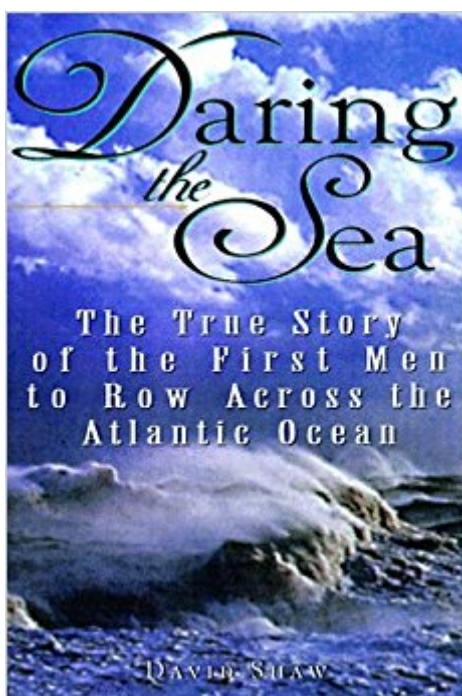


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# Daring The Sea: The True Story Of The First Men To Row Across The Atlantic Ocean



## Synopsis

Book by Shaw

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Norwegian immigrants George Harbo and Frank Samuelson found that life in America toward the end of the 19th century did not lead to riches; rather they learned that it was a struggle to survive as fishermen and clam diggers off the New Jersey coast. Thus in 1896 they determined to utilize their experience and skills as seamen to row across the Atlantic. They secured the lukewarm backing of Richard Fox, editor of the Police Gazette, who was always on the lookout for unusual stories, and set out from New York Harbor on June 6, bound for Le Havre, France. This account of their voyage, based in part on Harbo's journal, is a stirring adventure story, as the pair in their 18-foot-long craft narrowly escaped being hit by other ships, threaded their way through a school of whales, missed an iceberg and encountered severe storms with mountainous waves, one of which capsized them and dumped part of their meager food supply. Finally, after 55 days they arrived at Britain's Scilly Islands. Although they received considerable publicity, the public saw their achievement as a stunt. Returning to America they picked up their lives, married, had children and enjoyed some prosperity working on the sea. Harbo died in 1908, Samuelson in 1911. Readers who enjoy tales of humans pitted against the elements will find this work by freelancer Shaw thrilling. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1998 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Shaw, a writer for *Cruising World*, *Sail*, and *Offshore Magazine*, has reconstructed the voyage of two Norwegian immigrants who rowed across the Atlantic in 1896. George Harbo, a surfboat fisherman, and Frank Samuelson, a merchant seaman in the age of sail, met while fishing off the Jersey coast and became clamming partners. Each day they would row out several miles to rake clams to sell at market. One day they decided that if they could row all the way to France, they would set a new world record and become famous, and people would pay to hear them lecture. They had a local builder construct an 18' double-ended boat patterned after a Jersey surfboat with two watertight compartments and special rails on the bottom of the hull so that they could right the boat if it were capsized. Working from the log book as well as a journal dictated by Harbo, Shaw reconstructs the 55-day voyage and the many storms the pair endured. This amazing story is a good purchase for public and maritime libraries. A John Kenny, San Francisco, P.L. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Great purchase. Thanks

Great read--Shaw really paints a vivid and compelling picture of what Harbo & Samuelson must have gone through in their row across the Atlantic. My only complaint is that there were too many visits to the psychological side, which can only be pure speculation. A little bit of psych spec is good, but he went back to the well too often. Still, a very good book. Makes me feel like a wimp for cancelling my planned row across Lake Michigan!

George Harbo and Frank Samuelson are drawn to each other as Norwegian immigrants to late 19th Century America, both by their shared background and their common love for the sea on which they make their living. It's a spare living at best, though, despite the opportunities the U.S. offers that Norway does not. After years of trying to build financially successful lives, George finds himself separated from his growing family because his wife is better able to care for their children by returning to Norway; and Frank worries over his younger siblings who arrive in New York expecting to find miracles there. The friends come up with a plan to win fame, and with it (hopefully) fortune, by setting a world record. Under the sponsorship of a New York tabloid, they will row across the Atlantic Ocean. No one's ever done that before; and as New York prepares to see them off, just about everyone else seems sure they're heading to their deaths. This clearly wasn't an easy story to tell engagingly, and I give its author plenty of credit for handling it as well as he did. The first chapters, which provide the background for the crossing itself, presented a bit of a slog for me; but

the crossing was harrowing reading, the kind that kept me turning pages because knowing the ending already did nothing to allay the suspense. The tale is based solidly on documentation, despite the author's use of dialog that had to be fabricated, and the historical context provided goes a long way toward making the voyage's ironic aftermath both understandable and touching. Not the best written true adventure I've read, but a pretty good one overall.

In 1997, my cousin Jerry Bryant wrote a wonderful sea shanty/folksong simply titled "The Ballad of Harbo and Samuelson - a tribute to these two remarkable men after Jerry had completed a lot of research (but not as much as Mr. Shaw). "We'll see you in France or we'll see you in heaven, cried Harbo and Samuelson out on the bay" goes the chorus. After hearing this song, I began looking for more on this voyage, that as one previous reviewer of this book said, "has been kept a remarkable secret". And I found it in this book. Anyone with a thirst for doing the impossible, with a taste for adventure, and an amazement at the human spirit, will enjoy this book immensely - I read it in one night.

This is the dramatic true story of the most remarkable rowing excursions ever recorded. In June of 1896, two brave men set out to row 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean from New York to England in a small 18'X 5' rowboat. This vivid account prior, during & after their incredible 55 day adventure into the unknown is a fast-moving, gripping epic of survival, still listed in the Guinness Book of World Records. *Daring The Sea: The True Story*

It's hard to believe that this is a true story and even harder to understand why this story (and this book) are such well kept secrets. David Shaw has done an excellent job of telling not just the incredible story of their row across the Atlantic, but he effectively tells us the life stories of the 2 subjects while skillfully weaving in what American life at the turn of the century was all about. Great story, great book, easy read, about two men who lived incredibly difficult lives...this book puts things in perspective.

This book has a sad side to it: the men who first rowed across the Atlantic expected to become rich and famous. It is too bad that these incredible men could not have simply gloried in their amazing feat. There should have been overwhelming happiness for them to have accomplished so much. I enjoyed reading this book for two main reasons. One, the author sets a tone of excitement which keeps the reader's adrenaline flowing. Two, I stand in awe of these men of such endurance and

resourcefulness.

David W. Shaw captures the taste of salt in this well written and researched book. It is a page turner not only because of the subject matter but the author obviously knows what the sea is capable of with first hand knowledge. The reader can taste the salt and viscerally feel the ordeal these men went through. It is sad that these men were so soon forgotten and wonderful that Shaw has brought this story back to life.

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