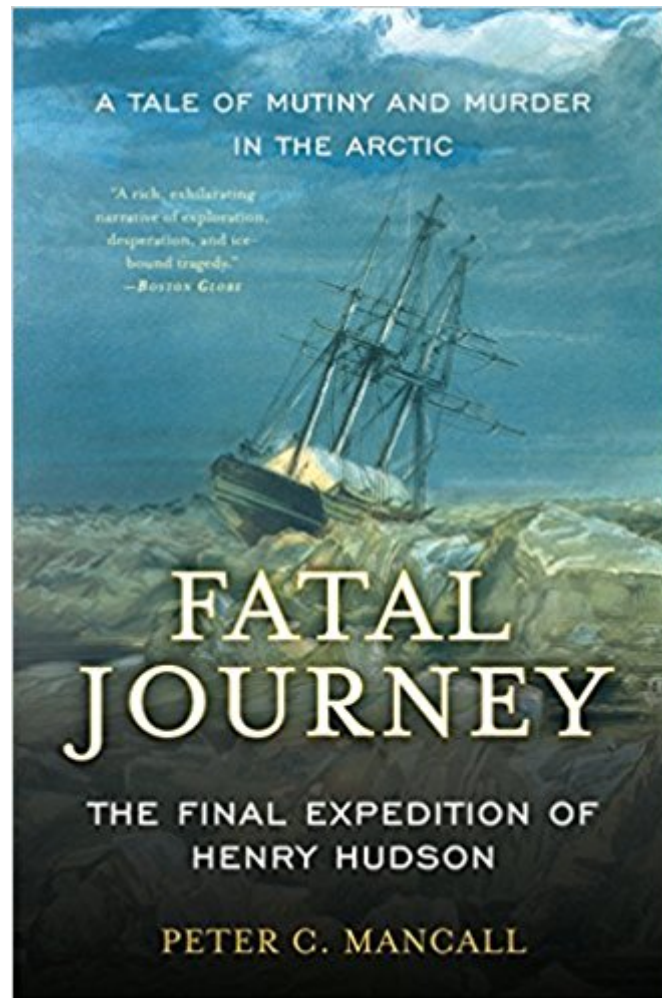




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Fatal Journey: The Final Expedition Of Henry Hudson



Synopsis

The English explorer Henry Hudson devoted his life to the search for a water route through America, becoming the first European to navigate the Hudson River in the process. In *Fatal Journey*, acclaimed historian and biographer Peter C. Mancall narrates Hudson's final expedition. In the winter of 1610, after navigating dangerous fields of icebergs near the northern tip of Labrador, Hudson's small ship became trapped in winter ice. Provisions grew scarce and tensions mounted amongst the crew. Within months, the men mutinied, forcing Hudson, his teenage son, and seven other men into a skiff, which they left floating in the Hudson Bay. A story of exploration, desperation, and icebound tragedy, *Fatal Journey* vividly chronicles the undoing of the great explorer, not by an angry ocean, but at the hands of his own men.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Basic Books; Reprint edition (September 28, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0465020313

ISBN-13: 978-0465020317

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars 27 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #316,072 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in [Books > Travel > Polar Regions > Arctic](#) #76 in [Books > History > Arctic & Antarctica](#) #365 in [Books > History > World > Expeditions & Discoveries](#)

Customer Reviews

In April 1610, Henry Hudson set sail on the *Discovery* with a crew of 22 (including his 17-year-old son) on his fourth expedition in search of a shorter route to the Far East. USC historian Mancall (*Hakluyt's Promise*) vividly recreates the eager anticipation of the voyage, the lust for conquest and for spices, the voyage's risks and the joy and terrors that Hudson and his crew faced. But as winter approached, rather than return to England, Hudson set anchor in the bay named for him. Stuck in ice for seven months, their provisions dwindling, the crew mutinied in the spring, forcing Hudson, his son and seven other sailors into a skiff left floating in the bay. When the mariners on the *Discovery* returned to England without Hudson, they were tried for murder but never convicted. As for Hudson and the rest, their remains were never found and their fate is the stuff of legend. As Mancall so

eloquently points out, the resolute will that had served Hudson so well in reaching this summit of exploration also made him unwilling to abandon his goal and led to his demise. Illus., map. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
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Booklist #147;Mancall's account of the doomed voyage is exciting, tense, and tragic#133;. This is an excellent re-examination of [Hudson] and his final, sad effort.~ - Minneapolis Star Tribune #147;[Mancall's] facility with primary sources is astounding. The story of Hudson's last voyage becomes, in his experienced hands, a lucid, fascinating lens into early Atlantic explorations. The book bristles with action, details about ship life, insight into British laws (the mutineers were found not guilty), and jaw-dropping accounts of encounters with Americans.~ - Seattle Times #147;This is a story that stretches the imagination and leaves the reader with a shiver.~ - Las Cruces Sun-News #147;Mancall [is] a master storyteller and historian#133;. Any reader of Dr. Mancall's account will be caught in an exciting adventure and overwhelming tragedy.~ - Washington Times #147;Mr. Mancall writes with authority in tone and scholarship.~ - New York Post #147;Rather than speculate, Mancall delivers the story of how Hudson's crusade put him on a collision course with his men#133;. But the story is perhaps most compelling in its descriptions of the Northern territory itself.~ - Washington Post #147;[Fatal Journey] recounts the puzzling episode of a captain overthrown by an enraged faction of his own crew#133;. [A] short and dependable guide to what befell a great but flawed explorer.~ - Newark Star-Ledger #147;For fans of Mutiny on the Bounty and The Caine Mutiny, Fatal Journey will only add to the store and lore of desperate actions on the high seas#133;. [Mancall] combines forensic history with pulsing narrative to achieve a highly credible account of how the mission unraveled.~ - Boston Globe #147;Bracingly told.~ - Boston Globe #147;Fatal Journey is a rich, exhilarating narrative of exploration, desperation, and ice-bound tragedy.~ - History Magazine #147;Mancall places Hudson and the mutiny in the context of their age, a time when economic and cultural forces lured explorers and sailors into the dangers of a new world in search of profit and fame.~ - Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research #147;Mancall, in this fascinating account based on a great deal of research, provides a reasonable explanation of Hudson's likely fate, after probably surviving for a polar winter or two#133;. I recommended this excellent book to both armchair explorers and serious students of the history of the Arctic.~ -

This book is all about locating the northwest passage to the Pacific Ocean. The early European explorers certainly had to be a hardy group to endure all of the hardships that were presented to them. Henry Hudson made four trips across the north Atlantic including one along the east coast of the present-day United States and then up the river that now bears his name as far as where Albany is now located searching for a route to the Pacific. Hudson's persistence in pursuing a northwest passage led to a revolt by some of his men on his 1610 trip. After spending a horrible winter iced in at James Bay when spring arrived Hudson, his son, and a few loyalists were cast adrift to fend for themselves with the remainder of the group leaving for a return trip to England. Alas, some of those men died fighting local Inuit in the area and never did return. I guess we can say that Hudson's stubbornness in insisting on forging ahead in search of the elusive passage led to his, and several others, demise. The author speculates as to what may have happened to Hudson and his remaining crew, but we obviously can't be sure. In any case of the eight men of the original twenty-three who returned to England no one was ever persecuted for their actions towards Hudson. I feel I learned a lot from this book. I knew that Hudson was cast adrift, but was unaware of many of the details regarding this trip. Also, it was informative to learn about the possibilities that may have taken place. I wasn't aware that the crew may have perished on shore in the James Bay area and not necessarily in the waters. If you look at a map of the area you will find places named not only after Hudson, but also Martin Frobisher, Luke Foxe, and William Baffin. There is a reason places are named as they are, and this book will tell you something about the person behind the name.

Such a book is long overdue as there is almost nothing of such detail brought together in one volume about Hudson and his last voyage; and for good reason. Unlike Bligh and the HMS Bounty mutiny, little is known of Hudson and the loss of his ship Discovery. With so much open to speculation, I give the author credit for attempting such a writing task. This is not a story book, but more a research work with as much facts as likely could be found. True, as others have mentioned, maps and illustrations are poorly presented (have a magnifying glass handy), and this seems to be a common problem with similar books. I did appreciate the historical background and descriptive context the author places Hudson and his crews. The demand for spices in Europe, the search for a short cut passage to Asia, and the dogged nature of individuals obsessed in that quest, are all part of the Hudson mystery. I found helpful and at times fascinating the author's informative details of the nervous relationship seafarers had with native people, the sea and natural world, and especially that of the arctic and its wildlife. It is remarkable how many explorers of that era achieved much, and at great risk, only to be forgotten by history. The author does a good job describing the efforts of others

before Hudson so that the reader can more fully understand Hudson's knowledge base and strategies in seeking his routes. Hudson and the like were astronauts of their time, and like the moon, the arctic then was as much a mysterious and dangerous place. In that backdrop, the reader is left to ponder what really happened? Why was there mutiny? What was different from the previous three successful voyages? Did the crew snap under the strain of a long winter locked in the ice, or did Hudson crack under duress of failing again in finding the passage? Did having his young son with him contribute to the disaster? We will likely never know as the man and the voyage are a mystery for all time.

Part of the issue with this story is that Henry Hudson's early life is a mystery--often the pre-adventure biographical information forms a nice chunk of the early part of such a book--and so is his ultimate fate. His journals were not recovered and he was never found so although we are left with much tantalizing speculation, there is no satisfying resolution of the story. This impacts the effect of the book on the reader. The writing itself is not lacking and there is still much to enjoy here.

Fascinating ! Gives Hudson and his crew that were with him until the end a sense of humanness. Gives a great insight into the minds and culture of the Native populations. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and recommend it.

Ok. I'll give this the benefit of the doubt. I wasn't able to read this in 2 or 3 sittings, so perhaps that is why I felt this book was repetitive and not as page turning as it might have been. Is it possible it was burdened by too many contemporary but superfluous facts? I had a very hard time getting back to it each day and was thrilled when it was done.

Basically, the book is a credible account of the efforts to find a Northwest Passage in the early to mid-seventeenth century. Mancall does a good job in establishing the economic importance of finding an Arctic route to the Spice Islands. Mancall's research of journals and accounts appears to be exhaustive, but unfortunately the book is a rather dry read. The author may be excused for lack of drama in some respects since the Hudson's journals and those from his associates apparently were rather cursory--unlike Pigafetta's. Even so, the story could be much more compelling had the author visited Hudson Bay or had first hand knowledge of working a sailing vessel in Arctic waters. Much more vivid are the works of Samuel Eliot Morison and Dallas Murphy because they sailed the routes of the voyages they write about. The two page map of Hudson's voyages (1607-1611) is very

welcome and an essential part to understanding the narrative--particularly the inset map of Hudson Bay. The reproductions of early maps, paintings/drawings from other expeditions scattered throughout the book are generally too small and dark to be useful. The large map itself has mislabeled the Provinces of Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba. Also, Davis Strait should have been noted as well as the degrees latitude. Tom Ogle, South Carolina

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