Hen Frigates: Wives Of Merchant Captains Under Sail

Joan Druett

Druett has used the letters and journals of seafaring women to limn a portrait of 19th-century ship-going life, including matters such as sex, child-rearing and medical practices. From shipwreck and pirate attacks to the intricacies of navigation and the pleasures of visiting foreign lands, Druett's heroines shed new perspective on the 19th-century shipping news. Read more. Historical sidelights can be as intriguing as major events, as in this study of 19th-century sea captains’ wives who sailed with their husbands and recorded their impressions in journals and letters. Druett (Petticoat Whalers) points out that in some instances finances dictated that wives be taken along, for a captain who put all of his capital into a ship might have no funds for a home on land.