



# Calico Jack, Anne Bonny and Mary Read: The Lives and Legacies of History's Most Famous Pirate Crew

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes historic illustrations depicting Calico Jack, Anne Bonny, Mary Read, and important people in their lives.

\*Includes the profiles of Calico Jack, Anne Bonny and Mary Read from the famous English pirate history "A General History of the Pyrates".

\*Discusses common legends about the three famous pirates, separating fact from fiction.

\*Includes a Bibliography for further reading.

"The Day that Rackam was executed, by special Favour, he was admitted to see [Anne Bonny]; but all the Comfort she gave him, was, that she was sorry to see him there, but if he had fought like a Man, he need not have been hang'd like a Dog." - Captain Charles Johnson, A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most notorious Pyrates

One of the most famous pirates of all time, and possibly the most famous woman to ever become one, was Anne Bonny. The Irish-born girl moved with her family to the Bahamas at a young age in the early 18th century, which at that time was a hotbed for piracy by the likes of Blackbeard, but the redhead with a fiery temper would go on to forge her own reputation. After marrying a poor sailor who accepted clemency to give up piracy, Anne began a legendary affair with Calico Jack Rackam and became pregnant with his child, but that did not stop them from plundering the high seas aboard his pirate ship *Revenge*, at least until they were captured by British authorities. Anne avoided execution by "pleading her belly", getting a temporary stay of execution due to her pregnancy.

It is at that point that Anne Bonny drops off the historical record and becomes the stuff of legends. It's unclear whether she was eventually executed or pardoned or even ransomed, and it's unclear what became of her child. Her relationship with Mary Read aboard the *Revenge* is also the stuff of legends, and people have been filling in the gaps ever since.

Among all the pirates of the "Golden Age of Piracy", none were as unique as Mary Read, who was one of just two known women to be tried as a pirate during the Golden Age, alongside her own crewmate (and possible lover) Anne Bonny. Like Anne, Mary Read was an illegitimate child who spent some of her childhood dressed up as and disguised as a little boy through incredibly strange circumstances. But unlike her future shipmate, Mary ultimately took a liking to it, and she continued to disguise her gender to take on roles reserved for men, including in the British army.

Though he would accomplish many things in his career that would earn him notoriety among the pirates of his age, the simple truth is that he is remembered mostly for his association with Anne Bonny and Mary Read, two of history's most famous women pirates. In fact, had it not been for his involvement with them, his name might have disappeared from the history books entirely. And fittingly, even his nickname, "Calico," came from the type of fabric he preferred for his shirts, the same fabric typically used for women's everyday clothing. Rackham preferred attractive print fabrics produced for trade with natives in the New World, a flamboyant taste worthy of the common pirate stereotype.

Calico Jack to make yet another contribution to pirate history and legend: the "Jolly Roger" pirate flag. Flying the simple yet frightening flag that featured a white skull and crossed swords against a black banner, Calico Jack ensured his targets knew they were in trouble as soon as they could spot the flag. To this day, the flag remains synonymous with piracy.

Still, it seems Calico Jack will never escape the shadow of his famous female shipmates, despite the fact he

was their captain, and if anything it seems he enjoyed having the fairer sex aboard, in more ways than one. This book chronicles the lives and legends of history's most famous pirate crew, with historic illustrations and contemporary accounts. It also includes a bibliography and Table of Contents.

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