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# The Marlinspike Sailor

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## THE MARLINSPIKE SAILOR

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Hervey Garrett Smith

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## Synopsis

This classic is organized as follows: Making Rope Behave Knot, Bend or Hitch? Anyone Can Splice The Short Splice The Long Splice The Stowage of Rope How to Lay Up a Grommet Whippings The Heaving Line Some Notes on Seizing Worming, Parceling and Serving The Running Turk's Head The Star Knot The Tack Knot The Lanyard Knot Matthew Walker's Knot A Simple Rope Mat Ladder Mat and Block Mat A Russian or Walled Mat A Sword Mat A Rope Ladder with a New Twist Plaited Sennits Crown Sennits Rope Handles Coach whipping Grafting, Pointing and Hitching Cockscombing The Sea Chest Deadeyes and Lanyards Decorative Wall Bag Tom Crosby's Ditty Sox The Rigger's Little Helper Wooden Bilge Pumps Palm and Needle Practice The Ditty-Bag The Sea Bag The Bell Rope Wooden Cleats Rope Fenders Stropped Blocks Canvas Deck Bucket Rigging a Jackline Sail Stop Bag Some Notes on the Use of Taykles's A Lanyard for a Cannon The Catboat Race Making a Mast Boot The Water Jug Registration Numbers Art and Yacht Design Synthetic Fibers and Their Characteristics

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Using hand drawings that are clearer than any photograph, THE MARLINSPIKE SAILOR (c.1960)

by Hervey Garrett Smith illustrated in a 131 page soft cover book a collection of the best detailed renditions of basic knot tying and ropework any beginner can learn to start his ropework career, or for an old hand to refresh his memory. There is no waste as only essential rope skills are shown in clear etchings, line drawings, and pencil sketches, which will make the wooden sail boat owner self-sufficient from a lot of expensive, store-bought textile gear. In a written text accompanying each excellent drawing, Hervey Garrett Smith explained the purpose of each rope related product; such as: knob knots used for drawer handles, baggy wrinkle for chafe gear, coach whipping for stanchion rails, rope shackles for your storage chest, sewing skills to make gear bags and sail mending, netmaking for storage, and rope fenders for hull protection. The author included no superfluous skills or fancy work (MacNamara's Lace as we called it in the Navy). There is more than a hint of Yankee frugality pervading THE MARLINSPIKE SAILOR as Hervey Garrett Smith promotes self-sufficiency through recycling old rope and canvas, or anything else that can be salvaged and made useable. THE MARLINSPIKE SAILOR is an important and useful book for the beginner to teach themselves the fundamental skills necessary to quickly make oneself a useful member of any traditional sailboat crew. This book should be read in conjunction with both THE ASHLEY BOOK OF KNOTS and SEAMANSHIP IN THE AGE OF SAIL.

As live-aboard cruisers, we have frequent uses for knots, bends and hitches. We have several instructional books on knotting and splicing, and the best remains "The Marlinspike Sailor" by Hervey Garrett Smith, published in 1956. Smith's explanations and illustrations stand the test of time. They are the clearest and easiest to follow of any instructions we've found. Invariably, we always pull out "The Marlinespike Sailor" when we're at loose ends!

THE MARLINSPIKE SAILOR, now in its 46th year, is one of the half-dozen or so "essential" books in any sailor's working library. Just a bit less cumbersome than THE ASHLEY BOOK OF KNOTS. THE MARLINSPIKE SAILOR is an excellent book to keep on board to teach yourself or your crew the fundamentals of working with rope, so critical a part of sailing. I find Mr. Dupre's criticism of the use of nautical terminology in THE MARLINSPIKE SAILOR to be a bit ironic; after all, that's like saying a cookbook makes too many references to kitchen utensils.

I bought this book for two specific reasons. First, because it is recommended by many other knot tyers that know their stuff, and second, because of the illustrations. Although digital photos are nice, I very much enjoy the drawings in this book. They are very clear and easy to follow, and the

accompanying text is enjoyable to read as well.

I compared the Kindle edition purchased in 2016 with the hardback 1971 printed edition and found numerous illustrations missing. The text appears to be complete but the missing illustrations would make it difficult to follow the text in creating knots. For example the 6 drawings that illustrate creating a Short Splice are missing and the illustrations in the Short Splice section belong to the Long Splice section. The Start know section is missing the 7 illustrations that show you how to tie that know. For now you would be better off to buy the paperback.

I purchased this book for my husband who has been looking for a easy explanation of splicing...He had the following to say: Have looked through several books on sailing knots and splicing and none have done a better job than The Marlinspike Sailor. The text shows a decent array of knots and does a great job on splicing which is what I purchased the text for. I have had no trouble following the simple directions to troublefree splices...a great item

A chatty and charming little notebook of traditional skills for working traditional 3-ply laid line. Owners of classic craft will find it useful, and those with an interested in traditional sailing skills will find it a must-have for their library. I'm already contemplating burying my gaff-rigged catboat in acres of netting, woven rugs and baggywrinkle.

It is not for beginners, as a how-to so much of basic sailor knots, for that you need a basic to advanced knotbook, but it shows complex knots, a very easy way to learn to the Turks Heads and a myriad of sea/sailor related projects, both inventive and traditional. The illustrations are very good and the text is very interesting reading. It is like Herman Melville in tone, to me, reminding me of the age-old uses of rope, though it fits nicely in the modern realm, of a knot-work book, and can greatly add to your skills as you learn and improvise on the various projects mentioned. Some go beyond knot-work in sailing and other practical things. So if increasing your knowledge (it has nice descriptions of the Star Knot, Matthew Walker, and various others) and gaining some insight into the days of old, and ways to make projects that still have use and beauty in the modern time this is ONE great book to own. I was very pleased for the price. Hervey Garrett Smith did a great job and the illustrations as he points out he put them in his book because others he found were not clear, and they are a beauty too look at too. If you are just getting into Marlinspike Seasmanship/Ropework Crafts, this is a great book. I take about three with me or keep them close at hand, along with my

ropeowork kit, and this is one of them.

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