanderer: The Last American Slave Ship and the Conspiracy That Set Its Sails:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An intriguing story of a majestic yacht put to devious duty By R.

Stewart While visiting Savannah recently, I became interested in the Molyneux/Henry Jackson house on Bull Street, across from Forsyth Park and home of the city's exclusive Olgethorpe Club. Jackson was the prosecutor of the federal government's case against the owners and crew of the Wanderer, the glorious schooner built in Long Island and sailing under the pennant of the New York Yacht Club. The yacht was soon re-outfitted to accommodate nearly 500 slaves in a conspiracy to advance secessionist interests of, among others, Charles Lamar of Savannah. The ship unloaded its illegal "cargo" on Jekyll Island, but the perpetrators ultimately were cleared, inciting outrage in the North and among moderates in the South. With the Democrats divided, Lincoln gained more support and was elected. The conspirators got their wish for secession, but not their dreams of an independent, pro-slavery South. This well-written book covers the history of the notorious schooner from its building to its eventual sea-floor repose and its place in American Civil War history.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Riveting

By Caroline Lim

In 1794, under George Washington's presidency, the first anti-slave act was passed wherein it became illegal for vessels to be equipped within the US, to carry on trade or traffic in slaves to foreign countries. However, it did not prevent slaves being brought into the US on non-US vessels. Further improvements were made on this act until 1820, when not only was it illegal to carry and introduce African slaves into the US on vessels, but individuals working on ships that carried slaves from Africa to the US were now considered pirates, and subject to the death penalty. Although there were Southern ship owners, after the 1820 act was passed by Congress, who continued to try bringing new slaves into the US from Africa, none were successful after The Wanderer brought the last known cargo of 400 African slaves to Jekyll Island in 1858. This book doesn't focus only on the horrific slave trade and the conditions they were forced to endure during the sea journey, but the inhuman status they were accorded by 'gentlemen' of the South. The trial of the Wanderer's captain and crew, and the ineffectiveness in the court in bringing the real conspirators to trial highlighted the degree of corruption and power in Savannah held by Charles Lamar and the other 'fire-eaters', a group of pro-slavery individuals. The trial was the catalyst that Lamar and Leonidas Spratt used to launch plans of disunion. Spratt's fiery speech is captured in full in this book, calling for secession. For a relatively slim volume, this book packs a punch and provides good researched material into so many fronts, the history of the Lamar family, starting with his father Gazaway Lamar and the Pulaski tragedy, the failed attempts before the group of conspirators' final successful plan with the Wanderer, the Northern pressure on the Southern legal system to mete out the justice they deemed fitting on slave traders, the key individuals involved in this slave trading run, and the secessionists who pushed for disunion. I wish the author could have provided more research though, on some of the slaves on board the Wanderer. He did allocate the final chapter to a man named Cilucangy, a slave who was renamed Ward Lee, who ultimately became a free man and who gained recognition and some fame in 1908 when an anthropologist from the University of Chicago interviewed him. His family have gone on to include lawyers, teachers and other professionals.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. First Rate!

By Michael E. Fitzgerald

The history of America's Civil War has a most unusual, remarkably odd theme running through it. The claim is made that the war had nothing to do with, nor was it fought over, slavery. Proponents of this line of thought state it was fought for the right of succession, the right to withdraw from a gentleman's club if you will, was fought for States Rights, was a War for Southern Independence or was a Second American Revolution, throwing off a repressive, despotic government. Early on even Lincoln insisted it was a war to reunite the States. No one it seemed wanted to deal with the ugly issue of slavery. Slavery was just too endemic, too disruptive and too tightly woven into the fabric of the United States economy to address head on. As this book clearly lays out, while decrying it, slavery was unmistakably accepted in both North and South to the point of the North's, not the South's, participation in international slavery! The term slavery was seldom officially used. The North referred to slavery freely as the South's peculiar institution. Importantly the word slavery does not appear in the US Constitution, a document which, in its original form, made provision for it. This is the first book I have ever read that unequivocally states what we all know, that the American Civil War was all about slavery. Importantly, it does not approach slavery from a hallowed, Northern abolitionist slant, i.e., Father Abraham's troops marching for John Brown and human dignity, but rather it is much more realistic, approaching from a Southern radical or fire eaters' point of view, arrogantly proud of the amazing economic driver slavery was and sincerely seeking to dramatically grow the practice in order to continue the associated economic growth. The fire eaters were uber-radicals who over time grew to be quite formidable. Like it or not they knew what they were about. From the 1820s to the 1850s the North's population grew many times faster than the South's. This faster growth shifted control of Congress, and of the Nation, to the North at the expense of the South who in the beginning at the adoption of the Constitution actually controlled Congressional representation through their slaves. The South had only two primary asset classes: Land and Slaves. To redress the shift in population growth within the House of Representatives they needed more land, thus various compromises occurred designed to maintain parity between slave and free states in the Senate as new States entered the Union. These Band-Aids satisfied moderates North and South for quite a number of years while the slave power held the majority in the House, but Southern radicals knew natural slave reproduction could not keep up with the North's immigration driven population growth. Without importing slaves, banned since 1820, or succession, the radicals knew the South's slave based economy, and their aristocratic way of life, was doomed. It was an arithmetic certainty. The simple fact was that slavery had to grow for the South to survive and that is what this excellent book is

all about. Originally led by John Calhoun, twice Vice President of the United States, Southern radicalism was slow to gain acceptance. It took 30 years for the radicals to ascend into the dominant power circles of the South and Erik Calonius does an excellent job of describing the Southern Commercial Conventions that preceeded the ultimate destruction of the Democratic Party at Charleston in April 1860. But before the reader gets there the author delves deeply into the sordid history of a racing yacht called the Wanderer, a headliner no less of the prestigious New York City Yacht Club, to illustrate all of the points discussed above. He describes the 1858 conversion of the Wanderer to a slaver, easily done in New York City then the capital of the United States' international slave trading industry, its trip to the Congo to purchase 480 fellow human beings and the delivery of the 400 that remain alive at journey's end to Tybee Island just outside of Savannah, Georgia. The resulting piracy trials, punishable by death and held concurrently with John Brown's Harpers Ferry raid and execution, pit North against South, the Buchanan Presidency against Savannah, Georgia's local politics, and truly crystallized the fundamental issue of slavery....just as the Southern radicals wanted them to. Timing was perfect. The Southern Commercial Conventions were beginning to unfold and with the Wanderer's and John Brown's trials generating white hot heat in the South, the radicals were able to engineer a Republican Presidential victory, Southern cohesion and succession. This is an altogether enlightening, gripping and marvelously informative read that clearly illustrates the road to the American Civil War was, from the get-go, all about slavery.

On Nov. 28, 1858, a ship called the Wanderer slipped silently into a coastal channel and unloaded a cargo of over 400 African slaves onto Jekyll Island, Georgia, fifty years after the African slave trade had been made illegal. It was the last ship ever to bring a cargo of African slaves to American soil. The Wanderer began life as a luxury racing yacht, but within a year was secretly converted into a slave ship, and--using the pennant of the New York Yacht Club as a diversion--sailed off to Africa. More than a slaving venture, her journey defied the federal government and hurried the nation's descent into civil war. The New York Times first reported the story as a hoax; as groups of Africans began to appear in the small towns surrounding Savannah, however, the story of the Wanderer began to leak out, igniting a fire of protest and debate that made headlines throughout the nation and across the Atlantic. As the story shifts from New York City to Charleston, to the Congo River, Jekyll Island and finally Savannah, the Wanderer's tale is played out in the slave markets of Africa, the offices of the New York Times, heated Southern courtrooms, The White House, and some of the most charming homes Southern royalty had to offer. In a gripping account of the high seas and the high life in New York and Savannah, Erik Calonius brings to light one of the most important and little remembered stories of the Civil War period.

From Publishers Weekly The slave trade became illegal in the U.S. in 1808, but for half a century after that, a black market in chattel slavery thrived. In his first book, former Newsweek correspondent Calonius tells the fascinating, heartbreaking story of the last slave ship to dock on these shores, in 1858, the Wanderer. Originally built as a sugar baron's racing yacht, it was outfitted, as the New York Times reported, for "comfort and luxury." But a trio of greedy proslavery radicals, known as "fire-eaters," transformed her from plaything to slaver: deck planks and inner framing were removed and iron tanks inserted. Then the ship headed to Africa, and eventually returned to Georgia's Jekyll Island with its human cargo. (En route, 80 Africans died.) Calonius charts the subsequent media outcry and trials, and follows the Wanderer's history through the Civil War, when, in a delectably just turn of events, the U.S. government seized the ship and turned it into a Union gunboat. This is fast-paced narrative history, and Calonius has a terrific eye for atmospheric details. Still, one wishes he had provided more analysis of the larger themes in Southern, American and Atlantic history that this tragic episode illumines. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From School Library Journal Adult/High School—Calonius tells with gripping detail the history of the black-market slave trade that persisted after the United States made the business illegal in 1808. The author focuses on the Wanderer, a speedy pleasure yacht owned by a sugar tycoon. In 1858, a trio of proslavery radicals calling themselves "the fire-eaters" transformed it into a smuggling boat and used the vessel to carry 400 captured slaves from Africa to the sales block at Jekyll Island, GA. The federal government captured the fire-eaters, uncovering a plot led by New York businessmen and Southern operatives not only to continue the slave trade, but also to split apart the country. The book follows the outcry from Northern media sources like the New York Times, the dramatic court trial, and the ironic ending when the federal government transformed the Wanderer into a gunboat for the Union during the Civil War. Photos of the key players and plans of the ship are included. Written in a fast-paced style more reminiscent of thrillers than history books, the highly accessible text digs deep into the motivations for the Civil War and illuminates some of the darkest corners of our nation's past.—Matthew L. Moffett, Pohick Regional Library, Burke, VA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Former Wall Street Journal reporter Calonius chronicles the illegal enterprise of slave trading, 38 years after it was outlawed, onboard a former luxury yacht, the Wanderer. Calonius illustrates the pre-Civil War climate of regional tension between the North and the South on the issue of slavery. Despite the tension, there was a substantial Northern element of slave traders centered in New York in 1858, when the temptations of the globalized

economy prompted Southern gentlemen owners of a yacht anchored at the New York Yacht Club to sail down the coast to Savannah off to the Caribbean, where they secured provisions for a slave-trading trip to Africa. The ship returned with more than 400 illegal slaves. The conspiracy was protected by Fire Eaters, who wanted to expand slave territory and prompt the breakup of the Union. Calonus brings to life this extraordinary story from the luxurious yacht-club salons to Southern courtrooms and the Congo, in this account that reveals the complicated legacy of slavery that has yet to be sorted out in contemporary America. Vernon Ford Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved