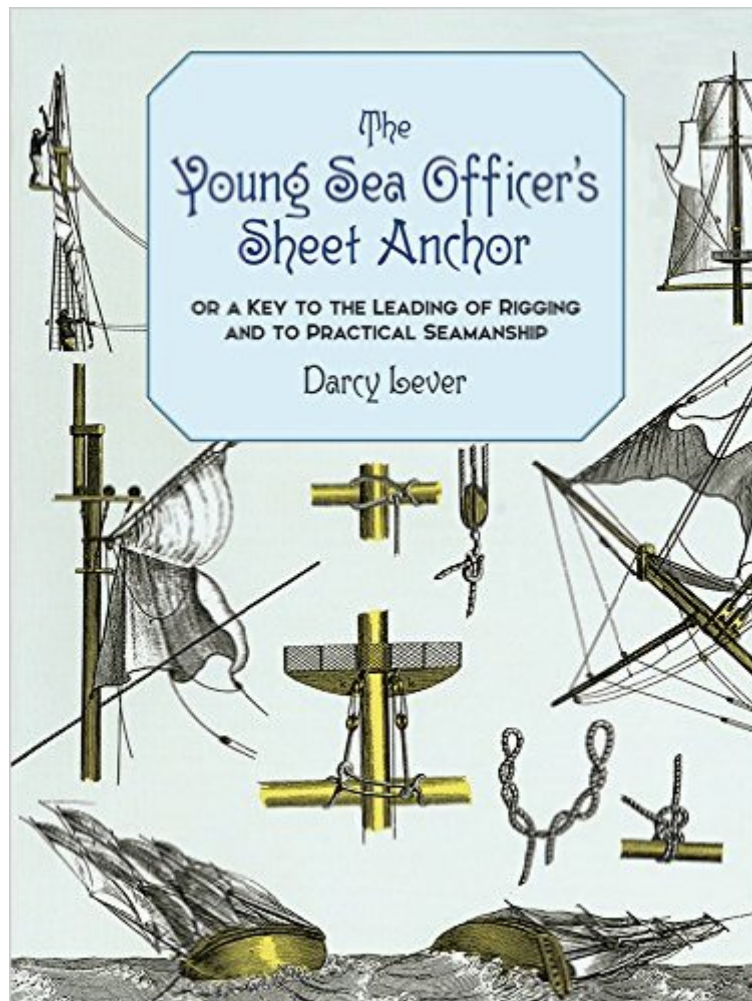


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# The Young Sea Officer's Sheet Anchor : Or A Key To The Leading Of Rigging And To Practical Seamanship



## Synopsis

First published in 1808, *The Young Sea Officer's Sheet Anchor* became a standard guide throughout the 19th century in both England and the United States. Author Darcy Lever compiled the text for "a young gentleman whose inclinations at that time led him to the choice of a sea-faring life," and he later expanded its contents for the general use of young officers in the Royal Navy and East India Company. Starting with a precise explanation of the principles of rigging, the text proceeds to a well-defined account of a ship's operation through the effect of the wind on its sails. Tacking, use of a compass, the art of swinging a ship at single anchor, casting, and numerous other aspects of seamanship receive close attention and clear definitions. Detailed drawings accompany the ample directions for splicing ropes, making sails, and other practical measures; indeed, every other page of this book features clear, well-drawn illustrations of the procedure under discussion and its execution. This rare volume, an authentic look at the maritime world of the 19th century, belongs in the library of every ship fancier, model builder, and naval historian.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This reprint of Darcy Lever's 1819 second edition is a true treasure. For those interested in naval history and square-rigged ships, this book is an absolute necessity. His coverage of masts, rigging and seamanship seems comprehensive, and each subject is matched with an elaborate and detailed engraving. Though originally written in 1808, Lever's descriptions of masts, rigging and

seamanship are still understandable and enlightening, even to nautical novices like me. Its also fascinating to know that this is the actual book that young sea officers were reading to prepare themselves to face Napoleon's fleet. It can be frustrating for novices to make sense of the many nautical terms, but thats the task of anyone new to sailing, and square rigged ships in particular. Even so, if you start from the beginning, Lever does patiently explain most of the important terms and concepts, giving you a better overall understanding than if you simply turned to the page with the mast/sail you're interested in and started reading. This is a far sight better than many other books, which presume that you have a complete understanding of all terms and dont provide any explanations. Some may find his language a bit archaic, but I found it to be understandable (in fact, surprisingly so, given that Lever wrote this almost 200 years ago!). The Verdict: Armchair sailor. History buff. Shipbuilder. Historical ship modeler. If any or all of these fit your description, you must have this book on your bookshelf, and its spine should be cracked and tired from constant reading. (Thankfully, Dover books is the publisher and they do an excellent job when it comes to book production and bookbinding).

I bought this book because I am a recreational sailor and ship modeler. I found this to be an excellent source of information on the rigging and basic operation of 19th century military and commercial sailing vessels, and it answered many questions I have had about older sailing vessels as compared to modern ones. The subject matter is laid out logically, but must be read carefully due to its original 19th century syntax and language, and the tremendous amount of detail discussed. The book starts with how strands are laid into ropes, how ropes are made into lines, the basic components of rigging (hooks, blocks, hearts, trucks, cleats), description and tying of basic seaman's knots, moving on to construction and stepping of the masts, spars and sprits, standing rigging, running rigging, sail construction and rigging for each location on the ship, finishing with anchor rigging. As if that were not enough, the second half of the book is a fascinating treatise on practical seamanship of the day, including coming to anchor, when to use certain sails, reefing, laying to, heaving to and other heavy weather techniques. The book is illustrated throughout with hundreds of highly detailed period line drawings. Truly an 19th century version of the Annapolis Book of Seamanship and Chapman's Piloting combined, it is an absolute must for any model builder or student of sailing ships who wants to know "how it was".

Once, while travelling, Darcy Level casually asked the purpose of a line on a ship. He was rudely brushed off and told to figure it out for himself. That event started his multi-year quest to document

the facts of rigging and handling "ship rigged" vessels. He scientifically studied the subject and the result is this book. This is a book that was studied by many of those that went to sea in the days of the tall ship. Any books that follow nearly tread in the footsteps of this giant. If you have an interest in Square Rigged vessels, whether to sail them today or to build models, you will need this book. The only negative thing I can say is that it is not up to modern standards on illustration, writing style, and terminology. I found some parts difficult to understand because I was unfamiliar with some of the arcane terminology. This, to me, makes the book even more interesting. Thanks to one rude sailor, who motivated Darcy Lever, we have today this outstanding book written on this subject that was and is the best reference of its kind.

Along with Harland's *Seamanship in the Age of Sail* and R. C. Anderson's *The Rigging of Ships in the Days of the Sailsail Topmast, 1600-1720*, Lever's *Sheet Anchor* is a "must have" in the library of anyone who either sails on, or has an interest in, square-rigged ships. The conciseness of description, the completeness of topics, and the clarity of the sketches make this book a valuable resource for those who have first hand experience on tall ships as well as for those who will never have the opportunity to sail except through the written word.

Judge this book by its cover! It's exactly what it says it is. This book is full of practical knowledge suited for the young naval officer or merchant seaman. It's one of those books that is just fun to read. Similar to "The Art of Rigging," this book has tons of information about the rigging of sailing vessels not in common use today, but it's fascinating nonetheless. A great volume for those enthralled by the sea, or who enjoy model ship building. Looks great on the coffee table, too!

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