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The Sea Captain's Wife: A True Story Of Love, Race, And War In The Nineteenth Century



Synopsis

A finalist for the Lincoln Prize, *The Sea Captain's Wife* "comes surprisingly, and movingly, alive" (Tina Jordan, *Entertainment Weekly*). Award-winning historian Martha Hodes brings us into the extraordinary world of Eunice Connolly. Born white and poor in New England, Eunice moved from countryside to factory city, worked in the mills, then followed her husband to the Deep South. When the Civil War came, Eunice's brothers joined the Union army while her husband fought and died for the Confederacy. Back in New England, a widow and the mother of two, Eunice barely got by as a washerwoman, struggling with crushing depression. Four years later, she fell in love with a black sea captain, married him, and moved to his home in the West Indies. Following every lead in a collection of 500 family letters, Hodes traced Eunice's footsteps and met descendants along the way. This story of misfortune and defiance takes up grand themes of American history—opportunity and racism, war and freedom—and illuminates the lives of ordinary people in the past. 47 illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A few quick comments regarding the previous negative critique...A). A great number, if not most, people from the laboring classes never achieve a solid sense of 'class consciousness' (in other words, they do not consciously consider themselves of the 'working class'). This was particularly true during the time and place of which Hodes writes (though applicable today). Even if the economic circumstances of Hodes' key subjects fluctuated, they did 'labor' with their bodies to

survive. Therefore, it is fair to allow Hodes to consider them laboring/working people, as these individuals' general economic experiences heavily impacted their existence/s.B). A key lesson one should learn while obtaining an "advanced degree in history" (as well as in high school history classes) is to be very careful about viewing the past through the lens of the present or assuming that subjects from the past (existing under diverging conditions and pressures historians are endlessly seeking to understand) should be expected to think or act as you or I would.. In other words, one's perception of "small town rural New England" of today should not discredit Hodes' historical analysis of the same region.(This is in reference to... "And no one who has spent any time in small town rural New England would buy into the author's contention that these people were obsessed with a racist-based fear that competition from black slave workers would further lower their social class...")C). It should not be assumed that every scholar concerned with class is a Marxist (or using "Marxist analysis," as if there is such a thing).

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