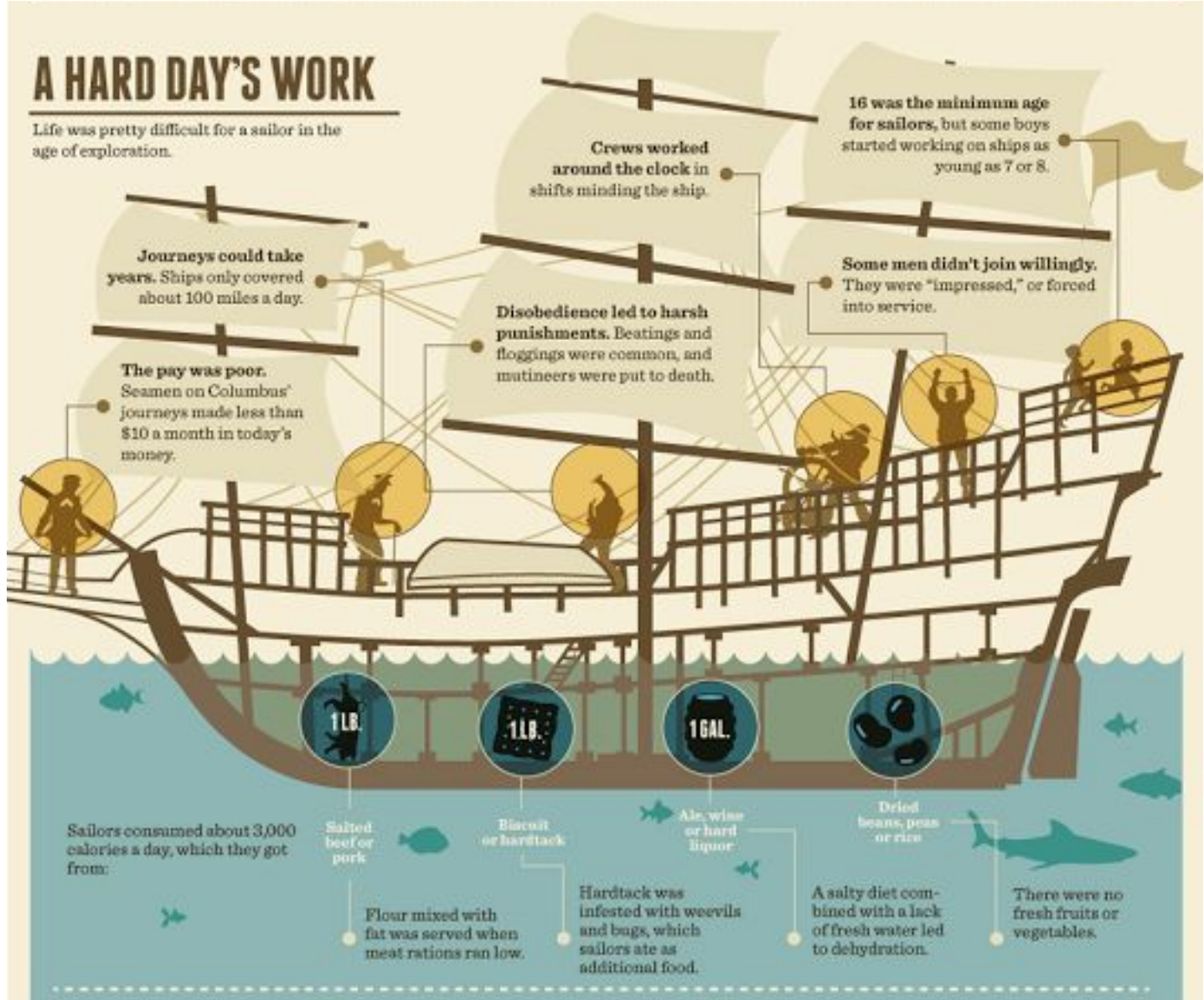


THE AGE OF EXPLORATION

LIFE ON THE OPEN SEAS

A HARD DAY'S WORK

Life was pretty difficult for a sailor in the age of exploration.



SCURVY, SEASICKNESS AND SLIME



Vitamin deficiencies gave men scurvy—and rotted teeth and gums, open sores and even mental breakdowns.

It was common to lose 50 percent of a crew to scurvy, known as the “scourge of the seas.”

Explorer James Cook was a pioneer in scurvy prevention. He fed his men sauerkraut and dried vegetable soup.



IF THE DIET DIDN'T KILL YOU,

Sailors had just one set of clothes that were rarely washed.

They thought dirt and grease provided protection from wind and rain.

Lice, rodents and foul drinking water spread typhoid fever.

THERE WERE PLENTY OF OTHER THINGS THAT COULD.

Ships could be dangerously cold—fires were only allowed in calmer weather.



The lack of fresh air below deck caused carbon monoxide poisoning. Men slept on deck in hammocks—an invention they borrowed from Mesoamerican cultures.

IGNOMINIOUS ENDS

Captains didn't have it much better than their crews.

A fight over stolen boats ended Cook's life in Hawaii.

Balboa was beheaded after feuding with his bosses.

Magellan didn't make it around the world with his ships. He was killed in the Philippines.



Hudson's crew set him adrift in what is now Hudson's Bay. He was never heard from again.

Ponce de Leon failed to find the Fountain of Youth, but a poison arrow found him in Florida.

Verrazano was killed and eaten by cannibals in the Caribbean.

SOURCES: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, "PATHFINDERS: A GLOBAL HISTORY OF EXPLORATION" BY FELIPE FERNANDEZ-ARMESTO, ROYAL MUSEUMS - GREENWICH
A COLLABORATION BETWEEN HISTORY.COM AND COLUMN FIVE

1. How much money did a sailor make in a month?
2. What kinds of punishments did sailors receive?
3. What did the sailors eat when the meat rations ran low?
4. What was hardtack?
5. What is scurvy?
6. Why did sailors sleep on the deck of the ship?
7. What was Ponce de Leon looking for? What found him instead?
8. What did Hudson's crew do to him?