



# Horrors of Slavery: Or, The American Tars in Tripoli (Subterranean Lives)

*William Ray*

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## **Horrors of Slavery: Or, The American Tars in Tripoli (Subterranean Lives) William Ray**

Barbary pirates in Africa targeted sailors for centuries, often taking slaves and demanding ransom in exchange. First published in 1808, *Horrors of Slavery* is the tale of one such sailor, captured during the United States's first military encounter with the Islamic world, the Tripolitan War. William Ray, along with three hundred crewmates, spent nineteen months in captivity after his ship, the *Philadelphia*, ran aground in the harbor of Tripoli. Imprisoned, Ray witnessed-and chronicled-many of the key moments of the military engagement. In addition to offering a compelling history of a little-known war, this book presents the valuable perspective of an ordinary seaman who was as concerned with the injustices of the U.S. Navy as he was with Barbary pirates.

Hester Blum's introduction situates *Horrors of Slavery* in its literary, historical, and political contexts, bringing to light a crucial episode in the early history of our country's relations with Islamic states.

A volume in the Subterranean Lives series, edited by Bradford Verter

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