

Brian gradual transformation from manifest destiny, focused on

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Brian Rouleau's, *With Sails Whitening Every Sea: Mariners and the Making of an American Maritime Empire* best demonstrates how maritime history can aid the transnational turn. Focused on the long nineteenth century, Rouleau reminds us that most historians of the era narrate a gradual transformation from Manifest Destiny, focused on North American territorial expansion, to an overseas empire of commercial expansion. Yet he points out that US ships sailed the Pacific Ocean decades before California entered the Union or the US government effectively controlled its territory west of the Mississippi. Before the Civil War the nation's merchant marine, in both size and economic power, was second only to Great Britain and thousands of American sailors forged transnational paths well before those places ever saw an American soldier, diplomat, missionary or businessman. Because "the power in making relationships with local populations.

.. did not lie with the republic's appointees," Rouleau argues, "seafarers are best considered agents in the internationalization of U. S. history." (115, 9) As America's "working-class diplomats" and the "country's international face," sailors reveal how nineteenth-century American history is maritime history. (7, 6) Despite their ubiquity, Rouleau argues that sailors are overlooked actors in the history of American foreign policy. He guides readers through their workingclass ideology of race, class, masculinity and patriotism, how they transported that ideology abroad, and the consequences for both native peoples and the United States.

So, for instance, Rouleau studies the startling popularity of blackface minstrelsy among sailors who put on shows to "introduce" America to Pacific

natives. Those peoples often adapted minstrelsy to confront issues within their own societies, but the long-term impact, Rouleau argues, was spreading “ ideas about the inferiority and capacity of nonwhite peoples” that eventually shaped the power dynamic between the US and its Pacific neighbors. (70) In another chapter Rouleau shows white mariners reaching back to a mythic history of Indian-colonial contact to simplify, map and understand the diverse range of peoples they encountered. Again, however, the metaphor proved crippling; by the 1830s “‘ Indian country’ was less a clearly defined area and more an idea or imagined border used to demarcate a racialized geography of not just a continent but the world.” (98) The minstrel show and the Pacific “ Indian” therefore were racial ideologies with “ very real consequences in the development of American foreign relations,” Rouleau writes.

“ In lashing out against peoples abroad they deemed inferior, sailors worked aggressively to entangle the world in a racial order that was AngloAmerican in origin but global in implication.” (115) In another section, Rouleau examines the sailors’ “ shadow economy” and its impact on larger US trade. Demand for profits meant slashed wages and sailors responded by swindling their low-level, native trade partners abroad. In fact, sailors proved shrewd, anticipating exchange rates and planning trade purchases before their voyage to maximize profit.

In return, natives quickly learned the products sailors wanted, and together they created a market that ran just below the surface of the markets run by ship owners and merchants. As natives learned swindling in return, however,

white sailors' racial and masculinist resentments were inflamed, and the resulting violence often damaged larger commercial interests. The result was a complex class conflict pitting Americans against native trade partners as well as against each other. Diplomats, religious leaders and capitalists tried "reforming" the sailor into a more compliant worker, and one less likely to disrupt large-scale trade networks.

Not surprisingly, however, exploited sailors tried exploiting natives in return, "justifying" their intemperance with racism and swaggering patriotism. As a result, Rouleau urges us to reconsider America's maritime expansion. Rather than a "simple dichotomy between subjugated native and white authority figure," we need attention as well to how "class interfered with racial paradigms of power," and that "internal" conflict over patriotism, masculinity, race and profit spilled outside the US borders with enormous consequences for all involved.

(129) In short, Rouleau's extraordinarily nuanced and sophisticated work demonstrates the ways a maritime approach invites new perspectives on American history and historiography. Pushing the narrative of American expansion off land, for instance, Rouleau demonstrates the ways "maritime encounters...formed a large portion of the foundation for both public opinion in the US about various other countries and peoples and developing ideas about the American people among the globe's other populations.

" (8) Putting seafarers at the center of American maritime expansion therefore incorporates working class voices not just to be "fair," but because

those seafarers profoundly shaped America's understanding of itself and its relations with the world.