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The forgotten trade

Nigel TATTERSFIELD

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#2454901 in Books 1991Format: ImportOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.75 x 6.75 x 1.50l, #File Name: 0224029150460 pages | File size: 34.Mb

Nigel TATTERSFIELD : The forgotten trade before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The forgotten trade:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Neglected Atlantic History.By S. SmithMost British slave trading between the late 17th and early 19th centuries was undertaken by substantial merchants in the major ports of Liverpool, Bristol and London; their activities are well documented. However, a few less established traders in minor ports such as Exeter, Dartmouth or Whitehaven were also involved but their activities were previously unrecorded. Nigel Tattersfiels The Forgotten Trade provides a full account of their activities in two distinct parts. One records a single catastrophic slaving voyage that left Dartmouth in 1700; the other is a survey of the slave trade in Britains minor ports in the early 18th century. There is also a short Foreword by the novelist John Fowles, prompted by his interest in the history of Lyme Regis, a minor slaving port.The first part relies on the detailed log of the "Daniel and Henry" a small, 200-ton ship fitted-out by three tobacco merchants of Exeter and Dorchester. Being novices, they chose a captain of limited experience, engaged too large a crew and paid too much for the goods to be traded. When the ship reached the Guinea Coast, its problems began. Slaves were scarce, and poor local knowledge forced the captain to spend five months buying them before setting off for Jamaica. Some slaves had already been chained up for months and the captain tried to make up for delays by overcrowding. By the end of the passage, 206 of 452 slaves and 10 of the crew were dead. There were many other slaves for sale in Jamaica but little sugar, so the ship returned to Dartmouth with a cargo worth only 300. The venture lost 1,500; one of the merchants had died, one was rich enough to absorb the loss, but the third was bankrupted and fled his creditors.Until 1698, the Royal African Company had a

monopoly on the West African slave trade, but in that year parliament ended its monopoly, allowing others, including merchants from small provincial ports without knowledge of Africa, to participate. Many of them thought it was an opportunity for quick rewards. The second part of the book reviews their slave trading as a business although it does not minimise the horrors and deaths it involved. Slaving promised substantial profits, but was risky and required experience and financial resources. For those without these assets, the economic results were poor for many: some faced ruin. Although Tattersfiels book claims to comprise the logbook of the Daniel and Henry, it is unclear how full the excerpts printed are and how they were selected and edited. In much of the first part, the author is too ready to intrude his own point of view and his writing style can be clichéd. Despite these negatives, it is still a useful summary of a neglected aspect of Atlantic history.

Nonfiction account of the slave trade. Hardcover with dust jacket. Map endpapers.