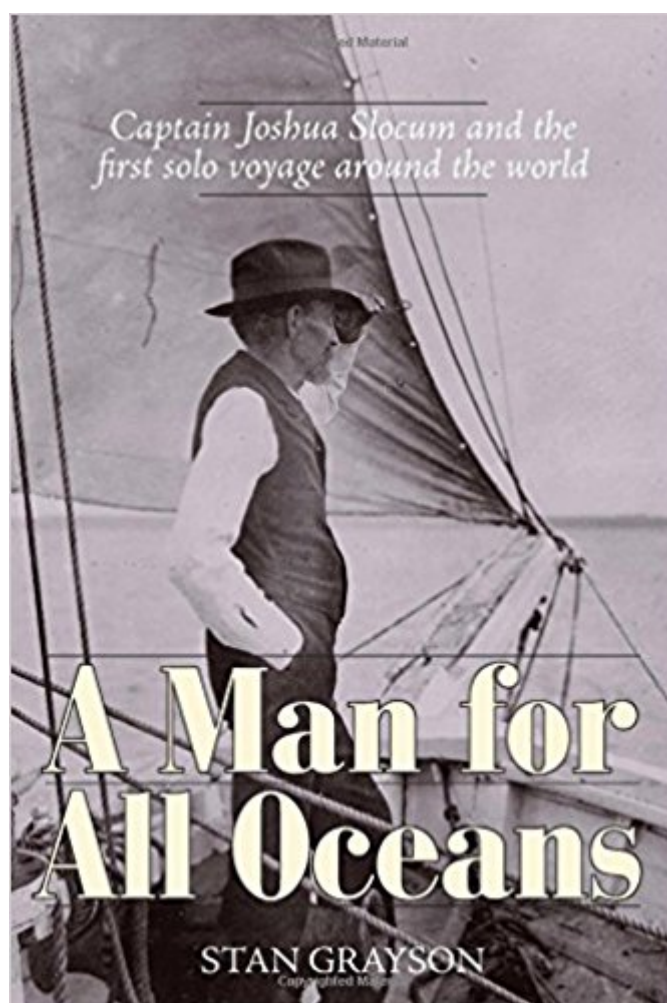


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# A Man For All Oceans: Captain Joshua Slocum And The First Solo Voyage Around The World



## Synopsis

The product of years of research, *A Man for All Oceans* is the most comprehensive biography of Slocum ever published, and the first written by a small-boat sailor. Author/historian Grayson uncovered previously unknown original source materials to shed new light on one of history's greatest sailors while answering questions that have been asked ever since the publication of *Sailing Alone*. In June 1898, three years and two months after departing Boston in his aged oyster sloop *Spray*, Captain Joshua Slocum made landfall in New England and became the first person ever to sail alone around the world. The voyage capped a lifetime of adventure for the indomitable Slocum, who had advanced from seaman to captain during the challenging final years of commercial sail, surviving hurricanes, mutinies, shipwreck, and the death at sea of his beloved first wife, Virginia. *Sailing Alone Around the World*, Slocum's book about his circumnavigation, is a seafaring classic, unmatched for adventure and literary verve, and has never been out of print since its publication in 1900. Yet despite several biographies over the decades, Slocum the man has remained unknowable to his legions of admirers, the facts of his life and career as elusive as a ship on a fogbound sea. Here is the real story of Slocum's Nova Scotia childhood, his seafaring career, and how he became an American citizen. Grayson gives ample evidence of Slocum's uncanny genius as a navigator while also noting the occasional role that good luck played in his voyages, including his odyssey from Brazil to the United States in the self-designed and built 35-foot *Liberdade*. And Grayson brings a sailor's perspective to Slocum's solo circumnavigation and mysterious disappearance at sea. A fascinating appendix compares *Sailing Alone Around the World* with Thoreau's *Walden* and shows that Slocum's simple lifestyle and self-sufficiency prefigured today's emphases on the environment and living responsibly. Previously unpublished photographs bring Slocum's world to life, and detailed maps trace the adventures of a sailor who knew the world like the back of his hand. This biography reads like an adventure narrative and will serve as the standard work on Joshua Slocum for years to come. B&W photographs and maps

## Book Information

Hardcover: 413 pages

Publisher: Tilbury House Publishers; 1 edition (May 16, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 088448548X

ISBN-13: 978-0884485483

Product Dimensions: 6.9 x 1.4 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #109,618 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in [Books > Travel >](#)

[Specialty Travel > Solo Travel](#) #76 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation >](#)

[Sailing](#) #181 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Water Sports](#)

## Customer Reviews

“Stan Grayson has written what must stand as the definitive biography of Joshua Slocum. A heartfelt, detailed, and lucidly written, A Man for All Oceans casts a revelatory light not only on Slocum but the times in which he lived and sailed.” - Nathaniel Philbrick, author of *In the Heart of the Sea*; *Mayflower*; and *Valiant Ambition* “A Man for All Oceans is a joy to read. Joshua Slocum was an enigmatic individual who achieved a great feat, and Stan Grayson’s engaging and well-written book brings both the man and his epic voyage wonderfully to life. Not only mariners, but anyone who appreciates history, will greatly enjoy this enthralling tale of a true American original.” - Eric Jay Dolin, author of *Brilliant Beacons: A History of the American Lighthouse* “A Man for All Oceans is the most thoroughly researched biography of the masterful and even mystical sailor and author, Captain Joshua Slocum, and as such is unlikely ever to be surpassed.” - W. H. Bunting, author of *Sea Struck* and *Live Yankees* “In his detailed, fascinating biography of a great adventurer and author of the classic *Sailing Alone Around the World*, Stan Grayson opens up the extraordinary, mysterious life of a captain of the oceans who never could master life on land.” - John Rousmaniere, author of *Fastnet*, *Force 10*; *After the Storm*; and *The Annapolis Book of Seamanship* “It isn’t just the depth and breadth of research that impresses me, it is the patience and diligence with which the author has gathered together all the pieces of this immensely complicated puzzle. Incident by incident, voyage by voyage, decade by decade, the character of Slocum takes form, grows, is tempered by experience and adversity, achieves flight and fame, and falls victim to the indignities of age and fate.” - Llewellyn Howland III, author of *No Ordinary Being* “Unless you are an avid sailor, the name Joshua Slocum conjures up, if anything, only a vague story of sailing solo around the world and being lost at sea. In his latest book, Stan Grayson easily convinces the reader that there is much more of interest to the story. Slocum’s life was extraordinary: a hardscrabble ascent from a failed Nova Scotia farm to hobnobbing with presidents;

advancement from the lowly forecastle, through the hawsehole, to world-famous ship's master; finding true love and then true grief; and finally, a heart-rending decline and fall. As far as is positively known, Slocum was last seen departing for a winter sail to the Caribbean. He never returned. Grayson started "picking at the corners" of the story in the mid-1970s. He was very conscious that someone had written what he generously calls a "pioneering biography" 20 years before. Was there anything more to be said about the great seaman? He kept picking away until he had enough new material for a magazine article. But still he couldn't let go, and the "ever-widening reach of the Internet" fed his habit. The final bonus was a cornucopia of information bequeathed to him by a Slocum relative. The result is "A Man for All Oceans," a riveting book. The Slocum legend was assiduously promoted by the man himself in "Sailing Alone Around the World," and Grayson is judicious in his assessment of the inevitable differences (to use a neutral noun) between saga and evidence. He starts from the premise that, where Slocum "concocted, rearranged, or even lied about key events" of his life, he had good, though not necessarily obvious, reasons. By trying to unravel them, the historian can "gain insight into Slocum's motives, feelings and actions" but must "tread carefully," Grayson writes. We can never know for sure, just as we will never know exactly what befell Slocum at the end. By placing the known facts of Slocum's life in the fascinating milieu of a sailing tradition struggling to survive, "A Man for All Oceans" gives a powerful evocation of both.

- Thomas Urquhart, Portland Press Herald

Grayson, whose own writing shines with journalistic polish, admires the writing skills of his subject, praising Slocum's "wordsmithing" and the "clarity that comes from economy."

Readers will learn much about Joshua Slocum they didn't know in A Man for All Oceans and they will be reminded of something everyone who read Slocum's book could sense: The man simply loved sailing.

"Whatever its threat, Slocum believed the sea was to be sailed over," Grayson writes, "and he celebrated the pleasure of sailing over the great oceans."

- Bill Schanen, Sailing Magazine

STAN GRAYSON (Marblehead, MA) has written extensively about American yachting and small-craft history. His work has appeared in Nautical Quarterly, WoodenBoat, and other publications, and his books include Cape Cod Catboats; The Wianno Senior Story: A Century on Nantucket Sound; and, most recently, A Man for All Oceans: Captain Joshua Slocum and the First

## Solo Voyage Around the World.

Stan Grayson has added to his impressive list of marine titles with the best and most comprehensive biography of Joshua Slocum yet. The remarkable career of the world's first single-handed circumnavigator takes on new life and color here. I think I've read all previous biographical material on the subject, and I find that the content of this book is so fresh and interesting that I can't put it down. Half way through the book, I've only gotten as far as Gibraltar with Slocum and Grayson, but I'm so hooked that I will be skipping duties and chores until we all get back to Massachusetts. Then I will be compelled to get out my copy of "Sailing Alone Around The World", going aboard the old "Spray" and starting all over again. "A Man For All Oceans" is a fascinating portrait of a great adventurer,, and a solid slice of American history.

I really wanted to enjoy this book as much as I have Slocum's own writings. It is well researched and would be a good addition to any maritime museum library. Unfortunately, for me, it was mind numbing, arcane minutia, i.e. detailed descriptions of ships Slocum never owned or sailed and/or if he could have know the builder of a certain ship he never owned or sailed, and odd passages that seemed contradictory. For example, on page 29 of my edition, the author discusses Slocum's sailing skill and determination, [he] sailed "with an angel perched on his shoulder"...what became known as "Slocum's luck". This was a man who had multiple shipwrecks, often made bad business decisions and went broke, who's first wife, "the love of his life", died at an early age, and who was eventually presumed lost at sea. No doubt Slocum was an adventurer and good storyteller, but "Mr. Lucky"?

I thoroughly enjoyed Stan Grayson's book about Captain Joshua Slocum. I've read a couple other books about Slocum but found this to be the most thoroughly researched tome. Grayson shares a great amount of details with his readers - "sharing' being the key word. I felt like I was hearing this amazing yarn from a trusted friend of the Captain's. I was mesmerized and didn't want to put the book down during Slocum's adventure around the world. And as proud of Slocum as I was when he completed his trip, I was so sad while reading about his decline. This is the definitive book about Slocum and the world he lived in.

Great book

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