



History 101

Edward Teach

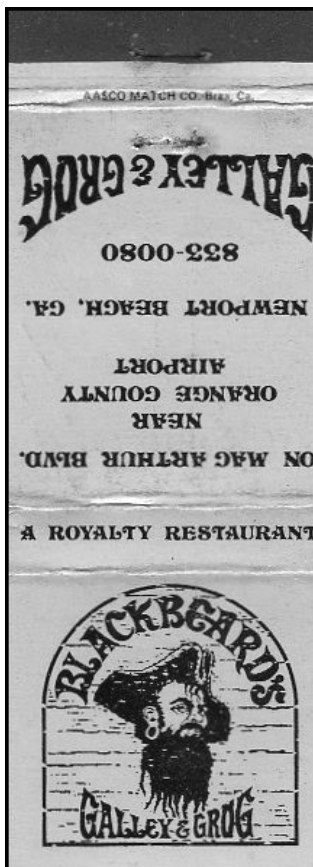
Blackbeard! Scourge of the seven seas! Bane of the oceans! Fearsome! Bloodthirsty! It's a name that has gone down in history and continues to live on, thanks to the many books and movies about the British pirate.

He was born Edward Teach, either in Bristol or Jamaica; no one knows quite when. He received his nickname from his habit of braiding his long, black beard and tying the braids with ribbon. Few pirates have looked and acted so fierce as Blackbeard. He fits the stereotypical picture of the ferocious, blood-drenched pirate as well as any.

Blackbeard terrorized the Carolina and Virginia coasts between 1716 and 1718 in his ship, the *Queen Anne's Revenge*. He lurked in rivers or behind sand bars and ruthlessly attacked all ships. He carried three braces of pistols and made himself look devilish by sticking long, lighted matches under his hat, framing his face in fire. If action was slow, Blackbeard stirred things up by lighting pots of sulphur in his own ship, or shooting off pistols beneath the table while entertaining friends in his darkened cabin. His journal states that confusion and plotting developed if his men were sober, but all went well whenever they had enough rum.

He is said to have had 14 wives and to have enjoyed the North Carolina governor's protection. He came ashore frequently and freely. He once 'took the King's pardon', but his 'going straight' only lasted a few weeks.

His pirating on the high seas took such a toll of shipping and created so much terror along the



American coast that Virginia and Carolina planters organized against him. The Virginia governor finally sent the *H.M.S. Pearl* out to take him dead or alive. He was caught on November 21, 1718, of the North Carolina coast. He fought desperately and finally fell with 25 wounds. His head was taken back to Virginia and set on a pole. *hmmmm!* [*World Book Encyclopedia, Vol. B, 1981, p. 309*]

I collect Blackbeard covers, along with other Historical characters. Currently, I have six.