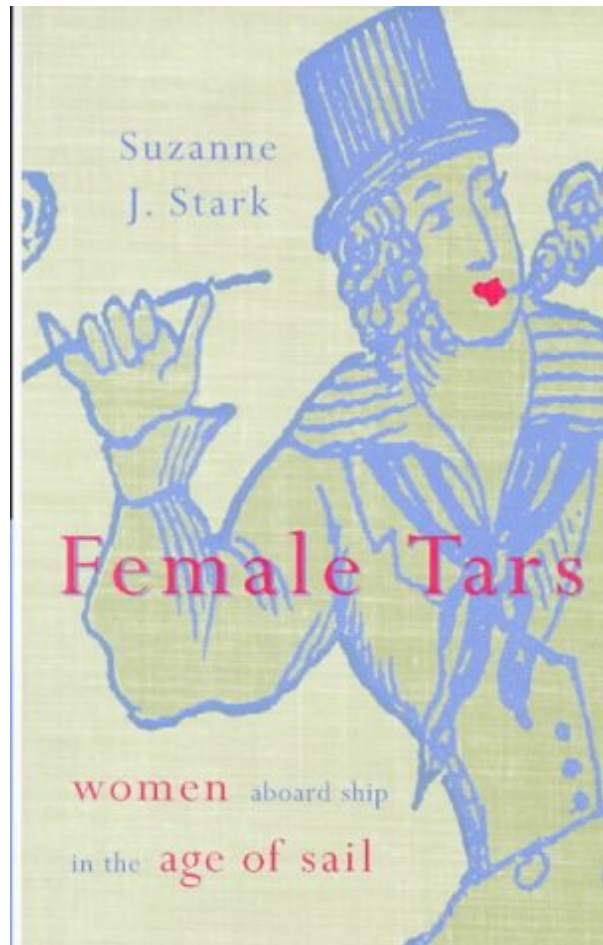
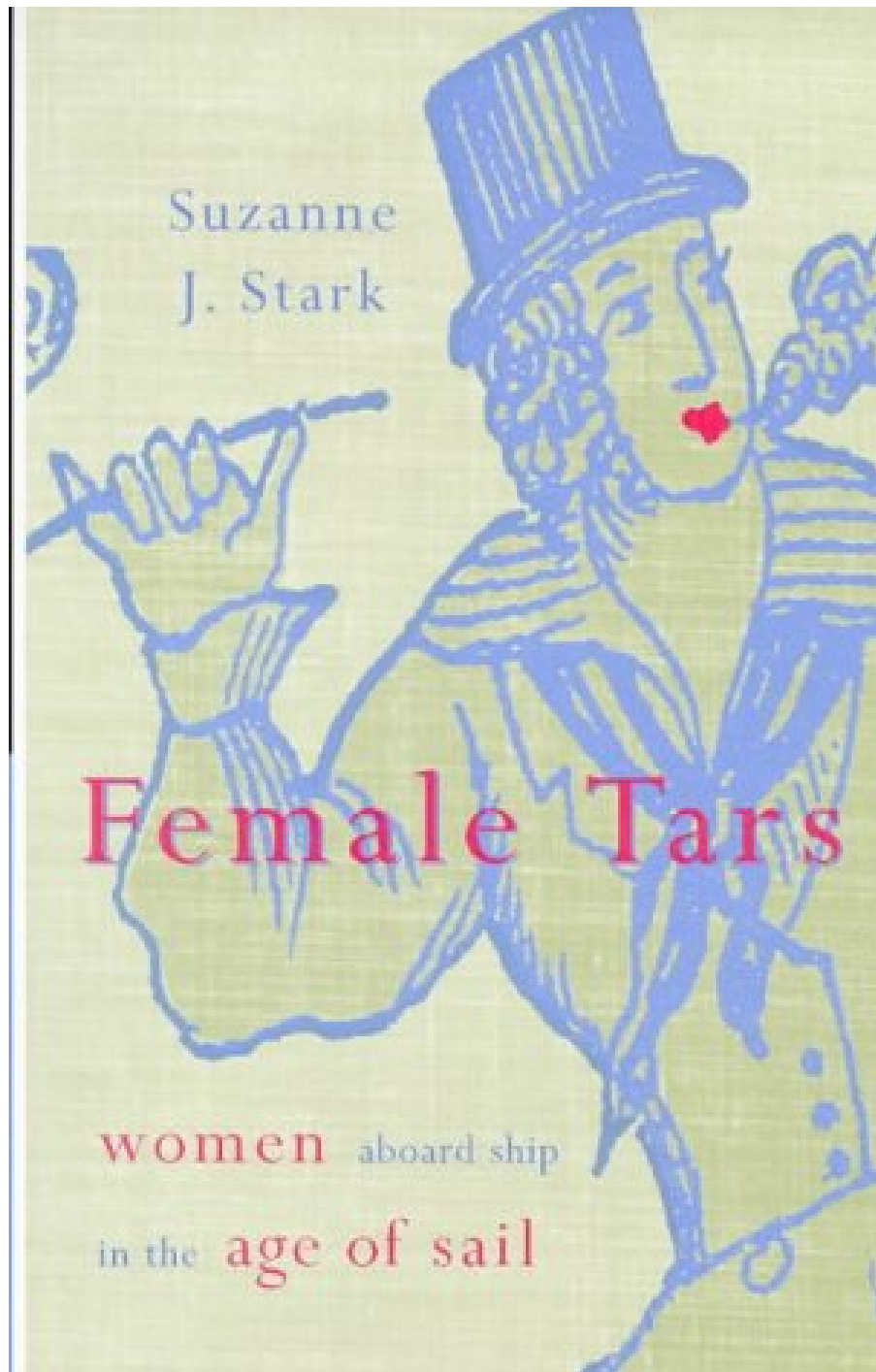


FEMALE TARS : WOMEN ABOARD SHIP IN THE AGE OF SAIL BY SUZANNE J. STARK



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woman: Mary Lacy, who served as a seaman and shipwright in the Royal Navy for twelve years. *Female Tars* is absolutely fascinating reading, an original, absorbing, informative, exceptionally well researched and superlatively written book! -- Midwest Book Review

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Worth reading about women in the Navy, the old navy.

By Mayor

I kind of thought that was happening and I was right. We don't seem to be able to get it right about relationships between people or maybe we don't know what the definition of right "is", like Clinton said.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Quite a nice little book, but you are left wanting for more

By Patricia

This book is quite a fascinating look at the roles women have played in the British Navy before this century. However, there does seem to be a lack of in-depth study of the women profiled. I found myself wanting to know much more than the author was willing to offer me. I felt too much time was taken re-iterating the social and economic standpoint of prostitutes in this era rather than focusing on the women's contributions to the Royal British Navy. I was mildly insulted when Ms. Stark suggested the reason these women were willing to be "transvestites," or dress as men to serve onboard naval vessels, was basically Freud's "penis envy" theory. This book did sharpen my appetite to find more books on the subject of Women in the Maritime Military.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Don't ask, don't tell, pretend they aren't there...

By Iscollison

"Officially, the women living on the lower deck did not exist," Stark writes of the prostitutes and seagoing wives aboard British Naval warships in the Age of Sail. "Even when a woman died at sea, the fact was seldom recorded. Their names were not listed in ship's muster books, and since only those people who were mustered had any official existence, women were not paid and not victualled"(Stark, 49).

The image of a nameless, faceless woman dying at sea (perhaps in childbirth?) and her death not even appearing in the official log was so vividly shocking to me that I wrote about it in *SURGEON'S MATE: Book Two* of the Patricia MacPherson Nautical Adventure Series. Stark's book, one of the few serious studies of women aboard ships during the Age of Sail, was important to my research and completely changed my perceptions of life aboard British Naval warships in former centuries -- especially the eighteenth century, when Britain ruled the seas.

Published by Naval Institute Press, this "seminal" (irony intended) work contains illustrations, an index, and is heavily footnoted. The author has relied on first-hand accounts such as naval hospital musters, sailors' narratives and diaries, captain's logs, letters, Admiralty records and numerous respected secondary sources. This is an important book for anyone interested in naval and maritime history as well as social history and women's studies. It is appropriate for most high school students and should be included in libraries and high school reading lists. *Female Tars* will open your eyes to the invisibles who indeed were aboard ship, helping to fight battles, care for the sick and injured, and helping to keep the seamen's morale up. Kudos to the Naval Institute Press for publishing it.

Suzanne Stark has revealed part of the story but there is still much more to discover. I, for one, am listening for the voices of women, long dead, who were officially not heard, seen, or remembered.

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