

Taking the sea: perilous waters, sunken ships, and the true story of the legendary wrecker captains

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Abstrak

In the late 19th century, an intrepid, reckless group of men ruled the ocean. Known as "wreckers," they earned their living by rescuing and raising sunken ships, even in the face of monstrous waves and fierce weather. To some, they were heroes, helping to rescue both passengers and ships with courage and skill. To others they were ruthless pirates, who exploited these ship wrecks purely for their treasure. In *Taking the Sea*, Dennis M. Powers uncovers a fascinating, yet largely unknown, period in our history. Here he traces the journey of these legendary men through the story of Captain Thomas P. H. Whitelaw, the most important ship salvager of his day. From their early beginnings when greedy villagers would lure ships to the rocky coasts of Europe to their heyday during the era of the fast but vulnerable American clipper ships and their founding of the city of Key West, Powers offers a compelling portrait of the wrecker captains and the dangerous lives they and their men led. From the East Coast to the Pacific, we travel along with these men as they faced the savage seas to save ships and plunder untold wealth. Beautifully written and vividly told, this is a magnificent look at the untold history of the fearless and often mercenary men who made their living from the sea.