

off the fence.

Setting Sail

4 x 60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. The Great Voyagers

This is the story of the world's first blue water sailors: the Austronesians and Polynesians who conquered the largest ocean on the planet. Their story begins in Southeast Asia more than 5,000 years ago, when the Austronesians began an eastward thrust into the Pacific. From Indonesia they headed East, reaching Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and finally Fiji.

Dispersed throughout the earth's largest and loneliest expanse of water, their exploits remained unknown to the rest of the world until recently. They were the first blue water sailors.

2. Sons of Sinbad

The story of Arabian ships and seafarers is often overlooked. But to remind us, there are the dhows of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, carrying cargo over waters that witnessed the birth of sea trade. Dhows helped spread Islam throughout the world, turning the Arabs into a major political force. The principal link in the lucrative trade between East and West, they also made Arab merchants a fortune.

3. The Dragon at Sea

This is the story of China and the sea. There is the story of the Grand Canal, an engineering feat which enabled the Chinese to bypass the sea; the burgeoning sea trade; and a frightening account of the attempted invasion of Japan, in which one hundred thousand men perished. Later we follow Zheng He and his remarkably forward-thinking seven expeditions to Western Seas.

4. Wooden Ships and Iron Men

Within a few hundred years, western ships and sailors spread all over the world, and dominated its trade in the name of god and greed. But the ships that allowed them to do so would not last forever. During the 19th century the era of sail came to a gradual close. No longer able to compete with steam, the West's sailing vessels gradually disappeared from the seven seas. Some were left to rot on distant shores, most never escaped the trip to the breakers. Today there are but a few survivors left to remind us of the age of sail.

