[**Dusi Sparrow**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2936-dusi-sparrow/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 102 posts
* Location:Germany
* Interests:music, books, tattoos, animals, Johnny Depp, history

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199360) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199360)

I feel a bit silly to ask about it. Must be the sun today. At lunch break the question just came to my mind. And if anyone knows about it, it's one of you lads or ladies here.

What did seamen use for sunblocker? Was there something like it anyway? I mean, they were (and still are) working outside. No escape from the sun all day. Or were they red like the crabs they ate? I'm serious. 

Thanks!

Dusi

[**Rumba Rue**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/5984-rumba-rue/)

* Immortal Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 7,270 posts
* Gender:Female

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199408) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199408)

I don't believe there was anything.

Nowadays, we have more skin cancers and such; we have elvolved as a society and so has our diseases.

[**kass**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1603-kass/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,526 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Easton, Pennsylvania
* Interests:Historical Clothing from the 14th through 18th centuries. Getting all the niggling details right. Dressing up and having fun with my similarly-obsessed friends. :)

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199441) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199441)

When you live everyday in the sun, Dusi, since you were a child, you build up a tolerance. These men would have had skin like leather, but they probably hadn't had a sunburn in years.

[**Silkie McDonough**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2754-silkie-mcdonough/)

* Proprietress of the Sealkies Hide
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 5,695 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:I have been a Virginian for 2 months now. LOVING it.
* Interests:Music, vocalizing, Irish balads. I love to draw, I do pencile portraits/detail drawings for barter and sale. The link in in my signature. Ireland, its history and culture. Sewing garb, mostly for myself. The arm of a strong gentleman round my waist.

Unfortunately, I don't do nearly enough of any of a these.

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199444) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199444)

Kass, what of those born in the north? Skin like leather but in the the intensity of the tropical sun I would think that they may suffer from initial sunburn again until acclimated. ...?

[**kass**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1603-kass/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,526 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Easton, Pennsylvania
* Interests:Historical Clothing from the 14th through 18th centuries. Getting all the niggling details right. Dressing up and having fun with my similarly-obsessed friends. :)

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199458) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199458)

Don't know, Silkie. It's just a guess. I'm not a skin doctor. But I've never read a reference to skin protection for sailors. Of course ladies wore masks to hide their skin from the sun, but they also didn't work in it all day.

[**Black Hearted Pearl**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1214-black-hearted-pearl/)

* Scourge of Everything
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,055 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:winds of the seas
* Interests:I'm sailing away in the morning.

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199467) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199467)

I imagine they did what those who work outside still do. They wore long sleeves as well as long pants and a bandana to cover the tops of their heads.

[**Red Dog**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2897-red-dog/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 398 posts
* Location:Lake Forest, O.C., CA
* Interests:Piracy, weapons, history, photography, reasearch, reading, SCUBA, costuming, ebay, <br><br>a little of everything really.......

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199515) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199515)

I can speak with knowledge on this topic!!!!! Mark yer calendars folks.

I was in Saudi Arabia and Iraq during the the Gulf War from 90 to 91as a basic Grunt Infantryman, "ok mortar man" I am a red headed, blue eyed Scots/Irish/German, I could be Snow Whites older brother,"Butt white. After only 4 months I was acclimated enough to go without a shirt or sunblock for 2-3 hours at a time with nothing more than a mild sunburn, for me, that's unheard of. I did burn initially, but staying covered with my sleeves down protected me well.

The human body is truly amazing. Mine, on the other hand, is really just kinda scary...... 

[**HarborMaster**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/970-harbormaster/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,446 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Centralia Wa and Cebu Philippines
* Interests:Scuba Diving ., Shooting ., Drinking ., Cannons ., Motorcycling . I hope I didn't , leave out anything important.

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199534) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199534)

I am going with Red Dog on this one. I too am hip to whats happening in the tropical sun. Again we just got back from the Philippines May 7th and you do acclimate to the sun., Every year when I go I get RED then it becomes darker and thats it., When we are diving alot of deck hands actually wear what looks like underwear .,I guess a bikini for diving. Most fishermen are in shorts.,and they handle it quite well. Myself I get red., then darken., you can see it in my forearms., because I wear a shorty while diving.

There isnt a 17th or 18th century sun-block that I am aware of., just get toasted.,burn peel., do it again., and soon., real soon.,you are fine., yup the human body is an awesome machine.

[**Red Dog**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2897-red-dog/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 398 posts
* Location:Lake Forest, O.C., CA
* Interests:Piracy, weapons, history, photography, reasearch, reading, SCUBA, costuming, ebay, <br><br>a little of everything really.......

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199541) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199541)

'lo HarborMaster, so were you agreeing that we can acclimate, or that I have a scary body? 



[**Mad Matt**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2519-mad-matt/)

* Pyrate Legend
* 
* 
* Member
* 3,435 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Aridzona
* Interests:Pyratin' (o' course), wenchin', drinkin' my fill, Disney things, and the greatest rock band ever, Metallica (sorry, no pirate tunes - but they did have a cursed pirate shirt at one point!)

Originally from Southern California!

Dutch family history. Just assumin' it'd have somethin' to to with pyratin'.

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199542) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199542)

I thought he was referrin' t' th' latter, meself.... 

[**HarborMaster**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/970-harbormaster/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,446 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Centralia Wa and Cebu Philippines
* Interests:Scuba Diving ., Shooting ., Drinking ., Cannons ., Motorcycling . I hope I didn't , leave out anything important.

[Posted June 13, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199588) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199588)

I was figurin Mad Matt that Red Dog has a "Dark and Scary Body" However as you can see when in the PH I do consistantly wear my Leather tricorn as EVERYDAY habidashery .,weather I am walking thru a town or snorkeling while drinking a mixed Rhum Drink., or having my sprained wrist worked on by a very dark native.,(He used heated leaves after rubbing oil into the wrist.,then wrapped cloth over the leaves The wrist still hurt., but the locals felt better after doing it to me) . This is of course how we can do our part in bringing the tricorn back into style., as it should be.

(It gets worse..., after I am living there full time., so will be my piratical attire).

My wife of course., does not turn red., in the upper left corner you can see she turns to a slightly roasted brown.,and No Leather Skin., trust me Kass the wife is soft and smooth., no leather there. Sugar Cane workers., now they got leathery hands but thats from working not sunshine.

You guys really need to get out more :)

[**Patrick Hand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1049-patrick-hand/)

* The sailor's sailor
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 6,100 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:TH' Mountains of Central California
* Interests:I like wierdness... Klingon, Pyrate..... and even..... gasp.... Renn Faires...... (Baseball and tractor pulls I'd have to think about.... could be wierd or Not,,,,)

[Posted June 14, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199652) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199652)

I'd guess that period sunblock was wearing a hat and shirt.....

I remember as a kid, we would get sunburned in Summer, peel off the dead skin, and then get a tan.... if you wanted a sun tan, you used baby oil and a little iodine in it.... sunblock was the zinc oxide that lifeguards put on their noses......... (this is in the 60's) sunblock and sunscreens didn't happen untill later.....

I've read a bunch of accounts about how sailors had tanned leathery skin,... but would have to search to find an actual period account.........

Untill I can find something better, I'll argue that they just got sun-burned and adapted to it....Or covered themselves to keep from getting sun-burned.....

[**Captain Bob**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2481-captain-bob/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 108 posts
* Location:Sacred Tomato, CA
* Interests:Science, technology, history, military history, etc.

[Posted June 14, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199659) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199659)

I'd use sunscreen anyway. Skin cancer is a real risk. 17th century people were simply not aware of the cause-and-effect of sun exposure and skin cancer. As recently as the turn of the twentieth century, the average life expectancy for men in the USA was about 45 years. Two hundred or more years before then, I suspect things were about the same. Nobody worried about skin cancer because so few people lived long enough to get it. Nowadays, people live long enough to die from things that were, at one time, rare diseases.

If you were nobility or gentry, you took pains *not* to get a tan, *especially* if you were female. Only the working class got a tan. Quality folk were pale as they could afford to be. Big hats, long sleeves, parasols, masks, whatever was appropriate to your station and gender was used to protect from the sun, not because they had any worries about skin cancer, but because pale skin was a sign that you could afford to keep the sun off.

If you were a working class person who expected to spend a lot of time in the sun, you would try to get a tan as quickly as possible. This was not because people thought having a tan was fashionable (reference the previous paragraph). Rather, it was because once you *were* tan, you were less likely to burn. You were also more likely to develop skin cancer, but nobody knew about that. Since something else was likely kill you before then, it wouldn't have been much of a concern anyway.

~~Cap'n Bob

[**Gypsy Rose**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2922-gypsy-rose/)

* Deck Hand
* 
* 
* Member
* 82 posts
* Location:Kohler, WI
* Interests:Geocaching, Wine making, sailing, and naughty things

[Posted June 14, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199673) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199673)

First I belive that this was a good question. From my experence in the Navy you would be amazed to how quickly you bake when you are getting sun from both top and bottom. As far as I know their was no sun screen and your skin just baked untill it got used to it. Long light shirts and pants, I believe, would have been the course of the day. I am sure that skin cancer was very common but would not have been known. I am sure that if someone died of cancer the cause would have been labled something else like natural causes. Just my two cents worth.

[**Dusi Sparrow**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2936-dusi-sparrow/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 102 posts
* Location:Germany
* Interests:music, books, tattoos, animals, Johnny Depp, history

[Posted June 14, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199841) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199841)

And I thought you'd hit on me for asking. It turns out to be very interesting. The only thing that came to mind was using curd to make the burned skin heal faster. As there was cheese I guess there was also curd.

Wearing long sleeves also makes sense.

Sorry, I always have strange thoughts running through my head. Like, if the deepest circles in hell are reserved for betrayers and mutineers, is there a special section for politicians? 

[**Longarm**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/823-longarm/)

* First Mate
* 
* 
* Member
* 231 posts
* Location:Summerville, SC
* Interests:History, Piracy, Tallships, Arms & Armor, Sailing the Cyber Seas, and most importantly Wench Watching

[Posted June 14, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199882) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199882)

Who do you think are digging the circles? 

[**Red Dog**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2897-red-dog/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 398 posts
* Location:Lake Forest, O.C., CA
* Interests:Piracy, weapons, history, photography, reasearch, reading, SCUBA, costuming, ebay, <br><br>a little of everything really.......

[Posted June 14, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=199924) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=199924)

Dark, nooooo, scary, maybe in the right light, or any light really, HEY, ya'll don't need ta be running me down, looks like I've I got that covered quite nicely, thank you.

Ya know, the pirates were in the tropical climates that alo Vera prospers in, I wonder if they figured out it's benefits?

[**Dusi Sparrow**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2936-dusi-sparrow/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 102 posts
* Location:Germany
* Interests:music, books, tattoos, animals, Johnny Depp, history

[Posted June 15, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=200046) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=200046)

You're right Longarm. I now can see them, clapped in iron singing about working in a chain gang. Gimmie th' whip, Bush be too slow fer me taste. Gotta give him a taste o' me whip. But I refuse to do it toour former chancellor, Dr. Kohl. I know, he likes it. Upps. Told an open secret. 

[**William Blydes**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2309-william-blydes/)

* Ship's Master
* 
* 
* Member
* 198 posts
* Location:Kingston On, CANADA
* Interests:Auto racing, Historical fencing, Ren Faires, Acting/Singing, Sailing of course<br><br>I'm a professional mariner by trade. An Officer in the Canadian Navy.

[Posted June 15, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=200067) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=200067)

I read that sailors would make wide brimmed reed hats to keep the sun off their face and neck.

[**Red Dog**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2897-red-dog/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 398 posts
* Location:Lake Forest, O.C., CA
* Interests:Piracy, weapons, history, photography, reasearch, reading, SCUBA, costuming, ebay, <br><br>a little of everything really.......

[Posted June 15, 2006](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=200170) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=200170)

A neckerchief was a fairly common item with the royal navy, makes sense that it'd transfer over to pirate life as well.

[**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 May 2, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=399266) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=399266)

Perhaps sailors were somewhat more aware of the dangers of the sun than is suggested previously. (No doubt most were well tanned, though. Like being with the pool maintenance crew, suntan would probably come with the territory.)

"On his being brought on board, the captain told him the accusation that was against him, and his party, and threatened him with a cruel and lingering death, if he did not confess the whole truth. In vain did he declare his innocence, and ignorance of any plot; the ruffian was resolved to glut his vengeance, and ordered him to be stripped and exposed, naked, wounded, and bleeding as he was [from being shot at previously when returning from shore], to the scorching fervour of a July sun; the July sun of a tropical climate!" (Aaron Smith, *The Atrocities of the Pirates* (1824), p. 36-9)

While others didn't seem to mind it, apparently regarding it as a recreational activity (not unlike many people today):

“[July 5, 1689] Now having nothing else to do, we put our fishing craft awork and caught some fish, which was a little diversion as well as a refreshing to us, while we lay here [in St. Helen’s road] acoveing and sun burning.” (Ingram/Roch, *Three Sea Journals of Stuart Times*, p. 115)

Some proof that hats were used to fend it off:

“There are an abundance of lobsters [in Newfoundland]- two or three boys would get in an hour or two’s time as many as would serve twenty or thirty men a meal, and butts or plaice, as broad as sun-hats, abundance.” (Edward Coxere, *Adventures by Sea of Edward Coxere*, p. 121)

Knowledge of sunburn goes wayyyy back. Naturally, bleeding was one of the cures, especially when you ask Galen [AD 129 – 199/217], who was the first big proponent of bleeding:

“…you know that you yourselves have often been with me when I have recommended venesection for gouty patients, or arthritics, epileptics, melancholics, or those with a history of haemoptysis, or a condition in the chest predisposing to such a disease, or scotomatics, or those who are repeatedly seized with sunanche or perpneumonia, or pleurisies, or liver diseases, or severe attacks of ophthalmia; in fact, to speak generally, with any severe disease. I say that in all such conditions phlebotomy is an essential remedy that must be applied immediately, as long as the patient’s strength and age are also taken into account." (Peter Brain, *Galen on Bloodletting*, p. 82)

[**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 May 2, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=399271) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=399271)

 On 5/2/2011 at 10:28 AM, Mission said:

Knowledge of sunburn goes wayyyy back. Naturally, bleeding was one of the cures, especially when you ask Galen [AD 129 – 199/217], who was the first big proponent of bleeding:

“…you know that you yourselves have often been with me when I have recommended venesection for gouty patients, or arthritics, epileptics, melancholics, or those with a history of haemoptysis, or a condition in the chest predisposing to such a disease, or scotomatics, or those who are repeatedly seized with sunanche or perpneumonia, or pleurisies, or liver diseases, or severe attacks of ophthalmia; in fact, to speak generally, with any severe disease. I say that in all such conditions phlebotomy is an essential remedy that must be applied immediately, as long as the patient’s strength and age are also taken into account." (Peter Brain, *Galen on Bloodletting*, p. 82)

Is "sunanche" an old word for sunburn?

Is "perpneumonia" short, or a misspelling, for "peripneumonia?"

I had to look up "scotomatic"; it's a disease that impairs part of your field of vision while leaving the rest clear. I did not know that.

[**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 May 2, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=findComment&comment=399272) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/7723-sunblocker/&do=reportComment&comment=399272)

The spelling in 17th c. manuscripts is nothing short of random - even within the document itself. I take 'sunanche' to be the 17th c. equivalent of 'sun-ache' and 'perpneumonia' to be an illness that someone who commits a crime comes down with. (I have no idea what perpneumonia is. It is most likely a variation on pneumonia, but I'd have to go back to the manuscript and see if I could find it again to verify that.) (Don't hold your breath awaiting my research vis-a-vis that point.)