



**Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Horrible Shipwreck! A full, true and particular account of the melancholy loss of the British convict ship Amphitrite, the 31st of August 1833, off Boulogne, When 108 female convict, 12 children, and 13 seamen Meith with a watery grave, in sight of thousands, None being saved out of 136 souls but three!* Naval Institute Press, 2010.**

Paula L. Webb

The book, *Horrible Shipwreck! A full, true and particular account of the melancholy loss of the British convict ship Amphitrite, the 31st of August 1833, off Boulogne, When 108 female convict, 12 children, and 13 seamen Meith with a watery grave, in sight of thousands, None being saved out of 136 souls but three!* is both an exhaustive and creative account of the Amphitrite, a female convict ship that sank in 1833. What made this ship so different from all the other convict ships traveling to Australia or the Americas? While it was not uncommon for ships to sink on the river Thames; it was unusual to for those on land to actually see the ship sink so close to shore. The fact that the ship was also full of women and children takes this event to a new level of sadness. It appears many popular people of the press, poetics and the well-to-do were vacationing in Boulogne and viewed the ship sinking from their hotel room windows. Once such account was that of Heinrich Heine, a German romantic poet. Jampoler provides this poet's full account of the event and the sadness of the entire situation. The river was over a mile wide at at Boulogne and it was normally a sufficient distance to keep the sensitive eyes of those on shore and the world of those on the ships separate. However, a very unusual and destructive storm would cause the captain to push the Amphitrite, its female convict passengers and the ships' crew into the shore.

Jampoler's research of this sinking ship, brings to life many aspects that would be lost in the sea of time, please excuse the pun. He starts the book with how he was lured into becoming interested in the subject. There were many new articles, poetry and various writing on the tragic event in the 1800's, but the one painting by artists, J.M. W. Turner and John Cousen, seems to have gripped the author greater than others regarding the exhibit at the National Gallery of Art, in Washington D.C. in 2007. The seascape, *Fire at Sea*, with its graphic depiction of women and children drowning seems to have peaked Jampoler's interest and gave him the longing to know more about what exactly happen, what events led up to the tragedy, and what was done about it afterwards. While it is good to know where the author developed his ideas for the book, it is wondered if they could encompass an entire chapter?

The beginning chapters are almost a historical prequel to the events that lead up the the sinking ship. At first, the chapters were quite confusing in regards to their association with the female convict ship. Chapter titles such as, Crime and Punishment, His Majesty's Hired Transport Amphitrite and The Convicts talked about the treatment

of each during the time, but little was mentioned of the actual event. When the women who died on the ship and their past that led to passage on this ship to Australia is mentioned in the chapter titled, *The Convicts*, we begin to see the book moving forward. It was observed later that these extra chapters of information were intended to educate the reader on the sociological aspects of the 18th century world. The author has written an exhausting account of how ships were turned into floating prisons, how sailors were hired to guard these prisons and how convicts, and in this case female convicts, in England were treated in general. In some cases these convicts were treated as ladies, but more often, they were not. While the exhaustive search was very informative, unless there is an intense interest in the subject, it could appear to be an overkill in detail.

The true story begins with Chapter 5, *Underway in Thick Weather*. The author details the progress of the ship along the river Thames. Using accounts from the three survivors, newspaper superlatives and nautical experts, the path travelled is revisited. Jampoler also visits stories of other ships and towns affected by the same storm. These extra stories appear to only prove that there was a terrible storm that day and that the area was capable of such a storm.

Boulogne-sur-Mer moves the information about shipwreck along, but not before there is another intensive study of the port, itself. While the information appears sound, one cannot help but wonder if it helps or hinders the progress of the book. The accounts of the three sailors who survived and how they made it to the shore was interesting.

The shipwreck resulted in an investigation of events. This investigation provides what the reviewer was searching for; what exactly happened with the female convict ship, its cargo, its crew and reformed needed to make sure it would not happen again.

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could get lost in the details of this book and never discover the entire story and this would be a disservice. Andrew C.A. Jampoler is a very good author, but it is feared the exhaustive nature of this book can make this hidden.

*Paula L. Webb is the Reference and Electronic Resources Government Documents Librarian at the University of South Alabama.*