**[Mission](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/" \o "Go to Mission's profile)**

* Goat Specialist
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_immortal_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)
* Admin
* 5,081 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 27, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=400529) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=400529)

Jib made a point that a bible might be "worth a good amount of silver" in the [Religion on Pirate Ships? thread](http://pyracy.com/index.php/topic/18066-religion-on-pirate-ships/page__pid__400526). Given that it has been the most widely published book in history, I have my doubts about this, but it got me to thinking...were books of value during the GAoP?

For whatever reason, I was under the impression that a lot of material was being published at this time. From my research, I can tell you that there are certainly an awful lot of medical manuals being printed. Extrapolating a bit, I would guess that medical literature would have a very small niche market, suggesting that there was no lack of printing going on, but I really don't know. Certainly printed pamphlets were in vogue and I seem to vaguely recall that they were quite inexpensive.

[**Jack Roberts**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2837-jack-roberts/)

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2837-jack-roberts/)
* Member
* 1,063 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Orlando, FL

[Posted May 27, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=400530) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=400530)

From what I've gathered You would buy the printed Book Block and then take it to a binder to have it bound in a hard back.

It was a 2 stage process. Of course I will need to confirm this with more research. I don't have hard evidence yet.

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

* Goat Specialist
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_immortal_pyrate.gif
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[Posted May 27, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=400531) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=400531)

On 5/27/2011 at 3:43 PM, Jack Roberts said:

From what I've gathered You would buy the printed Book Block and then take it to a binder to have it bound in a hard back.

The Book Block being the mass of pages? Were they trimmed to size or did the binder do that? It might help explain some of the crooked pages that show up in the scanned originals I have.

[**Jack Roberts**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2837-jack-roberts/)

* Dread Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_dread_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2837-jack-roberts/)
* Member
* 1,063 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Orlando, FL

[Posted May 27, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=400538) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=400538)

Yes the Book Block is the organized group of pages. I believe the Binder would trim all the pages and I think but I need to confirm with Williamsburg, that the tool for trimming was a planer.

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_captain.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted May 27, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=400544) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=400544)

If I read the diary entries of Pepys correctly, that appears to be how he did it.

And I do remember some discussion about this being a way a (private) library could have a consistent look to it's collection. Diverse works purchased, then bound to the taste of the individual buying them. Wish I could remember at what venue that discussion took place.

On 5/27/2011 at 3:43 PM, Jack Roberts said:

From what I've gathered You would buy the printed Book Block and then take it to a binder to have it bound in a hard back.

It was a 2 stage process. Of course I will need to confirm this with more research. I don't have hard evidence yet.

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[Posted May 27, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=400547) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=400547)

That would be an awesome service to have today if it weren't for copyright issues. You could do it with stuff that was out of copyright, though. Some day I'd like to clean up my pdf copies of *the surgions mate* and *Chirurgus Marinus* and have them bound for my display.

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

* Pyrate Captain
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_captain.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/352-daniel/)
* Member
* 652 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:McLean, VA
* Interests:History, pirates, fiction, writing, writing historical fiction about pirates, jokes, games, law.

[Posted June 9, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=400969) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=400969)

The first edition of the General History of the Pyrates of 1724 retailed for £0.2 according to Colin Woodard's *The Republic of Pirates*, Harcourt, 2007, p. 34. If that literally means two-tenths of a pound, that would be four shillings. On the same page it says a Royal Navy sailor earned £11.5 to £15 per year, so the book's price represented about five to seven days' wages for a sailor.

[**RoyalJames**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20921-royaljames/)

* Deck Hand
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_deckhand.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20921-royaljames/)
* Member
* 63 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Europe
* Interests:Pirates

[Posted June 24, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=416876) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=416876)

In Snelgrave’s account it is described how the pirates threw books into the sea:

*“Moreover, two large chests that had books in them were empty, and I was afterwards informed they had been all thrown overboard; for one of the pirates on opening them swore there was jaw-work enough (as he called it) to serve a nation, and proposed that they might be cast into the sea, for he feared there might be some books amongst them that might breed mischief enough, and prevent some of their comrades from going on in their voyage to hell, whither they were all bound"*

Why this hate toward books and writing?

What where they worried to find in these books that would “prevent them to go to hell”?

Perhaps most of them were illiterate and books were a symbol of the authorities. If few of them could read, the books didn’t have much value anyway.

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

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* Admin
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[Posted June 24, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=416879) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=416879)

I would guess that by jaw-work he meant talking instead of doing. But it's just a guess.

Coffee houses were in vogue at this time - people would go there, get coffee and read publications and journals like the *Tatler* and *Spectator* and then discuss what they'd read. Ergo, "jaw-work enough to serve a nation." Chole Black would be the one who could really address this one, but I haven't seen her around here lately.

[**RoyalJames**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20921-royaljames/)

* Deck Hand
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_deckhand.gif
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* 63 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Europe
* Interests:Pirates

[Posted June 25, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=416885) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=416885)

I think I’ve read somewhere (Rediker perhaps?) that writing was not allowed onboard some pirate ships. I find it a little odd that in an otherwise quite open-minded society ban books and writing. To me it reminds more of an act of a dictatorship rather than a democracy. But that is perhaps a more modern way to see it.

I can imagine that illiterates could have some fear of written texts. Not to allow written texts may have been an act of equality.

It would be interesting to understand what he meant by “jaw-works”. Perhaps you’re right, he just thought it was too much babbling. But, what books would prevent them to “go to hell”? Bibles?

Do we know of any other examples of pirates relations to books?

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
* 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 June 26, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=416891) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=416891)

On 6/25/2014 at 10:42 AM, RoyalJames said:

I find it a little odd that in an otherwise quite open-minded society ban books and writing. To me it reminds more of an act of a dictatorship rather than a democracy.

Aye, there's the rub! And so we start questioning the democratic pirates model :D

In the case of Bellamy's company, forced men were forbidden from writing anything down unless it was nailed to the mast for all to see - presumably a preventive act against secret messages and plots.

The study of literacy is quite a big subject, but it's probably fair to say that more pirates could read than one would expect. It's impossible to give any firm figures, but around 2/3 of early-modern sailors could write their names: the number of people who could actually write in any meaningful sense was probably lower than that, but the number of people who could read to some degree was probably higher than the number who could write.

One interesting thing is the provision of horn books for the Madagascar pirates in the 1690s, sent by Frederick Phillipse to Adam Baldridge. Horn books were a teaching aid, so it suggests that literate pirates taught their illiterate comrades to read in the off-hours.

[**RoyalJames**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20921-royaljames/)

* Deck Hand
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_deckhand.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20921-royaljames/)
* Member
* 63 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Europe
* Interests:Pirates

[Posted June 26, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=416895) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=416895)

Quote

Aye, there's the rub! And so we start questioning the democratic pirates model :D

You see right through me.. =)

Quote

In the case of Bellamy's company, forced men were forbidden from writing anything down unless it was nailed to the mast for all to see

That was what I was looking for! Even if I had forgotten that it was meant for forced men. This makes me think of Du Bucqouy. I assume he must have kept notes in a diary or such, which could mean that Taylor’s crew had no issue with writing even for forced men.

Interesting with the horn books. Apparently different crews had quite different views of books and writing.

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

* Old Twillian
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [Fox](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1019-fox/)
* Moderator
* 2,564 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Beautiful lush Devon, England
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  Shooting pirates.

[Posted June 26, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=416896) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=416896)

On 6/26/2014 at 3:57 PM, RoyalJames said:

Quote

Aye, there's the rub! And so we start questioning the democratic pirates model :D

You see right through me.. =)

Good on you! If there's one serous thing about pirates that *needs* questioning, it's the democratic model.

There are other examples of pirates restricting writing: John Quelch's crew didn't ban writing, but they did read through forced man Matthew Pimer's journal to check for anything that could be used against them and tore out several pages, for example.

Mind you, if you dig deep enough you'll find evidence of all sorts of unexpected ideas - John Taylor's company banned the discussion of religion.

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

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[Posted June 27, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=416900) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=416900)

I think one of the more important things I have learned researching this topic is how heterogeneous the pirate society really was. I think the movies and some books tend to paint pirates as a homogeneous group and they aren't. They're just like any group of people, containing differing beliefs, opinions and ways of doing things. Of course, you even have to temper THAT, because, like all societies at any point, they are inhabitants of their time. So to really understand them, you first have to try and understand the society and then look more closely into the variety of things that happened that hint at their underlying beliefs, motives and so forth. A big part of that is digging for period resources. (The General History, while important, isn't the only thing written about pirates during the period. Fortunately Foxe will be releasing a book containing other period references soon.) (Like, next week? :P)

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[Posted June 27, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=416902) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=416902)

On 6/27/2014 at 7:22 AM, Mission said:

Fortunately Foxe will be releasing a book containing other period references soon.) (Like, next week? :P)

Not quite next week, but I'm editing it as we speak (or type, or whatever)

[**RoyalJames**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20921-royaljames/)

* Deck Hand
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_deckhand.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/20921-royaljames/)
* Member
* 63 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Europe
* Interests:Pirates

[Posted June 29, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=findComment&comment=416907) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18072-the-value-of-books-during-the-gaop/&do=reportComment&comment=416907)

On 6/27/2014 at 7:22 AM, Mission said:

I think one of the more important things I have learned researching this topic is how heterogeneous the pirate society really was.

I agree with that. One great thing with this forum is to get input from different people with different views of a subject, which may give a hint if it follows a trend or not.