[**Nelson Cooke**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1918-nelson-cooke/)

* Deck Hand
* 
* 
* Member
* 74 posts
* Location:At sea
* Interests:ladies, theft, baseball

[Posted March 30, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=184258) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=184258)

Has any authentic pirate's diary ever been published?

[**Capn\_Enigma**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/139-capn_enigma/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 432 posts

[Posted March 31, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=184320) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=184320)

Define authentic.

Define diary.

Else: Hawkins, Drake (nephew), Exquemelin, Ringrose, Dampier, just for starters.

[**Fox**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

[Posted March 31, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=184321) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=184321)

One might add define "pirate".

As far as I know no authenticated pirate diary/journal from the GAoP has been published, or even exists. However, depending on what kind of information you are hoping to find you might do just as well with accounts from privateers of the period. Woodes Rogers' account of his privateering voyage into the Pacific has been published, as has George Shelvocke's of his voyage, and William Betagh's account of the Shelvocke voyage also.

Not diaries per se, but several depositions by pirates have been published in various different works - for a good rundown of depositions from Avery's, Kidd's, Quelch's and Bellamy's careers check "Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period" by J Franklin Jameson (ed.)

[**Daniel**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/352-daniel/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 652 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:McLean, VA
* Interests:History, pirates, fiction, writing, writing historical fiction about pirates, jokes, games, law.

[Posted March 31, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=184325) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=184325)

I agree with Foxe and Capn Enigma with one small addition.

There is an [excerpt](http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/historyfiction/document/joh/89_image.html) from Blackbeard's "journal" in Charles Johnson's *General History of the Pyrates*. If it is real and not a fancy of Johnson's, then it runs as so:

 Quote

*Such a Day, Rum all out: — Our Company somewhat sober: — A damn'd Confusion amongst us! — Rogues a plotting; — great Talk of Separation. — So I look'd sharp for a Prize; — such a Day took one, with a great deal of Liquor on Board, so kept the Company hot, damned hot, then all Things went well again.*

Since Blackbeard's sloop *Adventure* was taken largely intact, with even his letter from the deputy governor of North Carolina recovered, Johnson's statement that Blackbeard's journal was captured is plausible. But except for that one excerpt, the journal is apparently lost to history. Nowhere have I seen any portion of it reproduced except the one Johnson reports.

[**Nelson Cooke**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1918-nelson-cooke/)

* Deck Hand
* 
* 
* Member
* 74 posts
* Location:At sea
* Interests:ladies, theft, baseball

[Posted March 31, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=184546) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=184546)

Enigma, by authentic, I mean something about which there wasn't much suspicion that it was fake. Foxe, I plan to look into both the Rogers and Shelvocke. Daniel, the Blackbeard entry makes me wonder if in fact they ran out of rum. Interesting either way.

Thanks, bloaks, a rum for each of you:



[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted March 3, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406615) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406615)

 On 3/31/2006 at 8:42 AM, Daniel said:

I agree with Foxe and Capn Enigma with one small addition.

There is an [excerpt](http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/historyfiction/document/joh/89_image.html) from Blackbeard's "journal" in Charles Johnson's *General History of the Pyrates*. If it is real and not a fancy of Johnson's, then it runs as so:

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*Such a Day, Rum all out: — Our Company somewhat sober: — A damn'd Confusion amongst us! — Rogues a plotting; — great Talk of Separation. — So I look'd sharp for a Prize; — such a Day took one, with a great deal of Liquor on Board, so kept the Company hot, damned hot, then all Things went well again.*

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According to an article on [About.com](http://latinamericanhistory.about.com/od/Pirates/p/Blackbeard-Truth-Legends-Fiction-And-Myth.htm), the Journal never existed and Johnson made that up. Where does that come from? The author lists Cordingly's *Under the Black Flag* and Konstam's *The World Atlas of Pirates* as references. Is it in one of those? (I don't own Komstam's book. I'll try to remember to check Cordingly if I can find it.)

It does sort of make sense, though. I can't believe if Blackbeard left a journal with such interesting comments in it that more of it wouldn't be published *somewhere*. Unless it's in a private collection or something. (That would make a helluva McGuffin for a crime novel, you know...or a book about treasure hunting. The movie could star Nicholas Cage.)

[**Swashbuckler 1700**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20630-swashbuckler-1700/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,115 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Europe
* Interests:pyrates, pryvateers, naval military and other history, different books, good movies, music (a little bit), drawing, games,...

[Posted March 3, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406618) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406618)

 On 3/3/2012 at 10:18 AM, Mission said:

 On 3/31/2006 at 8:42 AM, Daniel said:

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There is an [excerpt](http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/historyfiction/document/joh/89_image.html) from Blackbeard's "journal" in Charles Johnson's *General History of the Pyrates*. If it is real and not a fancy of Johnson's, then it runs as so:

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I personally don't give too much tribute to Johnson or even these newer writers Gordingly and Constam. Still b**oth have lots of good stuff in their books** but there is never a book which people should read without some criticism. Gordingly has been tricked with pirate flags etc. and Constam cannot even remember dates many of his books claims stuff like Tsede Bonnet died in 1719 or Bart Roberts in 1723.... Still like I said **those writers are quite good....**

**Edited March 3, 2012 by Swashbuckler 1700**

[**Swashbuckler 1700**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20630-swashbuckler-1700/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,115 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Europe
* Interests:pyrates, pryvateers, naval military and other history, different books, good movies, music (a little bit), drawing, games,...

[Posted March 3, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406619) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406619)

 On 3/31/2006 at 7:06 AM, Foxe said:

One might add define "pirate".

As far as I know no authenticated pirate diary/journal from the GAoP has been published, or even exists. However, depending on what kind of information you are hoping to find you might do just as well with accounts from privateers of the period. Woodes Rogers' account of his privateering voyage into the Pacific has been published, as has George Shelvocke's of his voyage, and William Betagh's account of the Shelvocke voyage also.

Not diaries per se, but several depositions by pirates have been published in various different works - for a good rundown of depositions from Avery's, Kidd's, Quelch's and Bellamy's careers check "Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period" by J Franklin Jameson (ed.)

I think pirate diaries would be burned by pirates if they got captured... Image in court there is dang good evidence agains you if your diary has fallen to court's hads and in the diary there reads someting like "and in 7.11 we captured this vessel" etc...

**Edited March 3, 2012 by Swashbuckler 1700**

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted March 3, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406620) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406620)

 On 3/3/2012 at 10:50 AM, Swashbuckler 1700 said:

I personally don't give too much tribute to Johnson or even these newer writers Gordingly and Constam. Still both have lots of good stuff in their books but there is never a book which people should read without some criticism. Gordingly has been tricked with pirate flags etc. and Constam cannot even remember dates many of his books claims stuff like Tsede Bonnet died in 1719 or Bart Roberts in 1723.... Still like I said those writers are quite good....

Gee you've become jaded. Not *everything* in those books is wrong. If you don't trust the General History *at all*, you can't really build much of an image of what it must have been like to be a pirate, which you have stated in another post is your intention in asking all your questions. There are multiple errors in other period books and documents, as the Alexander Hamilton discussion proved. If you can't accept anything that isn't completely, provably accurate no reference is going to be good enough for you. (Even Foxe makes mistakes...)

[**Swashbuckler 1700**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20630-swashbuckler-1700/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,115 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Europe
* Interests:pyrates, pryvateers, naval military and other history, different books, good movies, music (a little bit), drawing, games,...

[Posted March 3, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406621) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406621)

 On 3/3/2012 at 11:46 AM, Mission said:

 On 3/3/2012 at 10:50 AM, Swashbuckler 1700 said:

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No I don't mean that. **I personally believe that there is much more true than false in general history**. **same with most other books** like "Kordingly's. everybody makes mistakes including me, you, Foxe, Constam and Kordingly... maybe **I used too extreme language** because English is not my mother tongue... **I trust in some point books and people** but I just ment that people should not blindly believe everyting... fortunately **all here are smart people**...

**Edited March 3, 2012 by Swashbuckler 1700**

[**Fox**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

[Posted March 3, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406626) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406626)

 On 3/3/2012 at 11:46 AM, Mission said:

(Even Foxe makes mistakes...)

I resemble that remark!

No, Johnson's far from perfect, and I've never yet read a book on pirate history that I couldn't pick some hole in or other, including my own.

Is Blackbeard's journal entry authentic? It doesn't seem right to me, but I realise what a terrible basis that is for an argument. If Blackbeard's journal had survived then it would most likely have been stored in the records office at Williamsburg VA, which suffered several fires before anyone really thought to look there for Blackbeard related stuff. Maynard doesn't mention finding a journal specifically, but he is known to have recovered several documents from the *Adventure*, which conceivably could have included the journal. Of course, even if Maynard did recover Blackbeard's journal it doesn't follow that Johnson really quoted from it. I will say this however, the Blackbeard journal entry is the only journal "quoted" in the GHP, and if any pirates' journal was likely to have survived it would have been Blackbeard's (because we do know that other incriminating documents were recovered from his ship). I don't believe it myself, but I'm not prepared to rule it out.

[**Cascabel**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/30-cascabel/)

* Evil Drooling Henchman
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 848 posts
* Gender:Male

[Posted March 4, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406630) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406630)

All of this makes me wonder, why a pirate would bother to keep a journal or diary of any kind. Certainly not to be able to show a higher authority that he had been busy doing his job, like a naval or merchant captain might need to. A logbook would hardly be important for the same reason, other than to make note of important details like location of sandbars, shoals and the like. Why keep a written record of your criminal activity ?

>>>> Cascabel

[**peglegstrick**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11477-peglegstrick/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,203 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Funston Ga

[Posted March 4, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406632) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406632)

***I agree with Cascabel....keeping a writen record of your prizes would be a straight path to a noose....***

[**Swashbuckler 1700**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20630-swashbuckler-1700/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,115 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Europe
* Interests:pyrates, pryvateers, naval military and other history, different books, good movies, music (a little bit), drawing, games,...

[Posted March 4, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406634) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406634)

Diaries and list's of prizes and loot would open way to check which loot come from which vessel (and when but that is no important) and then ensure that no one is cheating while dividing the spoils. So if there was't need to diary there was need for somekind of accounting that in court's hands would be good evidence against pirates (so would be pirate articles and they wrote those still). I say that that kind of logic don't always apply to pirates e.g "why use pirate flag and tell others that you are pirate". but you have good point there and I do not mock anyone.

**Edited March 5, 2012 by Swashbuckler 1700**

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,082 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted March 4, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406635) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406635)

Curiously, Blackbeard seemed almost resigned to his fate when he heard it was coming.

“The Night before he was kill’d, he sat up and drank till the Morning, with some of his own Men, and the Master of a Merchant-Man; notwithstanding his having had Intelligence of the two Sloops coming to attack him, as has been before observ’d.” (MacKlecan, p. 18)

It does not seem like the behavior of someone who cared if they found his Journal, agreeing with what Foxe said. One thought I had was that if a pirate Captain were to keep such, it may have been out of habit.

Based on the entry as it is recorded, this does not sound like the Journaling of someone who was concerned how the spoils should be divided. (Remember that according to the General History, Blackbeard was planning to take the bulk of the treasure himself and he grounded one of the ships and marooned several of the men rather than give them their share.)

In fact, it doesn't really sound like the comments that would be made by a Captain who wanted his men to read them. (He worries in print about them men plotting against him. He probably wouldn't want them to know that he knew of their designs if if he felt his fears were real.)

[**Swashbuckler 1700**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20630-swashbuckler-1700/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,115 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Europe
* Interests:pyrates, pryvateers, naval military and other history, different books, good movies, music (a little bit), drawing, games,...

[Posted March 4, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406636) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406636)

 On 3/4/2012 at 11:40 AM, Mission said:

Curiously, Blackbeard seemed almost resigned to his fate when he heard it was coming.

“The Night before he was kill’d, he sat up and drank till the Morning, with some of his own Men, and the Master of a Merchant-Man; notwithstanding his having had Intelligence of the two Sloops coming to attack him, as has been before observ’d.” (MacKlecan, p. 18)

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In fact, it doesn't really sound like the comments that would be made by a Captain who wanted his men to read them. (He worries in print about them men plotting against him. He probably wouldn't want them to know that he knew of their designs if if he felt his fears were real.)

Well if his intelligence was good it would have told that those sloops had no cannons and BB thought perhaps that he and his crew could win with little hangover. He was almost about to won but then there came that Maynar's surprise of hidden men. BB perhaps didn't believe that he would get captured and thus didn't destroyed E.g letter from Tobias Knight. I am not very sure how many sailors could read or write but certainly only few and thus the risk that crew would read captains books was minimum. BB was apparently well educated and because of his talents he got the captains place. Maybe that entry of GHoP is real and BB was writing that stuff just because he was bored (not new on sailing ships to get bored) and got pen and paper in his hands....

[**Fox**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

[Posted March 4, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=406644) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=406644)

It is surprising just how much paperwork pirates did keep. As well as the obvious articles, log books would probably have been kept by any trans-oceanic pirates because they serve a navigational purpose, they're not just about reporting to one's superiors.

We also know that at least Sam Bellamy and Ned Low's ships were run by 'watch bills', which in the usual run of things detailed who was in which watch and often what their duties were. This too makes perfect sense because it enabled commanders (pirate or otherwise) to ensure that the members of the crew were put to the best use.

As far as keeping a record of captured ships, again, we know that on Bellamy's ship at least, the quartermaster kept an account book.

As for literacy, that's a thorny issue made more difficult by the fact that 'literacy' itself is a 19th century construct. In the 17th and 18th centuries reading and writing were seperate and distinct skills, though obviously linked by the written word. Many people could read but not write, many people could write their own name but nothing else, some people could write their own name but not even read. About 2/3 of lower-deck seamen could write their own name, and virtually all officers could, but that only actually tells us how many people could write their name, nothing more. What we can say is that anyone who wanted to progress even as high as boatswain would have need to be able to read and write in the course of their professional undertakings, and that everyone in England and the English colonies had at least theoretical access to free schooling. Not everybody went to school of course, but there's no way of enumerating how many children were educated in the home. At school, reading was taught first, followed by writing, and finally by numeracy - they weren't taught side by side as they are now - so anyone who had had even the most basic schooling would be able to read to some extent, even if they couldn't write a word.

[**Capn Bob**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/8008-capn-bob/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 559 posts
* Location:Akron OH...which is not where I want to be...
* Interests:Piracy, fishing, piracy, obsidian, gold, piracy, flintknapping (am I the world's first "Caveman Pirate"?), gold, piracy, gold obsidian...and a good slab of bbq ribs.

[Posted March 17, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=findComment&comment=407109) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7180-pirate-diary/&do=reportComment&comment=407109)

I'm wondering...has anyone ever gone through, I mean, \*really\* gone through, the Alexander Spotswood papers? I'm assuming that Maynard, blast his eyes, would have delivered up any ship's logs he may have found to the Governor, along with the papers incriminating Tobias Knight, et al...

Or, considering Blackbeard's ship at the time was the sloop Adventure, and not the Queen Anne's Revenge, would he still have logs dealing with the QAR just laying about, as it were?

Inquiring minds want to know...

 On 3/3/2012 at 6:16 PM, Foxe said:

 On 3/3/2012 at 11:46 AM, Mission said:

(Even Foxe makes mistakes...)

I resemble that remark!

No, Johnson's far from perfect, and I've never yet read a book on pirate history that I couldn't pick some hole in or other, including my own.

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