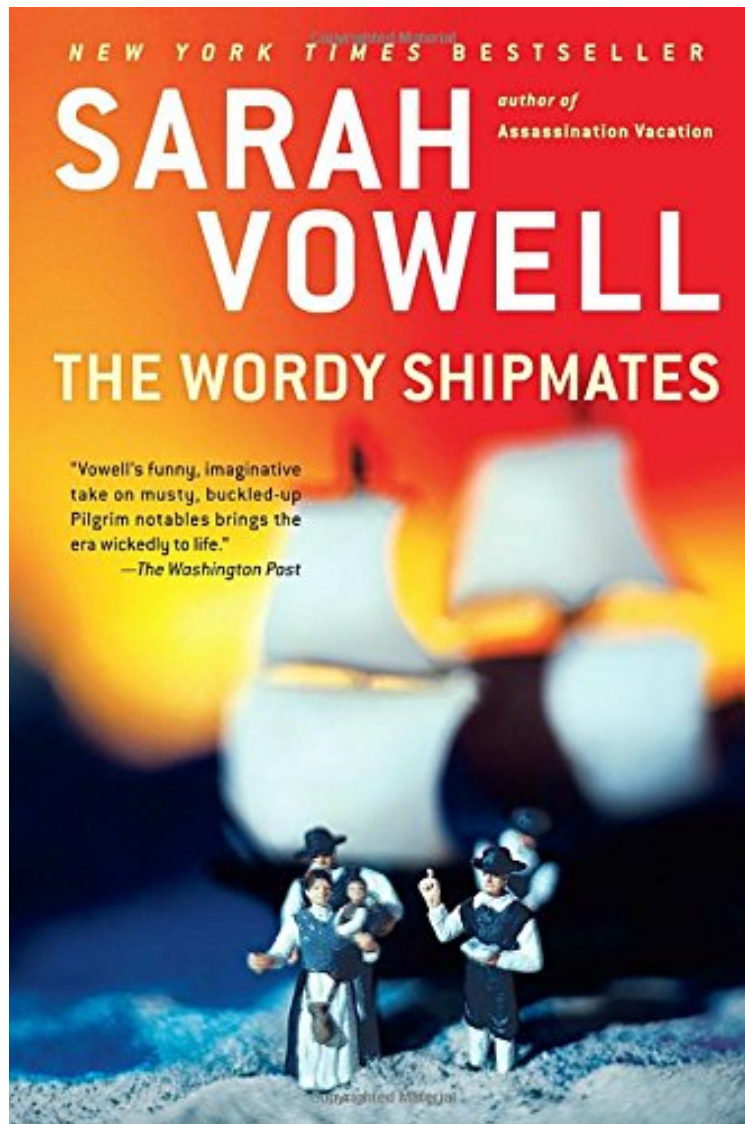


## The Wordy Shipmates

Sarah Vowell

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**Sarah Vowell : The Wordy Shipmates** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wordy Shipmates:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Learned quite a bit about Puritans through a different lens than the usual sense of Puritanical that modern America uses. By ARG Sarah Vowell is just entertaining storyteller. This time she takes us to Massachusetts Bay Colony with Winthrop, Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and the Pequot taking center stage. There is a dash of current events which ironically are probably even more impactful a decade later than they were originally. Learned quite a bit about Puritans through a different lens than the usual sense of Puritanical that

modern America uses. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. History that make you think By Naples 4 Kids Having read some of the authors other books, I hadn't realized what a solid Biblical background Miss Vowell has until I read Wordy Shipmates. Her understanding of Scripture gives her an advantage in understanding the Puritans who looked to the Bible to find the answers to much of Life's questions. When you learn about the Puritans and the Pilgrims in school, they seem so other worldly - but the way this books reads you see that they could be petty and uncharitable but you still admire them for their willingness to face hardships in the name of their beliefs and also for how truly ahead of their time some of them were! The times were grim in the material sense but the colonial atmosphere proved to be a fertile and lively place for theological revolutionaries. The author is part Native American and naturally takes a harsh view of the way the original Americans were treated by these "religious" newcomers - (although as I'm reading Jared Diamond's book Collapse just now I'm reading about some other cultures that did much worse) - the Massachusetts Bay Colony still managed to succeed despite some of the awful blunders committed. I recommend this book to anyone who wants to be entertained and educated at the same time! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Well researched and witty By Maria Kaplun I was hoping to like Sarah Vowell's writing after seeing her more than once interviewed on The Daily Show and hearing her read passages from her books. Her sizeable intellect, charming humor, and quick wit are the reasons I wanted to read The Wordy Shipmates; the lovely, unique mannerism of her voice is the reason I bought her audio book when I needed one for a bus trip -- and this set of 6 CD's (7 hours of Sarah occasionally interrupted by guest-read quotations) did not disappoint on any account. The book is mostly devoted to the founding of the Massachusetts Bay colony but also takes us through the beginning of Rhode Island and Connecticut. As deeply informed as it is possible to be about the spirituality, mentality, motivations, and the everyday happenings in the lives of the colonists -- not to mention the historical context surrounding them -- Sarah Vowell did not write an ode of praise to the Puritans nor a judgment of them from the hindsight of modernity. Her analysis of New England's roots, prides, and failures and what they mean for us today is nuanced, sensitive, and sophisticated, and her way of telling the story is so full of humanity that I found myself going from loving John Winthrop with a fervent love to hating him bitterly and back again. With the exception of, perhaps, a bit of choppiness in changing voices for very short quotes, I have no reservations in recommending this book to anyone with interest in American history, in religion, in politics or politica science, or in the general questions of human nature and social coexistence. If you get this, however, be prepared to be challenged, to be provoked, to be questioned -- and to question in return. If you do not, you will have missed the point.

In this New York Times bestseller, the author of Lafayette in the Somewhat United States "brings the [Puritan] era wickedly to life" (Washington Post). To this day, America views itself as a Puritan nation, but Sarah Vowell investigates what that means--and what it should mean. What she discovers is something far different from what their uptight shoebuckles- and-corn reputation might suggest--a highly literate, deeply principled, and surprisingly feisty people, whose story is filled with pamphlet feuds, witty courtroom dramas, and bloody vengeance. Vowell takes us from the modern-day reenactment of an Indian massacre to the Mohegan Sun casino, from old-timey Puritan poetry, where "righteousness" is rhymed with "wilderness," to a Mayflower-themed waterslide. Throughout, The Wordy Shipmates is rich in historical fact, humorous insight, and social commentary by one of America's most celebrated voices.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Essayist and public radio regular Vowell (Assassination Vacation) revisits America's Puritan roots in this witty exploration of the ways in which our country's present predicaments are inextricably tied to its past. In a style less colloquial than her previous books, Vowell traces the 1630 journey of several key English colonists and members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Foremost among these men was John Winthrop, who would become governor of Massachusetts. While the Puritans who had earlier sailed to Plymouth on the Mayflower were separatists, Winthrop's followers remained loyal to England, spurred on by Puritan Reverend John Cotton's proclamation that they were God's chosen people. Vowell underscores that the seemingly minute differences between the Plymouth Puritans and the Massachusetts Puritans were as meaningful as the current Sunni/Shia Muslim rift. Gracefully interspersing her history lesson with personal anecdotes, Vowell offers reflections that are both amusing (colonial history lesson via The Brady Bunch) and tender (watching New Yorkers patiently waiting in line to donate blood after 9/11). (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Bookmarks Magazine Most reviewers found Vowell to be a lively guide through the frequently misunderstood Puritan period. Several wrote that she will draw in readers who might not otherwise pick up a book on the subject: what could be better than history with the voice of Violet from The Incredibles? But others found Vowell's treatment to be less dexterous; she slips in jokes where they don't make sense and too often explains the past through pop culture references despite her clear understanding of it through original texts. Those who enjoy traditional history books may be dissatisfied. Yet, as one reviewer noted, Vowell's irreverence frees her to explore the lives of neglected figures such as Anne Hutchinson and to illuminate aspects of the Puritan era that more serious authors might have missed. Copyright 2008 Bookmarks Publishing LLC From Booklist \*Starred \* Although Puritanism is conflated with

modern religious fundamentalism and its disregard for any learning that doesn't come from the Bible, Vowell argues passionately that Puritans were as enamored of wisdom and knowledge as religious virtue. Focusing on the Puritans who settled in 1692 in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Vowell laments the image of Puritans as "boring killjoys" when in fact they were "fascinating killjoys" who, aside from their belief that Catholics were going to hell, were much more open to new ideas than we've been led to think. Drawing on letters, essays, and sermons, Vowell offers a penetrating look at the tensions between John Winthrop, John Cotton, Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and others as they argued about the role of religion in government and everyday life. They saw themselves as God's chosen people, a credo that set the tone for American history and notions of manifest destiny that have led to all manner of imposition on other lands and cultures. But they also vehemently debated separation of church and state and founded Harvard, even as they pondered the destiny of what Winthrop referred to as the "shining city on the hill." A book dense with detail, insight, and humor. --Vanessa Bush