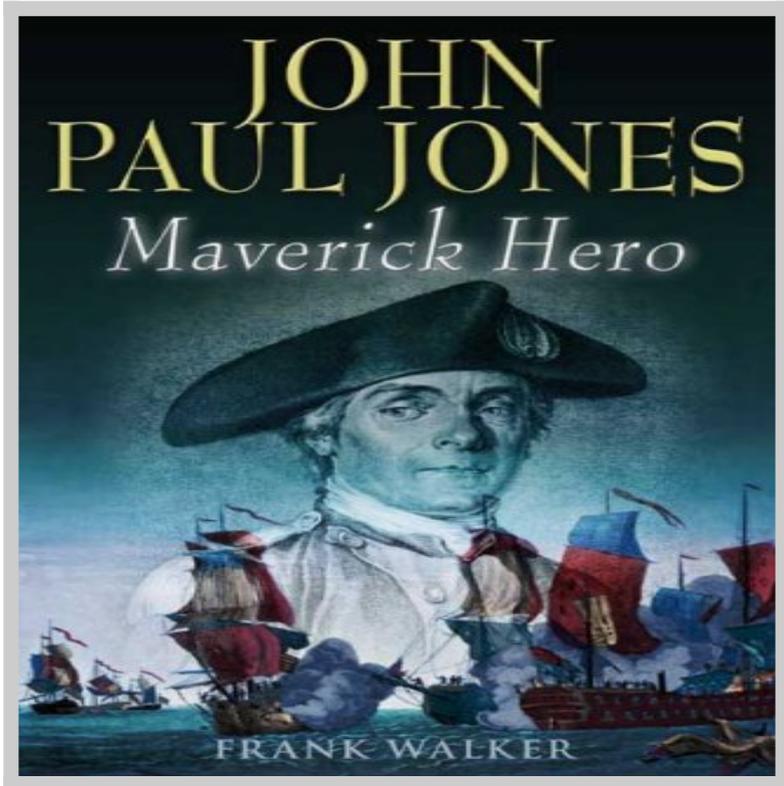


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John Paul Jones Maverick Hero Book Preview

An associate of Benjamin Franklin and hero of the American War of Independence, John Paul Jones was the first captain to sail an American warship under an American flag and was instrumental in the creation of a coordinated naval force for the new republic. Across the Atlantic, the "Scotch Renegade" had a far less enviable reputation, being most commonly remembered as a privateer and villain following his daring raids on British ports. This judgment would stand for a century or more. The 1875 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica exemplified this attitude: "Though [Jones] certainly ranks as an officer of the Untied States, the independent manner in which he cruised might well suggest letters of marquee rather than a government commission" - in other words, there was a whiff of the pirate about him.

Frank Walker charts the career of this rugged individualist, from his beginnings as a young apprentice in the English port of Whitehaven and early voyages aboard slave ships, to his commission as an American naval officer who led an attack on that very port and continued to harass British shipping as part of the effort to bring the Revolutionary War to a close. His battle with a British man o' war off Flamborough Head remains the longest continuous naval engagement in the age of sail in British naval history. There then followed an extraordinary interlude in Russia, where John Paul Jones fought successfully for Catherine the Great against the Turks, only to be hounded out of the country by a sexual scandal that was almost certainly fabricated by his enemies. And this was not the only apparently disreputable episode in Jones's life; on other occasions he was accused of a barbarous, indeed fatal punishment of a member of his crew, and more or less fled for his life after killing another.

Interrogating numerous contemporary sources, this book gives an accurate and balanced account of the life of this controversial and fascinating character. Crucially, Frank Walker has examined the scenes of Jones's greatest triumphs during his cruise around the British Isles, to shed new light on his methods, and some would say-in their incredible daring-his madness!

REVIEWS

"competent, well written biography...handsomely illustrated...adds new depth. Recommended. CHOICE, 11/2009

"...a quirky but readable biography of the American naval hero...entertaining." Journal of America's Military Past, WINTER 2011