



Tall Ships Down : The Last Voyages of the Pamir, Albatross, Marques, Pride of Baltimore, and Maria Asumpta

Daniel S. Parrott

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Captain Daniel Parrott, captain of the 170-foot topsail schooner *Pride of Baltimore II*, is a professional mariner of 18 years' experience in tall ships. While earning a master's degree in Marine Affairs from the University of Rhode Island in 1998, Parrott undertook an in-depth, critical reexamination of the official inquiries and other records pertaining to the losses of the 316-foot bark *Pamir* in 1957; the 117-foot brigantine *Albatross* in 1961; the 117-foot bark *Marques* in 1984; the 137-foot schooner *Pride of Baltimore* in 1986; and the 125-foot brig *Maria Asumpta* in 1995. Each of these casualties is ingrained in the consciousness of serious sailors. Each of them involved loss of life - 112 lost crew in total. Each is a frequent topic of sailors' talk and speculations. Parrott's 320-page master's thesis aimed primarily to trace the impact of these tragedies on the development of sail training around the world. In the end he did more, providing sobering insights into the circumstances surrounding these losses. *Tall Ships Down* is an outgrowth of Parrott's thesis research, framing his inquiries and conclusions for a broad seagoing audience. This book will be required reading for all those involved in the growing sail-training effort around the world, of course, but it is also rich in interest and significance for all sailors and mariners. It outlines the history of each ship from its building, showing how mission changes, structural changes, rig modifications, and ownership changes can erode a ship's seaworthiness over time. Then we relive the final voyages, dissecting the circumstances of loss from forensic evidence and the memories of survivors. Carefully examined, the evidence shows casualties that have been considered acts of god probably resulted from an ignorance or neglect of age-old practices of seamanship. Cargo loose in holds, hatches unsecured at sea, freeing ports timbered shut, rig and stability changes carried out with insufficient regard to their possible impacts on seaworthiness - these and other factors emerge from Parrott's in-depth analysis as contributing factors. In the book's concluding section - in what amounts to an unforgettable seminar on seamanship--Parrott explores the impacts of ship stability, structural integrity, weather, human error, and standards of risk on safety at sea. In the end, *Tall Ships Down* is about the lore of the sea and the wisdom of seamanship, and in that regard its lessons are applicable to small sailboats as well as tall ships. Students of the sea will read this book for its historical significance. Armchair sailors will be drawn to the vivid, tragic stories. Professional mariners will read it for its seagoing wisdom. And all sailors will draw from it a deeper understanding of what it takes to be safe at sea.

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