



Terror of the Spanish Main: Sir Henry Morgan and His Buccaneers

Albert Marrin

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Henry Morgan, who was born in Wales in 1635 and died in Port Royal, Jamaica, in 1688, was an unusual sort of leader. Inspiring the respect and admiration of his fellows, he led them to undertake daring raids on Spain's possessions in the New World; yet he commanded neither an army nor a navy. Nor was he a political ruler, although his exploits affected the power politics of Europe and earned him a knighthood. In plain language, Henry Morgan was a leader of thieves, a prince among a group of outcasts, desperadoes, and failed gentlemen known as buccaneers. Though movies and novels have romanticized them, the buccaneers were in fact a ruthless group who got their way by brutal means. Their motives were pure self-interest, yet they operated with the permission of certain European nations in order to break the Spanish monopoly in the West Indies. Vividly outlining the political and economic circumstances that allowed the buccaneers to flourish, and freshly evoking both life at sea and life in the colonies in the seventeenth century, Albert Marrin shows how Henry Morgan was a particular response to forces that are still with us. War, poverty, greed, bigotry, and oppression play themselves out, albeit differently, in our lives today. Albert Marrin is the chairman of the history department at Yeshiva University, and he has written many award-winning nonfiction books for young adults, including *Commander in Chief: Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War* (Dutton).

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