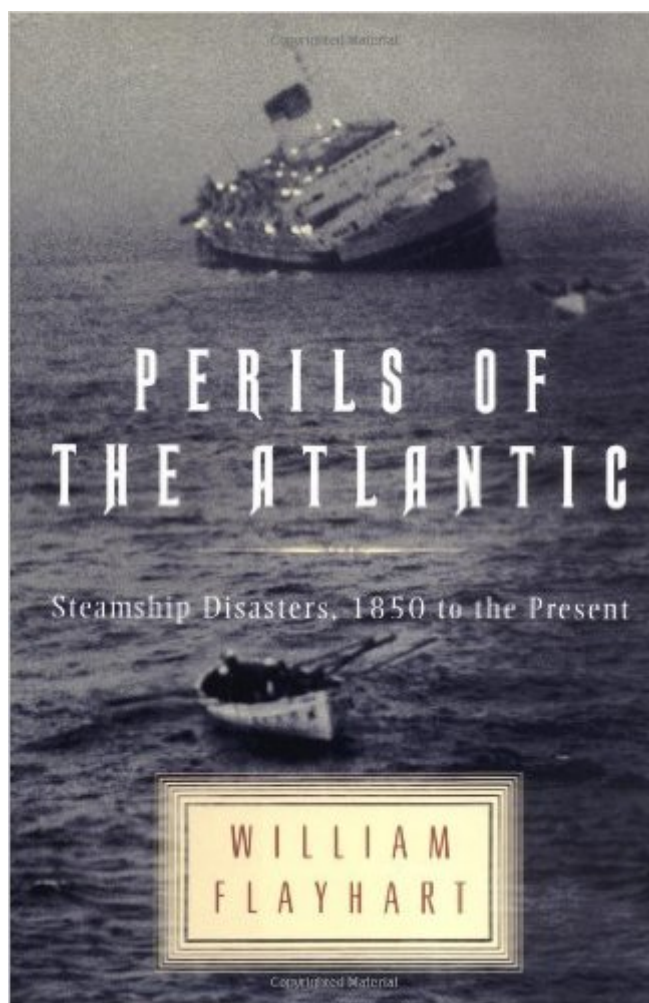


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Perils Of The Atlantic: Steamship Disasters, 1850 To The Present



Synopsis

"Flayhart delivers a gripping chronicle of mishap and mayhem . . . filled with danger and heroism and rich with detail." •Sea Power A colorful and deadly history of ocean liner disasters from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, *Perils of the Atlantic* is a chronicle of the most frightening episodes in the maritime history of the North Atlantic. From 1850 to the present day, the Atlantic has been home to hundreds of ocean liners and cruise ships, each more lavish than the last...all of them symbols of wealth and luxury. Perhaps this is why readers have always been fascinated by the lives of these ships •and their deaths. Many of us know the stories of the Titanic and the Lusitania. Both tragedies caused tremendous loss of life, even as they made the ships immortal. But there are many little-known accounts of extraordinary survivals at sea, such as the Inman and International liner City of Chicago that jammed her bow into an Irish peninsula in 1892 but stayed afloat long enough for all to be rescued, or the City of Richmond that survived a dangerous fire in 1891, and a year earlier the City of Paris, whose starboard engine exploded at full speed in the mid-Atlantic and yet miraculously still made port. Often such tales are forgotten even if the ship sank: In 1898 the Holland-America liner Veendam hit a submerged wreck and sank at sea, but all lives were saved •so this vessel's dramatic story seemed less important in maritime history than incidents involving human loss. As recently as 2000, the Sea Breeze I sank off the East Coast of the United States while on a positioning voyage, but all her crew members were rescued in a heroic effort by U.S. Coast Guard helicopters. These stories and many others are dramatic, and acclaimed maritime scholar William Flayhart has spent much of the last forty years in search of material from which to create colorful narratives. 26 illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A nice book for any sea-faring stories buff to own and essential to a library like mine. Not quite so 'up-to-date' as the author might have imagined, but then no imagination could come up with our latest disaster, in the "Med" in 2012 with the so-called liner's 'Captain' refusing to re-board his own distressed vessel to assist the passengers and resisting all Coast Guard orders to do so! (He was, he claimed, 'thrown off' his ship into one of the lifeboats!) Essentially the book offers a straightforward chronological narrative, in well researched and clear prose, of over 21 shipping disasters in the Atlantic. Each event is very fully detailed, from the first (usually) navigational error to resulting Board of Inquiry conclusions. Obviously Professor Flayhart has deep understanding on nautical affairs and terms, but does not "show off" his knowledge by any unnecessary descent into the lingo or "Esperanto" of the seaman's language. It is this core skill ... seamanship... that shines through many of his accounts of these shipwrecks. Marconi Radio Operators showing initiative and staying at their posts long past good sense should have let them. Captains being always the last to leave the ships - if at all. Or, conversely, the mad, expedient and very prompt evacuation of the crew first, long before that traditional "Women and Children First" rule. After many years at sea, through a few 'near misses' of my own, these stories thrill. Nowadays my seafaring is restricted to "Cruising" in vast, top-heavy ships designed to ensure that most passage-makers are totally isolated (protected?) from the experience and realization of their actually being at sea.

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