



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

Gregory Gibson

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In 1985 Greg Gibson was sent a handwritten journal discovered by a small time book dealer in rural Indiana. It turned out to be a young officer's account of the 1825 naval expedition dispatched to the Pacific with orders to apprehend the perpetrators of the Globe mutiny. The mutiny and its aftermath were notorious as the goriest crime in American maritime history; involving hatchet murders, stabbings, shootings and a shipboard lynching. The long-lost journal was the first eyewitness account of the fate of those mutineers, and of the innocent men left at the mercy of the tattooed islanders who adopted and enslaved them.

At the center of the mutiny was a young man raised in a staunch Nantucket Quaker family. As a boy Samuel Comstock's head was filled with the stories of daring naval exploits and sea-faring adventure. As he grew older, these fantasies took a darker turn. One year into a Pacific whaling voyage, Comstock brutally murdered the captain and his officers. He and three accomplices then forced the terrified crew (among them his fifteen year old brother) to sail to the Mulgrave Islands where he planned to kill everyone aboard, destroy the ship, subdue the natives and rule the island as its king. In the confusion that followed, six of the innocent crew stole the Globe and piloted her, in an epic shorthanded voyage, 7500 miles back to South America. There they told the world of the terrible events they had witnessed. The Navy sent out its expeditionary force and seventeen-year-old midshipman Augustus Strong penned the journal that would resurface 175 years later.

The story of the Globe mutiny is one of unending fascination. Dovetailing Gibson's riveting account of the mutiny is the history of the sperm oil industry, its Nantucket Quaker powerbrokers, the growth of American naval influence and how their combined agendas played out in the remote reaches of the Pacific. Above all, Demon of the Waters is, in the tradition of Nordhoff and Hall's Mutiny on the Bounty, a story of men and the sea.

Brilliantly conceived, gripping, horrific, and insightful, Demon of the Waters is destined to become a classic of sea adventure.

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