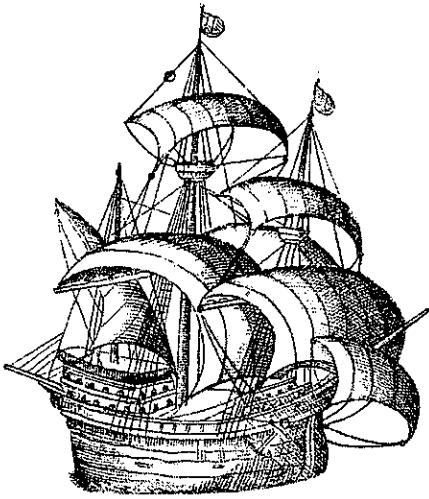


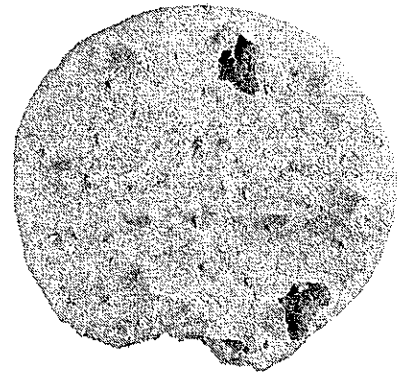
LIFE ABOARD SHIP (1)



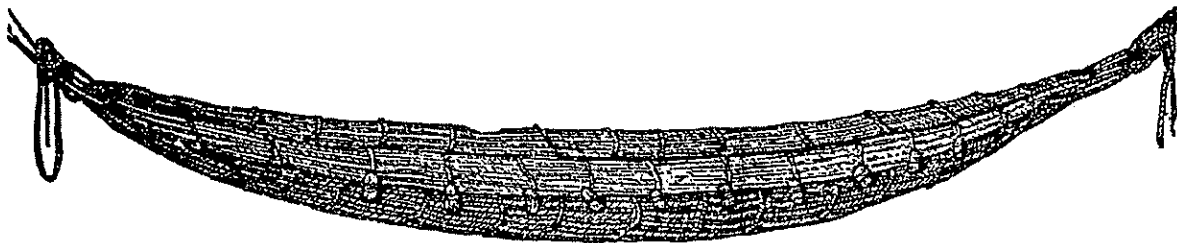
Life on board ship was extremely hard. A voyage of exploration meant months—sometimes even years—at sea. There were terrible diseases, boring, sometimes rancid food and foul water, cramped sleeping quarters, many duties, little time for rest or time to themselves, and strict discipline.

Scurvy was the most common disease to affect sailors. It is a vitamin deficiency caused by lack of fresh fruits and vegetables, which would rot quickly aboard ship. Scurvy causes body weakness, sore and swollen gums and joints, and loose teeth. Sometimes sailors died from scurvy. Eventually Spanish settlements in the New World supplied ships with fresh oranges and lemons. The British carried limes on all of their ships. The fruit helped prevent scurvy.

The sailors' diet was monotonous. Mostly sailors ate salted meat stored in barrels and **hardtack**. Hardtack was a type of biscuit that kept for years. Often the biscuits became infested with beetles or maggots. The sailors would remove the insects so they could eat the hardtack!!! On their long voyage across the Pacific Ocean to the Philippines, Magellan's crew had only rotted food and putrid water. They had to eat leather riggings and rats to survive.



Sailors slept in **hammocks**. These were swinging beds that could be hung up anywhere on the ship. This gave more room aboard ship. Also because the hammock swung from side to side, sailors did not fall out either below or above deck during rough weather.

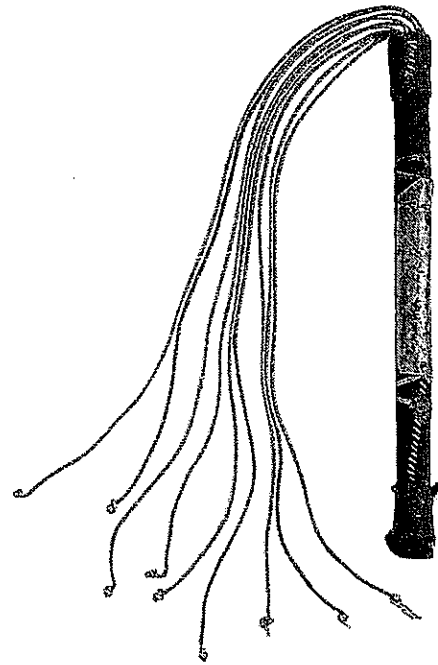


LIFE ABOARD SHIP (2)

Sailors had many duties. They climbed high masts and rigging to work the sails, took turns on watch, and cleaned or **swabbed** the filthy decks. They needed to mend torn or worn sails, repair ropes, and even make their own clothes. They used canvas left over from sail repairs. Sailors would treat the canvas clothes with oil to make them waterproof. One officer was the **bosun mate**. He would blow the bosun's whistle to signal orders at sea. It had a high pitched tone that could be heard over the sound of winds and waves.

If sailors disobeyed orders there was punishment. One of the most common was the "**cat-o'-nine-tails**." It was a whip made of nine lengths of knotted cord attached to a handle. The disobedient sailor would be lashed to a frame and **flogged** (whipped) on his bare back. The number of floggings depend upon the seriousness of his disobedience. But even a few whips of the cords brought blood and caused great pain. However, there would be a doctor present to stop the flogging if it appeared the sailor might die.

Sailing was very dangerous. The ships were small, with tall masts and lots of sails. In very heavy winds the ships could **capsize**. Ships could also run aground on rocks or shallow water near land. Many ships sailed out and never returned.



It is understandable why there were sometimes mutinies or why some men jumped overboard due to the unbearable conditions. There was little romance and excitement while sailing on the high seas. Life aboard ship carried many dangers and no luxuries!