

# SOUNDINGS

Royal Navy & Marines Living History - 1775 to 1814

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A Quarterly Publication for the  
Naval reenactment community by  
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*Frigate*  
**Richmond**<sup>TM</sup>  
*Ship's Company*

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Frigate Richmond proudly announces the launching of "The Corvette Wolfe", a War of 1812 era Royal Navy Ships Company. The website for our fledgeling organization is based on the flagship of Captain Sir James Lucas YEO the British Royal Navy's 1814 naval squadron on Lake Ontario. Much of the inspiration for a fresh water Naval group grew out of the membership in the Midwest who saw a natural blending of our common love of the Royal Navy and the superb action that took place so close to our homes. The site (still under construction) is accessible from...

<http://www.hmsrichmond.org/corvettewolfe/Corvettewolfesite.htm>

*Soundings* has been well received and this issue in particular has been blessed with scholarly articles and reviews that I'm sure everyone will find interesting.

The Adobe® Acrobat format has allowed for the democratic dissemination of information across the business world and I believe can be the tool to bring together important information about the age of sail and exploration that makes the 18th and 19th century so interesting to us today.

Vic Suthren's article goes to some depth to explain James Cook's early experiences in North America. It outlines how his natural curiosity about geography and distances laid the ground work for his success at his global explorations to come.

If you have a design towards crafting an article about items relevant to the of sail of the 18th and 19th century, please email me and I will post it for the fall edition. Wishing all my mates a wonderful summer..

*Craig Fisher*  
*Frigate Richmond.*



# CREATING THE INSTRUMENT:

When James Cook arrived at Halifax in the Spring of 1758, he was a capable but undistinguished Sailing Master in the Royal Navy, serving in HMS *Pembroke*, 64 guns. Over the next nine years, as his active professional life developed in the waters

of coastal Canada and Newfoundland, he was transformed from a simple warrant officer into a competent navigator, innovative chartmaker and surveyor whose superior skills led him to be selected to command the first of three epic voyages of oceanic exploration, and a role in the forefront of European scientific and philosophical investigation of the Pacific. Cook's experiences on the coasts of Nova Scotia, the Gulf and River Saint Lawrence, and on the coast of Newfoundland were, it can be argued, the anvil on which the steel of Cook's abilities were shaped. Those abilities would lead him to be later recognized as one of the most competent participants in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century's European burst of seaborne exploration and scientific inquiry into the Pacific after the close of the Seven Years' War.

Cook's emergence as a surveyor and chartmaker with his encounter with Dutch-born surveyor, Samuel Van

began chance the military Hollandt, at

Louisbourg in the summer of 1758. Cook learned from Van Hollandt the techniques of land surveying,

## *The Transformation of James Cook in North American Waters, 1758-1767*

*by Victor Suthren*

and combined that science with existing naval chartmaking techniques to produce chartwork and marine surveys of a wholly new level of accuracy. His participation in the ascent to Quebec in 1759 of the Royal Navy fleet carrying James Wolfe's troops, his key role in the success of that ascent, and his preparation of charts resulting from that voyage and other survey work on the Nova Scotian and Newfoundland coasts as the Seven Years' War ended led to his selection to undertake a major survey of the West and South coasts of Newfoundland. The extraordinary quality of this work, coupled with concurrent demonstrations of his astronomical observation skills, led to his selection in 1768 to command HM Bark *Endeavour* on her Pacific voyage, on behalf of the Royal Society and the Royal Navy, when both parties could not agree on another suggested commander.

The examination of James Cook's period of North American service arguably reveals that the development of Cook's innovative chartmaking and surveying skills and other qualities which led to the selection for the Pacific voyages, came as a direct consequence of his experiences in North American waters, and that the period 1758-1767 was not only the most formative for his life, but arguably for British and European exploration of the Pacific in the remainder of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.



Cook had entered the Navy in 1755, for reasons of his own and much to the astonishment of both the Walker brothers whose employ he left, and the Royal Navy, who were only too pleased to receive him into pay. At the time of his entry into the Navy he was a highly competent coastal mariner who had learned his trade in the Walkers' colliers along the treacherous North Sea coast and on a few passages to Ireland and Norway. His practical seamanship was unmatched, and combined with his physical and personal qualities to produce promotion out of the ranks of the common seamen within a month of his joining the Navy. His scholarly self-instruction in mathematics and the scientific bases of navigation were not yet developed to a similar degree, however, and it would only achieve a equal level of competence with his physical seamanship when he had the benefit of additional encouragement from perceptive commanders such as Hugh Palliser of *Eagle*, and, in particular, John Simcoe of *Pembroke*, under whom Cook first came to North American waters.

The arrival of *Pembroke* at Halifax in the Spring of 1758, with over twenty of the ship's complement ill with scurvy, brought Cook to a harbour that arguably he was to know better than any in his career save his collier home port of Whitby, as from 1758 until 1762 Cook was based at Halifax, first as Master of *Pembroke*, and then of *Northumberland*, 64 guns. The latter vessel remained on station at Halifax with a small squadron when the armada that had carried James Wolfe to Quebec returned to Britain. The transatlantic passage had been Cook's longest, and

*Pembroke's* ships' company had been so incapacitated by scurvy that the ship had remained at anchor in Halifax as the remainder of the squadron with which she had crossed sailed northward for the assault on the Fortress of Louisbourg. The genesis of Cook's almost obsessive concern for the health and cleanliness of his crews has not been fully documented, but it may have arisen from his experiences in the tidy, well-kept ships of the Quaker Walkers compounded by the dismay at first seeing how a transoceanic vessel like *Pembroke* could be rendered incapable of service by scurvy, which usually did not hold for coastal vessels.

*Pembroke* finally embarked her convalescent seamen from the hospital at Halifax and sailed north along the iron, evergreen-clad coastline of Nova Scotia to join the fleet under Vice Admiral Richard Boscawen, which had carried the assault troops of General Jeffrey Amherst to Louisbourg.

*Pembroke* arrived at the fleet's anchorage in Gabarus Bay, south of the fortress, on June 12, 1758, to learn that a successful landing had been made on June 8, and a slow but steady investment of the fortress was underway. The task of the fleet was largely to provide support to the troops ashore, which proved a challenging task in the abnormally

squally and tumultuous weather that swept over the anchorage. Over 100 boats from the various warships and transports were lost in the powerful surf that swept the single landing beach, at what later came to be known as Kennington Cove.



*Portrait of Captain James Cook RN  
by John Webber (c. 1752-1793  
National Portrait Gallery*

It was just off this beach that the most significant event occurred in James Cook's transformation from an undistinguished Master into something far more took place. On July 27, 1758, one day after the French garrison had surrendered, Cook came in to Kennington Cove beach with *Pembroke's* longboat, on unrecorded business ashore. As Cook arrived, his attention was drawn to the figure of an engineer officer in the grasslands just off the beach, employing a strange device and apparently making some kind of observations of the cove. Intrigued, Cook approached him, and asked what he was about. He soon found himself in conversation with a pleasant man of about his own age, Samuel Holland---more properly Van Hollandt, as he was Dutch in origin---who explained that he was carrying out a survey of the cove using a plane table. A plane table had a small, square flat surface supported on a tripod; Holland would sight over the top of the table at distinguishing marks using a rotating telescope fixed to the table's centre, and make notes of those observations. Cook learned that the process allowed the creation of an accurate diagram in which all physical features could be placed in correct relation to one another, and to a base line with a known magnetic heading, obtained from a box compass affixed to

the table. It was a concept that grasped Cook's imagination immediately, and he extracted from the agreeable Holland a promise to instruct Cook in the technique the next day. On returning aboard *Pembroke*, Cook reported his encounter to Captain John Simcoe, who not only approved of Cook's initiative but requested that Holland be brought on board the vessel to impart the instruction to Simcoe as well as Cook. Although Cook would later benefit from association with other highly competent surveyors during his stay in Canada, such as J.F.W. DesBarres, author of the *American Neptune*, it was this contact and period of learning with Holland that was instrumental in launching Cook toward his own apogee of achievement as an innovative maritime surveyor and cartographer. Through instructions that all Masters and Master's Mates had to observe in 1758, Cook was required as a matter of duty to produce charts and sailing directions for any harbour his ship visited. The quality of these drawings and writings varied as greatly as the capacities of the men who undertook them. For Cook, the electrifying realization which emerged out of the instructional sessions with Holland was that a combination of land surveying methods and accuracy with these established methods of marine sounding, surveying

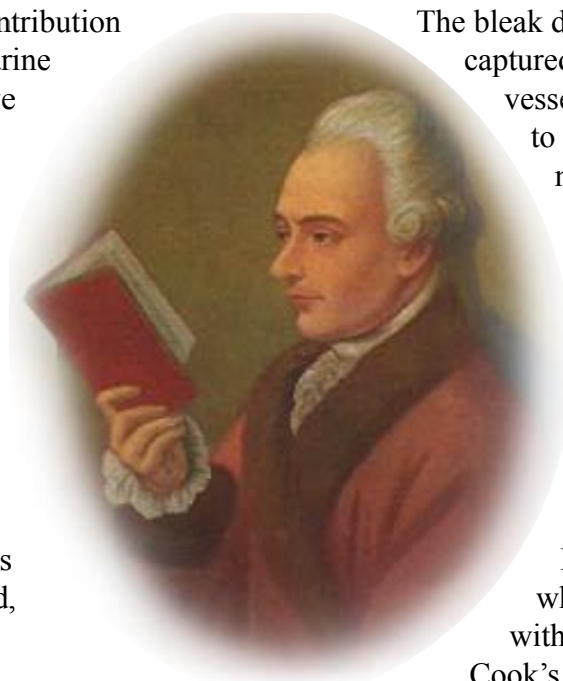
*Samuel Holland,  
(Dutch/English, 1728-1801)*

*Background Image, Casco Bay, 1776]  
From: Des Barres, Charts of the Coast and Harbors  
of New England ..., vol.3 (London, 1780)  
Engraving, Osher Collection*



*Samuel Holland's Timepiece  
Made by George Graham, renowned British  
designer of precision instruments. Holland used  
the clock to determine the longitudes for surveys of  
Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton, the lower  
St. Lawrence valley, the coast of New England,  
and areas of Upper and Lower Canada. His astro-  
nomical observations were published by the Royal  
Society.  
(Canadian Museum of Civilization)*

and chartmaking would offer the prospect of new exactitude in the heretofore very inexact science of marine charting. Cook's signal contribution to the state and competency of marine hydrography was in this innovative exercise of two traditions of observation as a single art with a uniform standard of precision, which raised chartmaking and the recorded basis of navigation to a whole new level. The importance to Cook's career, and to the history of western exploratory hydrography and chartmaking, of that chance meeting on the windy beach of Kennington Cove near the Fortress of Louisbourg, Cape Breton Island, cannot be overstated.



As *Pembroke* rode at anchor within the harbour of Louisbourg in the waning summer of 1758, Cook continued to develop his surveying skills under Holland's tutelage until the demands of war called him to put them unexpectedly to use. *Pembroke* was dispatched with a small squadron to carry troops into the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, where the army was to carry out the inglorious work of burning and destroying French settlements that might send supplies to the colonial capital at Quebec. One of these was the town and harbour of Gaspé, on the mainland. Cook's reaction to the business of carrying war to a defenceless civilian population is unknown, but he busied himself on the Gaspé expedition with observing, sketching and sounding, doing the latter from *Pembroke's* boats and possibly exercising his new land survey skills as well. On the return of the squadron to Louisbourg, Cook appears to have secured from Simcoe permission to spend time penning a chart and survey of the harbour of Gaspé. The result was a carefully-drawn two-sheet effort in a scale of two inches to the mile, and Cook was successful in obtaining its publication in London by Mount & Page in 1759. The publication of this chart of a small, beleaguered Canadian port marked Cook's emergence into the serious realm of surveying and

charting beyond the ordinary duty of a Sailing Master.

The bleak days of late Fall fell over the captured fortress, and the Royal Navy vessels were ordered back to Halifax, to secure themselves for the long northern winter. *Pembroke* came to anchor in Halifax harbour on November 19, 1758, below the muddy, rough-sawn town and its palisaded hilltop citadel. The campaign of the following summer would, according to a grand strategy ordered by Prime Minister William Pitt, be an ascent of the Saint Lawrence with an army like that which had taken Louisbourg, but with orders to capture Quebec itself.

Cook's production of the Gaspé chart and his increasing competence in charting and survey work, led to his being ordered, along with Holland, to busy themselves in *Pembroke's* great cabin under Simcoe's encouraging eye in the compilation of all known French and other charts of the Saint Lawrence into a folio that could be used to guide the great fleet up the treacherous passages of the river.

The coming of Spring led to the arrival of troop transports from Britain and a sizeable escort of warships, all under the command of Vice Admiral Charles Saunders, who had replaced Boscawen. Cook's *Pembroke* was assigned to an advance squadron under Rear Admiral Durrell that sailed from Halifax on May 5, 1759 and attempted to work its way into the Gulf and River Saint Lawrence, which was choked by an unusually heavy ice pack. With the main force halting at Louisbourg to pick up additional troops for the attack on Quebec, Durrell's force busied itself penetrating the river and allowing for the discovery of the safe channel---the French had taken up what buoyage there was---and the completion of a workable chart of the river. In *Pembroke*, Cook soon found that the compilation of French charts was insufficiently accurate to be relied upon, and took

**J.F.W. DesBarres, author of  
*The American Neptune*,**



the initiative in forming a sounding flotilla of ship's boats from the squadron, each carrying that ship's Master or Master's Mate, which sounded ahead of the fleet as it advanced up the several hundred miles of the river in stages, depending upon whether the winds were fair or foul. The greatest challenge to this technique came just below Quebec, at the eastern end of the Isle d'Orleans, where the safe navigation channel was known to cross from the northern side of the river to the southern for entry into the wide Basin below Quebec, in a swooping track known as the Traverse. Cook's boats sounded diligently while the squadron waited at anchor downstream, and discovered that the Traverse was a narrow channel no wider in some places than the extreme beam of some of Saunders' largest ships. Cook devised a method of marking the channel whereby the flotilla of boats moored themselves as buoys on either side of the channel, marking a clear if constricted passage into the wider anchorage of the Basin. With a favourable east wind, all 140-odd vessels of the fleet sailed one by one in slow majesty through this remarkable assemblage. By June 27, 1759, all of Saunders' fleet, including his flagship *Neptune*, 90 guns, had come to anchor in the Basin below Quebec, and the assault could begin.

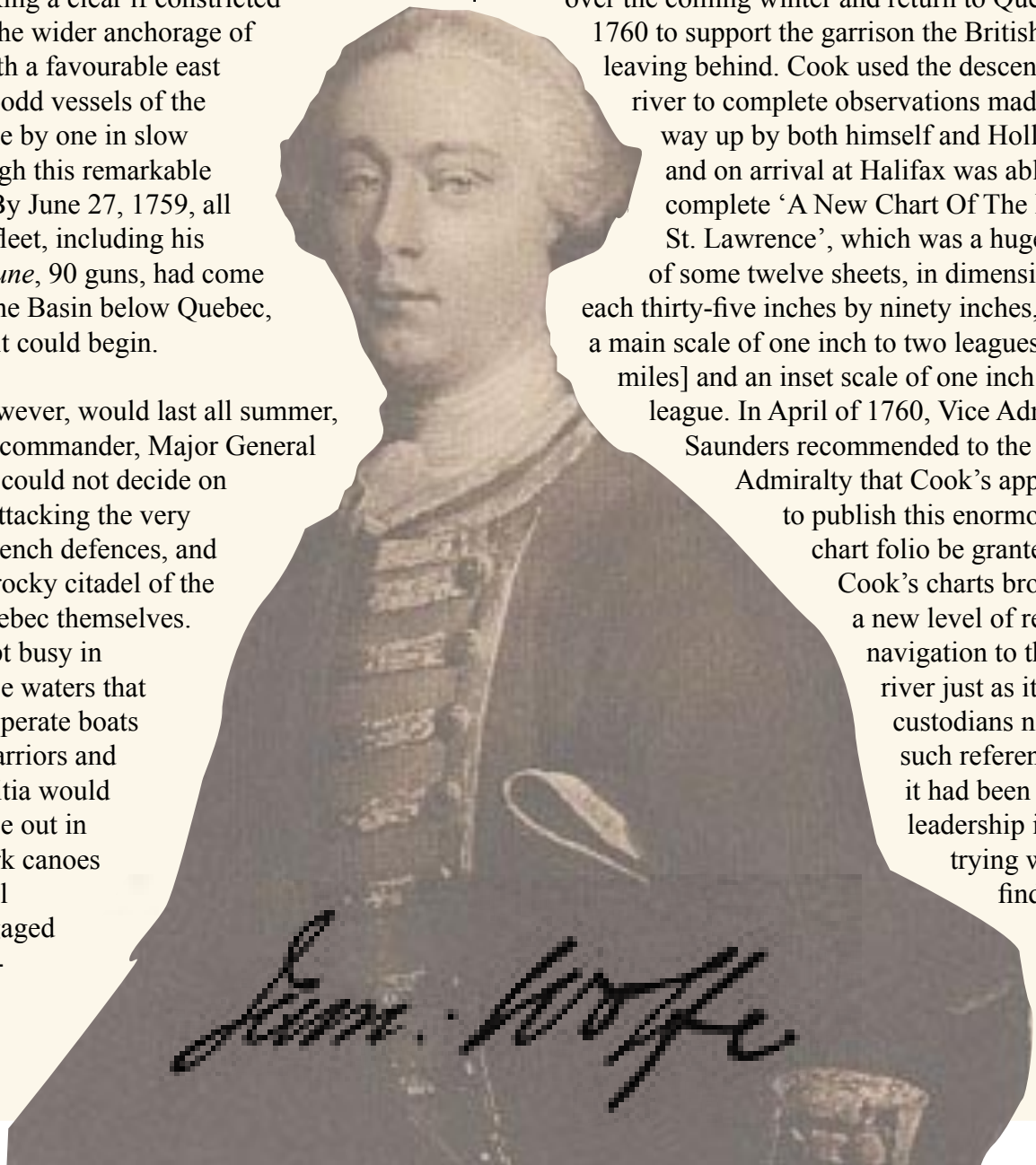
The siege, however, would last all summer, as the army's commander, Major General James Wolfe, could not decide on a method of attacking the very formidable French defences, and the towering rocky citadel of the heights of Quebec themselves. Cook was kept busy in sounding those waters that were safe to operate boats in---Indian warriors and Canadian militia would frequently race out in swift birchbark canoes to attack naval longboats engaged in sounding---and had some controversy attached to

his name when an abortive assault landing on the Beauport shore below Quebec went awry, at least in part because the assault transports and boats had gone aground on a ledge Cook's surveys had not reported. Cook's energy in continuing with the sounding and chartwork, when his other duties would allow, nonetheless had brought him by this point, scarcely a year after first asking Samuel Holland what his strange instrument was called, to be referred to as the 'Surveyor of the Fleet'. Cook played no direct role, as far as is known, in the September 12<sup>th</sup> night assault by troops under Wolfe that scaled the heights to the Plains of Abraham by means of the pathway at the Anse au Foulon. At the successful conclusion of the siege, when Saunders' main force was preparing to return to Britain bearing with it the body of James Wolfe, Cook was transferred into *Northumberland*, 64, which would remain at Halifax

over the coming winter and return to Quebec in 1760 to support the garrison the British were leaving behind. Cook used the descent of the river to complete observations made on the way up by both himself and Holland, and on arrival at Halifax was able to complete 'A New Chart Of The River St. Lawrence', which was a huge work of some twelve sheets, in dimensions each thirty-five inches by ninety inches, with a main scale of one inch to two leagues [six miles] and an inset scale of one inch to one league. In April of 1760, Vice Admiral Saunders recommended to the

Admiralty that Cook's application to publish this enormous chart folio be granted.

Cook's charts brought a new level of reliable navigation to the great river just as its new custodians needed such reference; but it had been Cook's leadership in the trying work of finding the

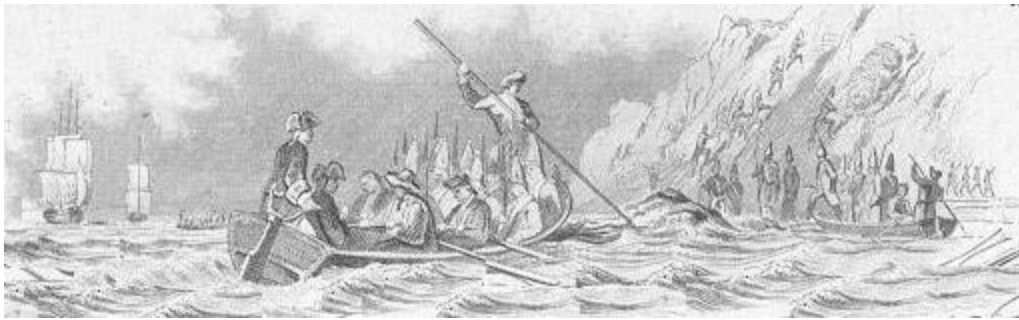


passage up for the huge fleet that had provided James Wolfe and his troops the opportunity Pitt wished

them to have: the capture and retention of the heart of Canada.

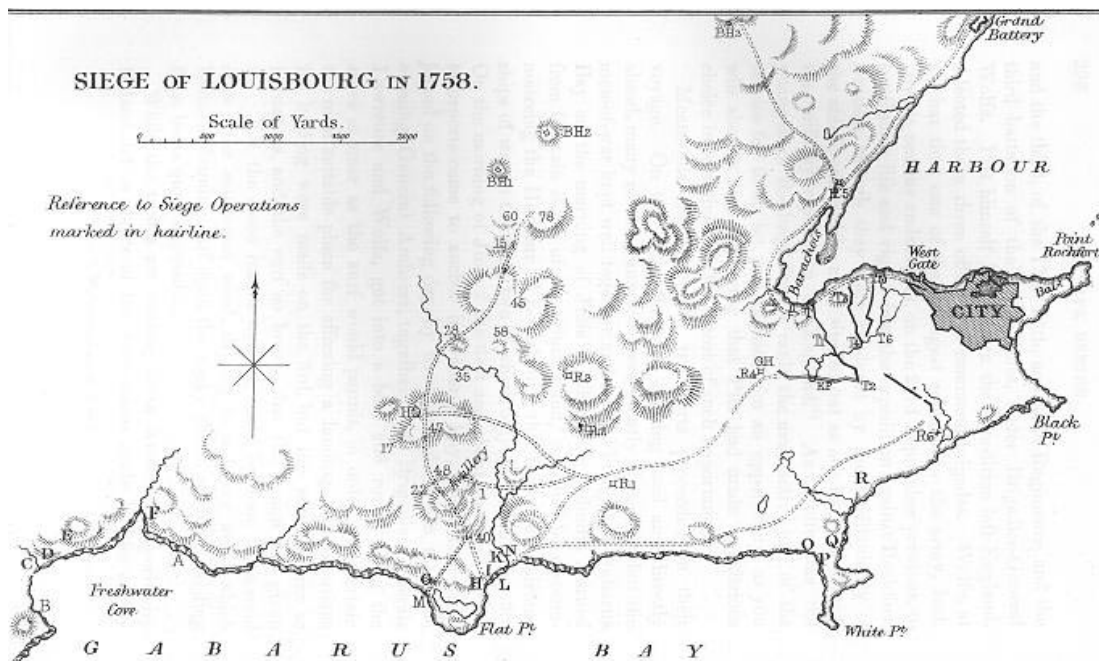
*Northumberland* lay at Halifax over the winter of 1759-1760, cocooned against the ice and snow, and Cook continued his personal studies of mathematics, navigation and astronomy, 'bringing in his hand' as he completed the great work of the Saint Lawrence chart. Cook would return again to Quebec the following summer, albeit briefly, but now entered into a period where his life and activities were centered on Halifax and the routine of the squadron. He nonetheless produced no less than four superb charts of Halifax harbour, and worked with the accomplished military surveyor J.F.W.DesBarres, who like Cook had made land surveying and marine charting into a composite science, and would produce the masterful charting of the Nova Scotian and adjacent coasts entitled *The Atlantic Neptune*.

In 1762, a last French attempt to secure bargaining power in the peace treaty which was to end the Seven Years' War led to their attack and capture of the port of St. John's on the rocky eastern shore of



Newfoundland. *Northumberland* took part in the combined force that successfully forced the French out of Newfoundland, and during

this service Cook produced charts of Placentia, on the west side of the Avalon Peninsula, of St. John's harbour, and of two fishing ports, Harbour Grace and Carbonear. In addition, he now produced a compendium 'Description of the Sea Coast of Novascotia[sic], Cape Breton Island, and Newfoundland', along with detailed Sailing Directions which would be published in several editions of the *Newfoundland Pilot*, produced by Thomas Jeffreys in London. So extraordinary was the quality of this work that, at the end of the war when *Northumberland* was paid off and Cook might have expected to re-enter the struggle for survival in the civilian world, he was retained as a result of requests made by Thomas Graves, governor of Newfoundland, to do further survey and charting work of that island. His first task was to complete, in the summer of 1763, a speedy but reliable survey of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon which were being turned over to the French. Cook completed the work, to what was now his customary standard of excellence, while the newly appointed French governor paced fuming on the quarterdeck of his ship.



*A map of the Siege of Louisbourg 1750*

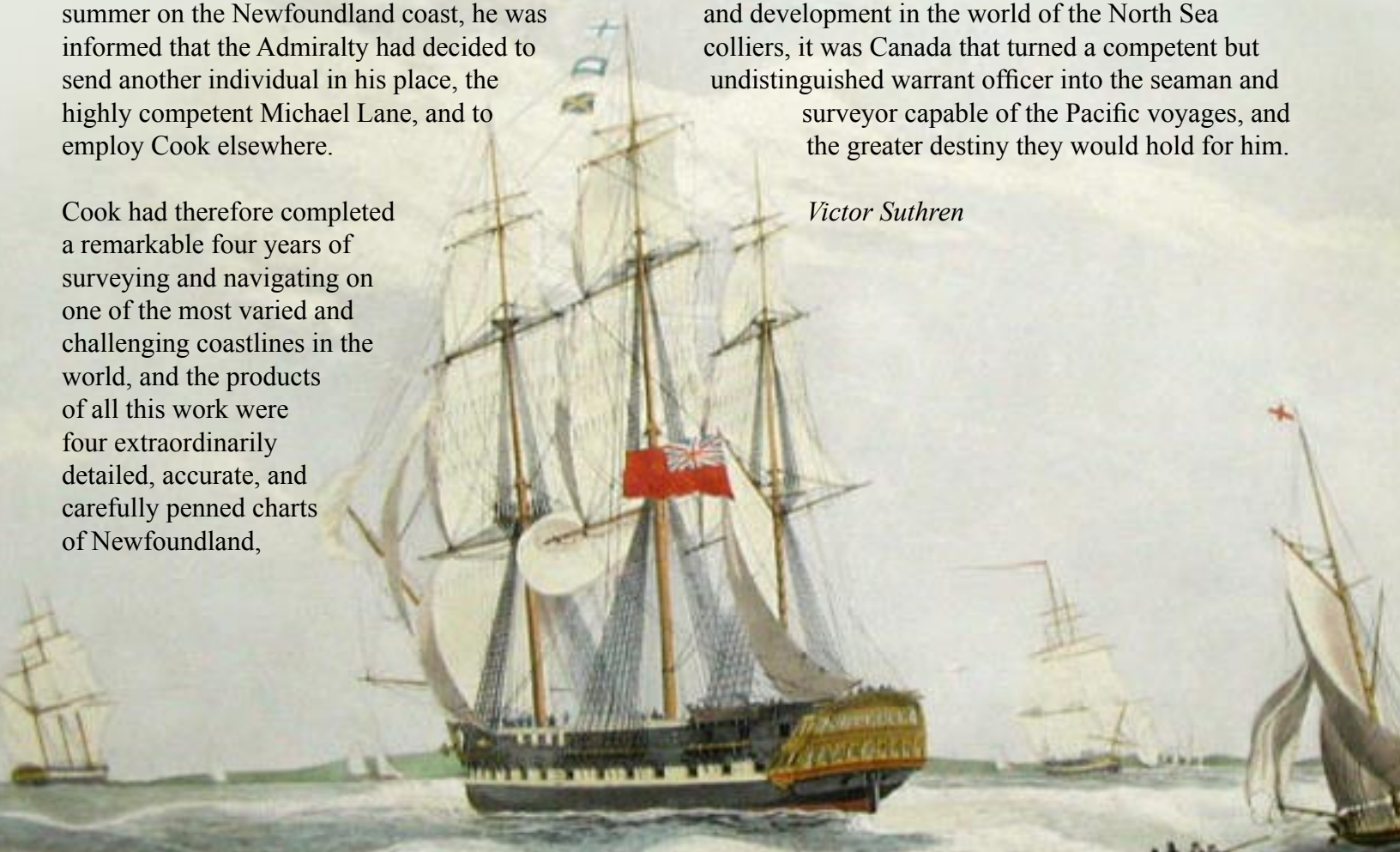
Thomas Graves was replaced as governor of Newfoundland by Hugh Palliser, who had commanded Cook in HMS *Eagle* before Cook had come to Canada. Palliser now continued Cook's work as a surveyor and chartmaker by having him undertake a detailed survey of major portions of the coast of Newfoundland, in a pattern that would see Cook spend the summer on the island's coast working from his small command, the schooner (later brig) *Grenville*, and returning to Britain for the winter to work up fair copies of his charts and Sailing Directions. From 1764 to the end of the summer of 1767 Cook managed a survey of the west and south coasts of Newfoundland to such exacting detail that his charts remained in use within living memory. He demonstrated an additional and important skill during this period, one that would bear heavily on his career. On August 5, 1766, aware that an eclipse of the sun was predicted, Cook observed it carefully from the Burgeo Islands off the south coast of Newfoundland, and wrote up his observations. These he presented in the Fall to Dr. John Nevis of the Royal Society, who in turn read them to a meeting of the Society. Bevis went on to report that Cook's observations allowed another astronomer to compare them successfully with a set taken at Oxford, and to deduce accurately the longitude of both places of observation. Cook's expertise was duly noted by the gentlemen of the Society. In April of 1768, as Cook was preparing for another summer on the Newfoundland coast, he was informed that the Admiralty had decided to send another individual in his place, the highly competent Michael Lane, and to employ Cook elsewhere.

Cook had therefore completed a remarkable four years of surveying and navigating on one of the most varied and challenging coastlines in the world, and the products of all this work were four extraordinarily detailed, accurate, and carefully penned charts of Newfoundland,

with accompanying sailing directions. They joined the enormous chart of the Gulf and River Saint Lawrence as a striking advancement in the professional standards of marine surveying and charting in waters of North America which were vital to Britain's interests. It had not been lost on both the Admiralty and the Royal Society that Cook, though technically still at the warrant rank of Master, had effectively commanded a minor war vessel in a lengthy and distant commission, had produced superlative chartwork and surveying, and had also demonstrated a professional capability as an astronomical observer and mathematician. When the Royal Society and the Admiralty could not agree on the appointment of Alexander Dalrymple to command a small vessel which was to set off for the South Pacific to carry out astronomical observations and survey new coastlines should they be found, it was not long before the name of Cook came to the fore. Before 1768 closed he had become Lieutenant Cook, in command of HM Bark *Endeavour*, and bound off on a world-girdling voyage of scientific observation, exploration, and discovery.

The shaping of Cook's fine metal into the instrument selected for this task had taken place in the waters now known as Canada, in the River and Gulf of Saint Lawrence, the Nova Scotian coast, and on the rocky shores of Newfoundland. As much as his growth and development in the world of the North Sea colliers, it was Canada that turned a competent but undistinguished warrant officer into the seaman and surveyor capable of the Pacific voyages, and the greater destiny they would hold for him.

*Victor Suthren*





## ---"Sound" Reviews---

The staff of *Soundings* welcomes any new and relevant material concerning the life and time of the era of sail. Reviews are posted quarterly. All text accepted electronically in html or Microsoft® Word®.

### To Rule the Waves

by Arthur Herman

*Review by James Pierce*

In recent years there has been a return to a form of historical writing that emphasizes positive aspects of history such as how strong societies develop and prosper and promote good and growth in the world. One writer who is brilliantly exploiting this thirst for history written in a "Whig" vein is Arthur Herman, the author of "How the Scots Invented the Modern World" a story of the development and impact of the Scottish Enlightenment on world history. Professor Herman has now turned his formidable talents toward a subject institution that is near and dear to our hearts.

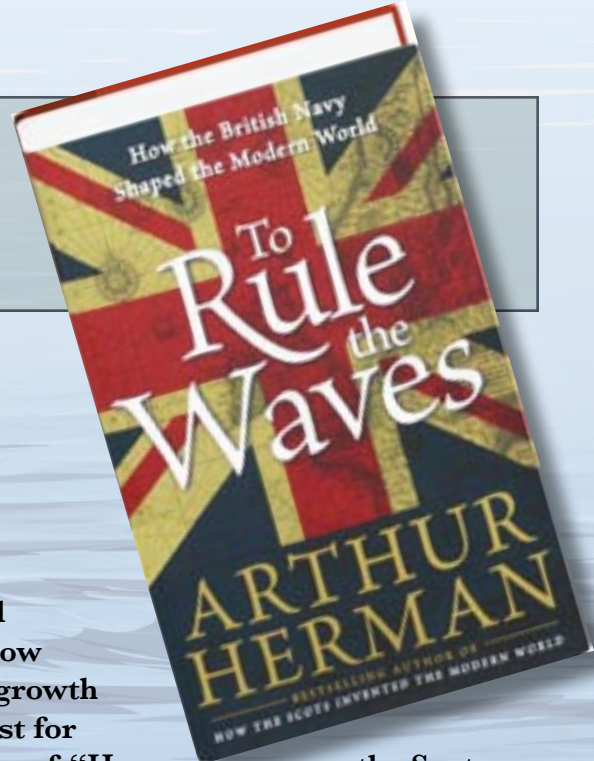
"To Rule the Waves" is a history of the Royal Navy and its impact on the history of the world, a world we still live in today. It is "big canvass" history at its best. This rollicking ride through history begins with John Hawkins, Francis Drake and the other "Elizabethan Sea Dogs" that were the fathers of what would become the world's dominant military institution. The sailing culture that developed among these West County "men of enterprise" would become the culture of the Royal Navy. The portraits of personalities are wonderful from the Diarist and Naval secretary Samuel Pepys all the way through Jack Fisher, John Jellicoe, and Winston Churchill.

The heart of the story though is the battle between France and England for the "soul" of the developing Global System beginning with the coronation of the "Sun King" Louis XIV and ending in Napoleon Buonaparte's exile to St Helena, to be forever guarded by British Frigates of course. The cast of characters is impressively portrayed from: "Old Grog" Vernon (yes he invents Grog), to Anson (the Moses of the Royal Navy), Hawke, the venial and corrupt Rodney, the supremely brave and talented, yet reckless and arrogant Nelson and his "Band of Brothers". It is one terrific ride where one almost breathes a sigh of relief when the "Whale" finally vanquishes the "Elephant" as one of the books chapters calls the beginning of the French Revolutionary Wars.

I have some issues with the book in that the mistakes are glaring and should have been caught (i.e. the British do not capture Baltimore in 1814), but on the whole this is excellent history and sheds new light on the dominant role of the Royal Navy in the development and spread of what we term today "Western Civilization". Herman does not ignore the average seaman either and calls him "The Indispensable Man of History".

Nothing like reading a book that makes you feel good about your portrayal. Don't miss this one.

*James Pierce – Frigate Richmond*





# Between Two Flags

by T.M. Grundner

Review by Craig Fisher

Let me first say that I have had the luxury of speaking with the author of "Between Two Flags" The site HMS Richmond (who posts this newsletter) has been given a small bequest by the author for the non-profit nature of our site and our mission. That being said, he has asked that a review of this work not reflect his gratuity and I believe he is a true and honest fan of the era of sail and the Royal Navy in particular.

Now that I have revealed this, I would venture further to say that the first and original "Frigate Richmond" plays a significant role in the story-line which makes it great book for members and fans of the site.

For those of us who both enjoy a nautical tale and good science fiction story, you will find both in Between Two Flags. The Richmond is the 18th century Royal Navy vessel that picks up a man floating in the North Atlantic.



The time traveling cast-away is Lt. Lucas Walker of the Vietnam War era U.S. Navy. Here he is rescued by the Richmond on her way to the Battle of Yorktown. To further enhance the story line there is a plot involving (midshipman) Prince William Henry added to the drama. Without going into the story line too deep, let me say that story does not assume you know every detail of the American War of Independence or Royal Navy trivia. I can truthfully say I learned a great deal of information from the book in a form that was both entertaining and fast paced.

The Battle of the Saints (which comes near the end of the story) is particularly interesting in the wealth of historical antidotes woven into the battle scene such as Captain Savage of the Hercules and his gout riddled tirade of the French during the battle.

The interplay of the characters are interesting and for the most part, the "time travel" nature of the story is used to debate the ethics of the slave trade and warfare as it was practiced in the 18th century. There are some technical issues where the Lt. Walker uses his knowledge of modern weaponry to make an escape that may be hard to qualify, but it doesn't detract from the plot line.

Lt. Walker is hardest on the living history community. Upon his rescue, he mistakenly assumes he is in the presence of ... "Horatio Nelson wannabes".

This "wannabe" would recommend this book, because at the heart of it, the "geek" in me really appreciates it when the improbable confronts the implausible and I learn a few more tricks in the process.

Craig Fisher

Frigate Richmond

PS. Tom Grundner's site will fill you in a bit on his background and other works in-progress at [www.HMS-Tigre.com](http://www.HMS-Tigre.com)



# The real engine behind the Wooden Ships of War

## 18<sup>th</sup> century Ropemaking

The whole make-up of all vessels at sea from the beginning of wind powered sail has been the interplay and tension of the structural elements (masts, sails, and the ship's body). Like the sinews of a runner's leg, the rigging and all ropework of a ship at sea in particular, needed to be strong weather-proof and dependable. This was a challenge in the pre-industrial societies of Europe where the navies of many countries vied for the ingredients to insure this strength.

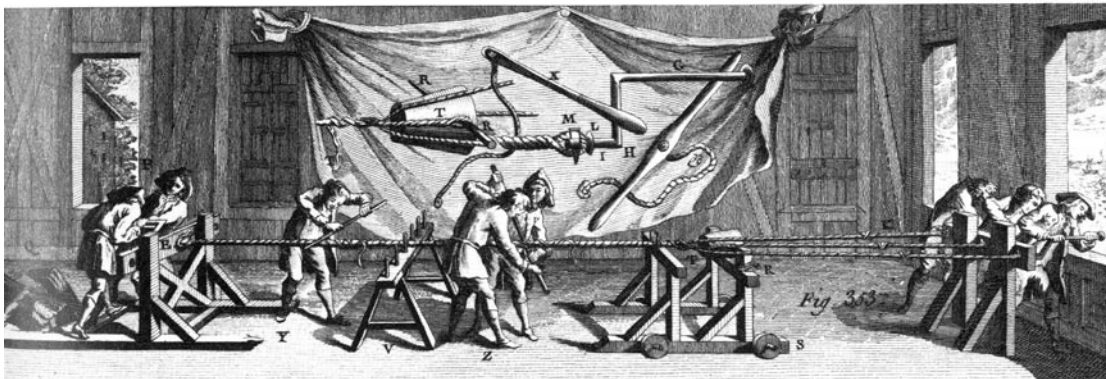
The craft of rope making enjoyed a status all its own in the community of ships' craftsmen. The process was time tested but not without necessary sweat and labor unlike any other.

Yarns, twines and ropes can be made by machine nowadays, but the ropemakers of older days were accustomed to making all of these in a walk. The principal of the walk is that yarns are stretched out between revolving hooks, often 300 yards apart, and these hooks twist the yarns together...."

"The layout of a medieval town like Bridport lends itself well to family rope or twine walks because of the long narrow alleys which stretch back from the main streets...a man would make twine and small ropes in the alleys off the main street with the help of his son, who turned a wheel to revolve the hooks. For many years after the introduction of local factories the walk method continued: indeed the last Bridport walk closed down only in 1970."

As mentioned in the quote above, ropemakers needed room for their craft, for the fewer splices in their rope, the stronger it was. Some ropewalks were over 800 feet long. The Diderot plate shows a much smaller shop, a *corderie du roi*, where cordage was manufactured to French naval specifications.

The process begins with hanks of carded, well combed, clean hemp (1, at right). The spinners gather up

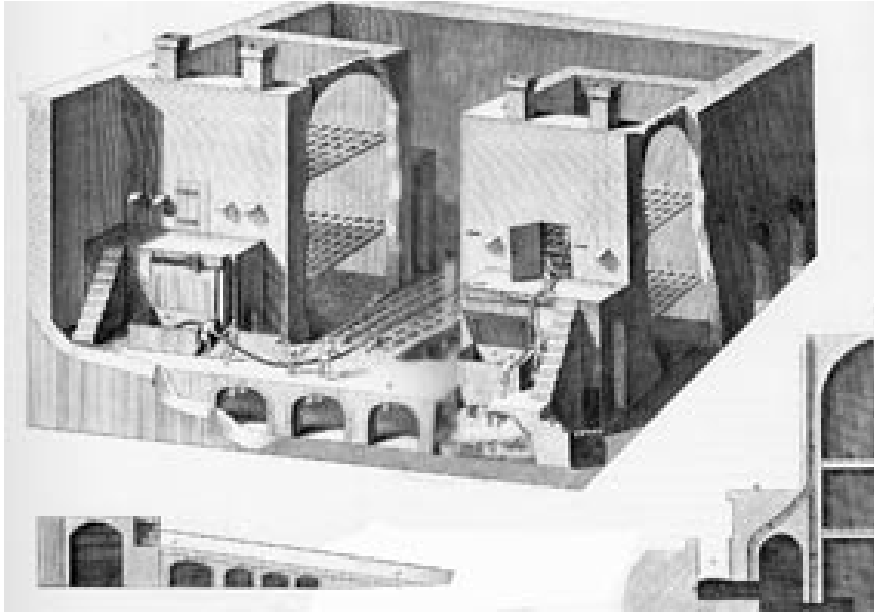


Two ropemaking processes shown above. An English engraving above with a French rope winding station below.

As the spinner moves away, the operator of the wheel turns a crank which causes all the little wheel-hhoks on the top of the wheel to revolve rapidly. This twists the fiber into a yarn, the uniformity of which depends upon the spinner's keeping

[illegible]

was drawn through the tar by means of a capstan or “crab”.



"After laying, cordage destined for naval use had to be tarred to prevent its rotting. This was a far more cumbersome job than might be supposed, and requires a rather elaborate construction. The fire (C) melts tar in a square cauldron (A) through which cables are paid, and it also heats the great ovens. (G,F) in which the cables are coiled to dry. This heating serves not only to dry the rope but also to impregnate all the fibers with protective tar. When the men are finished, they will have filled the whole space with a coil of cable which will cook for a day or two. The cross section of the lower building in the Diderot engraving at left shows the arrangement of furniture, cauldron, and ovens. This structure contained four such ovens, of which only the two front ones are shown.

Sanctuary, Anthony, 1996. **Rope, Twine and Net Making**. Shire Publications Ltd., Cromwell House, Princess Risborough, Buckinghamshire.





# The 2005 Naval Campaign (By Period of Conflict)

## The French and Indian War

### July 23-24, 2005-The F&I War's 250th commemorative battle of Braddock's Defeat - July 23-24, 2005

Braddock was accompanied on the march on Ft Duquesne by thirty seamen from the HMS Norwich under Lt Charles Spendlowe. It was Spendlowe who discovered the route from Cumberland Md. up Wills Creek to PA and his trusses became a wickiup decoration. The organizers have been looking for an outfit to play this role as well as provide "a Spendlowe". I told them the Richmonds might be interested. The event will be held at Old Bedford Village just off the PA Turnpike. More particulars to

## The War of 1812

### July 16-17, 2005-The 2005 School of the Sailor and War of 1812 Grand Tactical

This battle scenario training program is planned to take place at Navy Hall, Fort George National Historic Site, Niagara-on-the-lake, Ontario

A revised schedule of events will be posted to the Richmond 2005 events site:



Tips for period camping (and other useful items to the young sailor or merchantman) courtesy of Captain Fisher,

Betty Lamps, we all admired our mates oil lamp, but how to use it? This small gourd shaped lamp has a hinged lid, a handle with a hook for hanging and a chain with a wick pick. Furnished with a wick. Use only oil such as Everglow by Dixen Enterprises. Keep your wick down to eliminate smoke and you can enjoy period lighting at its most nostalgic.

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