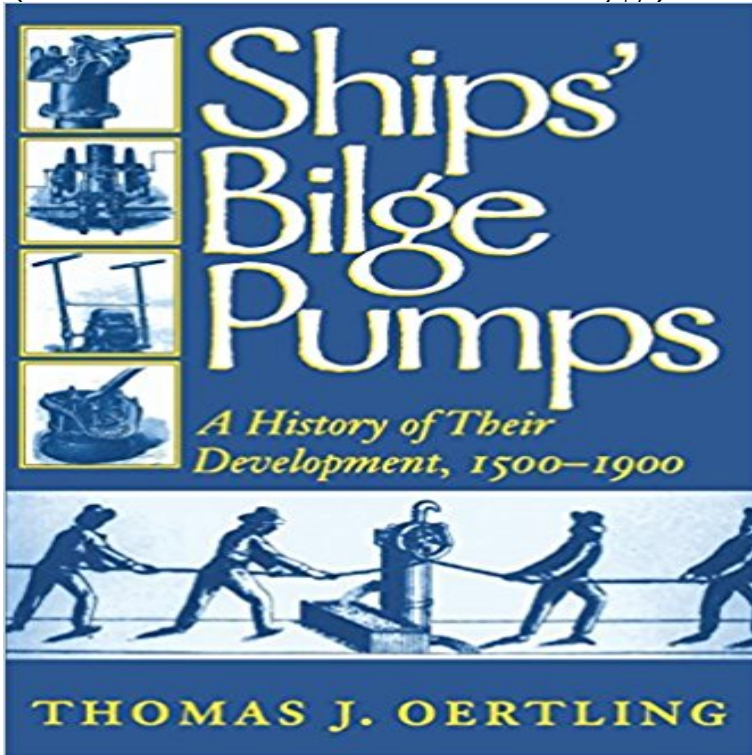


Ships Bilge Pumps: A History of Their Development, 1500-1900 (Studies in Nautical Archaeology)



All wooden ships leak, a stark fact that has terrified sailors since the earliest days of ocean travel. Maritime historical literature is filled with horrific descriptions of being aboard a slowly sinking ship. Starting from this human perspective, then, Thomas J. Oertling traces the five-hundred-year evolution of a seemingly mundane but obviously important piece of seafaring equipment and tells the story of nautical innovation in this one of a kind history of the ship bilge pump. Beginning with early sixteenth-century documents that recorded bilge pump design and installation and ending at about 1840, when bilge pumps were being mass-produced, Oertling covers a period of radical technological change. He describes the process of making long wooden pump tubes by hand, as well as the assembly of the machine-crafted pumps that helped revolutionize ship construction and design. Also given in detail are the creation, function, and development of all three types of pumps used from about 1500 to well into the nineteenth century: the burr pump, the suction or common pump, and the chain pump. Of further interest is Oertling's overall examination of the nature and management of leaks in ships hulls. This work is well illustrated, with line art depicting the placement and use of pumps aboard the ships, early drawings showing pump design, and photographs revealing artifacts recently found at shipwreck sites. Of obvious interest to nautical archaeologists, maritime historians, and ship modelers, this book is written in an interesting and informative style, rendering it easily accessible to laypersons and amateur enthusiasts.

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