

THE TRUE LEGEND OF
JACK BELVEDERE

From

HELL TO HIGH WATER

and

FAMOUS IN THE WORST PLACES

between the two

Known to some as Stumblin' Jack

Jack Belvedere
from
HELL TO HIGH WATER
And
FAMOUS IN THE WORST
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Between the two

The true legend in its entirety from the old documents as first put to paper by Jack himself during the different times in his life when he was able to put scribe to paper. Recently transcribed and edited to complete the wild ride through the historic times that are the story of one man also known as...

Stumblin' Jack

Stumblin' Jack, whose Christian name was John Belvedere, was born in June of 1836 and came from the highlands of Northern Scotland but was moved to Edinburgh by his mother after his father was killed in a gambling dispute. In a cutlass duel, he was pierced through the lung and died three days later. On his death bed he is said to have cried out, "I never cheated an honest man!"

Jack's mother, unable to support herself in the hard ways of the Scottish Highlands being from Aviemore on the Spey River in the Cairngorm Mountains, moved Jack (7) and his sister (4) to the city of Edinburgh where she became a washer woman at a local pub named The Iron Cask.

It was there that she met Mr. Jacob Knudson a carpenter from Norway who had moved to Scotland two years prior. Mr. Knudson who had lost his first wife in child birth soon asked her to marry him. He was employed as a cooper (barrel maker) for a local whiskey distillery named Hereford's High Reserve. It was in this environment that the young Jack Belvedere was raised, going from the dark swirling activity of a Scottish Pub and all of its influences, to the clean hard work of a whiskey barrel maker and blacksmith, where Jack was eventually employed as a full time cooper at the age of 15.

Not much is known of Jack Belvedere for the next few years and the only records show that he was on a tax record list for the local county as an employee of the Hereford High Reserve Distillery and Bottling Company. On a side note, it appears that Herefords High Reserve Whiskey was a supplier to the British Military and that huge amounts were shipped to India via the English Navy.



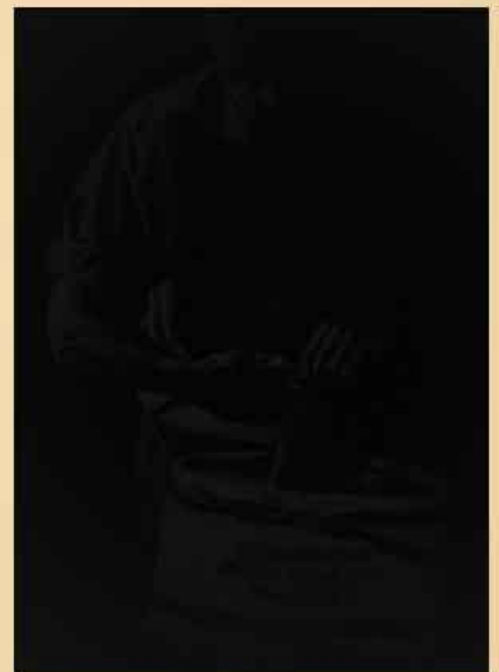
Jack as a Young Child.



The Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland.



The Scottish countryside near the Cairngorm Mountains where Jack was born.

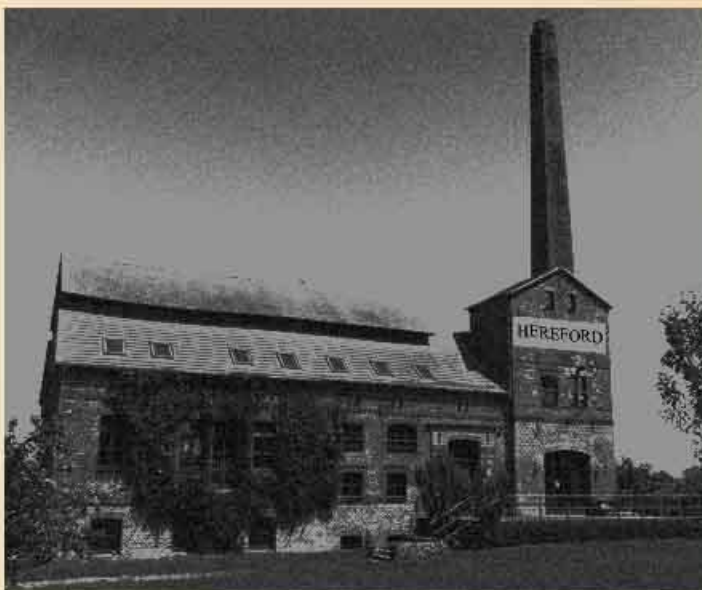


**Jacob Knudson,
Jack's stepfather**



Edinburgh

**The coopers shop
where Jack worked as
a young lad.**



**Hereford's
Distillery**

Jack's name does come up in 1851 on a list of wanted criminals published in the Crownes list of Criminals; an official list of Criminals, Thieves, and Brigands sought for justice due to crimes against the Crowne and more specifically against the Royal Family. This is a list that is different than the average list of wanted criminals in that it had a higher priority, much larger visibility (both realm and colony wide), and sometimes carried rewards or favors from the Crowne for bringing in one of those on the list. There was no statute of limitations or "plea bargaining" for anyone ever named on the Crownes list. It seems that our young Jack was charged with the crime of, "grievous assault against a person of royal lineage", in the month of January 1852.

It seems that at the very Pub (The Iron Cask) where Jack had worked as a child there was, as there was in every pub of the realm, every year, a celebration of the King's birthday, that being August 21. On this evening in 1851 Jack had come in for an evening of revelry, tall tales and laughter. During the course of the evening, Jack Belvedere made a somewhat coarse remark about the King who had recently increased the tax on both the distilling of Whiskey and the exporting of whiskey which was, of course, sorely felt by the Hereford Distillery. "He needs to have a special Crowne made for his Donkey years, since we now have an ass for a King", Jack was heard to say.

Unfortunately, in the crowd was a cousin to the Duke of Edinburgh, a Mr. Edward Tarpon, who overheard the remarks. When Jack went to leave for the evening Mr. Tarpon and several of his party were waiting for Jack around the corner. When Jack turned the corner he was seized and held firm by Tarpon's men. It seems that there was an English law that beating a man about his legs was an overlooked, and justifiable form of physical



**Jack's actual Mother
and Father
early 1800's.**

**Jacob Knudson in
the blacksmith shop.**



**The Iron Cask where
Jack's journey began.**



**The Hereford Tasters Crew
where the whiskey was
rated. C 1863**

**This was a highly coveted
position in the company. Here
the men sample a hybrid
Whiskey-Beer concoction.
Unfortunately all traces of the
recipe were never found.**

**Inside "The Iron Cask"
where Jack's mother
worked and Jack grew
up. The property
eventually burned down.
(Photo courtesy of
MacPhairce Ins. LLC)**



**Crew of the Hereford
Distillery. Jack Belvedere
is in the top row 2nd
from the right.**



retribution against a perceived insult. While being held, Tarpon beat Jack severely about the legs with a metal truncheon to the point of causing permanent damage to Jack's left knee. This was indeed, the cause of Jack's limp and the origin of the nick-name, Stumblin' Jack.

The Beating

What transpired later, was that in December of that same year, (5 months later) Jack was in another pub in the Lennon Street district of Edinburgh. As luck would have it, the same Edward Tarpon entered the establishment at some point during the evening with two scarlet women upon his arms, a fact not unnoticed by Jack who had tucked himself away into a dark corner of the room. After a couple of hours of drinking, Mr. Tarpon and his harlots made for the doorway, immediately followed by Jack.

Once out onto the sidewalk and past the nearest gas lamps, Jack announced his presence. "Mr. Tarpon, you will pay most dearly for your assault upon me." Immediately turning to face Jack, Mr. Tarpon raised his cane to swing, which Jack caught in mid-strike and jerked cleanly from Tarpon's grasp. Being a blacksmith and cooper and possessed of the resulting strength of such work, Jack broke Tarpon's cane in two as if it were a matchstick. Tarpon, sensing there was more to come fell behind the two women and pushed them forward into Jack.

Jack brushed them aside with a firm but gentle push. "You ladies get! And go about your business with more honorable men." One of them later stated.

“Tarpon, prepare yourself!” Jack was heard to yell. “You may be of high breed but of low and cowardly nature!”

At this point Tarpon attempted to run but by chance, slipped upon some ice and Jack was upon him like a wild fury. It was at this moment that Jack extracted his retribution, pummeling Edward Tarpon with fists that wielded steel forging hammers 12 hours a day. As a result of his strength and with great bad intent, Jack delivered a blow so powerful to his head, that it left Mr. Edward Tarpon with the condition of permanently crossed eyes, a state that led to the nickname of “Cross Eyed Tarpon” which he carried with hatred to his grave.

This was the story of the crimes that led to two very different yet related nicknames carried lifelong by two very different men whose paths had crossed but by chance, a fall evening in Scotland.



Edward Tarpon in an artist's rendition. Tarpon paid the artist to draw him without his crossed eyes.



The only known surviving true image of “Cross-Eyed Tarpon”. He had all others destroyed.

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A Journey Starts

TO BE CONTINUED...

A Journey Starts

Knowing that he would be wanted in some form or another by the authorities, Jack Belvedere immediately set off to leave Scotland, and England as a whole. It is believed that even with his lame condition, he walked the entire distance of over 500 miles, from Edinburgh to New Castle upon Tyne by foot, where upon, he obtained passage by boat to Amsterdam, Holland. Over the next six months he made his way south through France and into Spain, under the assumed name of Richard Lothby. It was there that he felt he would be free from the Crownes reach. Eventually he found employment in the city of Pontevedra, Spain as a cooper, building barrels for water and supplies for the lucrative shipbuilding industry that was centered there.

Unfortunately for him but, in the end fortunately for us, his life was to take another abrupt turn.

The Spanish Moon

Jack would often find himself late at night in various drinking establishments or cantinas as the saloons are referred to in Spanish. He would frequently walk the streets of the Soutomior district ducking into the doorways of the cantinas where could be heard the loudest and most festive music. It became his habit to frequent a particular saloon of a most notorious nature called the Luna de España (The Spanish Moon). Known particularly for the fact that The Spanish Moon featured a unique style of music performed only by female gypsy guitar players, it was a place where the whiskey was strong, the knives were sharp and life was cheap. The Gypsy



Jack and unknown blacksmith. Jack is on the right in the Pontreverde Coopering Shop.

The Coopering shop in Pontreverde, Spain, Where Jack found employment.



One of the young gypsies who played at the Spanish Moon.



The Spanish Moon, where Jack was tricked into Pirate Service.

The two Gypsy sisters, Malta and Slyvanita. Malta was the first true love of young Jack.



A fine example of a Quistalerene Dagger of the type favored by the bewitching Gypsy sirens.



women were as nimble and quick with their folding daggers, (oft times hidden under the skirt on their leg) as their fingers were, on the rosewood fingerboards of their gypsy flamenco guitars. Cheats, thieves, and cutthroats were always found there in numbers along with sailors from all ports of the world who would often spend their last dimes on those Gypsy Queens. Of the Spanish Moon, it was often said, "If the whiskey don't kill ya, the women will."

As luck would have it, one evening Jack, or Richard Lothby as he often introduced himself, heard through the crowd words spoken in the heavy Scottish brogue of his homeland. Seeking the source of this foreign but familiar sound, Jack found to his amazement two merchant sailors who hailed from Machrihanish on the west coast of Scotland. Having the opportunity to converse with two of his fellow Scots (the first in 2 years) led to a roaring night of laughter, tales and way too much whiskey and ale.

At the end of this long night Jack ordered one more round of pints for his compadres and himself. He was readying himself to leave and lifted his tankard to toast their chance meeting. As he raised the drink to his lips something slid from the glass and pressed against his lips. Reaching into the half empty vessel he pulled out an English Schilling. Knowing immediately what mischief was afoot, he jumped to his feet and upended the table in front of him. The two Scotsman were tipped to the ground in a tangle of legs, chairs and tables. As Jack turned to make a run for the door he was met with a blinding flash of white light. Jack had been duped by these two ne'er-do-well sailors who were sadly his own country brethren to boot.

The Gold Eye

It was in those times that ships and Naval Vessels were hard pressed to find enough men to man their ships. This also included the ships of Privateers, Gun Runners, and Pirates. Stumblin' Jack Belvedere had been press ganged into service on a Brigantine Vessel named the Golden Ace owned by a soldier of fortune and privateer known by the name of Goldie Helbeak, a Norwegian pirate who claimed to be a descendant of the ancient Viking King, Canute. The name Goldie (short for Gold Eye) came from the fact that his left eye was put out as a young boy on a whaling ship that he worked on in his youth. Some say he lost his eye as a bet in a card game on board a ship whaling in the North Sea. It was the origin of the saying "I'd bet my left eye on it." When he took his first gold plunder at the age of 18 he removed the scrimshawed, ivory false eye he had carved, and from the bullet mold of a .750 diameter smooth bore Creed rifle fashioned himself a golden eyeball with a silver inlaid pupil.

Jack had been press ganged into service using a common ploy that had originated in the King's Navy. It was a form of trickery where a schilling was dropped into a victims drink. When the unwary dupe noticed something in their drink and fished it out they were said to have taken the King's schilling and subsequently taken to sea by force. It was also a common ploy among others than the Royal Navy and was called "taking the captain's coin." In this case for Jack, he had, "taken Goldie's penny". Potential victims became so wary of this ploy that they demanded the use of glass bottom tankards so they could raise their drink to look in the bottom for anything dropped into their drink. This in turn spawned the origin of the term, "bottoms up."

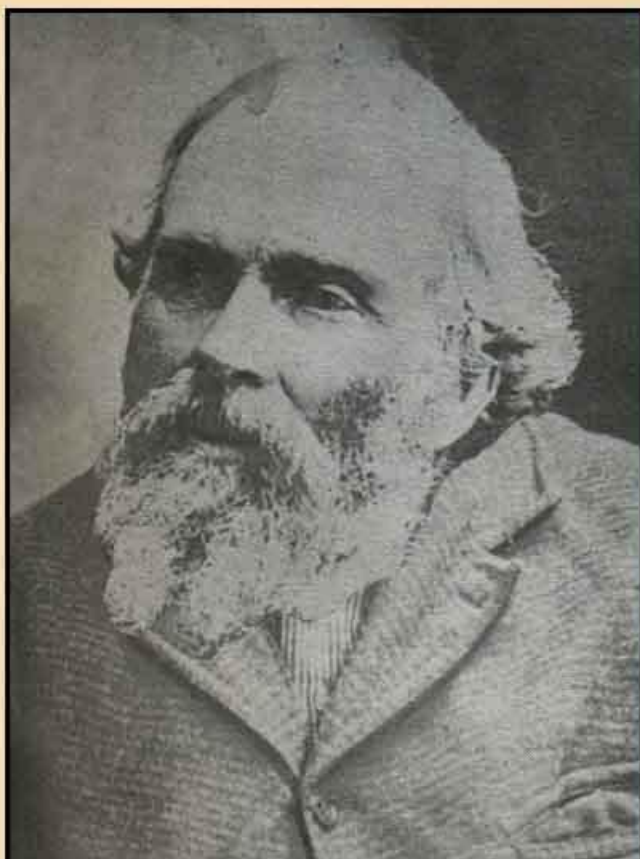
Skwid and the Skelton

When Jack came to he was 30 miles out to sea off the coast of Spain and headed southwest under fair sail at a brisk 14 knots. The creek of rigging and the flapping of sails slowly came into focus. Sensing someone, Jack looked to his left, directly into the face of a bearded soot covered creature with black bulging eyes. At first Jack couldn't tell if it was a man or animal. Then as his vision and thoughts began to clear Jack saw the yellow teeth through the smile. It was a man sitting next to him. No - he was standing. He was a midget.

"I'm Skwid, the ships surgeon. They says I looks like I'm sittin when I'm standin. Not much of a Surgeon though. Mainly I just cuts things off if they be hurtin. I'll tell you straight. Surgeons better than a half-mate. And ne'er ya ever call me one or yull feel my knife cross your neck. Yer heads been near stove in. Decided I better not cut it off as I figgered you be needin' it." He spit a wad of brown from his mouth and wiped a brown sleeve over his beard. Jack could see that the sleeve had once been white.

"I'm really an artist not a surgeon I'll tell ya. I does the tattoos. Whils yer were sleepin off yer cracked bean I put a dancing skelton on yer back. Owes me now does ya. Don't know when yer goin see it. Got no meer. Got ganged meself in God's Country. That's Ireland ya knows, 3 years back. Been with Goldie ever since. My advice to ya is, get used to it. If you piss your beans you'll be fightin the wind, and Goldies a hurricane when he's crossed."

Piracy and Plunder - The Beginning



Only known photo of "Skwid" the midget. No one ever knew his Irish given name.

Jack was 72 days at sea on the morning of April 28, 1854 when the cry went up from the main crow, "Sail! Sail off Port Bow! Galleon I say. Fourposter!"

Immediately Captain Goldie summoned Quartermaster Rafael Festoon and Master Gunner Simon Hobbs to the foredeck. "This far at sea she could be loaded and headed south to catch the Azore drift," stated Festoon.

"Any Eye on Flag?" Goldie shouted high.

It's a Jack I say!" Hobbs spoke, "English and here? It's for India and full. Give me broad shot and I'll break her dead!"

"There, she's low in the mainspace, asking for the Devil". Goldie then spoke firmly, "Those are not French women manning her crew. Those are Royal sailors. Those hands are as hard as nails, more often than not, Hobbs."

"More often not", Hobbs uttered, and with that a broad smile broke slowly over the Gold-eyed captain's visage. "We'll be rich by midnight mates."

"Or dead by noon" parsed the quartermaster, Festoon.

"Dead is our lot. All of us soon or late. We'll strip her like a fine English

tart," Goldie brayed and they broke into a single, roaring maniacal laughter.

"Ready those men and break for her at full sail. Ready up the Muddy Flag and knock up the main sails fore and aft. Hobbs, make those 10 pounders ready to clip her wings. If she's bound for India she'll be packed with fine English rifles. The southern Yanks'll pay in gold for those, Mr. Festoon."

Striding forth onto the main deck Captain Goldie addressed the men. "Muddy up the water and make ready boys, tonight we'll dine on English pork and the sharks will dine on English fat. Those English Bastards will taste Viking steel fore days end", holding his sword aloft.

"Hoo! Yah! Rah!", the men shouted in unison, and in the rear, Stumblin' Jack Belvedere knew he would never see Scotland again.

The muddy flag was often used by Captain Goldie Helbeak as a trap used to gain close approach to enemies or victims vessels. It was a flag designed to resemble many flags and yet no flag. From its use by Gold Eye Helbeak comes the phrase "Muddying up the water", a term he often used to call it into use.



The Muddy Flag

Death At Sea

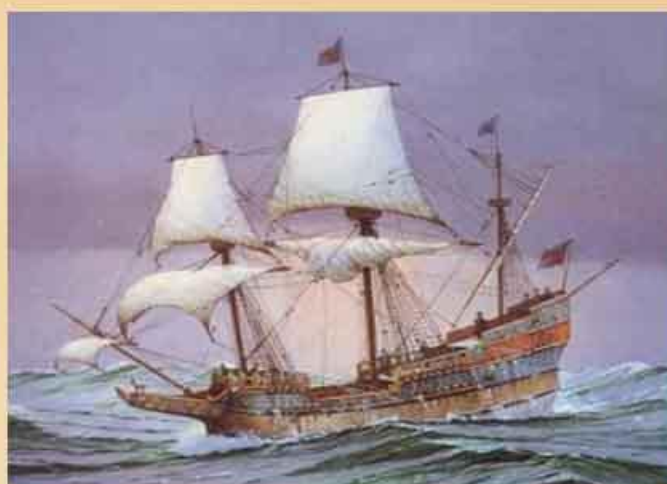
Little did Captain Goldie or his men know that the English Galleon, the H.M.S. Commander was captained by Lord Admiral Banastre Tarleton. Old, but in no way infirm, Admiral Tarleton was the only General of the Army ever to be fully commissioned into the Royal Navy. Lord Admiral Tarleton was a lieutenant Colonel in the Kings Royal Dragoons and one of the leaders of the most infamous battles of the American War of Independence, the Waxhaw Massacre, against Virginian Continentals where a small band of soldiers of the Patriot Army took a heroic stand against the overwhelming force of The British Legion Royal Green Dragoons on May 29, 1780. Following their victory in battle, Tarleton and his men hacked and clubbed the wounded patriot soldiers to death with their cutlasses and rifle butts on the battlefield. Regarded as the most bloodthirsty and ruthless commander in the British Military, he was a cunning and cruel tactician nicknamed "The Butcher," who was also brutally effective in battle.

After the battle, the king offered him the post of his choice. He announced proudly, "I want to go to sea." Having been raised in the English sea port of Weymouth, he proved himself to be the most capable of military commanders in the Navy, applying the Close Quarters Combat tactics he used so successfully on the ground to his 6 victorious battles at sea. He was preparing to be on his way to India to accept his last posting as the Kings Vice Chancellor of India when he had told the king, "I would ask for one last command at sea before I retire to a desk and pen if you please My Lord." And the King had granted his wish.

On board the HMS Commander Tarleton readied for the coming showdown.



The Golden Ace - A fine Brigantine vessel.



The HMS Commander

“We can make no flag sir.” The seven mate called down.

“Mr. Dunwiddy tell the helm, do not let her flank us to port. We need our wind and I want him fighting the swell so his fire is compromised should that be his choice. In that case we will be able to turn our starboard giving him our stern as a target, being much smaller, then we’ll broadside him with the two 16 pounders in the rear.”

“Yes Sir, Admiral”, Mr. Dunwiddy replied saluting and snapping his heels together sharply.

Tarleton raised his hand in a smart salute flashing the distinctive large, human skull ring that he always wore on his right hand. They say he had it fashioned from the silver buttons of the great coat worn by the French General Claude St. Pierre, who he had killed with his bare hands at the battle of Austerlitz in the Napoleonic War in December 1805. Having exhausted their ammunition, Lieutenant General Tarleton had raised the white flag of surrender. Upon the approach of the French General and his party. Banestre Tarleton and his officers left upon the unsuspecting French-



Lord Banestre Tarleton. Note the ring on his right hand.



men and henceforth, savagely and despicably ravaged the poor general and his party, biting, tearing and clawing them into death's submissive embrace. Although Tarleton and his men had escaped and lived to fight another day it was regarded by all Frenchmen as the most dishonorable and reprehensible of means.

In fact the French had despised Banastre Tarleton so vilely that they had named a certain gaseous bodily function after him. Although no longer in general usage, "Who let out the Tarleton?" or "Smells like someone did a Tarleton", became crude but common sayings in the country during the 1800's.

Aboard the Golden Ace, Goldie, dressed in a captured military uniform with

all captains regalia strode into view on the bridge. Standing in the full light of the approaching noonday sun he gave the universal signal of non-aggression; two arms up then two arms out at his side.

"They're saying they are no threat admiral, I think they might be Dutch or maybe Swedes. I can't make the flag."

"Hold steady but let's allow ourselves a better look", Tarleton ordered, as the Golden ace slowly attempted to come to port. First Mate Dunwiddy, scanning the ship for any signs, saw something through his spyglass, a glint or small flash coming from the captains hat or, there, again, but not his hat -- his eye.

He screamed out, "It's Gold Eye Helbeak! Break hard to starboard and drop that jib so we'll spin, lads!"

At that moment, sensing the discovery of their ruse, Goldie Helbeak immediately removed his hat that was the pre-given signal to fire and all eight gun windows on the starboard side pulled up at once. Eight cannon fired in a series of explosions that broke the eternal silence of the sea. Seven fused, iron balls spat forth, 7 missing but one, which pierced the HMS Commander at a strong angle amid ship and low.

By now Tarleton and his crew had turned ninety degrees to the Golden Spade and opened up with the two rearward cannon firing 2 rounds of chain shot, one clipping the brigantines main mast in half and the other blowing a wide hole directly below where Goldie was standing.

"We've masted her sir!" Came the cry on the HMS Commander. On our

first shot!

“Come about to her stern and put us at forty five degrees to her broadside. We’ll hit her when she can’t hit us. Give them a taste of English Iron. We’ll send him and his Gold Eye straight to Hell. All port guns fire one round mid ship!” A thunderous roar erupted, from the facing side of the Commander into the Golden Ace. When the smoke cleared, there was a gaping hole through the starboard side of the Aces hull.

On board the Golden Ace, panic had set in. Amid the screams of the wounded and dying, Captain Goldie lay under a jumble of twisted broken wood. Next to him lay Jack belvedere bruised but unharmed. Raising his head slowly, Goldie moaned,

“What time is it sailor?”

“I believe it’s almost noon sir.”

“Festoon was right, ... and Goldie Helbeak slumped back into an eternal sleep, his head hitting the floor.

To Jack’s amazement Goldie’s eye popped out and rolled slowly toward him.

“I guess Goldie won’t be needin’ this anymore.” Jack thought as he grabbed the gleaming object. Jack immediately tucked it into his feauscot, a leather bag secured by chain, that pirates often wore around their neck into which they secreted their most prize possessions. The old saying, “To Get Ahead” actually comes from the 17th century pirate saying, “You’ll get a head” that



Goldie Helbeak, as drawn by "Skwid",
the ships surgeon who fancied himself
an artist

was used as a rallying cry to spur the men to attack. "Getting the feauscot," another saying, no longer used, often meant taking the head off of the victim to get to the prize.

At that very moment, there was a terrible groan, then a thunderous crackling crash as the Golden Ace began to break in half. Jack raced to the side, threw himself over and began to swim feverishly away from the rapidly sinking vessel. "I know the English will pick me up. I won't drown but I'll end up bein' hanged," he thought.

The Pass Deceives

Aboard the HMS Commander Lord Admiral Tarleton shouted "Have we taken any hits?"

"One low sir but it's a passer." Meaning it had passed through. "We've taken a pass" was a common term. "And no casualties!"

Tarleton shouted out his commands, "Bring her around Mr. Barnes, we'll pick up the living dead. Standup the snipers Dunwiddy. Fetch my Henderson. We'll practice our marksmanship on those lucky survivors. Scanning the debris for survivors, he suddenly yelled, "I say! I believe that's a midget. Leave him for me!" Any man who fires on him will be "Kissing the Gunners Daughter" before nite fall. The midget is mine!" He screamed. And Tarleton raised his .800 calibre Henderson Arms Long Range Tiger Rifle to his shoulder.

Little did the Admiral or anyone aboard know that the cannon ball that had struck the HMS Commander was a fused ball, meaning an explosive charge. Since all seven other balls had missed, into the ocean, they had not exploded.

So they did not know that it was a fused ball that had struck home. Home indeed, it had lodged itself against the opposite side hull, directly under the powder stores. At times these fused ball charges worked well and at times not so well. And at times they experienced what is now commonly called a hang fire but at that time was called, "The Bulls Bullocks", a fused charge that was a slow burn but not completely out, ready to detonate at any time, sometimes many minutes later.

First mate Harmon Garvey headed below to check the damage. As he climbed down in the darkness amid the hundreds of large wooden barrels in the low hold, he saw a brief spark then a bright flare.

"Oh Lord, I'm Wanked!" Was his final thought.

Jack was trying to swim towards the path of the HMS Commander when he was lifted out of the water by a tremendous explosion directly from the bowels of the HMS Commander. Gasping for air, as the wind had been blown from his lungs, he was left gasping and aghast as debris came raining down around him. The ship was gone. There one moment and gone the next. And now, there were barrels, many barrels all around him. Some still lashed together with sailors rigging. Jack was astonished and horrified at the carnage around him. In particular he took note of a single human arm that floated near him. On its finger was a ring. A ring in the form of a human skull. He grasped for the ring and tugging at it, pulled it off the finger of the stiff white hand. Letting go of the arm he watched it slowly sink into the depths. "No need lettin' the sharks get this", he concluded.

Jack swam to three of the barrels lashed together that floated nearby. As he pulled himself up the rigging and onto the barrels, he saw the markings burned into the sides. "Herefords High Reserve Whiskey, Edinburgh, Scotland.

"My God man, it was a whiskey ship bound for India and from Hereford's no less." And, so it was that lady fate had left Stumblin' Jack Belvedere adrift and alone with 3 barrels of whiskey, a silver ring and a Golden Eye in his feauscot.

Midgets of The Sea

It was common during the 1800's for all ships of the French Navy to have a midget on board each vessel. These midgets were the chief man servants of the captain of the boat. Their official rank and title being designated as the Half-Mate. The Half Mates job was to attend to the captain's needs and since the French were extremely fond of their Napoleon Brandy they were never without their drink. In order to facilitate this habit, the French Navy developed a special square hat that featured a flat piece of wood on top. This was developed so that the captain could place his drink on top of the half-mate who was always at the captains ready. The French referred to it as "Le Plateau" but it was translated into English as the "Flat Top". It was a practice generally held in ridicule by all other Navies of the world, the exception being the Chinese who regarded midgets as brining good luck to the ship.

These poor hapless souls spent their entire existence running about after their French captains with a drink carried on the top of their heads. Although paid only half the wages of the rest of the crew, these half-sized sailors often found special favor from the captain in the form of officers' food and drink. It seems though that the grog they were allowed to savor was served them in a special, smaller sized cup often called a halfun, being a half pint, thus the origin of the phrase half pint, meaning something smaller in size or a word used to describe a small human.

Seaborne midgets were immortalized in the poetic prose of H. Richard Keiths, in his 1879 epic, *The Old Captain of the Sea*. It reads in the 8th verse;



A ships captain and his Half-Mate,
shown with the flat top hat and
full dress uniform.

Striding face and fore into the gale,
Broken hands upon the rail.
The immortal captain stands with pride,
Cutlass and Half-Mate by his side.
Alone he knows will never be.
His flat-top friend stands by his knee.

It must be noted that the current style of hair cut that is short and straight across the top called a "flat top," owes its origin to the midgets of the French Navy and was extremely popular in continental Europe during the roaring 1890's due to Keith's huge popularity as a poet of the times.

The End of The Beginning

17 days At Sea

Jack Belvedere lost count of his days at sea after the first week. Using his feauscot to collect rainwater, he survived by catching fish that would swim next to the barrels. It seemed that one of the barrels had developed a small leak. The fish seemed naturally attracted to the fine Hereford Scotch and those that lingered in its flow became sluggish and dullardly. They were in such a state that Jack could just reach down and grab one whenever he felt the need.

On the evening of the 17th day Jack's whiskey barrel raft scraped bottom. He had reached land! Land, oh sweet firmament. The touch upon his feet was like the first foot fall of Adam when he strode softly into the paradise of Eden for the very first time.

Jack had drifted over 1100 miles but had been caught in what is called the "Southwest Swore" and had been transported to the Caribbean island of Dominica.

Pulling his barrels ashore he hid them in some low brush under the shoreline palms.

Seeing some lights in the distance, Jack walked the short distance into the town of Santiago.

"I could use a drink", Jack said to himself. He heard loud voices and a calypso rhythm coming from a dimly lit building on the corner. Entering, every eye was upon him. "I'll take a whiskey", Jack croaked out, and the

black Dominican bar keep poured a shot from a dusty bottle. Jack could barely choke it down. "You call this whiskey? It's more a cross between turpentine and deck wash".

"I knows it aint good, but it's all we got. None gets whiskey these a parts." Jack leaned forward, "Could you sell good Scottish Whiskey if you had it? "I best guess I'd sell it good, sir," he answered back. "I believe I have a proposition we could both profit from," and Jack extended his hand, "Belvederes the name".

"Mines Treacle Sandoo. You got a fine fancy ring", chimed Sandoo.

"There's a story behind it," Jack smiled.

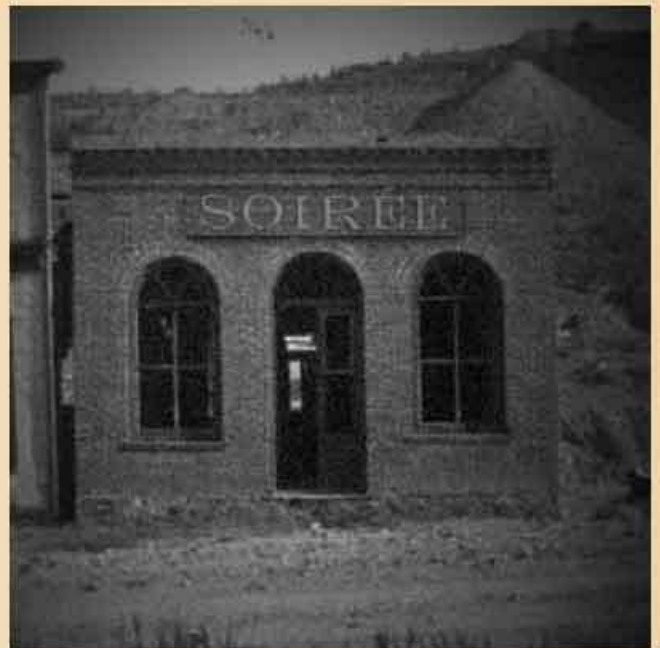
Jack Belvedere and Treacle Sandoo split the profit from the sale of the finest Scotch Whiskey in the Caribbean. Over the next 6 months, Treacle Sandoo made enough money to buy a failing sugar cane farm and soon learned that there was more money to be made from making spirits than serving them. He started a rum distillery using a recipe given to him by his grandmother that he called his "bitter panacea". It became a very popular drink in the Caribbean. Sandoo eventually sold his distillery to a Spaniard named Don Erasmo Bermudez sometime in the 1850's for a tidy sum. It became known as Bermudez Rum.

One evening Treacle Sandoo could not run the Soirée as he had to attend to his wife who was in childbirth with their 5th child. Stumblin' Jack would often run the tavern for Treacle with the help of his oldest daughter, Marvel who at the age of 18 was a dark eyed Caribbean beauty. It was a slow night and the last customer had left.



Treacle Sandoo - The Caribe who befriended Jack on the Island of Dominica.

Sandoo's Soirée on the Island of Dominica. Not much to look at, but oh, the tales its walls could tell.



Inside view of Sandoo's Soirée

"Do you want another brother or a sister?"

"A sister so's I can teach her to dress and be beautiful. Brothers just wears their tatters and ne're care bout their looks."

"Better tatters than fine silk I would say"

They both laughed. "Almost I2 up. Lets button her up and get gone."

"Yes sir Mr. Jack."

It was just around midnight that Captain "Irish" William Whelp stumbled through the Soirée door followed clumsily by his older brother Swanee Whelp. "We're here for your best," Whelp croaked knocking over a chair as he dropped himself onto another at the table. "Sit Swanee, were going to sample the fare here," his eyes traveling over Marvel.

"If the service is good we'll pay in silver. If we get serviced, we'll pay in gold", he said licking his lips. Marvel shot Jack a troubled glance.

Irish William Whelp was a scarred old slaver who had "holed" over in Dominica before takin his cargo, "his brown sugar" as he called it, to its final destination, the slave market in New Orleans.

Although the international trade in slavery had been outlawed in 1808, the greed of gold drew such men as Irish Whelp to the black market trade in slaves from Africa. Picking up their obscene cargo off the horn of Africa from Arab slave dealers, these human peddlers would run south to the coast of South America then North for the Caribes. From there they would con-

tact black market slavers from America and arrange for delivery. They were most hated by all other pirates, reviled and rejected by their peers, who considered them to be below even their lot. "The Devils Sailors," was a name commonly used to refer to these lowest of men.

His ship, the Black Hawk was as cursed a vessel as had ever roamed the high seas. It was eventually taken over during a slave revolt on board in the spring of 1858 while captained by William Whelp's brother Swanee Whelp. The slaves threw the crew overboard in the Gulf of Mexico with the exception of Swanee who they tied to the forward mast. It took 6 days for Swanee to die. The slave crew eventually ran the Black Hawk aground at the mouth of a river in Louisiana, where they dumped Swanees lifeless corpse. It became known as Swanee's River to the locals. Most of these freed slaves eventually made it north where they fought bravely alongside the Union soldiers in the coming Civil War.

"We'll take whiskey and whatever else is for sale here." Whelp looked to his brother.

Marvel stepped forward but Jack had already rounded the bar and limped to the table with the whiskey and two glasses.

"The drinks on me and then I'll ask you gentlemen to leave."

"We'll leave when I've had my needs attended to." Whelp sneered at Jack. "None sooner."

Jack looked squarely at Irish William Whelp.



Slave revolt aboard the slave ship, the Black Hawk captained by Swanee Whelp, the brother of, "Irish" William Whelp. Swanee is seen tied to the Bowsprit.



One of the former slaves from the Black Hawk slave ship revolt who had fled North to fight with Union Forces. Known only as, "Too High" for his xtreme height of 6'7".

"I have no taste for your foul stew. You do the devil's business. And when your time is upon you, you'll do his business in Hell, for all eternity."

"If that be my lot I'll share a warm toast and a fart with 'im in memory of your short life, if you run your tongue at me again," Whelp graveled out as his fingers curled around the quillion dagger hidden in his waist.

As Jack returned to the bar, Irish Whelp grabbed Marvel and pulled her to him in a drunken and debauched attempt to kiss her.

"Unhand her you foul swine!" Jacked shouted, just as Marvel slapped Irish most

violently in the face. Surprised and stunned, Irish Whelp screamed as Marvel doubled him over with a hard kick to the slavers "barnacles."

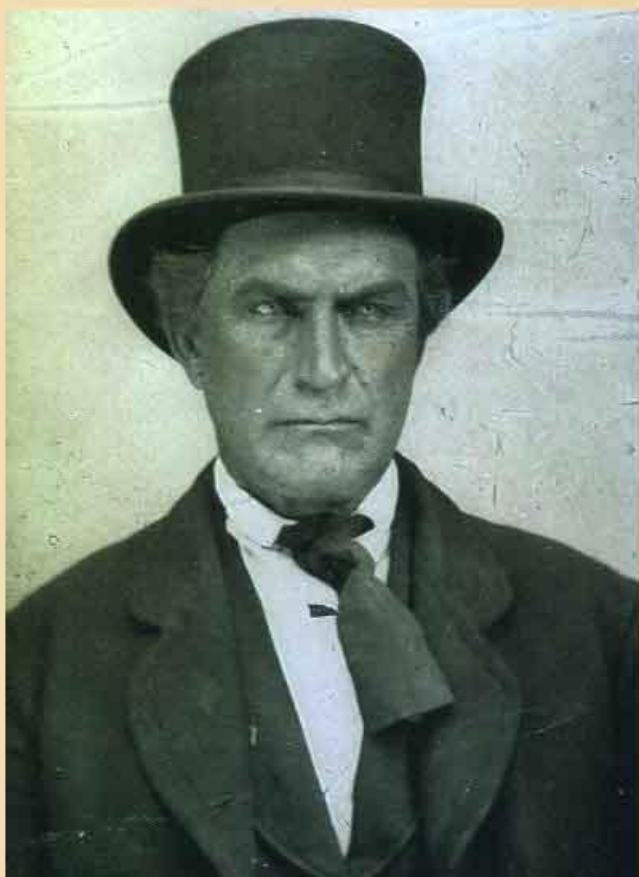
"I'll douse your fire when you're the whore maid on my boat. And I'll take you to clean my piss pot, you slaggard gimp," Whelp roared at Jack. Just then Swanee Whelp lurched forward toward Jack who was behind the bar.

Grabbing the golden eye from around his neck Jack unleashed a mighty pitch striking Swanee Whelp directly between the eyes with a loud crack, dropping him squarely in his tracks. Like a sack of Irish Potatoes, Swanee fell forward face first onto the ground.

In spite of his troubled knee, Jack flew over the bar in a mighty leap, lunging into Irish Whelp just as Whelp drew his dagger, slashing Jack on the forehead above Jack's left eye. Jack caught his arm as Whelp swung back again and with a mighty heave, snapped his arm like a rotten barrel stave.

With the bad intent of a wounded tiger, Jack exploded in a wild flurry of fists, beating Whelp to the floor. The former blacksmith beat Irish William Whelp to death with his bare hands. "Enjoy your time in hell and kiss the devils arse when you meet em." Jack stood over the crumbled corpulent heap that lay at his feet.

Unfortunately for Jack, his ring (Tarleton's silver skull), which he was always seen wearing, left a number of distinct deep skull impressions on Whelp's face and skull.



Irish William Whelp in a photo taken just one month before his fatal encounter with “Stumblin’ Jack” just around midnight at Sandoo’s Soirée.



Only known photo of Swanee Whelp who took over the slave ship, “The Black Hawk” after the death of his brother. Swanee was later killed by slaves aboard his own ship.

“Guess I’ve overstayed my welcome”. Jack stopped to pick up Goldie’s eye, wrapping a bar cloth around his bleeding face and headed for the door.

“Go to father”, Marvel half whispered.

At the edge of town, Jack knocked on the door of a small neat house. “It’s a boy.” Sandoo said as he opened the door for Jack, the light spilling out.

"Marvel's alright but I must leave, now".

"My Brother has a boat" Sandoo stated calmly.

In a swampy inlet a mile from Treacles home three men waded into the water.

"You are my friend," Sandoo said as Jack stepped aboard Sandoo's brother's boat.

"As you are mine" Jack simply replied. And they pushed off.

The Next Day...(next page)

WANTED

**FOR THE MOST NOTORIOUS AND SAVAGE
MURDER!!!**

**OF
THE MOST HONORED AND WELL LOVED SEA CAPTAIN
IRISH WILLIAM WHELP**

**\$500
REWARD
IN GOLD**

**FOR THE CAPTURE ALIVE OF
JACK BELVEDERE
ALSO KNOWN AS
STUMBLIN' JACK**

He is gimped of the left leg and walks most noticeably with a limp. It is reported that he wears a large silver ring upon his right hand in the most offensive shape of a human skull.

Herefords Demise

Herefords High Reserve Scottish Whiskey continued to enjoy success until the evening of July 14, 1918 when an errant and off-course German Zeppelin flew overhead. The captain of the airship, Baron Von Schwarzfahrt mistook the Hereford Distillery for a Lead Refining plant. Looking at the high towers, he thought that they were bullet making towers used in the manufacture of pre-1900 lead balls. Against the protestations of his crew who tried to convince him otherwise, Baron Von Schwarzfahrt was bent on furthering his career knowing that destroying a lead factory with his zeppelin would be a significant notch on his belt. Dropping a bomb directly into the main pressurized distilling vats created a tremendous explosion completely destroying the Hereford distillery on that fateful evening. It was never to be rebuilt.

Unfortunately for Schwarzfahrt, the explosion was so huge that it reached the bottom of the Zeppelin catching it on fire, causing it to crash into the nearby forest. The Baron and his crew were captured and spent the remainder of the war in British custody sewing underwear for the British Army at a nearby garment factory. He continued to believe that he had destroyed a munitions factory until he died in 1937. The name of Schwarzfahrt and his Lead Zeppelin folly became a running joke in the airship community for years afterward.

As a result of the destruction of the Hereford Distillery the remaining bottles of whiskey found throughout the empire became scarce and much sought after articles of status. They became a gift considered suitable for kings and rare, unopened bottles have commanded prices as high as 178,000 pounds sterling at various times to collectors who view the bottles as the

holy grail of their whiskey collections. It has been rumored that, at times, wealthy Arabs have served the whiskey at parties just to impress their guests.



The devastating ruins of the once glorious Hereford Whiskey distillery after the bombing by Scwarzfahrt's Zeppelin in 1918.

Again at Sea

Once again Jack Belvedere, the courageous crippled cooper from Scotland, found himself forced to go to sea.

The very next day after ridding the world of William Whelp, his wanted poster was found posted on almost every corner in Santiago.

"Tis a fine day to be in the wind and on the water." Uncus Sandoo looked over at Jack.

"It'd be finer if I didn't think every clapper in the whole world was chasin after me."

"Ya doin worry none, Mr. Jack. You gave my brother a fine man's life and ya saved his Marvel. I'll let no man touch a hair on your head. Ya don't let the willow branches grow fat around yer soul"

"Brother told me to get ya safe and that's I'm doin, come Hell or High Water."

"Where can I go?" Jack asked. "\$500 in gold on my head'll send every snag hunter and bounty skaller in the Caribes after my tail."

"We got a few stops, but yer gwan New Orleans. Treacle an me's got a cousin that helps the 'Merican coloreds git from Souf ta North. I'll get ya thar, he'll git ya far from yer troubles hereabouts.

Rum Runin & Bounty Huntin

Uncus Sandoo was a Rum Runner for his brother Treacle Sandoo's Rum distillery. It seems that in the Caribbean in the 1850's, the islands were owned as colonies by many different countries, some of which it seemed were perpetually at war with each other. Because of this, rum distillers like Sandoo were prohibited or severely taxed on any rum going into other islands. In order to make a profit these distillers had to rely on Rum Runners to deliver their goods surreptitiously to the thirsty islanders.

It was a dangerous endeavor and it took a special combination of sailor, adventurer, and gambler with nerves of steel and the bravery of a mongoose confronting a cobra. The penalty for rum running was severe, either a life sentence in a tropical hell box or death by hanging. It was debatable which sentence was the worse.

There was a strong incentive for islanders to catch the Rum Runners for there was no recourse involved for anyone to steal both their boat and its liquid cargo, for the runner already stood outside of the law in all regards. As a result, Rum Runners were known in general as a lot who were men not to be trifled with. In turn they trusted no one, for in most cases the ones they trusted most were the ones who were the first to betray them.

The preferred boats of the Runners were the fast and nimble, single mast sloops, outfitted with Bermuda Rigged sails, which with their large triangular sail and low draft were able to out maneuver sail upwind, and run the shallows that larger boats were unable to navigate.

Uncus's boat was named the Fallen Angel, and Uncus was as able a



A sloop of the period similiar to the one Uncus would of piloted.

seaman as had ever piloted a boat. He could run her in the hardest seas on the blackest of nights with a ghost like precision that few men ever attained and many more wished they possessed.

He'd been whipped by the wind, driven by the snow, had his head stove in but was still on his feet and he was willin' to take Stumblin Jack Belvedere all the way to America and the safety that it held in promise.

Jack and Uncus made several ports in the next 4 weeks. Always, laying offshore till nitefall and then letting into the dark docks as they were called, Jack and Uncus would fade into the busy dockside activity of the night found so easily and abundant in the warm evening air of the Caribbean Isles. Laughter, drink, and music would continue some nights until it could no longer be called night at all.

Having found a safe haven in the Haitian Port of Gonaives and under the safe cover of darkness Richard Lothby (he resumed his alias) and Uncus Sandoo had wandered into a dimly lit establishment appropriately called "End of The Road". Inside there was a black man the locals called "Blind Chonnee Johnson" playing a guitar and singing in a strange rhythmic and

mournful style with a young boy sitting on his knee. His music sounded different from anything they had ever heard before. Jack and Uncus soon learned that this gifted musician was not only blind, but deaf as well. Blind Chonnee Johnson had amazingly learned to play by feeling the vibrations through the instrument. When Uncus asked, "Ooo's da boy?" they were told. "Dat be 'is son Robert. Sometime he plunka strings on 'ees daddy's gitar when is daddy gives im. Someday maybe he playa too."

"Someday, maybe," Jack replied.

"How the hell could he learn to play if he can't hear" Jack wondered aloud.

"Some says ees cahoots wif the devil. Dats how ee lernta play." One of the crowd volunteered.

The guitar and strings seemed to be singing and crying as if the instrument had a voice of its own. This deaf, blind player used his guitar as none other had done before and it seems that he didn't just use his fingers on the finger board but made use of a short chopped glass bottleneck placed over the middle finger of his left hand which he slid over the strings producing a wailing howl in a most melodic tone. And Blind Chonnee Johnson sang in a long mournful tone of lost love, lost fortune and the sadness that life can bring. People were captivated by his songs and the sound of this strange new style of music. As there was always, a large crowd gathered in attendance to hear this man's lament expressed in his music.

As Jack and Uncus sat at a table near the back wall drinking deeply of a favorite local drink; a mixture of rum, coconut milk, and pineapple juice,

Uncus noticed a tall, skinny man leaning against a post near the adjacent wall. He was dressed all in black with a black wide - brimmed hat slung low over his forehead. Uncus nudged Jack's leg and nodded in the man's direction.

"Eee's been eyein you the once over, steady as a clock, Mr. Jack. Seems he's takin too much interest in yer presence here."

Jack turned to his left and looked over, catching the man's gaze for only a moment. The man in black stared back locking his stare with Jack until the young Calypso waitress broke the moment by asking Jack if they'd be pleased with another round of the delicious coconut rum concoctions.

"Young Lassie, would you bring the man in black over there a shot of your finest rum on our compliments." Jack turned to Uncus. "We'll see how he acts when we extend a friendly gesture his way."

"Ya knows thars only two kinds of men who stares you straight when you looks at em. " Jack looked straight at Uncus as he spoke. "Those that are with the law and those with a bad intent in their soul", stated Uncus.

The man in Black looked just a little surprised when the young lady approached him with the drink. He leaned into her as she said something and turned to look over at Jack and Uncus. He raised his hand to the brim of his hat and nodded. Then he took the shot of Rum and tossed it down in one gulp. At that instant, when he raised the glass to his lips, Jack saw the Pearl handle of an 1851 Colt Navy Revolver.

"This is a man of Bad Intent" Jack said cooly to Uncus Sandoo.

"We either deal with him now or later."

Jack and Uncus stood, Uncus looked at Jack, "Preacher man says, if you gotta eat crap, take big bites. Don't waste no time tasten it."

As Jack and Uncus approached the Man in Black, he turned to face them squarely. Jack looked him directly in the eyes, "What's your name sir?"

"The name is Skag - Henry Skag. But the more important matter is what your name is." Skag looked down at Jack's ring.

"Men know me as Stumblin' Jack." Jack replied.

"Well Mr. Skag, you a bounty - skaller?"

"Everybody's gotta make a livin" Skag answered. Tiny beads of sweat began to form on Skag's forehead.

"Die'n ain't much of a livin", Jack looked at Skag with a stony coldness. Sensing that the moment was at hand, Henry Skag started his move. At that moment and with the quickness of a cat, Jack Belvedere slapped Henry Skag squarely across the face with such force that it was heard like a gun shot all the way across the room. As Henry Skag recoiled in shock, Jack instantly grabbed Skag's gun from his holster and pointed it directly into Skag's face.

"It would seem that it would be in your better interest to leave here and forget you ever heard my name," Jack spoke.

Henry Skag was about to make the worst and final decision of his life. He reached for the Derringer pistol he carried in the inside pocket of his black coat.

At that moment Stumblin' Jack Belvedere put a bullet through Henry Skag's heart.

As Jack and Uncus made for the door, Uncus took his change bag or "dollar waller" as it was called, and threw the coins all about the floor. In a mad rush all of the patrons dove among themselves onto the floor in a mad grab for the money. In this state of crazed confusion Jack and Uncus made their escape with little or no notice. Except for one.

Blind Chonnee Johnson yelled,
"IMA WITIN A SONG BOUT DIS."

"The End of The Road" Saloon
where Jack shot the "Man In
Black." "Blind" Chonnee John-
son is seen on the left, the
bottle neck blues player.



The Dollar Waller

The dollar waller was a leather bag or pouch with a drawstring that was wound about a belt and then tucked inside the waist. Anyone with money had one of these on him at all times as this was where one carried his money, usually Spanish dollars. Hence the name dollar waller. It eventually became shortened to the name waller used as "Did you lose yer waller?" Or "That thief just stole me waller." Eventually the term was converted to the word wallet which is still used to this day.

East Meets West Indies

Jack and Uncus exited quickly through a side door into the pitch blackness of a narrow, dirty alleyway lined on one side with two more saloons, a whorehouse, and a lone Chinese restaurant. Several drunk (or dead) bodies lay propped against various back walk and stoops, bottles of their sleeping potions sitting cradled in their laps or overturned on their sides. Jack and Uncus ran wildly down this maze of garbage and human litter. Uncus looked down as they passed the restaurant and were about to turn the corner and make for the docks.

"Dis ones been drinkin me brothers Rum," noticing the bottle at his side.

"Looks to me like Treacles Rum is Famous In The Worst Places," replied Jack, just as the muddied lump of human clay at their feet sprang up like a waiting preying mantis ambushing his prey. In one silent unseen move Uncus dropped to the ground motionless. Jack turned to face this unknown apparition. His hands went up instinctively to protect himself and he moved forward to attack, his heavy hands ready to kill if necessary. Stumblin' Jack Belvedere swung his hammer like fist directly at this devil's head. With all his might he let his hammers fly intending to break whatever lay in their path, yet there was nothing to strike. The devil was gone!

Instantly Jack felt an intense pain on his right side, then his left and his knees started to buckle. Two iron bars wrapped themselves around Jack's Chest and tightened like a vice.

"Do not make me kill you." A cold absolutely emotionless voice broke the silence. Jack immediately knew that this man-ghost would not hesitate

for an instant in carrying out his threat and he relaxed. The vise immediately loosened and Jack regained his legs. Jack looked quickly at Uncus who lay in a heap at their feet.

"Do not trouble for your friend. He will return shortly. I need your help and perhaps I may be of help to you." The apparition came into view and now became flesh and blood.

"You have a bloody strange way of introducing yerself. What is your name and what do you want of us?" Jack blurted out in a mixture of anger and confusion. Uncus started to groan on the ground. They heard voices, voices coming from up the alley.

"Strangers been shot". Voices grew louder. Much louder and running footsteps came their way. A man flew past them in a blurring race of speed.

"Took the dead 'uns dollar waller. Thief! Catch im!" A galloping head came crashing by as Jack and the mysterious one pulled themselves back into the shadows.

"Me thinks some of them want that dollar waller more than they want to catch a thief," Jack whispered.

By now Uncus had regained his senses and though confused sensed that there was no threat.

"Follow me," And the three stepped through a curtain into the back kitchen of a dimly lit kitchen. They walked past a primitive wood stove where there sat an ancient Chinese man pinching a short burning cigarette

between his lips, set in a face that appeared to be hundreds of years old. His face looked like crumpled leather parchment and he bore absolutely no expression, his eyes frozen and staring straight ahead even as the three of them walked hurriedly by.

"Sit so that we may talk."

"I think we should be high tailin for the boat," Uncus broke his silence to their new "friend."

"If you flee now your flight will be seen as evidence of your guilt. If we leave in plain sight we will be invisible."

"I hear you usin the word we, how do I know you're not another bounty skaller? We don't even know your name.

"I . . . am a priest"

"What kind of priest can fight like a demon and disappear like a ghost?" Jack asked.

"My name is ... Chain, Cang Twai Chain."

"Well thar Mr. Chain, since we ain't goin nowhere, just what's yer story?" Jack ordered.

Chain paused, then began, "I, like you are pursued by a king. In my country I lived at a temple in a world of peace. One day my sister was on her way to visit me when she encountered a carriage of the Royal

family. Inside was the nephew of the emperor who summoned her to the carriage where he attacked her in a fury of lust and drunken power. When he finished with her he threw her to his bodyguards and told them to use her for their pleasure while he took his tea. When the head bodyguard, Bolo grabbed her, she pulled his dagger free and cut her own throat.

A farmer delivering grain to the temple told me of this and I pursued the carriage until they had stopped for nightfall. As I approached the Emperor's nephew in his tent I heard Bolo laughing with his men about the young girl and their misfortune that she killed herself before they had their time with her. In my rage I grabbed a jug of sesame oil used for cooking and doused him, before I threw him into the fire where he burned like a torch. In the confusion and terror this caused I entered the nephew's tent and hovered over his still, drunken, sleeping form. His eyes opened wildly in terror and confusion, and I asked him, "Do you know what that sound was? It was the sound of your throat being cut."

I set off from the Northern mountains of my country and walked south for days and days to the city of Shanghai. I knew that the assassins of the Emperor would pursue me relentlessly without stopping, forever. It was there that I was taken by force (and by my design) by the crew of a British Royal Navy Ship where I spent the next 3 years as the ship's cook.

"No man should ever be held against his will", Jack interjected angrily.

"It was on this boat, the HMS Commander that I learned of you, Mr. Jack Belvedere. Many is the time I spent reading the documents and charts of the captain. Once I chanced upon the Crownes List of Criminals and that is where I learned of your beating of a cousin of the king, Mr. Edward

Tarpon. It was a strange coincidence that his son, Augustus Tiberius Tarpon, Captain's second mate and Royal Signet of Locksbury, was second in command of our ship. Augustus Tarpon, was a hulking giant close to 7 feet tall. He was as mean and dire a man as has ever strode the deck of a ship. Cruel to the men and rumored, more wicked to women, Tarpon carried the crumpled page of the Crownes List in his swack boots that told your story, Jack Belvedere. The men hated him as they would a poisonous snake, wanting to kill it but too scared of it to take the chance. After two years of enduring his cruelty, he resigned his commission in the Royal Navy when we took land in the Port of New Orleans in the New Americas, stating only that he would avenge his father and when found, bring unrelenting pain to the one who had caused his father's life long misery. The last time we ever saw him, he was beating a poor black child mercilessly with his blackthorne cane for accidently stepping on his shiny boot.

For a year we fancied about various English colonial ports around the seven seas until the day came when our ship was taking a cargo of rifles and whiskey bound for India. We encountered a Pirate ship and our greed driven Commander engaged her in battle.

Although we sunk her, she had lodged a passer in our hold and at its time, blew us out of the water. All hands lost except for me. After two days in the water I came upon a man lashed to some boards. "Come aboard", he squawked out. "I could use the company." Seeing that it was a midget, I knew then that my luck had changed. He said his name was Skwid and that he was a ships surgeon."



Augustus Tiberius Tarpon

Shown receiving his commission into the Royal Navy and his title of "Royal Signet of Locksbury" from the King's Regent, Billings Hammerthorne.

Notice his incredible height and his Blackthorne cane at his side.

A Half-Mates Revenge

"Mr. Skwid and I became fast friends, although he never did tell me his last name. I learned that Skwid fancied himself an artist and did tattoos on all the sailors, after he had seen my arms and asked of them."

Jack and Uncus looked down at Chain's forearms and saw the strange marks.

"Thos are the damnedest tattoos I'd ever see'd," said Uncus.

"Can't say I've seen the likes," added Jack. "Not like the one I carry on my back." Jack pulled his shirt off to reveal the dancing skeleton that the same Skwid had inked into his back aboard Gold Eye Helbeak's Pirate vessel.

"I don't suppose you ever have", Chain began again. "They are the marks of my order, a tiger and a dragon, burned into my flesh when I was ready to bear them.

"They are the marks of a Shaolin Priest." A tiny Chinese grandmother had suddenly and silently appeared out of the shadows next to their table. "Looked for they cannot be seen. Listened for they cannot be heard. Felt for they cannot be touched."

"By Saint Godfreys beard! Who the hell are you?" Blurted out Jack. "I bring your tea. My name is Yip Wing Chun."

As she reached forward, Jack noticed under her sleeves the same Dragon

and Tiger burned into her forearms.

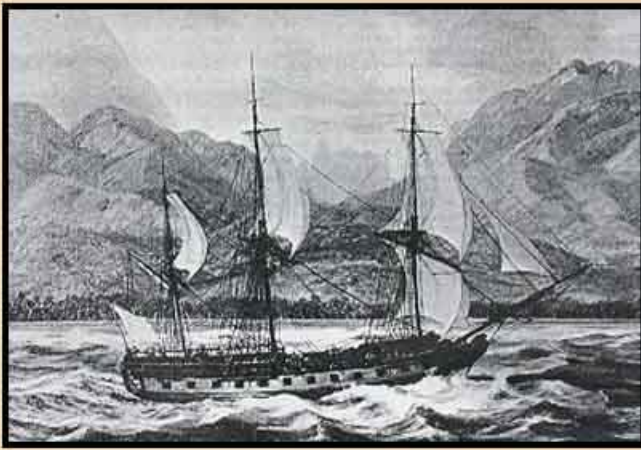
"Let me guess. If he's a priest you must be a nun." Jack added.

"You might call me that," as she seemingly vanished back into the shadows as silently and unexpectedly as she had appeared.

Chain returned to his story, "Skwid and I drifted for three more days until we were spotted by a French Frigate, Le Fleur De Lis. Although we were happy to be rescued, it was a short lived joy for Skwid though, for no sooner than we were taken aboard did the captain, Le Bastid de Feate, cry out loudly, "A Half Mate! Now I shall have my own!" Poor Skwid spent the following 9 months at the humiliating beck and call of Captain de Feate, carting his cognac around on his flat top, shining his swagger boots and polishing the brass buttons of his dash coat. I often heard in the deepness of night his call, "Halfmate, quick, bring my piss pot." Even though it lay on his night table only inches away from his bed.

In the end though, Skwid got his revenge. We had ported in Nantucket, Massachusetts to pick up a cargo of whale oil. While we were in port dockage, Skwid coaxed the Captain into a drunken stupor laced with opium. Seizing his moment, he strapped Captain de Feate to a gandy plank, tied him off and sawed off both of his legs at the knees.

"Make me your half mate! Who's the half-mate now, you sawed off whale turd?!" Skwid was heard to shout. Skwid then jumped ship and was last seen paddling a canoe down the river into the wild lands of North America along with an Algonquin squaw.



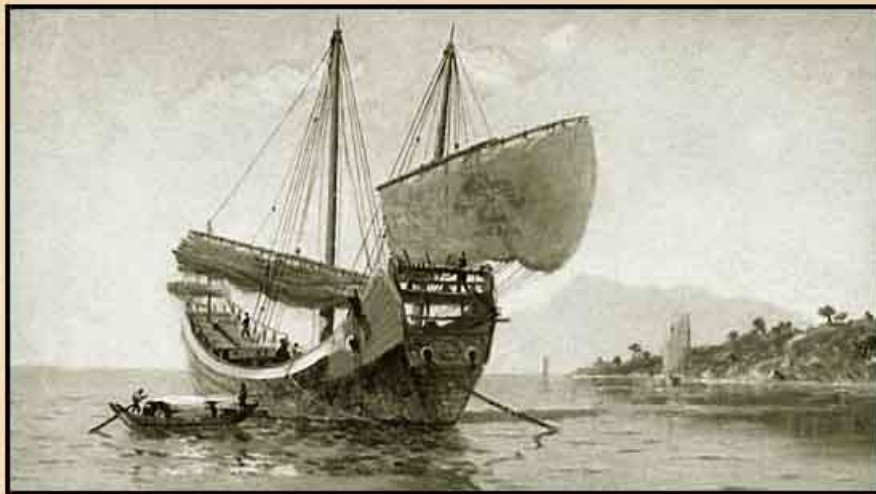
The French Frigate -
Le Fleur De Lis Captained
by Le Bastid de Feate

From that day forward, Le Bastid was known as the Captain de Feate with no feet. A name he regaled with rage whenever it found his ear. We eventually sailed south and during that voyage many times in the night's darkness I heard the captain cry out, "Half Mate! Half Mate! Give me back my legs!"

"Skwid always said he was better at cutting things off than patching things up." Jack added.

"We sailed south to the Caribes and to Dominica to top off our cargo with Bermudez Rum where I learned of your whereabouts. It was there that a Long Sail Chinese junk came to port, crewed by a wild lot of Chinese Pirates. One morning they grabbed Captain Le Bastid de Feate, stuffed him in a Rum Barrel and rolled him to their boat in plain sight and to no one's suspicion. They took him aboard as a good luck charm for their pirate junk. As they sailed from port I heard their cheers. "We've got our luck now. We've got a fine midget and a French one at that. Oh how the gods have smiled on us! And they sailed off, over the horizon bound for parts unknown. Captain Le Bastid de Feate was never seen or heard of again.

Having no captain and no boat, I sought you out. And that is how we came to be here in this place now."



The Chinese Junk, "The Lucky Tiger" crewed by the notorious "Black Skull" Pirates of the South China Sea, known for their ruthless and bloodthirsty acts of piracy seen in this artist's rendition of their ship leaving Haiti, no doubt along with the hapless halfmate, Captain de Feate with no feet.



Le Bastid de Feate upon his commision into the French Admiralty about 3 years before his chance encounter with "Skwid"



Picture of unknown Halfmate in "costume" found in Chinese antique store in 1903. Rumored to be an actual portrait of Le Bastid de Feate as an old "Halfmate". The Chinese characters are in an unknown pirate dialect that has never been translated.

Biographers note: At this point in the Jack Belvedere papers there are several pages of severely damaged notes, smeared and stained with discoloration from some liquid perhaps blood or whiskey and some burned areas. I have submitted the damaged documents to the (Sandoz) laboratories in Switzerland for radiological enhancement so that they may be translated at a later date. I will pick up the story where the notes become legible and translatable.

War of the Half-Mates

After the abolition of the Slave trade by the English in 1833 the English gentry was left without a good cause to champion. However one was soon found that fit the bill. As the conscripted servitude of midgets had been banned by all the world's Navies save the French and the Chinese, it became the cause, justly sought by the English Nobility and Common man alike. Thus was formed, "The English Women's Society for the Liberation of Half Mates," whose slogan "No Man Should Carry a Drink on His Head!" became a rallying cry throughout England. In turn the French formed, "The Half Mates Breeders Guild," in an attempt to breed more Half Mates as the world's ready supply dwindled steadily as more and more countries became signatories to the Copenhagen Half Mate Treaty of 1857 banning the use of Half Mates aboard Military Ships

Spanish Flies and the Origin of Naval Special Warfare

Relevant historical information: It must also be noted that special units of Half Mates were effectively used by the Spanish Armada in a most innovative fashion as a weapon of war. These Half Mates were deployed on Spanish Galleons and given specialized training in acrobatics and trapeze skills along with a highly specialized skill in the use of knives. Due to their small stature and light weight, special oversized sling shots were developed that could throw an average Half Mate approximately 50 English yards by air into the rigging of an opposing vessel. Once airborne the Half Mates would be tossed into the sails of the enemies ship and begin cutting the ships rigging as they swung back and forth between the masts like spiders upon their web. Nicknamed "The Spanish Flies," these tiny and daring sailors became the first Naval Special Warfare Operators ever used in combat on the high seas. Several of them were awarded the Gran Cruz Al Mérito Militar cross by the Queen of Spain for their valor and unquestioned bravery in battle. Their effectiveness remained unquestioned until the Greek Royal Navy developed an innovative countermeasure they called the "Fly Swatter," which was nothing more than a large canvas sheet supported on a linch pole with which specially trained Greek Naval units called "Swatters" could bat the hapless airborne Half Mates out of the air and into the sea.

As a result of the French refusal to sign the treaty to ban Half Mates, the cause was further championed by an extreme activist; Lady Philastina Hammerloin who was in fact married to a retired Half Mate and the mother to a midget. Backed by a Rouge Minister in the House of Lords whose brother

was a Half Mate shanghaied into the French Navy in 1853, Lord Minister Peckingham Tweed bankrolled and facilitated a band of Renegade Half Mates led by Lady Philastina on an armed incursion onto French Soil. Having learned that the French Frigate Bon Homme Capri was the ship where his brother Winston Tweed was held and that it was ported at Boulogne-ser-Mer for a forte night of repair and refitting, Peckingham, Philastina and 12 Renegade Half Mates hatched a bold and daring plan. On the night of April 14, 1859 the small war party crossed the channel in a Jakers skiff and attacked the French Naval Warship.

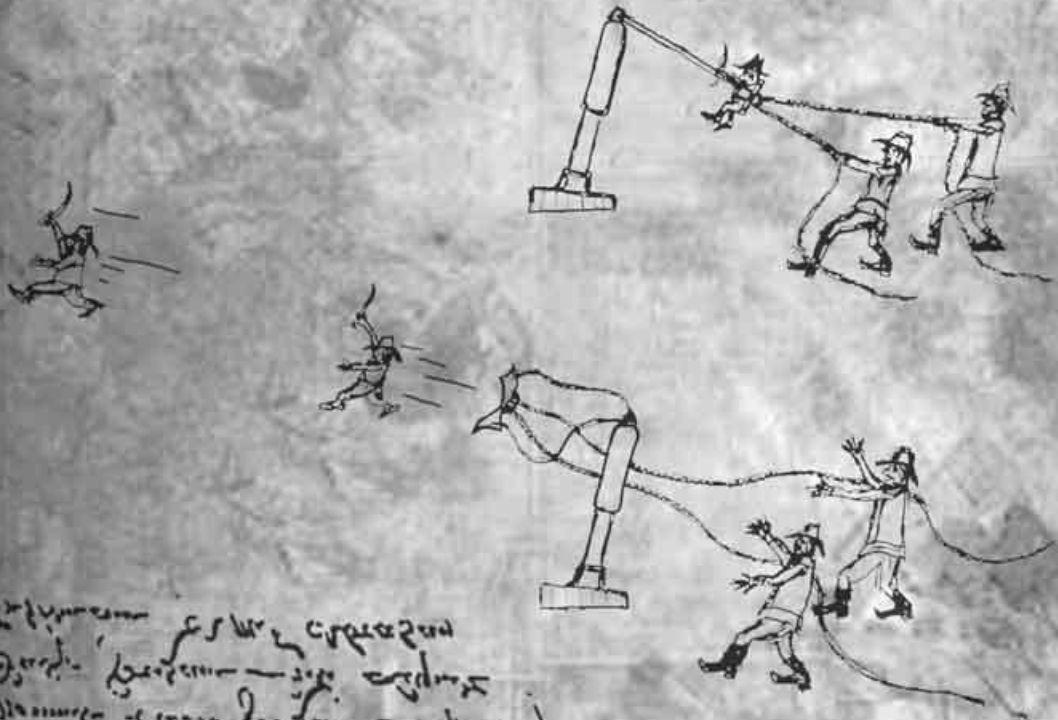
In a shocking move, Philastina hoisted herself over the rail of the quarter-deck and immediately dispatched two French Guards to Napoleon's grave. Armed with an oaken bailers board she swung her wooden weapon with the blind fury of a religious zealot crushing and breaking anything its path. Followed immediately by the 12 Half Mates, they scurried across the deck like a pack of mad squirrels hacking and slashing at any soldier who dared to oppose them. In the space of 20 minutes a Crazy Woman and 12 pint sized warriors had killed 16 French soldiers and wounded 34 others about their lower extremities, knees and Achilles tendons. The rest of the French garrison had fled onto the dock and scattered, thinking that a ruthless army of midgets led by an insane female demon had attacked them. Descending into the hold, the diminutive raiders found Winston Tweed wrapped in a net and suspended from a swell hook. In a flash they were gone and fast away across the channel.

The French later claimed that they were attacked by over 200 English soldiers and had driven them back into the sea claiming a route and victory over the English invaders. They were loathe to admit that an entire French garrison had been put to flight by the Female leader of the English

Women's Society for the Liberation of Half Mates and this maelstrom of 12 micro maritime marauders.

Lord Peckingham Tweed was officially censured by the House of Lords but later toasted by the same Lords in the Becketts meeting house, the after-hours "gentlemans club," for all of the Lords of Parliament, and henceforth given the nickname, "Peckingham the Boot" as they cheered, "for he's a jolly good fellow," for his part in kicking the Frenchies ass.

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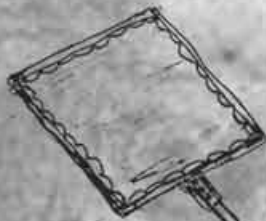
Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a historical or technical description of the laundry process. The text is arranged in several lines and is somewhat difficult to decipher due to the cursive style and the texture of the paper.

Additional handwritten text in a cursive script, continuing the description or providing further details. The text is arranged in several lines and is somewhat difficult to decipher due to the cursive style and the texture of the paper.



Smater
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Handwritten text in a cursive script, concluding the parody.

