[**Mourn**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1935-mourn/)

* Bilge Rat
* 
* 
* Member
* 1 post
* Location:Boonton, NJ
* Interests:Piracy, Renaissance Faires, Pennsic Wars, Penssic Wars...oh yeah Pennsic Wars

([IP: 67.84.206.159](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=67.84.206.159)) ·

[Posted December 15, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79719) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79719)

I was wondering if anyone has been able to find any info or pictures of tattoos commonly worn by pirates, or brands used to mark a Pirate?

Thanks,

Mourn

Clank meh!

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=edit)

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,569 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

([IP: 81.103.219.22](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=81.103.219.22)) · · 

[Posted December 15, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79722) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79722)

Hi Mourn,

I'm pretty certain the pirate brand thing is a POTC invention. possibly branding pirates was done in the middle ages, but by the 17th century pirates were generally either pardoned or hanged - I don't know of any nation that branded pirates.

Tattoos are similar. You've gotta remember that pirates were just people and generally did not go against fashion (sure, some did, but they were the exception) and tattooing was just not something people, even sailors, often did in the 18th century, so "commonly worn" tattoos would basically be non-existent.

Where pirates (or other seamen) did get tattoos they would probably be mostly the local tribal designs of the area where they got their tattoo done. I can email some pictures of 16thC American Indian tattoo designs if that would be of any help, though they would probably not really be applicable to pirates from the Golden Age, certainly not "common". 

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79722)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79722_menu)

[**JoshuaRed**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/81-joshuared/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,342 posts

([IP: 207.172.120.190](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=207.172.120.190)) · · 

[Posted December 15, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79723) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79723)

Tattooing really belongs with the sailors of the late 18th/19thc century. In the era of pirates Europeans didn't take to tattooing. The VERY FEW mentions of it I've found from the 17th/early 18th Centuries merely refer to it in passing as having a "painted body", or describing how various indians would "paint their skin by pricking it and rubbing pigment in". (I'm paraphrasing, but that's pretty much what they said)

Some believed it was the mark of the devil. So unless a sailor spent an amount of time living with indians, he probably would not have been tattooed. I'm not saying that there were no sailors with tattoos, but just that it's tough to prove it. It's just like the great earring debate further down this board. :)

Branding is another matter - it was common punishment up until the early 18th C. I haven't personally read accounts of any pirates being branded...but I did have a funny article about a "sodomist" being branded with a big S. 

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79723)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79723_menu)

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

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,083 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.

([IP: 24.247.198.104](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.247.198.104)) · · 

[Posted December 15, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79745) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79745)

Yeah, the punishment for piracy was *pretty clear* and it was a whole lot more drastic than branding...however, pirates might have gotten themselves branded for committing crimes other than piracy.

As for tattoos, I'm with Foxe and Joshua Red. Most pirates probably would have avoided them as that was not the style at the time.

**Edited December 15, 2004 by Mission**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79745)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79745_menu)

[**corsair2k3**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/82-corsair2k3/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 167 posts

([IP: 24.91.202.2](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.91.202.2)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79776) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79776)

Greetings,

For a very short period of time in the mid 1600's, the East India Company conducted piracy trials and other criminal proceedings in its assigned jurisdiction.

I don't THINK they were allowed to inflict capital punishment, however.

*Charles Gray in PIRATES OF THE EASTERN SEAS discusses this, and mentions several cases where convicted pirates were branded with a "P"*

*As to tattoos: I can't think of any pirates specifically mentioned as having them. But the colonial newspapers of the time (1715-1725) would advertise runaway servants and sailors with descriptions (this would be a good source of info for re-enactors)*

*I've run across mention of tatoos in these descriptions. The ones that stick out in my mind were the Jerusalem Cross, Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden with the Serpent, and the Crucifixion.*

*My focus of research was elsewhere, so I didn't pay a whole lot of attention--I'm sure mention of more designs might be found.*

*Also worthwhile for the description of clothing worn.*

*Regards,*

*The Corsair*

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79776)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79776_menu)

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,569 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

([IP: 81.103.145.129](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=81.103.145.129)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79777) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79777)

Nice one Corsair (again!) 

Just out of interest, what period and part of the world is Charles Gray discussing when he mentions branding?

Also, being on the wrong side of the pond for looking at Colonial newspapers would anyone be kind enough to a: point me in the direction of published versions of them obtainable over here, b: point me at a weblink for transcripts of some, c: share some of their own research with me, or d: all of the above? I'll be your best friend 

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79777)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79777_menu)

[**Pynch**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1780-pynch/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 131 posts
* Location:On the Western Shore of the Chesapeake
* Interests:Illustration, Tattooing, Piping, Shanty-singing, Motorcycles, Kayaking, Renfaires, the Fam, plotting my move to New Orleans, corsets, beer/beer/tequilla/wine/beer, boots, cramming 48 hours in a 24 hour day, and of course, all things Pyrate.<br><br>I am also a tattoo artist with<br>britishink tattoo studio & gallery<br>508 H Street, NE<br>Washington, DC<br>my portfolio: http://www.chesapink.com<br>the studio: http://www.britishinkdc.com<br><br>

([IP: 68.48.251.221](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=68.48.251.221)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79784) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79784)

 Mourn said:

I was wondering if anyone has been able to find any info or pictures of tattoos commonly worn by pirates, or brands used to mark a Pirate?

Thanks,

Mourn

Clank meh!

Hey Mourn,

Forgive the impending, long winded, tattoo lecture...but you've just sailed into my waters! :)

Ahem. ::clears her throat and stands on a barrell or rum::

Although tattooing has enjoyed popularity in all cultures, I'm assuming you're looking for dermagraphic art in Western European Culture.

Pre-Celtic Iberians in the British Isles, both sea-going and landlocked, tattooed ceremonially. The Gauls, Danes, Norse and Saxons tattooed family symbols and crests. Unfortunately, this practice ended in 787 AD with Pope Hadrian banned the art form, bugger 'im.

Tattooing still survived in Britain until the 1066 Norman Invasion. The Normans scorned the idea of marking one's hide for life. On a side note, legend has it that King Harold was heavily tattooed and when his body was recovered from the Battle of Hastings, it was identified by the tattoo of the name "Edith" over his heart.

Tattooing reemerged in Western Europe in 1691 in "civilized society". William Dampier, sailor and explorer, brough Prince Giolo, a heavily tattooed Polynesian, to London where he became a popular attraction at exhibition. It was probably the first time in six centuries that anyone in London had SEEN a tattoo.

Now sailors (any mayhaps latent Pirates) who had traveled to Tahiti with Captain Cook in 1771, began to come back with these intriguing, traditional tribal talismans etched into their hides, sparking the first tattoo rage in England, especially among Cook's upper class associations. The fad was short lived, due to the fact that this tattooing was done by hand and quite frankly, hurt like hell.

The true popularity of tattoos cambe about after Samuel O'Reillly (places her hand over her heart for the blessed Irishman), invented the first electric tattoo machine. Tattoos became a little less painful, faster and easier to apply. By the turn of the 20th century, the tattoo trade in any port wa a brisk one, with the most popular flash (art displayed in a shop to choose from) depicted themes of the sea, bravery, and of course, women.

Tattoos have long been identified with the tough, the fringe, and the non-conformist. That may be where the link to Piracy can be found, or more likely invented. Try as I might, I can not find any defined historical, piratical image for 16th-18th century alternative seagoing entrepeneurs. That's why I invent my own.

Traditional sailors tattoos include sparrows, representing homecoming, pigs and chickens, propellers, anchors, ships of all sorts, and the ever popular Nautical star, like the one I wear over my shoulder...

::bows and jumps off the barrell to get back to work, afore Cap'n Pike keel hauls her::

sources: George Burchett, "Memoirs of a Tattooist", Oldbourne Book Company, London, 1958.

Amy Krakow, "The Total Tattoo Book", Warner Books, New York, NY, 1994

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79784)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79784_menu)

[**corsair2k3**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/82-corsair2k3/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 167 posts

([IP: 4.156.72.196](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=4.156.72.196)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79816) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79816)

 Foxe said:

Nice one Corsair (again!) 

Just out of interest, what period and part of the world is Charles Gray discussing when he mentions branding?

Also, being on the wrong side of the pond for looking at Colonial newspapers would anyone be kind enough to a: point me in the direction of published versions of them obtainable over here, b: point me at a weblink for transcripts of some, c: share some of their own research with me, or d: all of the above? I'll be your best friend 

Greetings,

EIC factories west coast of India c.1670's-1680's.

As to colonial newspapers for perusal in Great Britain:

Originals might be held at the British Library and/or the PRO.

There are microfilms of early colonial newspapers which might be available at very good university libraries.

Not sure of anything on-line.

Regards,

The Corsair

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79816)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79816_menu)

[**corsair2k3**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/82-corsair2k3/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 167 posts

([IP: 4.156.72.159](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=4.156.72.159)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79822) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79822)

Here's an example of the kind of advertisements that were placed in the colonial newspapers regarding runaway servants and sailors:

This one appeared in the American Weekly Mercury of March 17, 1720 and was with regard to Samuel Benbrook...

""a North Country Man aged about 21 Years, Short Brownish Hair, Round-Faced. He has on one hand blue S.F. in blue letters and on the other hand blue Spots, and upon one arm our Saviour upon the Cross and on the other Adam and Eve, all supposed to be done in Gunpowder. He is a Saylor "

Regards,

The Corsair

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79822)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79822_menu)

[**redhand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/118-redhand/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 184 posts

([IP: 206.163.124.52](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=206.163.124.52)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79850) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79850)

The French seemed too adapt to tattooing, or

permanently marking themselves (tattu being a polonysian word)

after the fashion of the indians in the new world. French sailors of

the mid-to late 18th century marked themselves with nautical stars

as well as all manner of religious markings; cruciforms, hearts, fish,

and lettering such as INRI, and etc.

More than likely these were french sailors

who were catholic. The men who traded with the indians

were also more likely to adopt indian style tattoos, as well as

the religious themed ones. The french for whatever reason

seemed more willingly influenced by the native culture,

including tattooing than did their english competition.

I guess that puritanical or Calvanist religious upbringing

squelched the "desire" for marking themselves, as far

as the common 17th & early 18th century englishman goes.

-RH

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79850)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79850_menu)

[**JoshuaRed**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/81-joshuared/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,342 posts

([IP: 207.172.120.190](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=207.172.120.190)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79864) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79864)

Excellent posts, Pynch et al!

Foxe I have some great period colonial newspapers with "classifieds" seeking runaways...I'll see if I can pull up the sites and post the links here. Might take some digging as I haven't been to them in some time.

As far as punishment for piracy, it might also be worth noting that in many places during the mid-late 17th C., piracy was not a capitol offense, therefore not punishable by death. I could be wrong, but I believe for instance that Massachusets imprisoned the same men repeatedly for piracy and never hung them. I'll have to dig that source out too.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79864)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79864_menu)

[**redhand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/118-redhand/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 184 posts

([IP: 206.163.124.52](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=206.163.124.52)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79876) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79876)

Corsair-

The Virginia Runaways is an excellent site to

find reference for various things, especially clothing

descriptions, but mostly from the mid-Atlantic states,

with almost exclusive emphasis on Virginia.

There are some other extant examples of "runaway" ads,

from various other colonies....I'll try and find the links also.

Here's the virginia runaway link[virginia runaways page](http://http/etext.lib.virginia.edu/subjects/runaways/)

They cover the 1730s up through the american revolution

Hope this helps. Also check out www.historicaltrekking.com

on their "Links" page they have a resource section, that has

merchants and other listings you may find helpful

Cheers

Redhand

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79876)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79876_menu)

[**redhand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/118-redhand/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 184 posts

([IP: 206.163.124.52](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=206.163.124.52)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79877) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79877)

OK, sorry....try this...freakin computer operator! 

[My Webpage](http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/subjects/runaways)

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79877)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79877_menu)

[**corsair2k3**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/82-corsair2k3/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 167 posts

([IP: 24.91.202.2](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.91.202.2)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79881) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79881)

 JoshuaRed said:

Excellent posts, Pynch et al!

Foxe I have some great period colonial newspapers with "classifieds" seeking runaways...I'll see if I can pull up the sites and post the links here. Might take some digging as I haven't been to them in some time.

As far as punishment for piracy, it might also be worth noting that in many places during the mid-late 17th C., piracy was not a capitol offense, therefore not punishable by death. I could be wrong, but I believe for instance that Massachusets imprisoned the same men repeatedly for piracy and never hung them. I'll have to dig that source out too.

Greetings,

Taking this a step further:

It wasn't just Massachusetts. There were seldom more than 4 pirates hanged out of any captured crew till 1718 when the British government got serious about suppressing piracy.

Prior to that, captured pirates would simply be sent to the nearest warship what needed crew.

Regards,

The Corsair

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79881)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79881_menu)

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

* Old Twillian
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,569 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
* Interests:Nautical history of the 16-18th centuries and living history based thereon.

Shooting pirates.

([IP: 152.78.254.243](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=152.78.254.243)) · · 

[Posted December 16, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=79884) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=79884)

If we're going back as far as the 17th century there's a brilliant bit on one of Monson's tracts referring to an expedition of his in the early 17thC against some pirates in the Irish Sea. I forget his exact words but he more or less says "I picked out the members of my crew who had been pirates and asked them..."

I'm not at home at the moment, I'll post the details in a day or two.

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=79884)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_79884_menu)

[**Isabella**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1057-isabella/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 311 posts
* Interests:I love history! Any type! Painting, sewing, playing music, gardening, bird watching, sailing, being silly, walking barefoot on warm sidewalks, whistling, owls (Hey boys look at my Hooter Collection!), men who have the bumpersticker "Real Men Love Jesus" and don't realize how odd it sounds or looks on a Pickup truck. Being lazy on Sunday mornings, being lazy on any morning in general, my husband playing piano, holding hands in the car, long drives, Ren Faires...the OCEAN!

([IP: 4.225.149.112](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=4.225.149.112)) · · 

[Posted December 20, 2004](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=80170) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=80170)

 corsair2k3 said:

As to tattoos: I can't think of any pirates specifically mentioned as having them. But the colonial newspapers of the time (1715-1725) would advertise runaway servants and sailors with descriptions (this would be a good source of info for re-enactors)

I've run across mention of tatoos in these descriptions. The ones that stick out in my mind were the Jerusalem Cross, Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden with the Serpent, and the Crucifixion.

I think it's facinating they tattooed the Jerusalem Cross on themselves. It's not often seen now a days, but was common knowledge then. It's quite distinctive and ironic since I thought of getting one tattoo on me! It's historical! \*grins\* That is interesting, I will have to pick up and read some of those papers.

**Edited December 20, 2004 by Isabella**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=80170)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_80170_menu)

[**Misson**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4957-misson/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,001 posts
* Gender:Male
* Interests:Who me?

([IP: 24.231.217.242](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=24.231.217.242)) · · 

[Posted July 9, 2008](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=318586) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=318586)

I found a period reference to branding as a punishment, although not specifically for pirates. This is a rather round-about way of getting to the point, but the story is sort of interesting in other respects, so please bear with me. It's from *Barlow's Journal* by Edward Barlow:

"[1695] And two days afterward [of arriving in Blackwall] came aboard a woman, one of our seamen's wives, and she presently comes to me and threatens me with the death of her husband, saying I had killed him, and hanged she would see me if all the friends in the world I had should say to the contrary, and to prosecute the same she would spend the smock off her back, which made me admire to hear such a salutation.

But it seemed a man that ran away from us at Plymouth, who had no good will towards me, an idle fellow who I had struck sometimes in the term of our voyage for not doing his business, had given her his 'affidavey' [affidavit] how that when her husband died he laid his death to me for some blows I had given him not long before he died, which was when we lay at the river's mouth of Hoogli coming home, And another man or two had given the like 'affidavey', which God knows I scarce knew or heard anything of it all the ways coming home.

I must confess I did strike him several blows with a cane for not doing what I commanded him: it was about a parcel of canes we were stowing away, which he, not doing as he might have done and denying it, made me have to strike him, for I was in place to see the work done.

But he was well after I had struck him, and did his business about and never complained; and two days after, I asked him why he would provoke me and not do as I ordered. He made an excuse and said he thought he could not do it, to put the canes in such a place where he saw me put the very same canes. he complained to me then of no hurt I had given him, nor told the doctor of the ship.

He had been sick a long time before, and then was recovered. But about ten days after, he fell sick again, but then I was not aboard, but was gone up the Hoogli river to buy some goods I had occasion to carry to England, I being gone about ten days; and before I returned he died, as did our cook and two men more.

And as these men informed, he said a little before he died that they blows I gave him were the greatest cause of the death, which was very strange, nothing appearing or any sign of blows, nor all the time he had been sick before he died that he should not make it known if he had found himself so much wronged.

As for me to be the cause, I do believe some of those men that swore against me, that had little love to me, seeing in his sickness that there was but little hope of his recovery and that he himself was thinking he should die, wrought upon and persuaded him to give it out at that time, that his wife might come upon me and by that means recover a sum of money by his death.

And here I do take God to witness that I think in my very soul and conscious that what I did to him could be no real cause or means of his death, for he was not far from the likelihood of death in his sickness before: and the man, I never had any ill-will or malice toward him, only in commanding him to do his business when he had an occasion, as I did to others; and many seamen are of that lazy, idle temper, that let them alone and they never care for doing anything they should do, and when they do anything it is with a grumbling unwilling mind, so that they must be forced and drove to it, which is a great trouble and vexation to those men that overlook them, and many times are forced to strike them against their will when fair means will not do it.

Sop the news being come home, his wife made great bustle and fee'd a lawyer. And he, coming to me, made me to understand what condition I was in and how prejudicious and dangers it might prove to me, although it could not touch my life, yet it might come to a condemnation of being burnt in the hand (Footnote 1: Barlow would have been liable to be branded on the left hand with the letter 'M' signifying 'manslayer'.), and all that I was worth be confiscated; and if I gave what I was worth, it was all to little in consideration of the widow's loss, having two ro three children, all which they laid open with all the law and exactly what should be expected.

At last they came to this - to ask me what I would give to get clear of the business: and indeed I had no great mind to give anything, and would willingly have suffered trial; but being otherwise persuaded by my relations not to bring my name in question for no such matter (they declaring that) if I did come off clear, it would be a great disgrace to me and likewise charge, although it did cost me some money

And at last I proffered fifty pounds, but that was so far thought too little as not worth naming. So I let them alone and told them I would give no more. So at last they got the Recorder's warrant to take mu up, and seeing I would give no more, rather than put it to a trial they agreed for me to give the widow fifty pounds, and five pounds for to the lawyer for his advice and pain: and so I had a discharge from the widow and here executors, heirs and assigns as to that trouble, which was a good sum of money, she getting more by his death than ever she had seen together since he had been her husband. Indeed it was a great deal out of my pocket, and upon such a score, as I thank God for it was never in the least questioned about before, having then gone to sea thirty-six years; and I had many times before met with several knaves and rogues but never with any that accused me in that nature before, I always being reckoned rather too mild than too harsh to bear command over a parcel of seamen, for they are troublesome and unruly many times." (Barlow, p. 451-3)

**Edited July 9, 2008 by Misson**

* [Quote](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/)
* [Edit](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=editComment&comment=318586)
* [Options](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/#elControls_318586_menu)

[**Graydog**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/5382-graydog/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 796 posts
* Gender:Polly Wanna Cracker
* Location:The Sea
* Interests:My interest is becoming a one percenter so I can laugh at the 99 percenters. HAHAHAHAHAHA, Wow, guess I made it. Yo Ho.

([IP: 206.194.127.112](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/modcp/ip-tools/&ip=206.194.127.112)) · · 

[Posted July 9, 2008](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=findComment&comment=318589) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/3841-pirate-brandstattoos/&do=reportComment&comment=318589)

Branding:

[Old Bailey, London 1600-1800](http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/oldbailey/history/crime/punishment.html#branding)

Branding

Convicts who successfully pleaded benefit of clergy, and those found guilty of manslaughter instead of murder, were branded on the thumb (with a "T" for theft, "F" for felon, or "M" for murder), so that they would be unable to receive this benefit more than once. The branding took place in the courtroom at the end of the sessions in front of spectators. It is alleged that sometimes criminals convicted of petty theft, or those who were able to bribe the executioner, had the branding iron applied when it was cold.

For a short time, between 1699 and January 1707, convicted thieves were branded on the cheek in order to increase the deterrent effect of the punishment, but this rendered convicts unemployable and in 1707 the practice reverted to branding on the thumb. It is possible to search separately to find those sentenced to be branded on the cheek.

Branding as a punishment for those receiving benefit of clergy ended in 1779. The last convict sentenced to branding at the Old Bailey received the sentence in 1789.