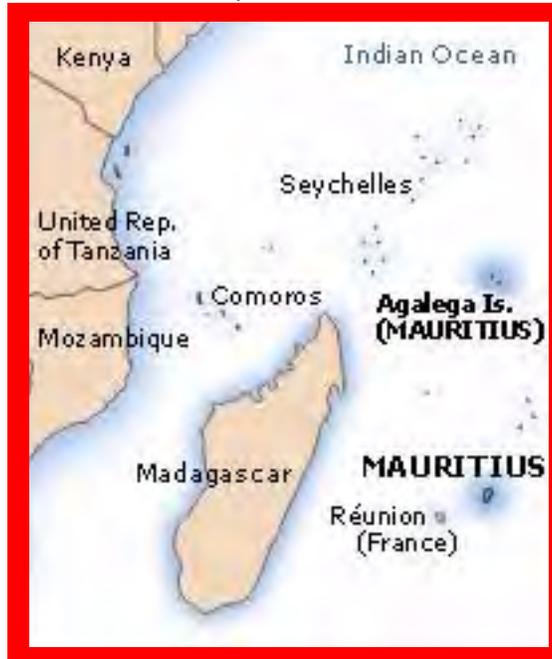


THOMAS TEW¹

1691

RHODE ISLAND born **THOMAS TEW** purchased a share in the 70-ton sloop *Amity* from some merchants in Bermuda. Sailing with Captain Tew was another sloop commanded by George Drew. Unable to obtain a privateering commission from the Rhode Island Governor, Tew sailed the *Amity* from **NEWPORT** to Bermuda and was sold, for £300 sterling, a commission “to attack French vessels,” by Governor Benjamin Fletcher there, who considered Captain Tew to be “a very pleasant man who tells wonderful stories.” Tew then sailed to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean to plunder local shipping. They had been fitted out and commissioned to sail with instructions to take the French factory at Garee on the river Gambia in West Africa. On the voyage out, a storm caused Drew’s sloop to spring her mast and the two vessels lost sight of each other. Captain Tew did not think much of raiding a factory with little or no hope of gold. He therefore proposed raiding other ships and his crew unanimously accepted the change in course. They sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and up the east coast of Africa to the Gulf of Aden at the Red Sea. Just as they reached the entrance to the Red Sea they saw a richly laden Arabian vessel full of soldiers, guns, and gold. She was taken without loss and £3,000 sterling was each man’s share. From there they set sail to the island of Madagascar.



1. Hawes, Alexander Boyd. *OFF SOUNDINGS: ASPECTS OF THE MARITIME HISTORY OF RHODE ISLAND*. Chevy Chase MD: Posterity Press, 1999

There 24 of the crew elected to retire and enjoy a life of ease in that delightful climate.



The rest of the company remained with Captain Tew and he set sail for America. Barely out of port he encountered a ship under command of Captain Mission, a famous **PIRATE** from France. Mission had earlier established a pirate haven and colony on Madagascar by the name of "Libertatia." Captain Tew and crew were welcome converts. Madagascar was ideally located and had no government. It is about three times the size of North Carolina. Captain Mission, desiring to strengthen his colony, decided to send a ship to Guinea to seize slave ships. He offered Tew the command of the expedition and gave him a crew of 200 men. After passing the Cape of Good Hope, Captain Tew captured a Dutch East Indianman with 18 guns. He lost one man but got several chests of English Crowns. Nine of the Dutchmen joined his company and the rest were put ashore. Off the coast of Angola, Thomas captured an English vessel with 240 slaves. They were returned to Libertatia after a short voyage around Madagascar, Thomas had the "Amity" refitted and set sail for America. From his New England home port he sent word to his partners in Bermuda to send for their share of the profits from his voyage. Captain Tew's share came to 8000 pounds sterling. Captain Tew applied to Sir William Phips, Governor of Massachusetts, for a new privateering commission, but was refused. However John Easton, Governor of **RHODE ISLAND**, for 500 pounds sterling issued such a commission. Captain Tew tied up with Frederick Phillips of New York. He backed a new venture and soon the ship *Frederick* was on its way around the Cape and anchored at Libertatia. Captain Tew and Mission each with a ship and 250 men, headed for the Red Sea. Off the coast of Arabia, they came upon a large ship with 1,000 pilgrims, bound for Mecca. They quickly took the ship and put all but 100 teenage girls ashore. They then headed back to Libertatia. The guns from the captured ship were used to help fortify the pirate colony. Not long after that, 5 tall ships from Portugal carrying 50 guns each attacked the pirate haven. Two of the ships were sunk, one was captured, and two escaped. Word of this battle with the pirates spread around Europe and America. Captain Tew was then made Admiral of the Pirate Fleet and at once sought to build up the level of manpower of this pirate Kingdom. First he sailed to his old shipmates on the other side of Madagascar. They said no thanks as they preferred their new way of life. While Thomas was ashore, a violent storm came up and wrecked his ship and all 300 men aboard drowned. Weeks later Mission came looking for Tew and once more the two were united. However the news went from bad to worse. Mission had sent out a 2nd ship, this left him with only a token force with women and children. Natives stormed the pirate fort during the night and Mission barely escaped with 45 men, 2 sloops, and a considerable treasure. They decided to go home. They split the treasure and each took a sloop and headed toward the Cape. Before reaching the Cape, Mission went down in a storm. **THOMAS TEW** made it back to America and for the time being retired in **RHODE ISLAND**. His men took their share of loot and quietly dispersed. However it did not take long for the men to squander their shares and soon they were soliciting Tew to make another run.

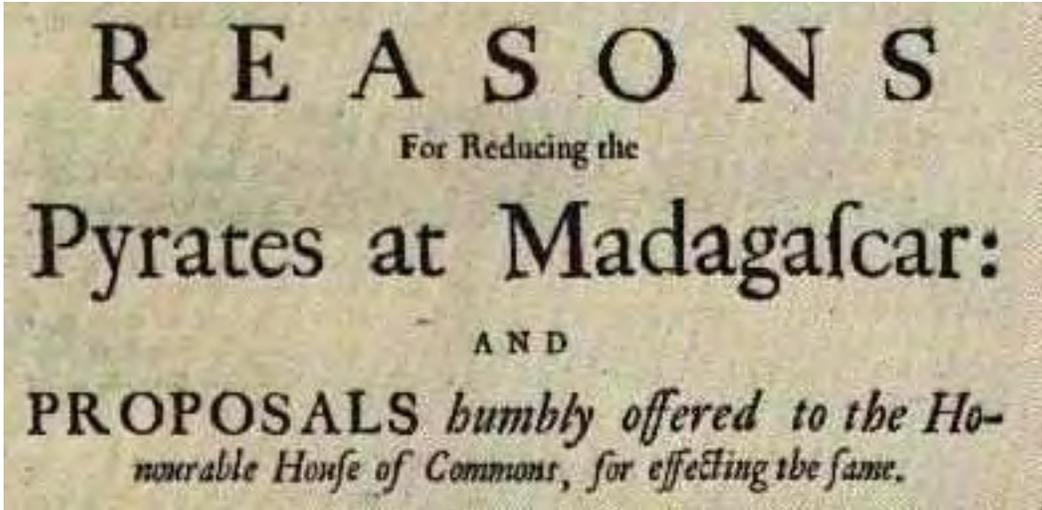
PRIVATEERING



Pilgrim Costumes

1693

October 19: Earlier in this year Lieutenant Governor Isaac Richier of Bermuda had commissioned [THOMAS TEW](#)'s sloop *Amity* and another sloop to attack "Goory," a French factory on the Gambian Coast of Africa. On the way to this privateering, or soldier-of-fortuning, Tew had decided that he would be a [PIRATE](#) instead, and had made for the entrance of the Persian/Arabian Gulf, where he had captured an Indian vessel. On this day his *Amity* arrived at St. Mary's Island off Madagascar loaded with the loot.

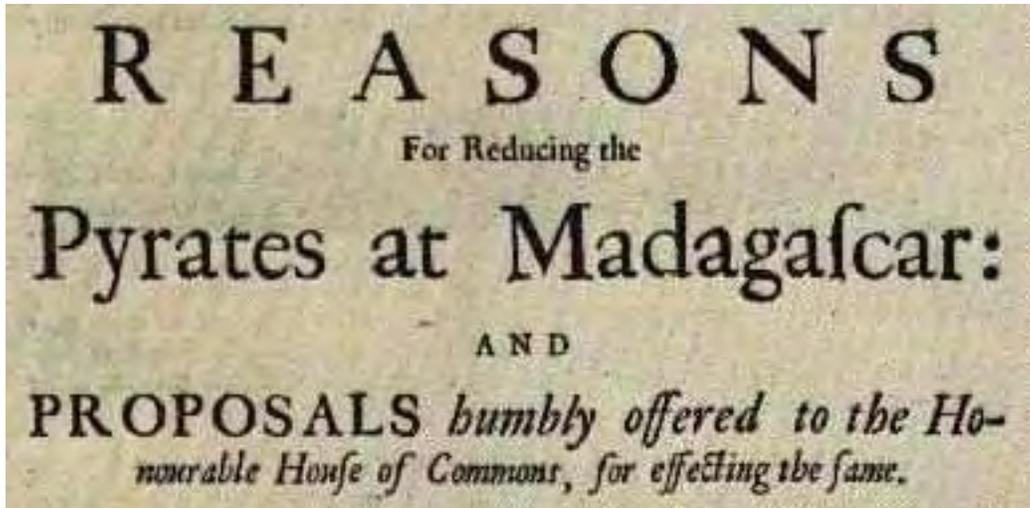


December 23: [THOMAS TEW](#) sailed on from St. Mary's Island to the pirate stronghold of Libertatia on Madagascar, an island known in those days as "[PIRATES](#) Kingdom."



1694

Spring: Captain [THOMAS TEW](#) and the 70-ton sloop *Amity* were back home at [NEWPORT](#), [RHODE ISLAND](#) with “100,000 pounds sterling worth of ivory, gold, silver, and jewels,” and each of his sixty [PRIVATEERS](#) “with 1,200 pounds apiece,” enough to retire on comfortably. Tew deposited his treasure, some suspect at Sakonnet Point or Patience Island, and recruited a new crew to return to Madagascar, an island known in those days as “[PIRATES](#) Kingdom.”



November 2: By this date Captain [THOMAS TEW](#)'s sloop *Amity* and Captain Thomas Wake's bark *Susanna* had sailed from [NEWPORT](#), [RHODE ISLAND](#).

[PIRACY](#)

November 8: For the sum of £300 sterling, Governor Benjamin Fletcher of New-York,² who considered Captain [THOMAS TEW](#) of [NEWPORT](#), [RHODE ISLAND](#) to be “a very pleasant man who tells wonderful stories,” offered him a privateering commission to use his *Amity* to harass French shipping. He would be joined by Captain Want of the Carolinas, and Captain Wake in another vessel, and –forgetting all that noise about being at war with the French– they would proceed directly to the mouth of the Red Sea.

[PIRACY](#)

2. Governor Benjamin Fletcher had been appointed in 1692, and would lose his office in April 1698 in part because of such dealings with [PRIVATEERS](#). In his own defense he is reported to have commented “I was just trying to make them Christians and correct some of their bad language.”

1695

December: Captain [WILLIAM KIDD](#)'s *Adventure Galley* was launched at Deptford on the Thames. This was a fast and highly maneuverable 34-gun galley with oars, a formidable privateering vessel. The nearly 70 seamen the captain hand-picked were mostly married, with families in England, because he supposed such men would be less likely to transform themselves into [PIRATES](#). The plan was to recruit 80 more such seamen in New-York before setting off toward the Indian Ocean.



Captain [JOHN HOAR](#) received a [PRIVATEERING](#) commission from Governor Benjamin Fletcher of New-York. He sailed from Boston harbor for the [PIRATE](#) haven of Madagascar and then the rich looting-grounds of the Red Sea.

December 11: We learn at this point that the *Amity* had no captain because Captain [THOMAS TEW](#) had been “killed by a great Shott from a Moor’s Ship.”

[PIRACY](#)

1696

January 26: Captain [WILLIAM KIDD](#) received a commission from King William III of England to take his [PRIVATEER](#) vessel, the *Adventure Galley*, out from New-York to capture the notorious [RHODE ISLAND](#) [PIRATES](#) [THOMAS TEW](#), William Mayes, and Thomas Wake:

William the Third, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. To our trusty and well beloved – Capt. Robert Kidd, commander of the Adventure Galley with a crew of 80 men and mounting 30 guns. Greeting: whereas we are informed, that Capt. Thomas Too, John Ireland, Capt. Thomas Wake, and Capt. William Maze or Mace, and other subjects, natives or inhabitants of New-York, and elsewhere, in our plantations in America, have associated themselves with diverse others, wicked and ill-disposed persons, and do, against the law of nations, commit many and great piracies, robberies and depredations on the seas upon the parts of America, and in other parts, to the great hindrance and

discouragement of trade and navigation, and to the great danger and hurt of our loving subjects, our allies, and all others, navigating the seas upon their lawful occasions.

Now know ye, that we being desirous to prevent the aforesaid mischief's, and as much as in us lies, to bring the said pirates, freebooters and sea-rovers to justice, have thought fit, and do hereby give and grant to the said Robert Kidd, to whom our commissioners for exercising the office of Lord High Admiral of England, have granted a commission as a private man-of-war, bearing date the 11th day of December, 1695, and unto the commander of the said ship for the time being, and unto the officers, mariners, and others which shall be under your command, full power and authority to apprehend, seize, and take into your custody as well the said Capt. Thomas Too, John Ireland, Capt. Thomas Wake and Capt. Win. Maze or Mace, as all such pirates, free-booters, and searovers, being either our subjects, or of other nations associated with them, which you shall meet with upon the seas or coasts, with all their ships and vessels, and all such merchandises, money, goods, and wares as shall be found on board, or with them, in case they shall willingly yield themselves; but if they will not yield without fighting, then you are by force to compel them to yield.

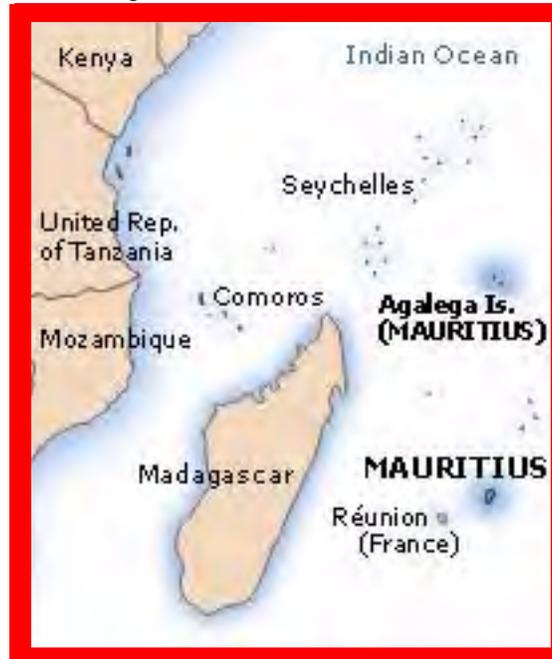
And we also require you to bring, or cause to be brought, such pirates, freebooters, or sea-rovers, as you shall seize, to a legal trial, to the end they may be proceeded against according to the law in such cases. And we do hereby command all our officers, ministers, and other of our loving subjects whatsoever, to be aiding and assisting to you in the premises. And we do hereby enjoin you to keep an exact journal of your proceedings in execution of the premises, and set down the names of such pirates, and of their officers and company, and the names of such ships and vessels as you shall by virtue of these presents take and seize, and the quantities of arms, ammunition, provision, and lading of such ships, and the true value of the same, as near as you can judge.

In witness whereof, we have caused our great seal of England to be affixed to these presents. Given at our court in Kensington, the 26th day of January, 1695, in the 7th year of our reign.

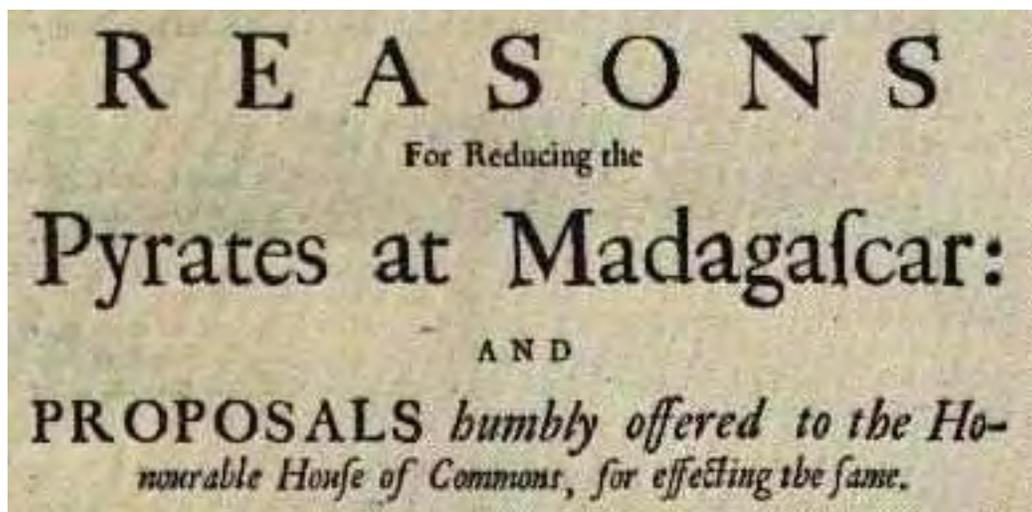
THOMAS TEW

THOMAS TEW

After several months of no success, Captain **WILLIAM KIDD** would take on new crewmembers and sail again. By the time they reached Madagascar they had been able to loot several ships, but not enough to pay the salaries the crew was demanding.



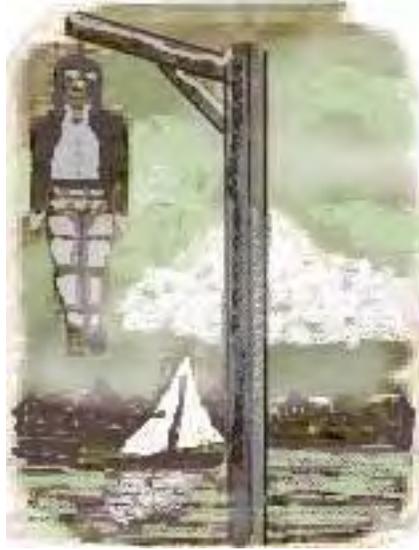
When Captain Kidd refused his gunner William Moore's demand that they attack any ship they came upon, Moore attempted mutiny and was killed by Kidd (he hit him on the head with a wooden bucket). When they reached Madagascar, 90 members of this 150-man crew deserted.



Three years later, upon his return, he would find he faced charges of **PIRACY** for the manner in which he had been interpreting this permission, and of murder for the killing of the mutineer. He would deposit some of his loot with the owner of Gardiners Island, which is at the eastern tip of Paumanok Long Island. Since British law required that all accused of piracy receive their trials in England, Kidd would be transported there. He would be found guilty of piracy and murder, and would **HANG** on May 23, 1701. The only portion of his loot ever to be recovered would be that portion which had been listed on the witnessed manifest at Gardiners Island. Some assert that the bulk of his loot is still under the sands of Campobello Island, which is just across the Canadian boundary. Others assert, on the basis of some cryptic remarks that Kidd made just before the

THOMAS TEW**THOMAS TEW**

noose choked off his breath, that the loot is buried somewhere near Old Saybrook, in Connecticut.

**1969**

Edward Rowe Snow's TRUE TALES AND CURIOUS LEGENDS — DRAMATIC STORIES FROM THE YANKEE PAST was published in New York City (273 pages, illustrated with photos and drawings):

America's first treasure diver, who sought gold at the bottom of Boston Harbor; **PIRATE** **THOMAS TEW**, Henry Thoreau, and a treasure chest buried near Walden Pond; the witches of Massachusetts, not one of whom was burned in Salem....



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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: February 4, 2008

ARRGH: THE ATOMATED RESEARCH

REPORT GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.

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