Athwart the Trend: Maritime History’s position in a sea of Atlantic World Prospects

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Abstract

The study of maritime history, like the study of Atlantic World history, is relatively new to the academy. Yet, while maritime history exhibits static growth patterns, Atlantic World history increases in prominence and popularity. Daniel Vickers attributes Atlantic World history’s recognition to the fact that it has a clear theoretical framework, while maritime history remains ill-defined. This article attempts to define both disciplines, discuss their differences and similarities, and argue that maritime historians have a lot to learn from practitioners of Atlantic World history.

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Seas of the Atlantic Ocean: Refer to this list to learn which seas are on the margins of the Atlantic Ocean from Geography at About.com. The Atlantic Ocean is one of the world's five oceans. It is the second-largest behind the Pacific Ocean with a total area of 41,100,000 square miles (106,400,000 sq km). It covers about 23% of the Earth's surface and located mainly between the American continents and Europe and Africa. The Atlantic Ocean is also similar to other oceans in that it shares borders with both continents and marginal seas. The definition of a marginal sea is an area of water that is a "partially enclosed sea adjacent to or widely open to the open ocean" (Wikipedia.org). The Atlantic Ocean shares borders with ten marginal seas. Although the Atlantic basin was in many ways the world center of commerce in the colonial period and into the twentieth century, many signs suggest a shift of the world center of commerce to the Pacific basin in the twenty-first century. Highly productive fisheries of the Atlantic have been severely overfished in the twentieth century and the development of industrial scale fish farming raises further issues about maintaining healthy wild fisheries. The Atlantic Ocean appears to be the second youngest of the world's oceans, after the Southern Ocean. Persistent fog can be a maritime hazard from May to September, as can hurricanes north of the equator (May to December). Its unique position attracts powerful winds and the shallow sea bed produces heavy wave motion. As winter begins and weather worsens, depressions cause severe weather at sea and constant rain along the shores. It was the scene of two of New Zealand's worst maritime catastrophes; the Penguin disaster in 1909 and the sinking of the ferry Wahine in 1968. Drake Passage, Southern tip of South America. This is one of the world's most renowned stormy seas, also known as the "Sea of Hoces". Beneath the sea lie considerable reserves of oil and gas, resulting in a number of offshore petroleum projects and considerable exploration activity. With so many storms and cyclones passing through the area oil and gas production are often interrupted.