

VOCABULARY AND TERMS

clipper ship — a sailing ship designed for speed (at the expense of more extensive cargo space), used extensively for long distance trade from the beginning to the middle of the 19th century. The lucrative trade with China and India stimulated the development of the clipper ship era, and the gold rushes in California and Australia brought the era to its height in the 1850's.

mutiny — a revolt against a superior officer by crew members. Due to the very real threat of mutiny on board merchant ships, captains and officers often used harsh discipline and punishment to deal with any sign of disrespect or disobedience.

ship's log — a daily record of events on board including the ship's progress, speed, and other pertinent nautical information. Ship's logs are good primary sources for studying the history of trade, trade routes, and life aboard the ships.

squall — a sudden violent wind, often with rain or snow. Squalls are common at sea and required swift action by the crew of clipper ships to adjust the sails in order to keep the ship stable.

Tropic of Cancer — approximately 23 ½ degrees latitude north of the equator. This is the latitude at which the sun reaches the greatest declination north of celestial equator.

Tropic of Capricorn — approximately 23 ½ degrees latitude south of the equator. This is the latitude at which the sun reaches the greatest declination south of the celestial equator.

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