



The Autobiography of Ashley Bowen (1728-1813)

Ashley Bowen

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The first American sailor known to write his own autobiography, Ashley Bowen remains a valuable storyteller who can speak to today's readers about the maritime world in the age of sail. Ashley Bowen began his seafaring career at the age of eleven. After leaving the sea, Bowen spent the rest of his days as a ship-rigger in Marblehead, Massachusetts. A witness to significant historical events, including the British conquest of Canada and the American Revolution, Ashley Bowen confounds today's audience with his eighteenth-century interpretation of events—an interpretation informed by his deeply religious beliefs and his suspicion of Yankee patriotism.

The Broadview edition is the first to present the story of Ashley Bowen as a continuous narrative. Vickers' introduction provides the context for Bowen's life in colonial New England, and additional writings by Ashley Bowen and his Marblehead contemporaries are included. The appendices include Bowen's diary accounts of his experiences in the 1759 British expedition against Quebec, smallpox epidemics, and the American Revolution.

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