



Master of the Sweet Trade

HISTORICAL FICTION BY ELIZABETH MOISAN, 2009

Book Review, by Pat Bertschy

Master of the Sweet Trade is the story about legendary pirate Sam Bellamy, his lover Mariah Hallett and the ship named Whydah. The tale is set on Cape Cod in the early 1700's and well-told by Elizabeth Moisan.

The reader is immediately intrigued when the village Minister Treat sees "something questionable and frightening in the infant Mariah's eyes" at the child's baptism. The mystery of Mariah Hallett plays only a part; this is the story of Sam Bellamy's piracy.

Life at sea and on the tall ships is told with such lively detail that it could have been taken from ships' logs or first-hand accounts of Bellamy's fellow pirates. The reader is swept onboard and can almost hear the men shouting to one another, "They're goin' to heave to!... mangy scupper-louts...Soddin' bilge-rats!"

Moisan works the pirates' language into the story so well that meanings become apparent. She assumes that her readers know such things as what a "fo'c'sle" is, or at least enjoy pretending to. She includes a glossary just in case readers are unclear.

Just as the language is authentic, the story unfolds with realistic descriptions of pirating in action. We feel as though we have entered their world. The gruesome parts are thoroughly gruesome, and the adventures are exciting.

Although the pirates are criminals, Ms. Moisan makes her readers sympathize and almost root for Sam Bellamy's men. Some we come to know well and like, as we would good friends. Of course there are also the truly evil pirates whom we are happy to see die.

The book is thoroughly researched. We watch as merchant ships are transformed into pirate ships, and as the men perform their duties on each. When a former slave ship is seized, we are shown a detailed list of the cargo and equipment. Moisan recounts storms at sea with such lyrical detail, the reader almost feels the big waves hit the side of the ship.

Her descriptions are brief but vivid: "He... looked over the side into the inky blackness as the surf pounded the hull." The reader longs for dry land.

When the story shifts back to Mariah after the excitement of life with the pirates, there could be a let-down in the action but there isn't. The storytelling keeps the reader equally captivated by Mariah's world on shore.

Just as we came to know Sam's shipmates, we grow familiar with the Cape Codders of Mariah's village. We see the "hellfire and brimstone" Mr. Knowles stirring up trouble for Mariah, and we smile at the kind Josiah who befriends her.

Ms. Moisan has crafted a very believable tale; so believable, in fact, that one will want to go and stand on the shore in what was once Eastham and is now Wellfleet, where the legendary Mariah Hallett presumably walked and watched for Sam's ship.



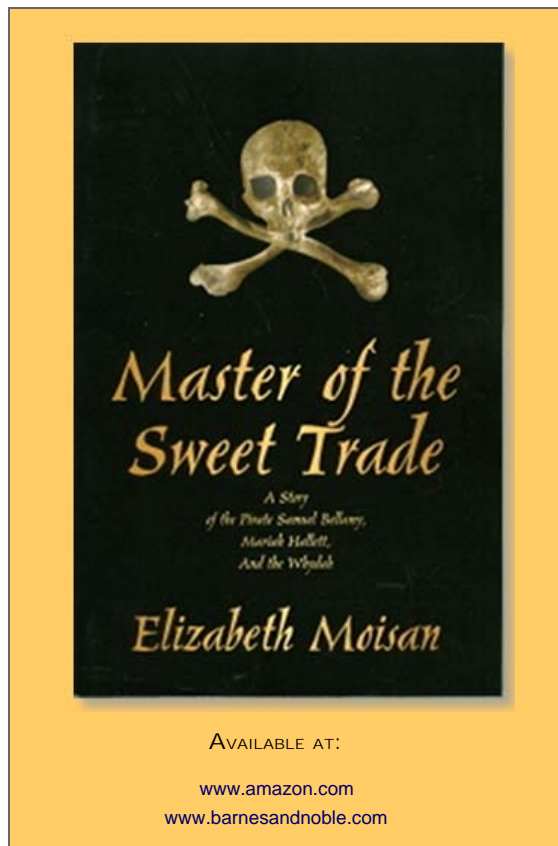
Pat, center, accepts her Norman Mailer CICC Writing Award.

Pat Bertschy is an avid reader who lives on Cape Cod.

She was recently awarded a scholarship to attend this summer's Cape Cod Writers Center Conference, held at the Craigville Conference Center, for her nonfiction story "Discovery."

Pat was also named one of five finalists in the Norman Mailer Cape and Islands Community College Writing Awards for a work of non-fiction titled "The Long Walk".

Pat was presented with her certificate on June 1, 2010 at the Cape Cod Community College, by Dr. Michael Olendzenski, Professor of English Literature and Dr. Kathleen Schatzberg, President, Cape Cod Community College.



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BRIEF SYNOPSIS:

Set in the early 1700s, this fictional account of the pirate Samuel Bellamy chronicles his lust for gold; for the accused witch, Mariah Hallett; and for the treasure ship, the *Whydah*.

On April 26, 1717, off the coast of what is now known as Marconi Beach in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, the *Whydah*, the flag ship belonging to the pirate Samuel "Black Sam" Bellamy, was lost in one of the worst storms on the Cape Cod's eastern shore—the graveyard of the Atlantic.

Mariah Hallett, the local woman he loved, watched the storm from the cliffs high above the beach. He was coming home to her, his ship laden with a vast treasure we now know—thanks to the 2008 article in *Forbes Magazine*—to be worth 120 million dollars in today's money.

Sam Bellamy left behind more than an unfulfilled romance and a trail of plundered ships. His legacy includes the only authenticated pirate ship ever discovered. The wreck and recovery of the *Whydah* and her vast treasure are renowned, and now the exciting saga of the man who once sailed her is told in *Master of the Sweet Trade*, a well-researched work of historical fiction.

Check out *Master of the Sweet Trade* on



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