[**John Maddox Roberts**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/334-john-maddox-roberts/)

* First Mate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_1st_mate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/334-john-maddox-roberts/)
* Member
* 272 posts

[Posted August 4, 2003](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=3705) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=3705)

It should be noted that both the skull & crossbones and the hourglass were both common "memento mori" (remembrances of mortality, roughly) used on tombstoes of the period.

[**pyrateleather**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2904-pyrateleather/)

* First Mate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_1st_mate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2904-pyrateleather/)
* Member
* 226 posts
* Location:Shawnee, KS

[Posted April 4, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=257884) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=257884)

In browsing the web I ran across this image:

The website I found it on claims that the image is of a "17th or 18th century pirate flag"

Anyone know the validity of this claim, who's flag it is, or any other info?

[**Matusalem**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2470-matusalem/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_notorious_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2470-matusalem/)
* Member
* 877 posts
* Location:Eastern Seaboard of North America

[Posted April 4, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=257894) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=257894)

Quote

Anyone know the validity of this claim, who's flag it is, or any other info?

Don't know.

Though it looks like they typical artwork you see on colonial-era headstones in and around new england.

[http://gravematter.smugmug.com/gallery/112.../82114879/Large](http://gravematter.smugmug.com/gallery/1120948/1/82114879/Large)

[http://gravematter.smugmug.com/gallery/149.../71889616/Large](http://gravematter.smugmug.com/gallery/1499497/1/71889616/Large)

[http://gravematter.smugmug.com/gallery/149.../71889124/Large](http://gravematter.smugmug.com/gallery/1499497/1/71889124/Large)

[**Matusalem**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2470-matusalem/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_notorious_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2470-matusalem/)
* Member
* 877 posts
* Location:Eastern Seaboard of North America

[Posted April 4, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=257916) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=257916)

forgot this one:

[http://gravematter.smugmug.com/gallery/149...7#79534416-L-LB](http://gravematter.smugmug.com/gallery/1499497#79534416-L-LB)

[**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 April 5, 2007](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=258144) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=258144)

Depends how you mean accurate. If you mean "did pirate flags sometimes have skulls and/or winged glasses" then the answer is yes. Plenty of skulls to be found and at least one winged hourglass.

If you mean "was this particular flag flown by any pirate" then the answer, I believe, is no.

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_scourge_o_the_7_seas.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted April 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353337) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353337)

somewhere there is a reference to a report of black beards flag being described as deaths head. anyone know where to find this reference?

[**Black Syren**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1511-black-syren/)

* At the sign of the trident
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_pyrate_legend.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1511-black-syren/)
* Admin
* 4,646 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Texas
* Interests:Writing, Singing, Drawing, Painting, Reading, Horseback Riding, Pirates and more pirates

[Posted April 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353338) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353338)

Hey Dutch..Try Foxe's site it talks about Flags and mentions BlackBeard's as "DeathHead"

<http://www.bonaventure.org.uk/ed/flags.htm>

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_scourge_o_the_7_seas.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted April 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353340) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353340)

foxes site got me started on this search. i'm trying to find the document itself.

[**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 April 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353349) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353349)

There are two or three: *The Deposition of Thos. Knight, 30th November 1717* (CSP Colonial, America and West Indies, 1717-1718. 298ii.) describes a death's head in the ship commanded by "Kentish and Edwards", aliases of Teach and Bonnet.

I also read mention of Teach's death's head flag in a newspaper recently, but I'm jiggered if I can find it again now.

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

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* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted April 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353352) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353352)

thanks mate

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_scourge_o_the_7_seas.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted April 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353361) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353361)

oh my........ now its worse.

298. ii. Deposition of Thos. Knight, belonging to the Mountserrat Merchant, Benjamin Hobhouse, commander, 30th Nov. 1717. On 29th Nov., seeing two ships and a sloop, and thinking one did belong to Bristol, and the other two to Guinea, he went in the long-boat to enquire for letters. They desired us to come on board, but seeing Death Head in the stern we refused it etc. They said they were bound from Barbados to Jamaica etc. They compelled us to go on board and asked about the guns and ships at Kingslale and Plymouth etc. We made Nevis. These and the ship they had taken out of Guardalupa spying some vessels in Nevis, and among the rest took one for the man of warr, they said they would cut her out, but the Captain being ill prevented it etc. Confirms preceding. They report the Captain of the pirates name is Kentish and Captain Edwards belonging to the sloop, and they report the ship has 150 men on board and 22 guns mounted, the sloop about 50 white men, and eight guns, and that they burnt part of Guardalupa, when they cut out the French ship. Signed, Thos. Knight. Copy. 1½ pp.

From: 'America and West Indies: January 1718, 1-13', Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies, Volume 30: 1717-1718 (1930), pp. 142-155. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=74033> Date accessed: 22 April 2009.

well there is the flag, but who the heck is edwards? and now for the next entry.........

298. iii. Deposition of Henry Bostock, master of the sloop Margaret of St. Christophers, 19th Dec., 1717. On 5th Dec., off Crab Island, he met a large ship and a sloop. He was ordered on board and Capt. Tach took his cargo of cattle and hogs, his arms books and instruments. The ship, Dutch built, was a French Guinea man, 36 guns mounted and 300 men. They did not abuse him or his men, but forced 2 to stay and one Robert Bibby voluntarily took on with them. They had a great deal of plate on board, and one very fine cup they told deponent they had taken out of Capt. Taylor, bound from Barbados to Jamaica, whom they very much abused and burnt his ship. They said they had burnt several vessels, among them two or three belonging to these Islands, particularly the day before a sloop belonging to Antego, one (Robert) McGill owner. They owned they had met the man of warr on this station, but said they had no business with her, but if she had chased them they would have kept their way. Deponent told them an Act of Grace was expected out for them but they seemed to slight it. Among the crew was a nephew of Dr. Rowland of this Island etc. They asked whether there were any more traders on the Porto Rico coast, etc., and sent to look for them etc. They intended for Hispaniola to careen and lie in wait for the Spanish Armada that they expected would immediately after Christmas come out of the Havana for Hispaniola and Porto Rico with the money to pay the Garrisons etc. They enquired where Capt. Pinkethman was. Deponent said he heard he was at St. Thomas' with a commission from the King to go on the wrecks. He believes they had much gold dust on board etc. Signed, Henry Bostock. Nos. i.–iii. endorsed as covering letter. Copy. 2½ pp.

From: 'America and West Indies: January 1718, 1-13', Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies, Volume 30: 1717-1718 (1930), pp. 142-155. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=74033> Date accessed: 22 April 2009.

[**Tartan Jack**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4587-tartan-jack/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_notorious_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4587-tartan-jack/)
* Member
* 908 posts
* Location:South Carolina
* Interests:History, Scotland, Batman, Cars, and more<br />Married with 2 kids<br />

[Posted April 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353368) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353368)

Now . . .

There is the debate as to what EXACTLY a "Death's Head" was taken, then, to mean.

It could have been:

1) A skull alone.

2) A skull with crossed bones underneath (most common depiction today)

3) A skull with crossed bones BEHIND the skull (most common Jolly Roger depiction in contemporary or near-contemporary depictions (see the various ones in Capt. Charles Johnson's book's different editions).

4) A collective term for ALL THREE of the above, plus other possible skull and crossed bones configurations.

Remember:

For an accurate WAY they were drawn, look to old tomb stones and the near-contemporary illustrations, as shown in better editions of Capt. Charles Johnson's "A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates" (also known by the abbreviated title of "A General History or Pirates"). Johnson is one of the main sources for pirate histories.

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_scourge_o_the_7_seas.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted April 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353370) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353370)

ahhh Johnson- the national enquirer of its day....... eh discussion for another thread.

anyhow- the deaths head is indeed open to interpretation which is why I was looking for the original source.

[**Tartan Jack**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4587-tartan-jack/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_notorious_pyrate.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4587-tartan-jack/)
* Member
* 908 posts
* Location:South Carolina
* Interests:History, Scotland, Batman, Cars, and more<br />Married with 2 kids<br />

[Posted April 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353388) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353388)

bbcddutchman said:

ahhh Johnson- the national enquirer of its day....... eh discussion for another thread.

anyhow- the deaths head is indeed open to interpretation which is why I was looking for the original source.

Didn't say it was accurate text, historically, just a "pointer" to casual readers to look at near-contemporary sources for illustrative bases and styles, rather than that of much, much later.

As for my last comment, Johnson IS a major source for written histories, accurate or not. I would agree that such is for another thread. I was thinking "flags" and posted in haste.

Likewise Shake-a-lance used the "Holinshed Chronicles" for the basis of several of his "historical" plays, esp. MacBeth-> which has little to NOTHING to do with what ACTUALLY happened in 1040-1057, the 17 years MacBeth reigned as King of Scotland.

Anyways . . .

Johnson's illustrations show, in general, HOW they were drawn in only a few years after the fact. Thus, it is MUCH closer as to what a GAOP "skull and bones" flag would have looked like than most presently sold "pirate flags."

Foxe and I have discussed the meaning of a "death's head" several times and are of somewhat different opinions. (I lean to number four and he leans to number one in my list above. Sorry, Mr. Foxe, if I speak out-of-turn and in your place.)

A link I picked up somewhere for tombstone illustrations:

<http://www.capecodgravestones.com/styles.html>

Note the DATE of the stones/death of the person.

I have found it VERY informative, as many contain commonly mentioned elements found on pirate banners. The style is QUITE different than today.

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

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[Posted April 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353389) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353389)

welp- looks like were off to the books to find more detailed descriptions from the sailors who saw them.

[**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 April 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353403) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353403)

"Edwards" was Bonnet's alias.

I'm only marginally in favour of #1, and only because there are references elswhere to "a death's head and bones". I'm quite happy to accept #4

Ooh ooh, can we discuss Johnson? Can we, can we, can we? :blink:

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
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* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted April 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353414) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353414)

I've seen all four of tartan jacks deaths heads plus a few variations on stones. by variation I mean front and side views of the skull and i've seen one death head in yorktown with a worn and barely noticeable flower under it- i like to think it might be a posy. I don't think that would be very menacing on board ship though. I can see it now "AAARG- i'm a pirate fear me- here have a flower. HAHAHAHA you have the plague, you have the plague!" The whole question I have about the flags was geared more towards debunking the off the shelf, nylon, stock #, this was pirate "X"'s flag and am in search of references and sailors descriptions of flags. More of a were not quite sure what it is, but we know for sure this is what it isn't approach.

Foxe, can you help me connect the pieces with the two entries. We have Edwards and Kentish in one entry with three ships present. One assumed from bristol who was captain of #3? The next one refers to Tach (presumably Black Beard) but no flag is mentioned and there is only one ship referenced. From these two entries, Tach does not appear to be Associated with the first two captains by description of numbers.- how is the deaths head flag attributed to him?

Ahhh Johnson- the man of many legends. Where did he get his information from. Word of mouth, newspapers, did he meet some of these folks, how could he be everywhere at once. Do we even know who he is. Why are there changes between the two volumes? Now I'm not saying the events did not occur, but I fear it may be a case of the fish was this big.

Now referring back to the entries, lets add Ben Franklin (who wrote a lovely bit for his almanac about the battle of Ocracoke) and Johnson. News and media being of the day, Is it possible that THIS is how the Bristol Born came to be? The two reports came in the same day. could someone have misunderstood the reports and combined the records? Something like this-

Deposition of Thos. Knight, belonging to the Mountserrat Merchant, Benjamin Hobhouse, commander, 30th Nov. 1717. On 29th Nov., seeing two ships and a sloop, and thinking one did belong to Bristol, and the other two to Guinea, he went in the long-boat to enquire for letters. They desired us to come on board, but seeing Death Head in the stern we refused it etc. They said they were bound from Barbados to Jamaica etc. They compelled us to go on board and asked about the guns and ships at Kingslale and Plymouth etc. We made Nevis. These and the ship they had taken out of Guardalupa spying some vessels in Nevis, and among the rest took one for the man of warr, they said they would cut her out, but the Captain being ill prevented it etc. Confirms preceding. They report the Captain of the pirates name is Kentish and Captain Edwards belonging to the sloop, He was ordered on board and Capt. Tach took his cargo of cattle and hogs, his arms books and instruments. The ship, Dutch built, was a French Guinea man, 36 guns mounted and 300 men. They did not abuse him or his men, but forced 2 to stay and one Robert Bibby voluntarily took on with them. They had a great deal of plate on board, and one very fine cup they told deponent they had taken out of Capt. Taylor, bound from Barbados to Jamaica, whom they very much abused and burnt his ship.

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  Shooting pirates.

[Posted April 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353454) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353454)

I'm certainly in favour of debunking nylon flag myths!

As to the two entries, there's a ship *and* sloop mentioned in the second piece, two ships and a sloop in the first. The Boston News Letter of March 3 1718 reported that in the previous November "Capt. Teach the Pirate [was] in a French Ship of 32 Guns, a Briganteen of 10 Guns, and a Sloop of 12 Guns". The French crew of *La Concorde* reported that "Edouard Titche" captured their ship in two vessels on the 17th November 1717. So it seems that in the second half of November Teach had command of the *Queen Anne's Revenge* and two other vessels. In December Bostock reports only the QAR and a sloop, as does Governor Hamilton in January 1718 (CSP Colonial, America and West Indies, 1717-1718, #298). The logical conclusion is that around the beginning of December Teach abandoned one of his vessels. The fact that the number of guns does not tally between the two reports is unsurprising: even the officers of *La Concorde* could not agree how many guns the ship carried when she was captured, Knight only told what was "reported" to him, and Hamilton, in the letter noted above, says "The ship some say has 22 others say she has 26 guns mounted but all agree that she can carry 40". Kentish can be identified as Teach (or Thatch, Titch etc) by the size of his vessel and his association with "Edwards", a known alias of Bonnet (given, for example, in his arraignment).

Every answer to a Johnson related question seems to throw up more. No, we don't know who Johnson was, but we can say with some certainty that whoever actually penned the text Nathaniel Mist was the man behind the book. Almost certainly changes made in subsequent editions of the GHP were the result of new information reaching Johnson. We can say where a fair amount of Johnson's information came from with some certainty, including from previously printed material, from people involved (certainly John Atkins and possibly Woodes Rogers), probably from interviews with several pirates in prison in London. Furthermore, I can show that in at least one case Johnson used information which was substantially accurate, but which did not come from any other known printed source - suggesting further witnesses or sources as yet unnamed. But therein lies the trouble with Johnson, his information can be divided into three types: that which is demonstrably correct when compared with other sources; that which is demonstrably incorrect when compared with other sources; and that which cannot be verified either way and which might be fanciful invention or from an unknown source. In short, Johnson can't be relied on unless his information is verified elsewhere, but that does not mean that his information is inherently inaccurate unless it can be shown to be so.

The two reports arrived *in London* at the same time, but Franklin was not in London. It must be considered entirely possible that the reason Johnson claims Blackbeard was born in Bristol is because he was.

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

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* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted April 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353466) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353466)

Doing a search on Young Mr. Franklins work, I found the following-

USA Today, April 2000.

Did Benjamin Franklin Create Infotainment?

Benjamin Franklin, one of our nation's Founding Fathers, also was the founding father of infotainment, that ever-popular blend of information and entertainment, according to Tom Leonard, associate dean of the University of California, Berkeley's North Gate Graduate School of Journalism. Even as a youngster, Franklin was writing ballads that incorporated details from daily newspaper reports about events such as the pirate Blackbeard's beheading. He then would hawk copies of the songs on the streets of Boston.

The 13-year-old Franklin wrote and helped his brother James publish a ballad, "The Downfall of Piracy," in 1719. The Franklin brothers later used their newspaper to advertise broadsides--sheets of paper on which was printed a song on a topical subject. The young Franklin's ballad recalls the last day in the life of Captain Edward Teach, commonly known as Blackbeard, the pirate who plundered the Atlantic coast.

Such ballads "are among the earliest indicators of what news would be, who would control it, and how it could support a business," Leonard notes. He also links specific details in the ballad with historic fact, explaining that the song predates by three years the "Silence Do-good" letters of 1722, which scholars have long considered the earliest surviving writings of Franklin. Previous investigations of the song conceded that the ballad could have been Franklin's, but failed to make a definitive finding.

Recognizing "Downfall" as Franklin's earliest work, the one that the statesman-inventor-writer called "wretched Stuff" in his old age, sheds new light on the media's evolution, Leonard suggests. While American newspapers of the time were in their infancy and generally carried dull, but informative, reports of happenings, broadsides--or broadsheets--contained not only songs, but accounts of military maneuvers and even political material.

As ballads grew more popular, entrepreneurs such as the Franklin brothers realized the profit potential of connecting them with spin-offs. "The Franklins, astute businessmen that they were, lost no time in exploiting the entertainment potential of the news." They launched the New-England Courant in Boston in 1721 and drew on news they reported to give details to punctuate the broadsheets they printed and, in turn, promoted in their newspaper.

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_scourge_o_the_7_seas.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted April 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353469) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353469)

I've put together a bit of a timeline to help us along with what information we have on hand.

Nov/Dec 1717 Black Beard/ Teach surfaces and his name is put to print and "seeing two ships and a sloop, and thinking one did belong to Bristol, and the other two to Guinea,"

Nov 1718 He Dies

March 1719 Young Franklin publishes "A sailors song on the taking of Blackbeard" at the ripe age of 13. a jaunty little tune that becomes a hit amongst the broadsides of the time-

With cutlass, sword, or pistol

And when we can no longer strike a blow

Then fire the magazine boys, and up we go!

Its better to swim in the seas below

Than to swing in the air and feed the crows,

Says jolly Ed Teach of Bristol.

1724 Johnsons book is published.

Are there any other written works connecting Black Beard with Bristol prior to 1724? Now I'm not going to jump up and down and say he was not Bristol Born, but if this is all we have then I think we would be amis to not atleast exhaust our research efforts to support this.

edit 1920hrs.

so i've been mulling over this bristol born thing a little more. the nov 1717 reference clearly describes the ships NOT the captain. So did Mr. Knight ask the captain if he was from Bristol? would a pirate captain have honestly answered or did later authors simply make a "logical conclusion" which is now steeped in 300 years of tradition?

edit #2 2117hrs.

ok kiddies, I bet there is more to the story! regarding 298 i, ii, & iii. those are depositions and we're only reading the cliff notes. how can we get ahold of the actual depositions? I bet this would have the answer to the flag question and may shed some more light on the man of bristol as well as some pressed folks, see 298 ii to see that reference.

**Edited April 23, 2009 by bbcddutchman**

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

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* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
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[Posted April 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353513) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353513)

and now back to the flag topic...... this occurred 13 days prior to the previously posted items in the same waters.

HOLY SMOKES LOOK WHAT I RAN ACROSS!!!!!!!!!!!

but before he had my answer a ship came by, which a little Brittish sloop that had escaped her amongst the little Islands at whom he had fired three guns (the first under Brittish colours, which he lowered and then hoysted a white Ensign with the figure of a dead man spread in it) gave me an account that the said ship was a priate upon which we made a signall for Captain Marshall to come off which as soon as he did we went after said pirate believing her to be a ship of about 18 or 20 guns but could not get sight of her, she having as we believed turned up under the North side of that Island

**Edited April 23, 2009 by bbcddutchman**

[**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 April 24, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353556) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353556)

Cool, what's the source for that one?

Regarding Blackbeard's birth place, AFAIK we have one or possibly two contemporary-ish sources that say he was Bristol born, possibly as many as two that suggest he was associated with Jamaica, one that suggests he had a wife and children in London, and one (which I can't find to hand to verify) that says he sailed out of Philadelphia. There's no reason why they shouldn't all be true to some extent: he might easily have been born in Bristol, married in London, and sailed at various times from Philadelphia and Jamaica.

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_scourge_o_the_7_seas.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted April 24, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=353619) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=353619)

from 298. I've thumbed through a few of the previous logs and found the London born reference- then went home and could not find it on the computer there. We will not all be able to read every page and dig into it. I'm headed out for the weekend, but how bout this. upon my return lets split the reading and collectively come up with a referenced time line from the journals. anything however seemingly minute may turn into a clue. then we can all pick through what we wish.

And as I feared! these are cliff noted. I was able to get a copy of an affidavit and unfortunately not from an on line resource- sooo anyone have any friends in england that would not mind digging through records?

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

* 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 October 20, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=417338) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=417338)

I am resurrecting this thread because my pirate surgeon article for this month is about [memento mori during the golden age of piracy](http://piratesurgeon.com/pages/surgeon_pages/memento_mori1.html). It gets into how memento mori symbols were used in stories, art, grave art, anatomy books, jewelry and pirate flags. In fact, I actually added a story (and an image) which I found in this very thread.



[**Littleneckhalfshell**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4-littleneckhalfshell/)

* Plunderer
* http://pyracy.com/uploads/pip_plunderer.gif
* [](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4-littleneckhalfshell/)
* Member
* 390 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Hudson Valley, NY
* Interests:Blacksmithing, hunting, fishing, stuff.......

[Posted October 29, 2014](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=findComment&comment=417359) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/18650-flags-and-the-deaths-head-memento-mori/&do=reportComment&comment=417359)

Memento Mori opens at WDW, It's not just for pirates ;-)

<http://www.insidethemagic.net/2014/10/haunted-mansion-store-memento-mori-officially-opens-appropriately-amidst-halloween-season-at-walt-disney-world/>