



Demon of the Waters: The True Story of the Mutiny on the Whaleship Globe

Gregory Gibson , Gary Tonkin (Illustrator) , Erik Ronnberg (Illustrator)

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The mutiny of the whale-ship Globe in the South Pacific in 1825 was one of the goriest incidents in American maritime history and has achieved legendary status in seafaring lore. At the centre of the mutiny was a young man raised in a staunch Nantucket Quaker family, Samuel Comstock, one of the most bizarre and frightening figures who ever went to sea. This is an account of the legendary mutiny, packed with incident and detail.

Demon of the Waters: The True Story of the Mutiny on the Whaleship Globe Details

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Author : Gregory Gibson , Gary Tonkin (Illustrator) , Erik Ronnberg (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Demon of the Waters: The True Story of the Mutiny on the Whaleship Globe for online ebook

Dr. says

An sad historical story, leaving one wondering why some individuals are so evil.

Monica Perez says

Well written story of the mutiny on the whaleship Globe in 1823. Full of details on whaling and the Nantucket whaleship days.

Donna says

Demon of the Waters is the second book I've read about the *Globe* mutiny led by Samuel Comstock in 1824. It's more recent than the one I read a few months ago, and the back cover promised information from a newly available source, which was also part of the attraction. Unfortunately, this book doesn't live up to its promise.

I knew I was going to have issues with the author's writing style when early chapters kept telling me what those associated with the *Globe* "may have" done and "probably" did. Heavy speculation in nonfiction is annoying. Explain common practices of the time, sure, but stick with the facts when it comes to the specific people you're writing about.

The book includes chapters about life in Nantucket, boat building, whaling practices, and the navy. Some of this background information was interesting, but it tended to veer off into unnecessary tangents. A lot of ship-related jargon was used and only occasionally explained, and for a general-audience type book, some of the technical aspects of sailing should have either been explained better or avoided. The short psychological analysis of Samuel Comstock seemed especially awkward.

The overall structure is jumpy and sometimes just strange. In one instance, a new chapter begins and then immediately skips us four days back in time for no obvious reason. There are also sections, seemingly placed at random, about the author's personal experiences as a book agent, his research on the new source of *Globe* information, and his trip to the island where the mutineers landed. I didn't find these parts especially interesting or relevant enough to justify the way they constantly broke the flow of the main story.

The much-touted new source was a private journal kept by a midshipman on the naval ship sent out after the mutineers, which probably explains why the book spends so many more pages on the rescue party than the other mutiny or shipwreck books I've read. I'm not sure how much truly new information this source contributed. The author quotes from the journal, but mocks the quality of the prose and compares it unfavorably to Melville more than once. It seems mean-spirited to keep pointing out that the young man's writing attempts are well beneath the efforts of one of America's best known literary figures.

My biggest problem with the book was that all the asides about the era, the author, and the rescue ship overshadowed the actual events of the mutiny at times. Some of the little details that I found really interesting from the earlier account that I read were either glossed over or entirely left out of this one.

If you're interested in reading only one book about the *Globe*, I'd recommend Mutiny on the Globe. Its style is a little more old-fashioned, but the simpler structure and clearer focus more than make up for that.

Natalie says

This has been on my list forever and I finally went to the library to get it and it was Lost, so....I'm not going to worry about it anymore. I don't want to read it bad enough to borrow it. Maybe if the library finds it, I'll read it, but I'm moving it off my massive to-read list.

Irenic says

Part history, part true-crime, I could not put this down. Getting a middle-aged mid-western gal interested in maritime history is quite an accomplishment. Now I want to read more of Gibson's work

Melissa Cuevas says

When I picked this up, I was hoping that I had another book much along the same lines as the wonderful "In the Heart of the Sea", which I truly enjoy and reread often. However, I was truly disappointed here. The first part, dealing with the Globe's financial history, the familial lines of her owners and crew, and her building, were strong and enjoyable. The first kinks started to show in the intermittent and annoying self insertion chapters that the writer kept placing... if (and it's a very strong if) there really was a need to go into his personal history with the documents that spawned this book, they should have been either at the front of the book, or the back, but dropping them piecemeal in the middle made for a distracting and jarring read. But, once I got to the actual voyage and mutiny, I realized that there might have been an actual reason for these chapters, because quite bluntly, there is precious little about the voyage and mutiny contained in this book. They serve as padding to justify a book length price of a very brief look at the actual event. I actually had to go back to find a single paragraph of grave importance because I couldn't believe that was all the coverage that this certain event warranted in the entire layout of this book. A completely gratuitous self insertion section was of equal length or longer than the mutiny. Then we go to the Dolphin's attempt to find and rescue the survivors (with yet more interspersed history on a not very interesting manuscript...yes, I see all of your friends/contacts wanted a mention!) which, in spite of the fact that he crew survived to have written/been interviewed, etc, remains extremely light on substance and heavy on yet more self insertions. Just read "In the Heart of the Sea" and pass this one up.

Scott says

interesting true story with lots of insights into the 1800's whaling industry. Gets alittle bogged down in the end.

Fredrick Danysh says

Samuel Comstock led a mutiny aboard the whaling ship Globe. This book is a story of that mutiny, whaling in general during the age of sail, and the author's own experiences as a book scout. The entries on the whaling industry are detailed and informative.

krin says

This is a well-researched book on not only the mutiny Samuel Comstock led on the whaleship Globe, but also the broader history of the whaling industry and its effect on trade and the culture in Nantucket and surrounding areas during the early 19th century.

Joe Paulk says

An excellent history book that reads like a dark thriller. The story is well grounded in fact and the speculation is kept only to a necessary minimum. Still, the events are put together in a smooth flowing narrative that leaves a chill running down the spine in parts. How many historical books do that?

Raving Redcoat says

A very readable look at a largely forgotten chapter in American whaling. Fans of nautical nonfiction will enjoy this.

Sasha (whispersofthesilentwind) says

"I am a bloody man! I have a bloody hand and I will be avenged!"

I was browsing through Half-Price Books when the title of this book caught my eye. I had just recently been studying the point in history which the Whaleship Mutiny takes place in so I figured 'heck why not pick it up'.

Gibson does a great job with keeping the story intriguing and not bogged down with dry facts. But there was a number of issues that I had with this book. The foremost being, I don't want to hear what "probably" or "maybe" happened. If you think it happened then say it like you believe it **or**, if you don't, then present it as rumors of the time. This is supposed to be non-fiction, stick to the facts!

The next issue is I really couldn't care less about how *Gibson* came by whatever book for your research, or some random book hoarder seller. They're irrelevant and didn't add to main point of this book.

I did like learning about the back ground of Nantucket and the whaling industry. It was fascinating to learn that *"There was at least one whaleship whose crew were entirely composed of blacks"* as well as that blacks

would attain ranks up to that of the harpooner (which is just below that of the ship's officers.) However some of the background information wasn't necessary and just bogged down the story.

The last and most egregious problem with this book was that so little time was spent on the actually mutiny. *Gibson* built up to it; but it was there and gone in the next breath and the survivors were on their way back home.

In the end I did like learning more about the whaling industry and how the different whaling towns interacted with each other. As well as the random little facts sprinkled here and there. But the main point of the book (**which was the mutiny**) is really glossed over.

Tim Painter says

This is another 19th century mutiny story that rivals that of the bounty. A very engrossing book and worthy of reading. Gives a good look into the lives of whalers in that day.

Michael says

I sure do like books about whalers. Another great book for anyone into maritime history. Maybe even for those that aren't. Well written and not many dull moments. A little too much sailor talk. The author obviously knows a lot about the old ships and uses a lot of terminology that most people won't be familiar with. Mostly describing the ship works. I have read A LOT of maritime history books and I still don't know what every sail or masts are called. At some parts I felt like "ok, I get it. You know a lot about historical ships.". Otherwise, great book and great story. A little of everything a great seafaring tale needs.
