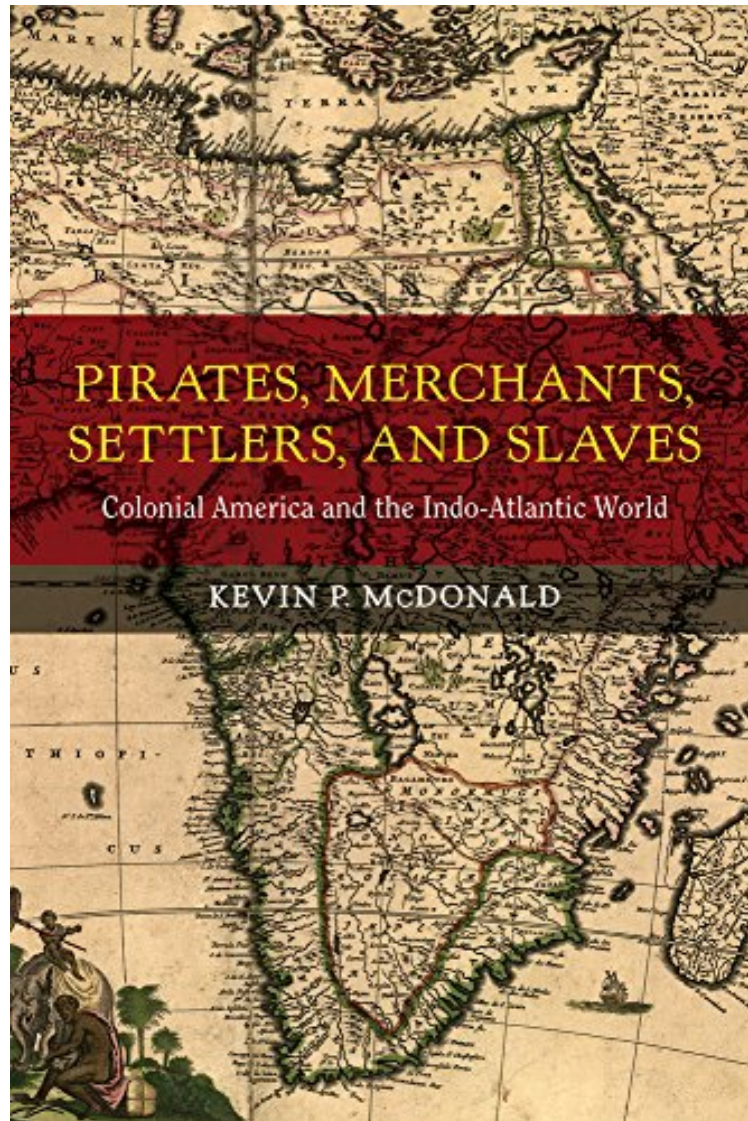


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Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves: Colonial America and the Indo-Atlantic World (California World History Library)

Kevin P. McDonald

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Kevin P. McDonald : Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves: Colonial America and the Indo-Atlantic World (California World History Library) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves: Colonial America and the Indo-Atlantic World (California World History Library):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A short book on a surprising topic--pirates of the Caribbean relocating to Madagascar. By lyndonbrecht This is a difficult book to rate because it promises a lot, provides some fascinating information and stories, but ultimately shows the need for a lot more research. The core of the book is that pirates, backed by merchants often from colonial New York, engaged in piracy and slave trading in the Indian Ocean, from bases in Madagascar. McDonald makes the point that "pirate" was a flexible and open category. A privateer in the Atlantic, with official letters of marque, might turn pirate once out of Atlantic waters, or the pirates might be simply pirates. Insofar as the prey was shipping owned by non-Europeans there seems to have been no objection, to robbing Moors. The Portuguese had been there for generations before these pirates (the book covers roughly 1660-1720) but they seem to not have been of much importance in this story. The pirate bases required supply, and Euroamericans (of British and Dutch background) were happy to oblige, because slaves were cheap and made the very long voyage worthwhile. I had not been aware of the number of Malagasy slaves brought to the Americas, including apparently some hundreds to New York and other colonies. The total of pirates was about a thousand, says McDonald, which seems a small number to base a contention of historical significance on. His point I think is more the interconnections than the overall significance. There are stories aplenty in this short book (125 pages or so of text). In one instance pirates were unhappy with the division of spoils, so they formed two teams on the beach to fight to the death. The last two pirates alive divided the loot, to their satisfaction. There were mixed-race people who became of some consequence in Madagascar's later history, some of them born of American pirate fathers, and there's a footnote to history!

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, more than a thousand pirates poured from the Atlantic into the Indian Ocean. There, according to Kevin P. McDonald, they helped launch an informal trade network that spanned the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds, connecting the North American colonies with the rich markets of the East Indies. Rather than conducting their commerce through chartered companies based in London or Lisbon, colonial merchants in New York entered into an alliance with Euro-American pirates based in Madagascar. *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves* explores the resulting global trade network located on the peripheries of world empires and shows the illicit ways American colonists met the consumer demand for slaves and East India goods. The book reveals that pirates played a significant yet misunderstood role in this period and that seafaring slaves were both commodities and essential components in the Indo-Atlantic maritime networks. Enlivened by stories of Indo-Atlantic sailors and cargoes that included textiles, spices, jewels and precious metals, chinaware, alcohol, and drugs, this book links previously isolated themes of piracy, colonialism, slavery, transoceanic networks, and cross-cultural interactions and extends the boundaries of traditional Atlantic, national, world, and colonial histories.

"Extremely well researched."