

# **The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History**

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1812  
Part 6 of 7**

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unjustness of my pretentions. With the greatest respect & Consideration [&c.]

Tho. Shields  
Purser

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 230. In Shields's hand.

LIEUTENANT DANIEL T. PATTERSON TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New Orleans Decr 22d 1812

Sir.

Captain Shaw has thought it highly necessary to Appoint a Seperate Purser, to the Ship of War called the *Louisiana*, lately purchased into the Naval Service on this Station, the Gentleman Appointed by him to fill this Station, is my Brother in law Mr Carlile Pollock.

I have therefore taken the liberty to address you on the subject, in which I feel a lively interest, in order to Solicit from you a Confirmation of the appointment, and that if confirmed by you, that you will do him the Honour to nominate him to the Senate for a Commission as a Purser in the Navy of the United States, to which Service he is extremely desirous of becoming permanently Attached: The confirmation of Mr Pollock's Appointment, will lay me under very great obligations to the Honble the Secretary of the Navy, who I hope will not deem this application presumptuous. I have the honour to be [&c.]

Dan<sup>l</sup> T. Patterson

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 233.

## Chapter Five

### The Atlantic Theater: September–December 1812

*During late 1812, when American naval officers became disillusioned with duty on remote stations, such as St. Marys, New Orleans, or Black Rock, they requested duty on the Atlantic. For there careers were being made, junior officers were gaining the laurels that might win them a command at sea, and there was the possibility of getting rich on prize money. Captains Hull and Porter had already won national attention, though Commodore Rodgers had fallen short, and Commodore Decatur's time was yet to come. The British blockade was still relatively porous, but there would come a time when sailors who had longed for Atlantic service would yearn for duty on the northern lakes just to escape from the frustration of being bottled up by British squadrons in Long Island Sound or off the Delaware and Virginia capes.*

*The promise of future victories was fulfilled in the period September–December 1812. Wasp–Frolic, United States–Macedonian, and Constitution–Java were American single-ship victories that established a soaring mood in the small American navy. But there were signs, for those who chose to read them, that this optimism might not last. The British were seizing a large number of American merchantmen and privateers, and many American seamen spent idle months on bleak Melville Island, a prison in Halifax Harbor. It was not easy to find seamen willing to sign on for a two-year naval cruise when prize money in larger shares was available in privateers. British cruisers sailed into the sounds and bays of the southeastern states with impunity. Despite these factors, it took Congress six months after the declaration of war to decide that a larger navy was necessary if the early victories at sea were to be followed up.*

*On land, American military defeats and failures to exploit enemy weaknesses along the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River frontier showed the British that the United States was militarily vulnerable along*

thousands of miles of contiguous border. A lack of preparation, stemming from an almost fatal over-confidence in the militia traditions of America's revolutionary "minutemen" doomed any chance of a lasting military conquest on the northern frontier. Generals Hull, Van Rensselaer, Smyth, and Dearborn all lost whatever reputations they had cultivated. By the end of the 1812 campaign season, it was apparent that American mettle would again be sorely tested. If there was to be any chance of success, it would depend upon a rejuvenated military and the establishment of naval superiority on the northern lakes. Commodore Isaac Chauncey, seconded by the capable Lieutenants Melancthon T. Woolsey and Jesse D. Elliott, accomplished a miracle of naval logistics and with sheer bravado overawed the small force of the Provincial Marine on Lakes Ontario and Erie. By the time cold weather arrived, British naval forces on the lakes were on the defensive; but clearly this condition could last only until the opening of navigation. The advantage then would lie with the forces who had best taken advantage of shipbuilding opportunities during the long northern winter.

In Washington, the Madison administration received an electoral victory in November which seemed to endorse the war, and this strengthened the president's hand in selecting more capable cabinet members. Both Secretary of War William Eustis and Secretary of the Navy Hamilton were perceived as men unequal to the crisis. December was the last month during which they served. Secretary Hamilton was soon to be succeeded by William Jones, a Philadelphia merchant with a considerable knowledge of ships and seagoing men.

By the end of the first year of war, the American public had been reminded of war's excesses as well as its few opportunities for glory. It was to the credit of the American navy that the taste for victory had been whetted. Unfortunately, as 1813 was to show, success was as frequently elusive on sea as on land. One legacy of the year 1812 is that despite all the difficulties, a tradition of excellence was established in the naval service. Many of "Preble's Boys" had become men, and although the navy was small, it was admirably prepared for offensive operations in the Atlantic Theater.

## U.S. Frigate *Essex* vs. H.M. Brig *Alert*

*In an earlier though less famous action than Constitution-Guerriere, Captain David Porter's Essex took the first British warship to fall to an American naval vessel in the War of 1812. The British had drawn first blood in an easy capture of Lieutenant William Crane's brig Nautilus on 16 July. Porter's capture of Alert was equally easy, and he makes it quite clear that the taking of a smaller ship of less force was no test of his capacity. Porter's egotism, however, was backed up by real ability. The list of his captures for the period 3 July to 3 September was sent to the secretary of the navy as an enclosure to his report on his engagement with Alert.*

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Essex*  
At Sea September 3d 1812

Sir,

I had the honor to address you on the 14th Augt by Lt [James P.] Wilmer, and on the 17th by an American Schooner, informing you briefly of my having captured H B M Sloop of War *Alert* commanded by T. [Thomas] L. P. Laugharne Esqr after an action of eight minutes—for the satisfaction of the Dept however, I now take the liberty of entering into a detail of particulars relating to that affair.

At 1/2 past 9 on the morning of the 13th Augt in Lat. 41°04' N. Long. 35°24' W. as we were standing to the Southd with the wind Westerly, discovered a square rigged Vessel to windward running down under a press of canvass evidently with a view of speaking us; as she approached supposed her to be a large arm'd English West Indiaman, as every means had been used to give her that appearance, and under this impression I considered it unnecessary to call to general quarters, but took my usual precautions of having some of the Gun deck Guns cleared away, tapping in the half ports & tompions, & concealing every appearance of preparation—On her nearer approach, after she had made a signal to us and hoisted her colours, we sighted the English ensign & pendant. At 1/2 past 11 she was short pistol shot on our star-board quarter, I the discovered that she was a ship of War and prepared for action, and perceiving it to be their intention to rake us, I

hoisted American colours wore short around, and after receiving his broadside, (which did us no more injury than the cheers that accompanied it) brought our larboard Guns to bear, which compeled her to haul her wind on the starboard tack; we again wore, and by the time our starboard guns were brought to bear she was on the larboard tack: finding that the shortness of the enemy's ship gave him the advantage over us in close manoeuvring, and that he intended if possible to prevent our getting fairly along side of him, I determined to gain more room, and with this view stood on a wind on the starboard tack until the ships were separated about musket shot, then wore raking him in the act of wearing: he now attempted to make his escape, I consequently made more sail and was ranging up with the intention of not firing until there was a certainty that every shot would take effect, but when we were short pistol shot on his starboard quarter and had hoisted our flag bearing the Motto "free trade & Sailors rights" he avoided the dreadful consequences that our broad side would in a few moments have produced by prudentially striking his colours.

I sent Lt Jno Downes to take possession and on her commander coming on board and delivering up his sword, he informed me that the ship was sinking. I caused her to be wore around on the other tack to bring the shot holes above water and sent our carpenters to plug them up.

The *Alert* has suffered much in her hull, sail & rigging; she had two Guns disabled by us, three men badly wounded and two slightly—it was stated by her crew that she had nine men killed, and if they remained at their quarters during the firing, I cannot conceive (from examining the course and effect of our shot) how they could all have escaped.

The *Essex* has received a few musket & grape shots in her hull & sails, but the greatest injury she has sustained is in having her cabin windows broke by the concussion of her own guns.

The *Alert* with a select crew was cruising with the view of intercepting the *Hornet*, and it is the source of regret to me that she did not fall in with that vessel instead of the *Essex*, as the forces would then have been more equal.

We are now well convinced notwithstanding Capt Bingham's declaration that an English Sloop of War,<sup>1</sup> calculating on the Magic of the British name and Terror of British Thunder, has had the assurance to "commence attack within pistol shot on an American Frigate" for such (they informed us) they knew us to be, and have repeatedly reported, that had we been frenchmen they would either have taken

us, or made their escape, with all due deference to the insuperability of British prowess, I believe that in their future naval contests with americans, they will be induced to apply some other rule to measure their resistance, than that employed to estimate the opposition of Frenchmen.

Nothing could have exceeded the zeal exhibited by the Officers & crew of this ship, and I cannot speak in too exalted terms of the conduct of the Marines and Topmen in annoying the enemy with their muskets while he was enabled to keep under our stern—his striking so soon was the cause of no small regret to the seamen as it deprived them of the opportunity of firing that broadside, on the effect of which they had so largely counted and of which the enemy was evidently so much in dread.

After getting the officers and greater part of the crew from the *Alert*, I sent Lt J P Wilmer on board as Prize Master with an intention of proceeding in company with her to America; but had I considered that she possessed as many good qualities as our own Ships of War, I should have sent Lt Downes [John Downes], and strongly have recommended him to you as her future commander. She will answer admirably as a guard or block ship but not as a cruizer—After repairing her damages and finding her to sail badly, on the 18th Augt I concluded (as we had a great many prisoners on board and our provisions and water were getting short) to send her to St Johns in Newfoundland as a Cartel, therefore I proposed the terms contained in the enclosed papers to Capt Laugharne, which were accepted, and on the same day I dispatched her under the command of Lt Wilmer with the orders to proceed from thence to New York with such Americans as he may receive in exchange.

It would have afforded me much pleasure to have witnessed that liberality and strict sense of honor and propriety in the enemy after his surrender, that is so much the boast of Englishmen—So far from being guided by those laws of war that should govern the citizens and subjects of civilized nations, and particularly those of the Navy of Great Britain, so celebrated for its strict discipline, no sooner had Capt Laugharne left his ship, than a scene of pillage and destruction was pursued by her crew, that would have disgraced a corsaire of Barbary—The Spirit room, pursers, and other store rooms were broken or thrown open, nor did the Captains Cabin & private stores escape, and such articles as could not be taken were broken, thrown overboard, and otherwis wantonly destroyed—But Sir, while I state



those facts I fully acquit Capt Laugharne of any suspicion of having authorized, or being concerned in conduct so disgraceful & dishonorable to such as have, by a surrender, not only claimed the mercy and generosity of their vanquishers but have deceived them into a confidence of security against further acts of hostility—Although British pride may have been much humbled, such means of convincing us of the fact was of all others the most unjustifiable.

The *Essex* has sent into Port and destroyed since the 12th of July, nine of the enemies ships and Brigs, and the whole amount of property may be estimated at \$300,000. she has also made 424 prisoners, some of whome have gone on parole, the rest have been sent off in Cartels to be exchanged, and during that time she has been off Bermudas, Halifax & St Johns in Newfoundland, and the Western Islands: Only one man has died during the cruize, and at this time she has not a man on board unable to do his duty—she has never at any time run from an enemy, nor has any endeavour been used to shun them, though frequently in the neighborhood of very superior force.

Copies of papers relative to every important transaction of the cruize accompany this letter. Also subjoined is a list of captures. I have the honor to be [&c.]

D Porter

#### List of Captures by the *Essex*

July 11th 1812	The Transport <i>Samuel &amp; Sarah</i> , Captain L. T. Somes, conveying troops to Quebec: Ransomed
July 13th	Brig <i>Lamprey</i> Thos White Master from Jamaica bound to Halifax via Bermuda—Cargo Rum &c &c sent in Midn Haddiway [William H. <i>Haddaway</i> ] Prize Master
July 26th	Brig <i>Leander</i> Jno: Bolsor Master, from Liverpool bound to Newfoundland: cargo Salt, Coal &c &c sent in Midn [George] Pearce Prize Master.
Augt 2d	Ship <i>Nancy</i> Edwd Stanworth Master from Gibraltar bound to Newfoundland—Cargo Salt, Coal &c &c: sent in Midn [Joseph L.] Biggs Prize Master.
" 2d	Brig <i>Hero</i> , Henry Gardner Master from Guernsey bound to Newfoundland, in ballast—Burnt!

" 3d	Brig <i>Brothers</i> , Richd Penny Master, having on board 62 Prisoners, captured by Capt Joshua Barney of the Schooner <i>Rossie</i> increased the number to 87 and sent her in as a Cartel to St Johns, Newfoundland under command of Midn [Stephen D.] McKnight <sup>2</sup>
" 8th	Brig <i>King George</i> , Jno: Alkinson Master from Pool bound to Newfoundland Cargo Salt &c &c—sent in Midn: [Richard] Dashiell Prize Master
" 9th	Brig <i>Mary</i> Jno Small Master, from Pool bound to Newfoundland, in ballast Burnt!
" 13th	Sloop of War <i>Alert</i> Capt S L P Laugharne sent to St Johns Newfoundland as a Cartel.

D. P.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 12.

1. Commander Arthur Bingham, commanding officer of the British sloop of war *Little Belt*. See his letter to Vice Admiral Sawyer on pp. 41–43.

2. See p. 218.

## Discipline On Board Privateers

*As seen in the case of the privateer Matilda (pp. 191–92), discipline was occasionally lacking on board private armed ships. However, Captain Joshua Barney of Rossie had been an officer in the Continental Navy and was well aware of the importance of discipline for a successful cruise. Article 15 of the Instructions of Letters of Marque (see p. 169) had been framed for a purpose. Having put in at Newport at the end of his first successful cruise, Barney transferred to Master Commandant Oliver H. Perry two men whom he believed deserved trial by court martial. The following documents refer to this incident.*

MASTER COMMANDANT OLIVER H. PERRY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newport Sept 3d 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inclose you two letters from Capt Joshua Barney, commanding the private-armed Schooner *Rossie* requesting a court martial on John Nerborn & Thomas Holden-the latter it appears from the documents which I have in my possession as noted in the margin not only prove him to be an American Citizen, but that he has been in the Naval Service of the United States, and as Capt Barney alleges "a deserter from it." They are now in confinement onboard *No 46* where they will be kept until your pleasure is known.

I have been induced to take them in charge from the circumstance of the *Rossie* being about to sail, and looking upon one of them as a deserter from the Navy. It has not however escaped me Sir, that Capt Barney should have made this request direct to you. I am [&c.]

O.H. Perry

For the Margin please turn over-

Memn papers found on Thos Holden

No 1st Certificate of Citizenship dated at Philadelphia March 13th 1806 signed by Richard Bache Junr Clerk

2 Passport as citizen of the United States "having occasion to pass into foreign countries &c" dated July 3rd 1804 and signed by James Madison Secy of State

3 A Protection as an American Seaman & citizen of the U.S. granted by Sharp Delany (No.905) Collector of the District of Pennsylvania March 28th 1797. Endorsed in the Margin "American Consulate London Feby 14th 1809 examined & approved Febury. Dickens, Chancellor.

4 A Letter dated Sept 7th 1802 from Richard Pitt directed to Mr. Holden,<sup>1</sup> [care of] commanding officer onboard the frigate *Ge. Greene* Washington [Navy Yard]

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 11.

1. Thomas Holden served as acting gunner on board *General Greene* in Nov. 1802. See Knox, *Barbary Wars II*: 316-17.

[Enclosure]

O.H. Perry Esqr

Newport R.I. Sept 2d 1812

Sir,

I have sent onboard your Vessel, a man by the name of Thomas Holden, he was taken by the private armed schooner *Rossie* under my Command, when Chief Mate of the British Ship *Jeanie* which ship Engaged me. I find by his papers that he is a Citizen of the U.S. and that he has been employed onboard of one of the public vessels, having taken him In Arms against his Country, I have thought proper to deliver him over to the Authority of the Country, & in consequence have sent him on board your Vessel and with him, the papers found in his Possession proving his Citizenship, to be dealt with according to Law. I am Sir [&c.]

Joshua Barney

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 11.

[Enclosure]

O.H. Perry Esqr

Newport R.I. Sept 2d 1812

Sir

By the inclosed Law of the U.S., Article 15, you will perceive the Mode pointed out for the trial of Offences committed onboard private Armed Vessels, In consequence of that Law, I have sent onbd the Vessel of the Commanding Officer, a man by the name of John Nerbon. This man is accused of Cowardice and flying from his Quarters in time of Action. I therefore beg, you will be pleased to order a Court Martial for the purpose of putting him on his trial, and am your [&c.]

Joshua Barney  
Comr of P.A.S. *Rossie*

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 11.

## Commodore Rodgers— Ready for Action

*After returning from a long, disappointing voyage of many weeks duration, Commodore John Rodgers was alert to the possibilities for action. While preparing President and Hornet for an upcoming cruise, Rodgers interrupted this work to prepare for action against H.M. frigate Maidstone which he understood was in the offing, outside Boston Bay. In amplification of his cruise report (pp. 262–66) Rodgers sent further suggestions on how U.S. Navy ships ought to cruise in the future and mentioned scurvy among the men of President, a fact known also to the British commander at Halifax (p. 497). The enclosure, from Oliver H. Perry, contains intelligence concerning a British squadron which had its own problems with scurvy.*

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*  
Boston Sept 4th 1812

Sir

A report having reached here yesterday, about one o'clock, that an Action had taken place that morning off Cape Ann, between two Frigates supposed to be the *Essex* and British Frigate *Maidstone*. I had prepared to put to Sea this morning, with this Ship, the *United States*, and *Hornet*, in the expectation that if it had been the *Essex*, she would at least require assistance to get into port, the *Maidstone* being a much heavier Ship. After working all night, taking in Water & provisions, and having sent our Sick to the *Constitution* and *Congress*, and received effective men in their place, the report turns out to be entirely unfounded: This circumstance, I am sorry to say, will retard our equipment three or four days longer.

Permit me to suggest Sir for your consideration whether, when the Ships, at present here, are ready for Sea, it would not be advisable to go out in Squadron and afterwards separate: By this means the Enemy will for a considerable time be kept in ignorance of the dispo-

sition of our vessels, and, in consequence, concentrate his force, to the advantage of our commerce. It will at the same time afford now and then an opportunity to our Frigates and theirs, of falling in singly, to our advantage, as I am satisfied they never will attack us in squadron, without a decidedly superior force, as fully appears from the character of the force with which they have appeared on our coast since I left New York.

The Communication of which the enclosed is a Copy I received this morning. I had known however, a fortnight previous to my arrival here that the squadron, it mentions, was on our coast, and by referring to the Log-book I find we were on the 30th Ult where they are represented to have been two days.

I do not regret that we did not fall in with them, particularly as we had so many men confined with the Scurvy.

The men affected with the Scurvy are recovering very rapidly and I hope they will all be perfectly restored to health in twenty days at farthest: no time will be lost, you may be assured, in getting the Ships ready for Sea again: I feel extremely anxious to make up for time lost, at the first of the War.

I wrote you yesterday respecting the *Hornet*, she will be ready for Sea tomorrow or next day, and might make a cruise of a fortnight, and return by the time the other vessels are ready.

I am about ordering a survey on the *Constitution*, and apprehend she will require new lower masts: the other injuries she gained in the action, can be soon repaired. With the greatest respect [&c.]

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 16.

[Enclosure]

[To John Rodgers]

New Port Sept 3rd 1812

5 P.M.

Sir

By an arrival this moment at this place the Ship *Neptune* Captn Rolls from Liverpool in 30 days I am informed by Captn Williams a passenger, that they left the *Eolus* in company with the *Spartan*, *Maidstone*, and a Brig of War on Sepr 1st at 9 A.M. in Latd 41° 11' Longd 69° 42' in 50 fathoms water. the same evening they were joined



by a large Ship which he supposed to be *Shannon*, making in all four Ships & a Brig—when last seen they were laying too, heads to the Eastd The whole squadron was short of water, and it was said were ordered to Halifax—many of the Crew of the *Eolus* had the Scurvey. It is supposed they had water for fifteen days. It was mentioned on board the *Eolus* that they intended to make an attempt on some port in the U. States for the purpose of Cutting out, preparations were making by mounting Swivels in the Boats &c These accounts is confirmed by several of the passengers

I have thought this information of sufficient importance to warrant me in sending an express to you I have therefore directed Mr [Stephen] Champlin Comdg Gun Boat No 89 to proceed direct to Boston with this

18 of the *Eolus* Crew were down with the Scurvy.

Signed, O. H. Perry

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 16.

## A Critical Report on the North Carolina Gunboats

*Congressman William Blackledge, a representative from North Carolina in the 12th Congress (1811–1813), was a personal friend of Secretary Hamilton. While travelling to Washington, North Carolina, Blackledge discovered some irregularities in the performance of the U.S. Navy gunboats assigned to protect Ocracoke Inlet. He reports his discoveries in the following letter, in which he also comments on problems of supplying the navy in that location. Blackledge's political persuasion is apparent from opinions expressed in the postscript.*

CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM BLACKLEDGE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Washington N Carolina  
Sepr 4th 1812

Dear Sir,

On my arrival at this place, I find one of the Gun boats here, & learn that their Orders are to Cruise in the waters of Ocracock. Now before I left Newburn I found complaints that the Boats did not lie at Ocracock or in that neighborhood where they are wanted, but availing themselves of the latitude of their orders are almost always at Newburn or this place. The waters of Roanoake, Tar river & Neuse are considered by them as the waters of Ocracock because they discharge through that inlet, yet it is obvious no enemy can get into these rivers but through Ocracock Inlet. The use of Gun boats at Ocracock is to prevent an enemy coming at that Inlet & to protect the vessels lying in that harbor. They would also be useful in preventing depredations upon the Citizens living on Ocracock & Portsmouth Banks, but to lie at Newburn, Washington or Edenton they would be of no earthly use. The two Orderd to Beaufort are arrived and will no doubt occupy their proper Stations at that town which is in sight of the Sea. Before I close this letter I beg leave further to mention that a few days past a vessel arrived at Newburn with Flour and Pork for the Gun boats, the Captain of which said he was orderd by the Navy Agent at Baltimore to deliver his Cargo to John P. Blount Esq. Mer. at this place (Washington). Yet you have a Navy Agent at Newburn Jeremiah Brown, and at Newburn Pork and flour are always 15 to 25 P Cent lower than at Norfolk. Then where is the policy of purchasing at a higher price in Norfolk, paying freight & shiping it round at the risque of Capture? These things are remarked upon by our enemies and our friends cant well ward off the effect of their observations. My sincere good wishes to the administration and particulary for you have incuced [*induced*] me to state this circumstances, and remain your sincere friend [&c.]

Wm. Blackledge

P.S.

Federalism has gained much ground in this State but there is never the less a considerable majority not less than 20 to 30 of republicans



elected, so that unless some very untoward circumstances should occur in carrying on the war there can be no doubt but the whole votes of this State will be for Mr Madison. The letters of the New York Committee & their pamphlet in favor of [DeWitt] Clinton are very briskly circulated here, & the federalists of this State will do their utmost to elect him, as the Essex Junto have determined to support him, & not to run any candidate of their own politics.<sup>1</sup>

W. B.

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 89.

1. Essex Junto: phrase coined by John Hancock to describe hardcore Federalists of New England led by Timothy Pickering. New York Republicans, led by DeWitt Clinton, opposed the reelection of President James Madison and won the support of many Federalists in their autumn campaign. *Address of the Republican Committee of the City of New-York. . . in Support of the Nomination of the Hon. DeWitt Clinton, to the Presidency. . .* [New York, 1812] was issued 17 Aug.

## Joshua Humphreys's Advice

*In September 1812, Congressman Adam Seybert from Philadelphia wrote former naval shipbuilder Joshua Humphreys with several questions regarding U.S. Navy ships. Humphreys's replies provide an interesting commentary on the state of the navy, Humphreys's notions of shipbuilding, and the United States' proposed building of 74-gun ships of the line. Humphreys's reputation had grown to large proportions since the days of the American Revolution. As the superintendent of a commercial shipyard in Philadelphia, he fitted out several vessels of the Continental Navy. In 1794, Humphreys was appointed the first "naval constructor" of the United States, and he is credited with having developed the basic plan for the 44-gun frigates which became the mainstay of the U.S. Navy from 1797 until 1815.*

*Although Humphreys was dismissed as naval constructor in 1801, he continued to take work on commission from the government, in particular, the building of a yard and dock for the U.S. Navy at Philadelphia in 1806. At the time Congressman Seybert asked his advice, Humphreys was in retirement on his farm near Chester, Pennsylvania. Seybert was a Republican member of Congress during the years 1809–1815 and 1817–1819; he was particularly interested in compiling*

*statistical data concerning expenditures and revenues of the United States, which he later published.*<sup>1</sup>

1. Adam Seybert, *Statistical Annals embracing Views of the Population, Commerce, Navigation, Fisheries, etc. (Philadelphia, 1818).*

JOSHUA HUMPHREYS TO CONGRESSMAN ADAM SEYBERT

[Extracts]

Sept 5, 1812

Pentreading Farm Delaware County

Sir

I have received your letter of the 12th ulto and have endeavoured to convey to you facts and my Ideas on the different subjects as they have occurred to me, I should have sent you my answer sooner, but was prevented by my rural affairs.

Whether the naval establishment has been conducted with proper management, or with mismanagement I cannot say. I have endeavoured to explain as well as my recollection serves me, the manner it was conducted so far as it came under my notice, perhaps a comparison with the present establishment may give some information.

However I may differ from the policy of the present administration, as an American, I shall nevertheless always be ready and willing to communicate to them the little experience I possess.

The natural & Political capacity of the nation to create & maintain a Navy

On this question I can say but little, but I should suppose there could be no doubt on this subject, as this Country is the second greatest commercial nation in the world, and as we have heretofore derived all our revenue from commerce which is ample, and will increase if encouraged; therefore it is the interest of the U.S. to cherish & protect it; The resources of this country are in my opinion fully adequate to create and maintain a Navy: and money properly expended for that purpose would save more to this country, than if we were without a navy. The U.S. abound with every material, requisite for the building and equipping Ships of war.

The actual State & present management of the Navy of the U.S.

I can say little or nothing on this subject. The gun boats & some few other matters only have come under my notice. The Gun boats which have been built in this port, are in my opinion badly constructed and as badly executed. Gun Boats ought to be constructed for Shallow water and not larger than sufficient for our bays, they ought never to be sent into extensive waters, because the smaller and lighter they are built, so that they are large & strong enough to carry the men & metal they are intended for the better, The timber should be of the smallest size & out of timber grown to the mould. no timber should be put into them cut across the grain, because it is a useless weight, in fact it is a disadvantage as it adds weight without increasing the strength. The Cranes for the waste cloths ought to have been made in such a manner, that when done rowing, the Oars would swing directly fore and aft which is the best position for them when not in use, & they can more easily be resumed; The present mode, is when the Oars are not in use, to either run across the deck, or let them stick out from the side; In the first instance the oars must encumber the deck, and in the last are very liable to be broken.

The manner in which they are rigged is in my opinion, improper, from their construction & rig they cannot move against a head wind. If they were built light & of a proper construction & rigged with Lattean masts & Yards they could be rowed against any moderate breeze. The masts are short & when the sails are baid up, the yards are placed in a horozontal position so that their ends only are exposed to the wind; Another great advantage arises from the lattean sails, they will lay much nigher the wind than any other.

In order to bring to any point in a short time a number of Gun-boats, and to make a much less number answer, say one half, and appropriate the sum the other half would cost, with the sum it would take to maintain them, to open an Inland navigation from St Marys River to Rhode Island, by this means the one half would be much more formidable than the whole is under the present unconnected state of the river & bays; Inland navigation would much facilitate the transportation of stores from one place to another. . . .

The best state in which it may be practicable to place it under existing circumstances.

I would recommend to call in all our small Cruisers and heavy sailing vessels and station them in our Rivers and Bays, and keep none out but the large Frigates, the *Essex* and any other of our vessels that sail fast.

Of Timber what are the kinds of timber commonly used and the most approved for the construction of ships in the port of Philadelphia.

The timber that is now generally used in this port is white oak but sometimes they are built of Live oak & red Cedar, & generally the principle pieces are of Live Oak. The Timber which our Merchant Vessels were generally built of before the Revolution were White Oak, Live Oak & Red Cedar; Their floor & raising Timbers, Lower Futtocks, Knees & sometimes the beams were of white oak, the middle and upper Futtocks & toptimbers were of Live Oak and red Cedar, and all the rooms between the timbers and plank above the floor timber heads were filled with salt, which has by experience been found the best mode of preserving ships. But experience has convinced me that if ships were built with Live Oak floor & raising timbers & lower Futtocks and the upper timbers of white Oak taken green from the stump & well salted as the best methods of building Ships; the Sap of green timbers acts as conductors, by which means, the salt penetrates all the pores of the wood and soon displaces the sap. But If Ships are not to be salted, then It will be best to build them of timber seasoned under tight sheds. Timber seasoned in water looses much of its strength by the destruction of its [quitenous] substance & when taken out is very liable to rend and crack on being exposed in the air & is very brittle & short. . . .

Is there at this time a provision of large and approved timber at the yards of Philadelphia

I will require about, 30,000 Cubic feet of timber for the frame of a large 70 or 80 Gun ship exclusive of plank wales &c. There has been delivered from 1800 to 1802 into the different Navy Yards cut expressly for the 74 Gun Ships the quantity annexed most of which I suppose may be on hand

Boston	40,036	Cubic feet
Portsmouth N.H.	18,706	ditto
New York	18,676	do

Norfolk	18,542	do
Philadelphia	20,426	do

Besides the Live Oak there was provided in this port Keel pieces, Kelsons, wales, &c a large proportion of the live Oak knees were reshipped to Washington & also a number of white oak knees were procured here and sent on to the same place. I believe there are very few pieces of timber in the yards of Philadelphia that would be suitable for ships more than 500 tons. . . .

Can ships of war be conveniently built in Philadelphia of what rates particularly

There is no port in the U.S. in which ships of war can be built more conveniently than in Philadelphia of any Rate that will be useful for the United States, which I presume ought not to exceed double deck Ships on account of their harbours. The Ships built in this port are noticed in all parts of the world for their beauty and substantial workmanship, and are preferred to all others and have always commanded a freight in preference to any other Vessels built in the U.S. and for the risque of the sea can be insured at a less premium. . . .

Should Government direct the building of the double deck Ships, I would by all means recommend the extension of their dimensions, the timber provided will admit of it & make them the most formidable double ships; by extending their dimensions you encrease their sailing. By building your ships of war larger and more powerful than they are in Europe you take a lead in two classes of ships (I mean double deck Ships & large Frigates) which will in a degree render the Ships of Europe of the same class in a very great degree useless, but if you build of the same size & construction you will always be behind. it is only by taking a bold lead you have any chance of succeeding; no necessary expence ought to be spared on this subject for it is one of the most important in the formation of our navy. The recent & last most brilliant affair of the Frigate *Constitution* confirms this opinion. The excellent qualities of our large Frigates, has confirmed the arguments I made use of in favour of their size. In drafting the 74 I had not the same latitude, they are much smaller than I think they ought to be. . . .

What time would be required to build a 74, in the port of Philadelphia admitting the necessary timber was already in

the yard. What time is generally consumed for building a merchant ship of 300 tons do they last in proportion to the time employed in building

A 74 may be built in about 12 months if all the materials are provided, merchant ships generally take from 4 to 6 months. I do not [think] that it makes any difference as to the time in building. . . .

Have you any knowledge of the premature decay of the Ships of war belonging to U.S. if yea, to what cause do you attribute it & what are the precautions you would recommend in future.

The first knowledge I had of the decay of our ships of war, was, in the year 1800, on board the Frigate *UStates*, about three years after she was Launched. Having been in the Habit of Salting all the Merchant Ships I built, I strongly pressed the necessity of salting the Frigate *U.S.* but it was opposed by Captain [John] Barry he stated it would make the ship damp & unhealthy, he carried his point: The want of this necessary precaution, was one reason why the cause of decay affected that part of the ship so much. I am convinced the decay was caused by the foul air of the ship & for want of a free circulation of fresh air, & I am confirmed in this opinion from the following facts. I found in taking off the plank that above almost every port cill where the foul air was in a great degree excluded, the plank was much less affected, and in some places not at all; the Brackets of the spare gun carriages which were laid in the hold, one on the other, the foul air lodged between them where I suppose there was little or no circulation, in this situation, that part of both brackets that laid on each other was decayed, when the other parts were sound, the reasons that these parts of the brackets, which were not affected, was In my opinion owing, to the air not being so confined, but had a circulation from many causes.

In the Frigate *Constellation* I found where the Bulk heads were nailed to the beams & where I conceived the foul air lodged & where the common movements in the vessel could give it little or no circulation, In these places I found the beams Rotten (not in the heart that part being sound, as is the case in all our large white Oaks they decay the first in the heart) on the outside this was the first instance of the kind I had ever met with, From these facts I am firmly persuaded the premature



decay in our ships was caused by the foul air in the hold, & which I as firmly believe may be prevented by salt & sufficient ventelation.

To remedy the Evil in some degree in the *UStates*, I had hung between every Gun port a hanging port, with a communication from all the timbers between the Gun ports by a ralbit in the edges of the plank, in which there fixed a thin plank that was 1 1/2 inches clear of the timbers, through this opening I conceived the air would circulate, these ports kept constantly opening & shutting as the ship heeled the weather side opening & the lee side shutting. If ships were to be salted there would be of no occasion for this precaution, neither would it have any good effect, as all the room between the timber would be filled with salt. wether the same precaution was made use of on board the *Constellation* while under repair I cannot say, nor what was the result of this on board the *U.S.* as I was discharged from the service before the *Constellation* was finished.

Would you under any circumstances advise ships of war to undergo a thougrough repair, or do you deem it preferable to put them out of service when in a condition to need such repair.

Under some circumstances I would advise very considerable repairs where a ship has been found to be of superior construction where her qualities exceed any other ships, in such cases I should advise a repair if it would amount to the cost of a new vessel

In the merchant service I have always advised my employers, when their ships wanted considerable repairs to dispose of them, but with Government it is different their Old ships cannot be disposed of they are seldom suitable for merchants they are therefore under the necessity of giving their vessels heavy repairs. It is a very difficult point to ascertain the true state of a Ship even by the most experienced & disinterested persons. Officers some times press considerable repairs of their vessels, even should the cost exceed her value when she is repaired; for fear of loosing their command, and there are very few who have had sufficient experience to form correct opinions and so various are the opinions of commanders, that let the most experienced one of the navy have the fitting of a ship & then change the commander & if he has time and liberty will run the public to very considerable expence in alterations he will state to be absolutely necessary. True principles ought to be fixed upon by which all vessels belonging

to the U.S. should be fitted and no alterations should be allowed, but what could be done with the crew of the ship without any additional Cost. There are certain considerations to be taken into view before an opinion could be formed wether great or extensive repairs ought to be gone into, particularly the relative cost & firmness when compleated & compared with that of a new one, than unless the advantage was very obvious & clear repairs ought not to be gone into; It is a fact that after the strictest examination & calculations made when you have taken out the defective parts first discovered you will always find more so that you never know the cost untill the repairs are compleated. . . .

Before I close this letter I will take the Liberty to state the duty assigned & performed by me under the Navy Department while Philadelphia was the seat of Government of the U.S. and the compensation allowed me; and where the greatest number of vessels of War belonging to the United States were fitted, It was a satisfaction to me to be informed by Mr Stoddard [Benjamin Stoddert] Secretary of the Navy, that the vessels were always fitted more expeditiously and at much less expence than in any other port in the U.S. . . .

Joshua Humphreys

The Honl Adam Seybert

Copy, PHi, Joshua Humphreys Papers, 1682-1835, Letterbook 1800-1835, pp. 99-114.

## A Narrow Escape

*Captain David Porter was returning to port after a successful cruise off the Grand Banks when he encountered and was chased by three enemy warships. He fell in with them off Georges Bank, a rich fishing ground northeast of Cape Cod. The following document is his report to the secretary of the navy. Essex sailed into Delaware Bay and put in at Chester, Pennsylvania, for a layover of almost seven weeks. Porter's next assignment was to sail with Constitution and Hornet under Commodore Bainbridge.*



CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

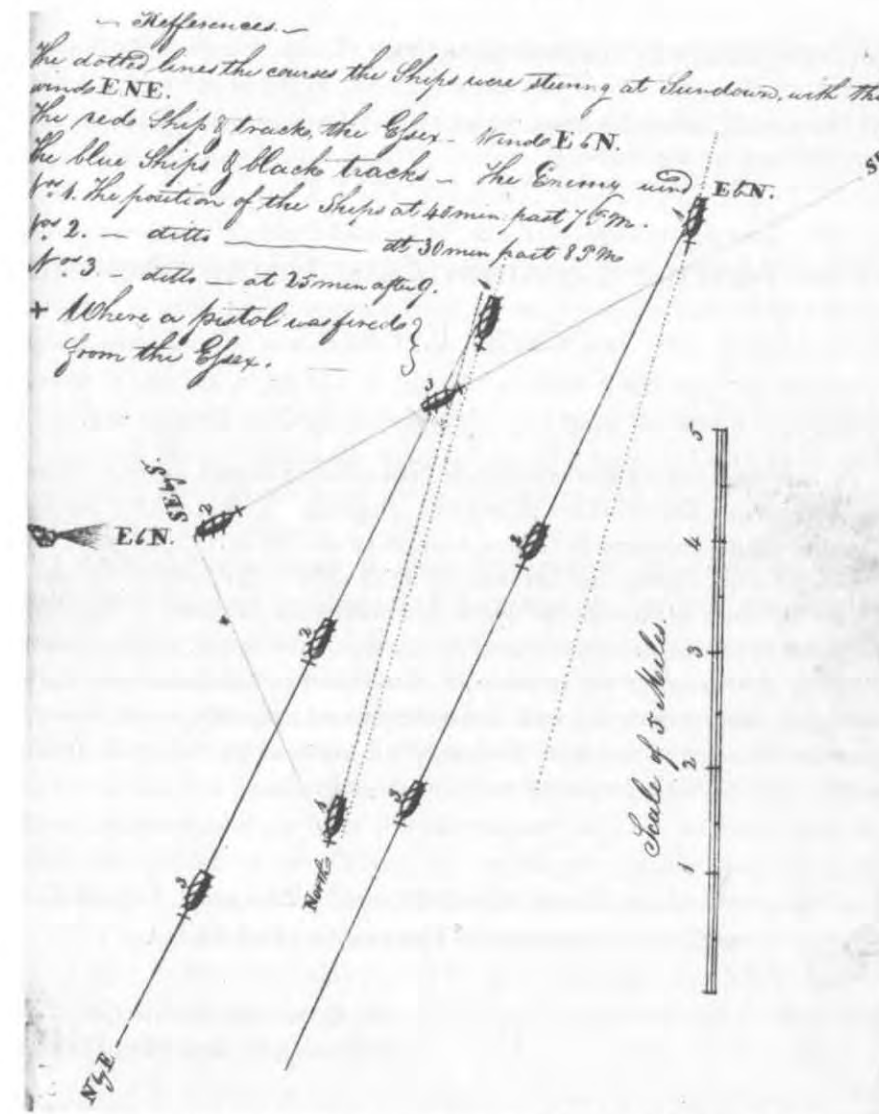
U.S. Frigate *Essex*  
At Sea Sept 5th 1812

Sir,

On the 4th inst off the tail of St. Georges Bank I discovered two Ships of War to the Southd and a Brig to the Northd—the Brig in chace of an American Merchant Ship, and I have not the slightest doubt of their being enemies!—gave chace to the Brig which attempted to get past us to join the rest of the squadron, this we prevented and compelled her to stand to the Northd continued in chace until we got abreast the American Ship when we gave over chace as the wind was getting light and the Brig leaving us with her sweeps out—On shewing our colours to the American Merchant Ship several signal guns were fired by the ships to the southward which made all sail in chace of us. At 4 PM they had gained our wake and had come up with us very fast, calculating on making my escape by some manoeuver in the course of the night, I hoisted American colours and fired a Gun to Windward; the ships still continuing to gain on us and the largest being considerably to windward of the other and about 5 miles a stern of us bearing S. by W. I determined to heave about as soon as it grew dark, and, in the event of our not being able to pass him, to fire a broad side into him and lay him on board; with this view made every arrangement and preparation the crew in high spirits & gave three cheers when the plan was proposed to them—At 20 minutes after 7 hove about and stood S E by S (the wind heading us off the moment we hove in stays) until 30 minutes after 8, when we bore away SW without seeing any thing more of them, which seems the more extraordinary as a pistol was fired by accident on board this ship at the moment when we must have been at our shortest distance from them. Finding myself thus cut off from New York and Rhode Island, I made the best of my way for the Delaware.

Considering this escape as a very extraordinary one, I have the honor to enclose you a sketch of the position of the ships at three different periods, by which you will perceive at once the plan of effecting it.<sup>2</sup> I have the honor [&c.]

D Porter



Captain Porter's Sketch of the Escape of *Essex* off Georges Bank,  
4 September 1812

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 18.

1. According to James, *Naval History*, V, 367-68, the "two Ships of War" were *Shannon* and recaptured merchant ship *Planter*.

2. The enclosure is filed with the letter. See illustration, p. 463.

## The Marine Commandant Comments on Naval Events

*In replying to Captain Archibald Henderson's report on the cruise of President, Commodore Rodgers's flagship, Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton remarked on the service of marines on board ship during the summer of 1812. His letter, which follows, shows his sense of loss in the death of Lieutenant William S. Bush of Constitution's marine guard and his concern for detail in providing clothing for marines on shipboard. The marines available for duty were few compared to the new demands placed upon the corps, consequently reassignments were frequent as some ships returned from cruises while others prepared to weigh anchor.*

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C.,  
TO CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD HENDERSON, U.S.M.C.

H. Q. of the Marine Corps  
Washington, Sept 7th 1812

Sir!

I congratulate you on the return of the Squadron, & I hope the Cruise has restored your Health, of which you have said nothing in your last communications to me.<sup>1</sup>

I had heard, as you may suppose with great pleasure, the brilliant act of Capt Hull, which has done much for our Country, & I trust will do something for its Navy. The loss we have to lament in the fall of our late brother officer Bush is severe; but as a Military Man he has gained by it—he has left an example worthy of Imitation, & his Memory will be cherished so long as heroic Acts are valued.

Your reports will be attended to on the Books of the Adj't in regard to the loss of your Men, & the promotions you have made are confirmed.

Commodore Rogers will be made acquainted, if not already so, of the relief in the Squadron of two officers of the Corps, yourself and Lieut [Henry H.] Forde. it will be of course most advisable that you immediately prepare yourselves to deliver the Guards to the officers ordered to relieve you, & who have been in New York for some months. They are Capt [Robert] Greenleaf, & Lieut [William] Strong. Whenever the relief has been made you will receive the Guard of Marines at Boston, or rather Charlestown from Lieut [James] Broom, who will remain with you for some time there, to assist you. The moment Lieut Forde is relieved order him to proceed to New York, with all dispatch, & report himself to Capt [John] Hall, as I have for him a Command which will be very desirable—indeed if it were possible I should be very happy for Lieut Forde to proceed there on receipt of this—by the consent of the Commodore.

I find you have been by your unexpected departure from N. York—very deficient in Clothing. I have had placed there supplies for you, & have now directed Capt Hall to forward, whatever he can, with all dispatch—some Articles he cannot have on hand. I must therefore request you to contract for the delivery of 150 Uniform Coats—150 Pair of Gaiters, & 500 pair of Shoes on the best terms, & to be as early as possible furnished for the use of the Squadron. The form, or pattern of each, of the two former Articles, you can furnish, with the quality of the Cloths, & I presume you can buy them in Boston, as cheap as in New York. For the Coats I there pay 8:50 each. I cannot however limit you in the prices; you must make the Contract; & the Contractors will be paid through the Navy Agent, who will be instructed so to do. The Agent I presume could assist you much in this business. I am [&c.]

F. Wharton

Capt Archibald Henderson  
Commandg Marines, of the *President*  
Boston

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

1. Archibald Henderson, commissioned 2nd lieutenant on 4 June 1806, was promoted 1st lieutenant on 6 Mar. 1807, and captain 1 Apr. 1811. He was appointed lieutenant colonel commandant of the Marine Corps in 1820, rose in rank to brevet brigadier general, and served as commandant until his death in 1859. He was, at the time this letter was written, commanding officer of *President's* marine detachment.

Repairs for War-Damaged Frigates

*The Boston navy agent was in a key position to expedite the supply of goods and services for warships and naval personnel. On 23 January 1812, Secretary Hamilton informed Amos Binney that he had been appointed to this position and that for his services he would receive a commission of 1 percent on all naval expenditures.<sup>1</sup> But when the war began, the amount of work that fell to the navy agent was staggering, particularly at Boston, the port closest to the scenes of naval action. Binney described his initiation as a wartime naval agent in an account published in 1822:*

*In Aug. or Sept. [1812] the whole squadron came into port. Every ship required complete supplies of provisions and every kind of stores. I was but newly appointed, had no experience, no precedents, no forms, no instructions; was obliged to form a whole system from the chaos that surrounded me, was always short or wholly destitute of funds. I resorted to the banks and to my friends for money on loans and on interest, was soon overwhelmed with requisitions from the public ships in every department—purser, boat-swains, carpenters, gunners, armourers; and frequently had half a dozen midshipmen, with as many boats' crews, calling for stores, &c. I could not be with, or serve everyone at once; hence was obliged to confide much of the business in detail to persons I believed honest and faithful.<sup>2</sup>*

*The following order, concerning the finances of repairing warships damaged in battle, arrived on Binney's desk at the very time described above.*

1. Hamilton to Binney, 23 Jan. 1812, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, pp. 28–29 (and enclosure). For further orders, see Hamilton to Binney, 19 Feb., DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 40.  
2. Documents relative to the Investigation, by Order of the Secretary of the Navy, of the Official Conduct of Amos Binney, United States Navy Agent at Boston, upon the Charges made by Lieutenant Joel Abbot and Others, "Published by the Accused" (Boston, 1822), pp. 60–61.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO NAVY AGENT AMOS BINNEY

Amos Binney Esqr  
Boston  
Navy Depart  
8 Sept 1812

Your letter of 31 ulto has been received.  
On account of pay of the Navy 10,000\$: on account of provisions 10,000\$: on account of medicines 2,000\$ and on account of contingencies 1000\$—I have this day directed a warrant to be issued in your favor, agreeably to your requisition.  
You require "For Repairs 4,000\$." The repairs of the frigates *Constitution* & *President*, as both those vessels have been damaged in action, must be paid for out of the appropriation for "repairing our vessels of war, that may be damaged in action"; and under this head you will be pleased to make your requisitions for all monies required for the repair of the frigates *Constitution* & *President*, and for the repair of all other of our public vessels that may arrive at Boston under similar circumstances—that is requiring repairs of damages sustained in action with the enemy.

That no inconvenience may arise to the public Service, and as you will certainly want more the [than] 4000\$ for the repairs of the frigates *President* & *Constitution*, I have directed you a remittance of Ten thousand dollars, out of the appropriation for "Repairs of vessels damaged in action."  
We are extremely anxious to get all our public vessels to Sea, with the least possible delay—and we confidently hope, that every assistance on your part, will be promptly rendered, to effect this desirable object.

For Paul Hamilton  
C: W: Goldsborough

Pay.	10,000
Provisions	10,000
Medicine	2,000
Contingent	1,000
Repairs of vessels	
damaged in action	10,000
	<u>\$33,000</u>



Copy, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, pp. 142-43.

## The Porter-Bainbridge Friendship

*On returning from his cruise, David Porter wrote Commodore Bainbridge of his successes and added some personal comments. Porter had served as Bainbridge's first lieutenant on board the frigate Philadelphia when she grounded off Tripoli in 1803. He had shared the trials of imprisonment at the hands of the Tripolitans with Bainbridge, and the two officers remained close friends for many years afterwards.*

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE

U.S. Frigate *Essex* Mouth of Delaware  
Sept 8th 1812

Dear Sir

I have the good fortune to inform you of my safe arrival here and of the success of my cruise I have no cause to complain, for although I have not benefited myself much, I have the satisfaction to reflect that I have been a great annoyance to the Enemy—I have taken in the mouths of their Harbors eight of their merchant vessels, and one of their sloops of war, the latter fought me 8 minutes—Two of the Merchantmen I burnt—two or three days ago they gave me a hard chase and were very near catching me I however gave them the dodge in the night—I have made 220 prisoners and the injury I have done them in less than 2 months may be fairly estimated at 300,000\$ I hope however to have another slap at them ere long that will gall them still more—I do not know whether my prizes have arrived as I have not yet had any news from shore—This is written in haste by an officer that goes in a passing vessel. I know you will expect a letter from me and I am confident that you will be much pleased to hear of any of my good fortune and indeed it would be unpardonable in me to let slip the first opportunity of dropping you a line—I should be much gratified to hear from you as early as possible and feel much solicitude as to

your future intentions. Do you not intend having a dash at them? How do you like Boston? How is Mrs Bainbridge pleased with it? Give my warmest regards to her, my love & kisses to Miss Susan and the Little ones and accept assurances of my unalterable friendship & Esteem<sup>1</sup> Yours &c.

D. Porter

Comre. Wm Bainbridge

I am all anxiety to see my little rib<sup>2</sup>—I left her unwell and many a bitter and anxious moment I have felt on her account—When I get home I shall write you more fully—I think it not improbable my repairs may keep me in port 3 weeks—

ALS, Navy Department Library, Special Collections, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.

1. Susan Heyliger Bainbridge and Susan Parker Bainbridge.
2. Evalina Anderson Porter.

## Further Instructions to John Mitchell

*By a letter of 26 August, the secretary of the navy sent instructions to John Mitchell regarding his duties as American Agent for Prisoners of War at Halifax. Realizing that these instructions had been framed too broadly, giving too much discretion to the man on the scene, Hamilton's next letter to Mitchell narrowed his field of action.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO JOHN MITCHELL

John Mitchell Esq.  
Philadelphia

Navy Depart  
8 Sept 1812

In the letter of instructions addressed to you under date 26. ulto you were informed that it would "be your duty to discuss & arrange with



the proper authority all points in relation to the exchange of prisoners."

This instruction was given to you under the erroneous impression, that it was the intention of the President of the United States, to invest you with full power to discuss and definitively adjust the principles of exchange—Having communicated with the Secretary of State upon the subject, I find, that the objects of your appointment were "to promote an exchange of prisoners, to supply their wants and to facilitate their return to the United States" leaving the principles of Exchange to be settled by Commissioners hereafter to be appointed for that purpose.

So far therefore, as the instructions under date the 26th ulto may be considered as conferring upon you the power of discussing or adjusting any principle, upon which the exchange of prisoners shall be made you will consider them as hereby revoked. I am Sir [&c.]

for Paul Hamilton  
C: W: Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 142.

## Squadron Cruising Orders

*Shortly after the return of the combined squadrons of Commodore Rodgers and Decatur, preparations began for a second cruise. The results of the U.S. Navy's activity during the summer of 1812 seemed to indicate that ships cruising independently inflicted more damage on the enemy than those cruising in large squadrons. The success of Constitution and Essex were remarkable in this respect. Rodgers himself suggested in his letter to the secretary of 4 September that U.S. Navy ships sortie in squadron strength to deceive the enemy, then operate separately. Secretary Hamilton's subsequent orders show a compromise between squadron and independent operations. Three small squadrons were to be formed with considerable latitude allowed the commodores as to cruising grounds. As most of the ships intended for these squadrons were refitting and were in different ports, some time passed before they were ready to sail in force.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO  
COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Comre Rodgers  
Boston

Nav: Dapt 9 Sept 1812

It has been determined that our vessels of war shall be divided into three small Squadrons to be commanded by yourself in the frigate *President*, Comre Bainbridge in the frigate *Constitution* & Comre Decatur in the frigate *United States*;<sup>1</sup> for the present, each Squadron will consist of two frigates, & a small brig. when ready for sea each Squadron will be instructed to pursue that course, which to the commanding officer, may, under all circumstances, appear the most expedient to afford protection to our trade & to annoy the enemy; returning into port, as speedily as circumstances will permit, consistently with the great objects in view & writing to the Department by all proper opportunities

In arranging these Squadrons reference must be made to the relative rank of the respective commanding officers, & to the properties of the respective vessels—In paying every proper respect to rank we must not forget the great importance of selecting vessels for each of the squadrons, as nearly equal in the property of sailing & in capacity of burthen, as may be practicable: The three small vessels that will be attached to the squadron, will be commanded by Capt [Jacob] Jones Capt [James] Lawrence & Capt [Arthur] Sinclair: & they are to be attached to the Squadrons in the order of their rank. That is to say—Capt Jones will join Comre Rodgers; Capt Lawrence will join Comre Bainbridge—& Capt Sinclair will join Comre Decatur. The three frigates to be attached to the Squadrons (besides those to be commanded by the commodores themselves) will be the *Chesapeake*—the *Congress* & the *Essex*— & with respect to these frigates the commanders will consult the good of the Service & decide for themselves, if found necessary, & the good of the service will permit, they will choose in the order of their relative rank; that is Commodore Rodgers will choose first, Comre Bainbridge next & Comre Decatur will take the third—In making the arrangement, You will also have proper reference to the periods when the respective vessels will probably be ready for service, it being important that the whole should proceed to sea, as early as may be practicable.

The *Essex* & the *Wasp* are expected in daily—& unless they should meet with some untoward accident, they will, in a day or two, after their arrival be again prepared for service.

The commanders will give every requisite order for carrying into effect the objects of these instructions & having made the necessary arrangements, each will give every necessary attention to the outfit of his Squadron.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 146-47.

1. Identical letters were sent to Commodores Bainbridge and Decatur; see Hamilton to Bainbridge, 9 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, pp. 329-30 and Hamilton to Decatur, 9 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 144-45.

### Special Praise for Captain Hull

*Secretary Hamilton's terse letters usually contained few words of praise for his officers. The victory of Constitution over Guerriere, however, was such welcome news that he fairly deluged Captain Isaac Hull with gratitude. Material rewards in the form of prize money were forthcoming, as well as promotions and favorable reassignments for Hull and his officers. For personal reasons, Hull requested duty ashore and was assigned to the New York Navy Yard. His first lieutenant, Charles Morris, received a generous promotion. Hamilton's enthusiasm for Hull and his men is evident in the following letter.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL

Capn Isaac Hull  
Boston

Nav: Depm't  
9 Sept 1812

I have it in special charge from the secretary of the Navy to express to you & through you to the officers & crew of the frigate *Constitution* the very high sense entertained by him of your & their distinguished conduct in the late action with his Britannick Majesty's frigate the *Guerriere*. In this action, we know not which most to applaud, Your gallantry or Your skill-You, Your officers & Crew are entitled to & will receive the applause & the gratitude of Your gratefull country.

Your officers will not be neglected by this Department-Their distinguished merits entitle them to special attention.

Transmit to me the name of that excellent Man, who has lost his leg-Express my condolence in his misfortune. He shall immediately have a pension-You will also favor me with the name of that distinguished Hero "who, in the heat of the action, on seeing the flag at your foretopmast head shot away went up & lashed it in such a manner as to make it impossible for shot to take it away, without taking the mast"-& You will make to him some suitable present not exceeding value one months pay, as a testimony of the approbation of his country.

Express to Lt. Morris my high admiration of his conduct & my sincere hope, that he will speedily restored to health & further honor.

The Death of Lt. [William S.] Bush of marines is deeply regretted-He died nobly.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 148-49.

### Arrangements for Prisoner Exchange

*Prisoner of War Agent John Mitchell, soon to depart for his mission at Halifax, responded harmoniously to Secretary Hamilton's restriction of his powers as agent. In the following letter, Mitchell shows that he has rapidly grasped the principal responsibilities of his new position.*

JOHN MITCHELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Philadelpa  
9th Sept 1812

Sir,

I had the honor of writing You Yesterday, and today that of receivg your letter of the 8th revoking that part of Your Instructions of the 26th Ultio which made it "my duty to discuss and arrange with the proper Authority all points in relation to the exchange of Prisoners."

and shall conform to your desire and follow the instructions I received this day from the Secrety of State.

I have to acquaint you with my having seen Mr [Anthony St. John] Baker today, & am to see him again Tomorrow.

Should he persist in sending the British prisoners to Halifax under Contract as he mentioned to me today, instead of chartering a vessell and furnishing regular Rations to the Men I will loose no time in engaging a vessel to proceed to Halifax that will be Capable to bring back two hundred or more of our Men, as such a vessell will not be as expensive in proportion as one which will carry only 100 men.

As there is only about 40 Prisoners here Mr Baker wont look for a vessel capable of carrying a larger Number & that trifling exchange will not meet the vieus of our Government.

Tomorrow I shall have the Honor of Writing you again on the subject, I am [&c.]

John Mitchell

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 99.

## Supply Problems on the Charleston Station

*A ship's purser during the War of 1812 carried out duties which more recently have been allotted to a ship's supply officer. All items related to the needs of shipboard personnel, such as pay, clothing, and food, fell within the scope of the purser's responsibilities. He had to procure, disperse, and account for these items. Usually, the purser of a ship would deal with the navy agent of his station for the procurement of these necessities. Occasionally, however, when local goods or services of a certain type were not available or were not acceptable, he would request permission of the secretary of the navy to make a purchase outside the system. In the following letter, Purser Satterwhite of the U.S. brig Vixen discusses his needs in this regard.*

PURSER EDWIN T. SATTERWHITE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Brig *Vixen*  
Charleston, Rebellion Roads  
11th Sep 1812

Honorable Sir,

The extreme bad quality of Cloth, of which the Winter Cloathing for the men belonging to the *Vixen* were furnished last year, produced murmurings by no means agreeable. This year, it would appear, will be more difficult in procuring them. I have visited throughout Charleston, and I find that Cloathing, which is very bad, commands an exhorbitant price. I have therefore, Sir, thought it adviseable to request of you permission to let me get them of Messrs Winn & Butler of New York, as Mr [Gwinn] Harris, Purser St Mary's Station, assures me that they can be procured of a quality much superior to those in Charleston, and at prices below those heretofore paid.

I have taken the liberty to enclose a Letter for Mr Silas Butler; in which I have requested him to call on you.

The inhabitants of Charleston are very sickly; and two or three cases of Yellow Fever have occurred; owing it is supposed to the heavy falls of Rain, and the stagnant water which has been permitted to remain in Cellars, &c. You have no doubt heard of the Death of our worthy Commander, Capt'n Gadsden<sup>1</sup>-his Son, about 18 months old expired a few days after. The family are the most distressed I ever saw. I had the pleasure of conversing with Col. Waring a few days since; he stated your family to be in perfect health.

You will have the goodness, Sir, to forward my instructions relative to the Winter Cloathing. I have the honor [&c.]

Edwin T. Satterwhite

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 34.

1. Christopher Gadsden died 28 Aug. 1812.



## The Return of the *Nautilus's* Crew

*Captured on 16 July, Lieutenant William Crane, with his officers and men, was held prisoner at Halifax until arrangements for parole could be made. On his return to the United States, Crane reported to Commodore Rodgers who forwarded documents relating to Crane's confinement to the secretary of the navy. The following items include Lieutenant Crane's letter announcing his arrival at Boston and Commodore Rodgers's letter of transmittal and an enclosure in the form of a safe conduct for the cartel passengers.*

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Boston 11 Sept 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you with the arrival at this port of the officers & crew of the late U.S. Brig *Nautilus* in the *Dart* Cartel. I have laid before Comdre Rodgers the Correspondence between Admiral Sawyer and myself relative to the treatment of my crew, and thro' him all the documents which are thought in any way necessary for the information of the Department will be forwarded.

I have on the part of myself, my officers, and crew requested Commodore Rodgers to convene a court of enquiry before the seperation of the Ships Company, to investigate and examine into the causes which have led to the loss of the late U.S. Brig *Nautilus*<sup>1</sup> respectfully [&c.]

W. M. Crane

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 37.

1. For the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry on Lieutenant Crane's conduct in the loss of *Nautilus*, held on 26 Sept. 1812 on board *United States* in Boston harbor, see DNA, RG125, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Navy), (Records of General Courts Martial and Courts of Inquiry of the Navy Department, 1799-1867), Vol. 3, No. 119.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*  
Boston Sept 12th 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you that Lieut Wm. M. Crane, late Lieut Comdt of the late U.S. Brig *Nautilus* arrived here (in a Cartel from Halifax) yesterday, with the officers and crew of that vessel

Lieut Crane, his officers, and crew have been liberated on parole, or rather conditionally exchanged, as you will perceive by the inclosed paper No. 1, for a certain number of Officers and Soldiers, taken by the U.S. Frigate *Essex*, and sent to Halifax

The crew of the *Nautilus* I shall distribute among the different U. States vessels, at present here, under the presumption that yourself and the Secretary of War will assent to the proposed exchange, the Enemy having acknowledged the receipt of an equivalent number of British Officers & Soldiers, captured by the *Essex*, and which now only requires the consent of yourself, and the Secretary of War, to render the exchange effected

I shall, nevertheless, from motives of delicacy, connected with the strictest obligation of the intention of a parole of honor, consider the Officers of the *Nautilus* as merely on that parole, consequently not employ any of them on service against the Enemy, until I hear from you

Lieut Crane has requested me to signify to you his desire to have his conduct investigated, touching the capture of the *Nautilus*, as early as it may be convenient for you to give an order for the same

With the enclosed paper No 1 I herewith forward for your consideration certain others, relating most particularly to the detention of six of the *Nautilus's* crew, who have been sent to England for examination & trial, under pretence of their being British subjects

For the six men, detained as above stated, I have detained 12 of the *Gurrier's* crew, and shall cause the same to be kept in confinement until I receive your orders respecting them

You will, no doubt, readily perceive, Sir, the propriety of my orders for the detention of these men, as a retaliatory pledge for the return of those so insultingly taken from the *Nautilus*: should I, however have mistaken the policy of our government, or misconstrued our rights as a Belligerent, I hope it will be attributed to proper motives-a real wish to serve my Country, and an earnest desire to protect her rights



You will perceive, Sir, that there are also included in the exchange, or parole, No. 1, Two Midshipmen & five seamen belonging to the U.S. Frigate *Essex*, who were recaptured in a prize. Seven seamen recaptured in a prize to the U.S. Frigate *Constitution*, and one midshipman & four men belonging to the U.S. Brig *Argus*, recaptured in a prize to the squadron under my command, all of whom are placed in the same situation, as respects their exchange, that those the *Nautilus* are I have the honor to be [&c.]

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 43.

[Enclosure]

By His Excellency Lieutenant General Sir John Coape Sherbrooke KB Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief in and over His Majesty's Province of Nova Scotia and its Dependencies &c &c &c and by Herbert Sawyer Esquire Vice Admiral of the Blue, and Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Squadron on this Station  
&c &c &c

To

All unto whom these presents shall come

Greeting

Whereas the several persons who are particularly named and described in the Schedule hereunto annexed are Citizens of the United States of America have been captured by the Ship of His Majesty subsequent to the Declaration of War on the part of the United States against Great Britain and Whereas we are willing that the said Persons should be released and restored to their Native Country in Exchange for the like Number of British Subjects who are or may become Prisoners of War in the United States of America and for that purpose have given to the said Prisoners our Permission to proceed from hence under a Flag of Truce to the Port of Boston in order to preserve that courtesey and good understanding which should subsist between Nations on all such occasions and in full confidence and trust of receiving a Like Number of British Subjects who are or may become Prisoners in the United States in Exchange for them. Now be

it known that this Passport and safe conduct is hereby given by us to the said several persons beforementioned in order that they may forthwith proceed without hindrance or molestation in the Brig *Dart* whereof Ramage<sup>1</sup> is Master under a Flag of Truce as aforesaid We having every reason to conclude that the said Flag will meet with all due respect and consideration from the Government of the United States and all persons at sea or on shore belonging to the said Government

And we do hereby order and direct all His Majesty's subjects within this Province and to all Commanders of His Majesty's Ships and vessels on this Station to permit and suffer the several persons beforementioned to proceed on their said voyage to Boston in the said Brig without any hindrance interruption or molestation whatever of their persons or property and to use them kindly and courteously wheresoever they shall be found. In Testimony and Confirmation whereof we have with our hands signed these presents and caused them to be sealed with our Seals, Dated at Halifax this 1st day of September in the 52d Year of His Majesty's Reign and in the Year of our Lord 1812.

J. C. Sherbrooke<sup>2</sup>  
H. Sawyer

By His Excellencys Command  
H. H. Cogswell  
D. Secy

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 43.

1. James Ramage, later sailing master, USN (as of 1 June 1813).

2. Lieutenant General Sir John Coape Sherbrooke (1764-1830), Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, 1811-1816.

[Enclosure]

PORT  
OF  
HALIFAX

{

LIST of. AMERICAN Prisoners of War discharged out of the Custody of  
LIEUTENANT WM MILLER Agent at the said Port.<sup>1</sup>

Current Number.	Name of Prize.	Whether Man of War, Privateer, or Merchant-Vessel	Prisoners' Names.	Quality.	Time When discharged	Whither, and by what Order <sup>2</sup>
1	<i>Nautilus</i>	Man of War	W. M. Crane	Commander	1812 3 Sept	
	"	"	Thos. Babbitt	Lieutt	"	
	"	"	Foxhall A. Parker	ditto	"	
	"	"	Benjn. P. Kissim	Surgeon	"	
5	"	"	Jas. P. Sigourney	Master	"	
	"	"	Geoe. Russel	Mrs. Mate	"	
	"	"	W. H. Chaile	Midn	"	
	"	"	Chas. L. Williamson	ditto	"	
	"	"	Peter Joseph	Gunner	"	
10	"	"	Simpson Shaw	Ships Stewd	"	
	"	"	Edwd. Greenwell	Midn	"	
	"	"	Edgar Freeman	ditto	"	
	"	"	Fras. Whinsickle	Servant	"	
	"	"	James Collins	ditto	"	

15	"	"	Chas. Sewell	ditto	"	
	"	"	Josh. Colston	Seaman	"	
	"	"	Warner Breed	"	"	
	"	"	James Colter	Clerk	"	
	"	"	Christn Smith	Boats Mate	"	
20	"	"	Chas Middleton	Boatswain	"	
21	"	"	Richd Declure	S1 Maker	"	
	"	"	Abm Dermitt	Carpr	"	
	"	"	Fredk Frail	Seaman	"	
	"	"	Ledger Stout	"	"	
25	"	"	Rueben Williamson	"	"	
	"	"	John Conner	"	"	
	"	"	Hugh Dougherty	"	"	
	"	"	John Simpson	"	"	
	"	"	Thos Baker	"	"	
30	"	"	Josh Moody	"	"	
	"	"	John Howe	"	"	
	"	"	Willm Jackson	"	"	
	"	"	Peter Quarnteen	"	"	
	"	"	John Wallace	"	"	
35	"	"	Franklin Bull	"	"	
	"	"	Thos B Hatherly	"	"	

Current Number.	Name of Prize.	Whether Man of War, Privateer, or Merchant-Vessel	Prisoners' Names.	Quality.	Time When discharged	Whither, and by what Order <sup>2</sup>
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	<i>Nautilus</i>	Man of War	Wilson Denight	Seaman	1812 3 Sept	
	"	"	Elisha Painters	"	"	
	"	"	Robt W Edgehill	"	"	
40	"	"	Thos Harding	"	"	
	"	"	Henry Foster	"	"	
	"	"	James Butler	"	"	
	"	"	John Watson	"	"	
44	"	"	Willm Thomas	"	"	
45	"	"	Thos S Dyer	"	"	
	"	"	James Terney	"	"	
	"	"	Fras Gray	"	"	
	"	"	Green Camp	"	"	
	"	"	John Reed	"	"	
50	"	"	Willm Wheaton	"	"	
	"	"	Daniel Thomas	"	"	
	"	"	Chas Allan	"	"	
	"	"	John Duffie	"	"	
	"	"	Caesar Black	"	"	
55	"	"	Thomas Thompson	"	"	

	"	"	Josh Pechoa	"	"	
	"	"	Josh Goodall	"	"	
	"	"	Jno Williamson	"	"	
	"	"	John Brown	"	"	
60	"	"	Sylvester Stacey	"	"	
	"	"	Chrstr Haile	"	"	
	"	"	Andw Anderson	"	"	
	"	"	Abm Squibb	"	"	
	"	"	Richd Williams	"	"	
65	"	"	Thos Lee	"	"	
	"	"	Daniel Miller	"	"	
	"	"	Josh Raymond	"	"	
68	"	"	Josh Dunson	"	"	
	"	"	John Hunt	"	"	
70	"	"	Willm Moss	"	"	
	"	"	John Gardner	"	"	
	"	"	Swan Easland	"	"	
	"	"	John Appleton	"	"	
	"	"	Thos Jones	"	"	
75	"	"	William Lowry	"	"	
	"	"	James Williamson	"	"	
	"	"	Elias Beall	"	"	



Current Number.	Name of Prize.	Whether Man of War, Privateer, or Merchant-Vessel	Prisoners' Names.	Quality.	Time When discharged	Whither, and by what Order <sup>2</sup>
	<i>Nautilus</i>	Man of War	Richd. Moss	Seaman	1812 3 Sept	
80	"	"	Geoe Hadley	"	"	
	"	"	John Hughes	"	"	
	"	"	Thos Smith	"	"	
	"	"	John Smith	"	"	
	"	"	Willm Delloway	"	"	
85	"	"	Jno Greenleaf	"	"	
	"	"	John Ross	"	"	
	"	"	Davd Bathy	"	"	
	"	"	John Bissat	"	"	
	"	"	Bretan Stocum	"	"	
90	"	"	Saml Johnson	"	"	
	HBMS <i>Shannon</i> being an American		Thos Barge	"	"	
	" <i>Africa</i>	ditto	James W. Doty	"	"	
93	" "	ditto	Nichs Caston	"	"	
	HBMS <i>Maidstone</i> being an American		Jacob Thompson	"	"	
	" <i>Paz</i>	ditto	Dominic Naylor	"	"	
95	" "	ditto	Abm Springstone	"	"	

100	"	ditto	Clk Warren	"	"	
	" <i>Emolous</i>	ditto	Peter Williams	"	"	
	"	ditto	Willm King	"	"	
	" <i>Acasta</i>	ditto	Robt H. Read	"	"	
	"	ditto	Temple Hight	joined previous to sailing		
	"	ditto	Thos Ray	"	"	
	"	ditto	Peter Ribble	joined previous to sailing		
	"	ditto	Cornelius Rose	"	"	
105	" <i>Morgiana</i>	ditto	Robert Swan	"	"	
	"	ditto	John Karwin	"	"	
	" <i>Nymphe</i>	ditto	Saml. Blanchard	"	"	
	"	ditto	John Banks	"	"	
110	USS <i>Essex</i> Prize <i>Nancy</i> recaptured	}	Joseph S. Biggs	Mid	"	
			Fras B. Gamble	ditto	"	
	"	"	Enoch M. Miley	Seaman	"	
	"	"	John Francis	"	"	
	"	"	Olof Hasselfelt	"	"	
115	"	"	Edwd Highly	"	"	
	"	"	Chas Foster	"	"	
	<i>Bolina</i>	Mercht Vessel	John Fairfield	Master	"	In <i>Dart</i> Cartel to Boston for Exchange
116	"	"	Geoe Dean	Super Cargo	"	



[Enclosure]

[Royal Arms]

WHEREAS LIEUTENANT WILLIAM MILLER Agent to the Commissioners for conducting His Britannic Majesty's Transport Service, and for the Care and Custody of Prisoners of War at HALIFAX NOVA SCOTIA has granted US the undersigned Prisoners described on the Back hereof, Permission to return to THE PORT OF BOSTON upon Condition that WE give OUR Parole of Honour, that WE will not enter into any Naval, Military, or other Service whatever, against the United Kingdom of GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND, or any of the Dominions thereunto belonging, or against any Powers in Alliance with GREAT BRITAIN, until WE shall have been regularly exchanged for one or more British Prisoners of equivalent Rank, and that WE will surrender OURSELVES at such Place, and at such Time, as shall be required by the said Commissioners, or their Agent for the Time being, to whom WE ARE to give Notice from Time to Time of OUR Place of Residence. NOW, in Consideration of OUR Enlargement, WE do hereby declare, that WE have given OUR Parole of Honour accordingly, and that WE will keep it inviolably. Given under OUR Hands, at HALIFAX NOVA SCOTIA this Day of SEPTEMBER 1812.

Signature	Rank	Ship or Corps	Man of War, Privateer, or Merchant-Vessel
John Fairfield	Master	<i>Bolina</i>	Merchant Vessel
Geo Dean Jr	Super Cargo	ditto	ditto
Chas. Bertody	Master	<i>Hare</i>	ditto
John Wales	Mate	ditto	ditto
Jonathan P. Felt	Master	<i>Monk</i>	ditto
J. Lewis	Captain	<i>Bunker Hill</i>	Privateer
Saml. E. Foote	Master	<i>Passinger</i>	Merchant Vessel

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 43. These prisoners' names are signed to a printed form. Handwritten additions to the oath are set in small capitals.

Name	Rank	Stature			Person	Visage	Complexion	Hair	Eyes	Marks or Wounds &c
		Age	Feet	Inches						
John Fairfield	Master	39	5	7 1/2	Stout	full	fair	dark	hazle	None
Geo Dean	Super Cargo	21	5	7 1/2	Slender	long	sallow	dark	hazle	None
Chas Bertody	Master	24	5	7	Stout	round	dark	dark	dark	None
John Wales	Mate	28	5	8 1/2	Stout	round	dark	dark	dark	Scar on Forehead
John P. Felt	Master	27	5	8	Stout	full	dark	dark	black	None
Jacob Lewis	Captain	48	5	6	Stoutish	full	dark	dark	hazle	None
Saml E. Foote	Mate	24	5	8	Stout	long	dark	dark	hazle	None

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 43.



## The Uses of H.M. Sloop *Alert*

On 13 August 1812, Captain David Porter's *Essex* captured the British sloop of war *Alert* (see pp. 218–19) and sent her into New York as a prize. After completing his cruise, Porter returned to the United States and informed the secretary of the navy of his arrival (see pp. 461–64). In responding to this welcome news, Secretary Hamilton sent congratulations and stated that President Madison would soon decide whether or not to take *Alert* into the navy. Hamilton asked Porter whether by making alterations *Alert* could be converted into a useful cruiser.<sup>1</sup> In the following letter, Porter responds to Hamilton's question, supplying a good description of *Alert*'s qualities.

1. Hamilton to Porter, 12 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 150.

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Essex*  
Chester [Pa.] 15th Sept 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th inst. and immediately commenced the repairs. I shall cause my Sails, Bowsprit and other repairs to be made in Philadelphia and shall keep the ship in a state to act on the shortest notice until they are ready to come on board. Our provisions, wood and water will be completed tomorrow.

Your instructions respecting the Arms &c shall be attended to as soon as I can procure suitable persons to value them.

As respects the *Alert* I do not think she would suit our service as she does not sail well, and it would be mortifying to see the British Flag again flying on board her. She is a substantial well built ship and well equipped and calculated to mount 20 Guns has chiefly been employed in convoying. she carries without any inconvenience eight months provisions & water for crew of 120 men, she is high out of the water as you may suppose when she has eight feet high on the Birth Deck, perhaps settling her Gundeck might improve her sailing, but I should not sup-

pose it worth while to try the experiment when we have so many vessels in the United States so far superior to her in fleetness. As a Guard or prison ship, no vessel can be better calculated. As a Block Ship, six or eight 24 pounders could be mounted on the Birth Deck, which with twenty 24 pound Carronades & two long twelves on the Gun Deck would make her very formidable in the narrows near New York. As a Guard or prison ship no alteration would be required, for the latter the height between decks would be a great advantage. she is nearly as high out of the water as the *Essex* and I am informed by her officers that some others of the same class have heavy Guns mounted on the Birth deck. I have the honor [&c.]

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 50.

## A License to Trade with the Enemy

Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer's secret memorandum of 27 July named explicit conditions under which American ships would be allowed to pass unmolested through a British blockade. In that document, he refers to a letter written to Andrew Allen, British consul in Boston, stating that vessels with a copy of that letter, certified by a consular seal, among their papers will be "protected" by the warships under Sawyer's command. The following documents include that letter, with seal, made out in favor of the schooner *Mary* under the command of Russell Stephens. This practice, however, did not always result in the protection of the American vessels possessing the license. There were restrictions and risks for masters of vessels who chose to apply for this form of security.<sup>1</sup> After delivering their goods to Spain, Portugal, or the colonies of those nations, the ships had to return to the United States in ballast. From time to time unscrupulous British captains did extort money from the American masters they were supposed to protect. Likewise, if the licensed vessel were brought to by an American naval vessel or privateer, she might be taken as a prize of war.

1. See Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783–1860* (Boston & New York, 1921), pp. 205–206; John P. Cranwell and William B. Crane, *Men of Marque: A*

History of Private Armed Vessels out of Baltimore During the War of 1812 (*New York, 1940*), pp. 32-33; *Garitee, The Republic's Private Navy*, pp. 50-53; and *William A. Fairburn, Merchant Sail (Center Lovell, Maine, 1945-1955)*, II: 837-45.

VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER, R.N., TO  
ANDREW ALLEN, BRITISH CONSUL AT BOSTON

His Majesty's Ship *Centurion* at  
Halifax the 5th of Augt 1812

Sir

Papers for the  
Schooner *Mary* 62  
7/95 tons to be  
returned when this  
voyage is ended by  
the vessels return  
to the United  
States

I have fully Considered that part of your letter of the 18 ultimo, which relates to the means of ensuring a Constant Supply of Flour & other dry Provisions to Spain & Portugal & to the West Indies, & being aware of the importance of the Subject, Concur in the proposition you Have made. I Shall therefore give directions to the Commanders of his Majesty's Squadron under my Command, not to molest American Vessels Unarmed & So Laden "bona fide" bound to Portuguese or Spanish Ports, Whose Papers Shall be Accompanied with a Certified Copy of this letter Under Your Consular Seal, I have the honor to be Sir [&c.]

Sign'd H. Sawyer  
Vice Admiral

Arms

Office of his Britannick  
Majesty's Consul,

I Andrew Allen junior, His Brittanick Majesty's Consul, for the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire Rhode Island and Connecticut, hereby certify that the Annexed paper is a true Copy of a letter Addressed to me by Herbert Sawyer Esquire Vice Admiral and Commander in Chief on the Halifax Station.<sup>1</sup>

Given Under my Hand and Seal of Office at Boston in the State of Massachusetts this Sixteenth day of September in the Year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and Twelve.

And<sup>w</sup> Allen, Jr.

Seal  
wax

To all Officers of his Majesty's Ships of War  
or of Privateers belonging to Subjects of his Majesty

Whereas from a Consideration of the Vital importance of Continuing a full and regular Supply of Flour & other dry Provisions to the Ports of Spain & Portugal & their Colonies, it has been deemed Expedient by his Majesty's Government, that notwithstanding the Hostilities now Existing between his Majesty's Government & these United States, every degree of Protection & Encouragement Should be given to American Vessels Laden with Flour & other dry Provisions & bound to Spain & Portugal or their Colonies—& Whereas in furtherance of these Views of his Majesty's Government, Herbert Sawyer, Vice Admiral & Commander in Chief on the Halifax Station, has directed me a letter under date of the 5th Augt 1812 (a Copy of Which is herewith enclosed) Wherein I am instructed to furnish American Vessels, So laden & destined, a Copy of this letter Certified under my Consular Seal, Which documents are intended to Serve as a perfect Safeguard & Protection, to Such Vessels in the prosecution of her Voyage.

Now therefore in prosecution of these instructions, I have granted to the American Schooner Called the *Mary* of 62 7/95 tons burthen whereof Russell Stephens is master, now laying in the Port of Alexandria and laden with Flour & Bread &c bound "bona fide" to the Port of St Bartholemews a Copy of the Said letter of Vice Admiral Sawyer, Certified under my Consular Seal, Hereby requesting all officers of his Majesty's Ships of War, or of private armed Vessels, belonging to Subjects of his Majesty, not only to offer no molestation to the Said Vessel, but on the Contrary to grant her all Proper Assistance and protection in her passage to St Bartholemews and on her return from thence to her original Port of departure Whether laden with Salt or in ballast only.

Given Under my hand & Seal of  
Office this Sixteenth day of Sept  
in the Year of our Lord one thousand Eight Hundred & twelve.

And<sup>w</sup> Allen Jr  
his Majesty's Consul

Seal

Copy, DNA, RG45, AF 7.

1. See UklPR, Adm. 1/502, part 3, p. 419.

Intelligence on British Strength  
at Halifax

*In responding to Secretary Hamilton's cruising instructions, Commodore Rodgers indicated his plans for leaving Boston and included valuable up-to-date information on the buildup of British warships at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and St. John's, Newfoundland. Although Rodgers' source was a Halifax newspaper, in all likelihood it was the most accurate information Washington had received in some time concerning the naval strength of the enemy.*

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate President  
Boston Sept 17th 1812

Sir

Your letter of the 9th inst I have received.<sup>1</sup>

The *President* will be ready for sea in 5 or 6 days, and in the event of a single British Frigate appearing off here I shall put to sea by that time, otherwise I shall wait for the *Congress*, which will be ready to accompany me in 12 or 14 days from this date. The *Wasp* (the 3rd and only remaining vessel of my division) has, I am just informed, arrived at Norfolk. I shall inform her commander of the desposition you have made of the Public Vessels, and direct him to join me in a certain Latd & Longd on a certain day, leaving him sufficient time for the outfit of his vessel

I have just seen a Halifax paper of the 4th Inst stating that Adml Sir John Borlaise Warren had been appointed by the British Admiralty to supercede Admiral Sawyer on the Halifax Station, and that he was on the eve of sailing from Portsmouth (Engd) with an additional squad-

ron, to those already at Halifax & St Johns, consisting of five Ships of the line and two or three Frigates, one of which (the *Junon* rated a 38) the same paper states to have already arrived at Halifax

They are determined, it appears, to have Ships enough on our Coast: comparatively small as our force may be. I hope that we shall still be able however, by judicious management, to annoy them: and indeed if we had half their their number, of equal force, I am satisfied they would soon be made heartily sick of our Coast: At any rate, should they send their whole Navy on our Coast, I hope it never will be urged as a reason for the few vessels we have not going to Sea.

Your Copy of extracts from Lieut [William M.] Crane's letter of the 18th ult I have received, and presume the reinforcement under the command of Adml Warren as stated in the Halifax papers of the 4th Inst, is that to which he alluded

I received information to day that there were four British Frigates seen off New Port, the evening before last, and it is reported here (but from what Authority I could not learn) that there were three others outside of Block Island: everything that is seen on our coast now having three Masts, is magnified into a frigate.

Annexed is a list of the English Naval force at present on the St John's & Halifax stations I have the honor to be [&c.]

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

List of British vessels of War at present on the Halifax & St John's stations the 25th August 1812

Name & rate		
<i>Africa</i>	64	G.S.
<i>Centurion</i>	50	
<i>Shannon</i>	38	
<i>Spartan</i>	38	
<i>Nymph</i>	38	
<i>Statira</i>	38	
<i>Acasta</i>	40	
<i>Belvidera</i>	36	
<i>Maidstone</i>	36	
<i>Aeolus</i>	32	



<i>Tartarus</i>	20	}	Ships
<i>Indian</i>	28		
<i>Morgianna</i>	18		
<i>Colibri</i>	18	}	Brigs
<i>Plumper</i>	14		
<i>Emelous</i> <sup>2</sup>	12		
<i>Bream</i>	6	}	Schooners
<i>Juniper</i>	8		
& 3 or 4 small Schooners			

This force is under the command of Vice Admiral Sawyer  
At St Johns under the command of Admiral Sir John T. Duckworth

<i>Antelope</i>	50	flag Ship
<i>Pomone</i>	38	
<i>Jason</i>	32	
<i>Recruit</i>	18	

Also 1 Frigate & four other Sloops of War *Ringdove*, *Rosamond*, & *Laura*, Brigs, have sailed with Convoys.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 53.

1. See pp. 471-72.

2. Formerly U.S. brig *Nautilus* which was renamed for the British sloop *Emulous* which grounded on Cape Sable on 2 Aug. 1812.

## News for the British Admiralty

*Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, nearing the end of his term as commander in chief on the North American station, continued to inform his superiors periodically of the movements of various warships, communications with the United States government, and news of the enemy's ships. In the following letter, Sawyer remarked particularly on the "unpleasant" news of Commodore Rodgers' squadron's safe return to Boston, arrangements made for the exchange of prisoners, and the problem of British seamen serving in American warships.*

VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER, R.N., TO  
SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

His Majesty's Ship *Africa* at Halifax  
17 September 1812

Sir

I had the honor of addressing you on the 9th Inst and have to acquaint you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty with the movements of His Majesty's Squadron under my Command since that period and of the circumstances relative to the services that have occurred.

On the Evening of the 12th the *Hope* Tender arrived from Boston which she left on the 8th with Dispatches from Mr [Anthony St. John] Baker for Lord Viscount Castlereagh & myself, the former will be forwarded by this conveyance. She arrived at Boston with the Dispatches that were brought from England, in His Majesty's Ship *Nymphe* for Mr [Augustus J.] Foster on the 24th of August, and waited the return of the Messenger from Washington. I am quite ignorant of the nature of the dispatches she has brought in reply. I have received the unpleasant information by the *Hope* of the arrival of the American Squadron consisting of the *United States*, *President* and *Congress* frigates and the *Wasp* and *Hornet* sloops at Boston on the 31st of August after a very unsuccessful cruise—having taken and destroyed seven vessels of little value & many of their crews having died of the Scurvy. The *Constitution* arrived the following day in consequence of her action with the *Guerriere*, the *Chesapeake* is also in that port, nearly repaired & will be ready to sail in about a Month.

A Prize to the *Maidstone* and *Eolus* arrived here the 14th. She left them on the 2d off Long Island, on her way hither, say off Nantucket, the 5th Inst She fell in with the *Nymphe*, *Acasta* *Statira* & *Emulous*, steering for New York where I have reason to believe the *Shannon* & *Belvidera* to be:—The *Tartarus* arrived on the 14th from Quebec, with Convoy & brought here Capt [F. L.] Coore, Aide de Camp to His Excellency Sir George Prevost on his way to England with the American Colors taken with General [William] Hull's Army, the *Holly* arrived also on the 14th from New York with Dispatches for me from the Admiralty & on his way to Newfoundland, on the 15th the *Coquette* arrived from England & the *Paz* from Sidney with Convoy. I have deemed it expe-

dient to send the *Coquette* to England with the Dispatches from Mr Baker & Sir George Prevost, which I hope will be approved of. I stated in my Letter No 70 of the 9th Inst. a general Exchange of Prisoners between this Country & the U.States has been agreed on, & an agent appointed by the American Government to Superintend those at Halifax, but I wish it to be understood by their Lordships, that I have no intention of exchanging those taken in Privateers, while there are any others, but shall wait their Lordships direction herein. I have therefore only to represent that when this Garrison is strengthened the great accumulation of Prisoners of whom there is a thousand, and at present would render it very difficult to obtain supplies equal to such an increase of Persons.

As I addressed you so recently & not any movements of the Squadron have taken place since, except those detailed above—I shall defer sending returns until the next opportunity. The ships remaining here are the *Africa*, *Centurion*, *Junon*, *Tartarus*, *Paz*, and *Bream*.

The *Endeavor* Cartel arrived here last night with Lieut. [Bartholomew] Kent and a part of the Crew of His Majesty's late ship *Guerriere*, & a number of Merchant Seamen. That Officer has informed me that on passing the *President*, Commodore Rodgers caused twelve of the *Guerrieres*, men to be taken out of the Cartel, who assigned as a reason for so doing, the circumstance of six men belonging to the late United States Brig *Nautilus* having been sent to England, and said they would be treated as Prisoners of War until the six men were released or satisfactorily accounted for. They were sent in the *Thetis* by Captain [Philip] Broke of the *Shannon* who addressed you on the subject. Six men who were serving on board the *Congress* frigate, having given themselves up as British Subjects have been sent here, but I am sorry this is not generally the case nearly two thirds of the American Frigates crews are English and manifest a disposition to quit them, but means are resorted to, to prevent it. I intend however to promulgate an offer to intervene for them, with a view of obtaining His Royal Highness the Prince Regents Pardon for all those who may be thereby induced to return to their allegiance, which I hope will meet their Lordships approbation. I have the honor to be &c

(Signed) H Sawyer  
Vice Admiral

Jno Croker Esqr

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, part 3, pp. 581-86.

## A British Protest

*Even as preparations were being made for the proper exchange of prisoners captured at sea, difficulties arose over the treatment of prisoners of war. Lieutenant William Crane had pointed out abuses of his men at Halifax, and in Boston, Andrew Allen, the former British consul, charged that Americans were interfering with British prisoners of war. In the following letter, Anthony St. John Baker complains to Secretary of State Monroe on these matters, asking redress.*

ANTHONY ST. JOHN BAKER TO  
SECRETARY OF STATE JAMES MONROE

Philadelphia Sept 19 1812

Sir,

By a letter dated on the 10th Inst which I have received from Mr Allen, his Majesty's late Consul at Boston and who now superintends the embarkation of the British prisoners of war from that port, I am informed that on the arrival at Boston of the Squadron under the command of Commodore Rodgers "every attempt was made to seduce the common Seamen amongst the prisoners who were on board to enter into the American service, but except in a few instances ineffectually; that several boys, however, from 10 to 15 years of age, who were apprentices under indentures, were compelled or persuaded to enter, and notwithstanding repeated applications for their release were still detained; and that many of the Seamen after being kept for some days on board were turned into the Streets instead of being given up to the Marshal, in the hope that from the want of means of procuring subsistence they would be compelled to resort to the American service for support."

I forbear making any remark upon these circumstances as I trust that a knowledge of this improper conduct on the part of its officers will alone be necessary to induce the American Government to issue such orders as may cause immediate redress to be afforded and may prevent the occurrence of such events in future.

I feel it however to be my duty more particularly to call your attention to the following circumstance as stated in the above-mentioned letter from Mr Allen. "The British Government Brig *Endeavour* with 110 passengers was stopped on her passage down the harbour by a boat from the *President*, Commodore Rodgers, and 12 men, part of the crew of the late *Guerriere*, every one of whom were Englishmen, taken forcibly out and carried on board of the man of war.<sup>1</sup> The pretext assigned for this outrage is that six of the Crew of the American Brig of war *Nautilus* (who were however British Subjects) were permitted to enter into the service at Halifax, and six more of the same Crew who were recognized as deserters from British Ships of war have been sent to England by the Admiral to await their trial."

I need not point out to you, Sir, the evil consequences to which a proceeding of this nature may lead, and which I am convinced will be deprecated by no person more than by yourself. With a view therefore to arrest in this early stage a course of measures which may have so fatal a tendency, I have the honour to request that the persons who were seized by the order of Commodore Rodgers may be released, and to offer to afford every facility in my power in transmitting either to Vice Admiral Sawyer or to his Majesty's Government any claim which may be made by the Government of the United States to the Seamen either at Halifax or in England whose detention has served as a pretext for the violent proceeding adopted by Commodore Rodgers. I have the honour to be [&c.]

Anthony St Jno Baker

The Honble James Monroe  
&c &c &c

Copy, DNA, RG45, AF 7.

1. For Commodore Rodgers's comments on this incident, see pp. 477-78.

## Prize Money for the St. Marys Gunboats

*After a ship was captured, the usual procedure was for the prize master to bring her into the nearest safe port. There a prize agent would present documents before an admiralty court to have the ship libelled and condemned as a lawfully taken prize of war. The ship was then sold at auction. In the case of prizes taken by the navy, 50 percent of the proceeds were retained for the federal treasury and the rest was presented to the ship or ships involved in the capture. This sum was then dispersed proportionally according to shares assigned to the commodore, if there was one, captains, officers, and enlisted men. In the following letter, a purser assigned to gunboats in East Florida discusses the result of such an admiralty proceeding.*

PURSER GWINN HARRIS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St. Marys in Georgia  
19th September 1812

Sir:

The British Schooner *Trimmer* taken by the Gun Boats on this Station on the 9th July last,<sup>1</sup> has been libelled and condemned in the Admiralty Court of this District: The Specie and nett sales of the articles onboard, amount to Five thousand Eight hundred and Sixteen Dollars and ninety one cents. I am appointed by the captors as prize agent to distribute the one half amongst the officers & Crew & all concerned in the capture: The other half, say Two thousand Nine hundred and Eight Dollars and forty five & 1/2 cents remains in my hands Subject to the order of the Government. I have the honour to request You will direct, to whom the above Sum is to be paid. I have the Honour [&c.]

Gwinn Harris

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 58.

1. See Campbell to Hamilton, 18 July 1812, pp. 195-97.



## Master Commandant Ludlow at New York Navy Yard

*The departure of Captain Isaac Chauncey from New York for Sackets Harbor, with men and materiel from the yard, created a scarcity of many items. The task of filling these needs fell to Master Commandant Charles Ludlow. In the following letter, Ludlow states his situation and discusses the ship John Adams and the prize ship Alert which Captain Porter had sent in during his cruise off the Grand Banks.*

MASTER COMMANDANT CHARLES LUDLOW TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Navy Yard New York  
Septembr 29th 1812

Sir

Commodore Chauncey left this station for the Northd on Saturday the 26th Inst. since which, I have had the honor to Command the Yard and flotilla.<sup>1</sup> I beg leave to report to the Department the immediate want of Cannon Shot & Small Arms, (to supply the deficiency that Commodore Chauncey has made, by taking those articles from this station) I require 1300 round 32 pd Shot, and 800 Muskets, before the Gun Boats can be ready for service, and have only Men enough belonging to the flotilla & Yard to Man six Boats. I am making every exertion to Ship Men, & have made requisitions for the Shot and Arms, but have to report that neither can be compleated for some considerable time, the Muskets particularly. I have been inform'd that the Arsnel in Connecticut contain a Quantity of Muskets belonging to the United States, if we could have a supply of them, it would enable me to expedite the fitment of the flotilla, & put it in some state of defence.

The U S Ship *John Adams* has at present 30 men attached to her, without her having a Gun, or grain of powder on board.<sup>2</sup> these men I have no control over, owing to her being commanded by a Senior Officer to myself, if it could be so arranged, they would be of infinite service to the Yard & Boats at present.

I find the Ship *Alert*, prise to the Frigate *Essex* laying at the Yard.<sup>3</sup> I have receiv'd no orders respecting her, but if it should meet the approbation of the department, should like to make use of her as a receiving Vessel, it would tend very much to the cumfort & health of the recruits, for which purpose she is well calculated.

I hope to be honord with an answer respecting the Ship, Arms, &c. With the highest [&c.]

Ch<sup>s</sup> Ludlow

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 75.

1. On 9 Sept. 1812, Secretary Hamilton sent orders to Ludlow at Newburgh, New York, to report for duty at New York City to take command of the gunboat flotilla and, temporarily, the command of the navy yard. See Hamilton to Ludlow, 9 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 147.

2. For further discussion about this ship, see pp. 187-88.

3. For Captain Porter's recommendation on *Alert*, see pp. 490-91.

## The Naval Rendezvous

*When a warship needed seamen, the traditional way of attracting them was to "open a rendezvous," which meant detailing an officer to go to a location where such men were likely to gather. There he would make a public announcement that his ship would soon sail on a cruise of a certain duration. Special provisions were usually made for an advance of several months pay and the payment of an enlistment bonus, called a "bounty." Occasionally, the officer would take "music" (a fifer and a drummer) with him, as well as a surgeon or surgeon's mate to examine the candidates. He might also have handbills printed or advertise in the newspapers. Those deciding to enlist would sign articles of agreement, pledging themselves to serve the required term in that ship.*

*In October 1812, the frigate Constellation was in the final stages of a refit at Baltimore. The next document pertains to the navy's expectations for a two year cruise. It was Constellation's bad luck, however, to spend most of the war at Norfolk penned in by the British blockade of the Chesapeake.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN

Captain John Cassin  
Gosport Navy Yard

Navy Depart  
1st Octr 1812

The *Constellation* requires a number of able & Ordinary Seamen. Cause a Rendezvous to be opened at Norfolk for the purpose of entering for that frigate from 60 to 100 able Seamen and as many Ordinary Seamen—wages 12\$ pr month for able & 8 to 10\$ pr month for Ordinary Seamen—from two to four months advance may be made to each upon good Security to indemnify the public in the event of desertion—and should you find it absolutely necessary, you may allow to able Seamen a bounty of from 10 to 20\$ each. The whole to be entered to serve two years from the ship's first weighing anchor on a cruize. The Agent will furnish the necessary monies upon the requisitions of the recruiting officer approved by you. The requisite blanks are herewith sent to you.

for Paul Hamilton  
Ch: W: Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 339.

## Some Naval Intelligence

*While Essex was lying at Chester, Pennsylvania, on the Delaware River, awaiting new sails and rigging, Captain Porter was eager for news of the position of the British fleet. He made a cruise a short distance down to the Delaware Capes, where he spoke an American merchantman. Porter learned that there was a large concentration of enemy ships to the north and passed that information to the secretary of the navy. The Delaware Capes were clear of blockading ships for the time being, a fact that must have made Porter anxious to get underway before they appeared. He finally sailed on 28 October, expecting to rendezvous with Commodore Bainbridge's squadron.*

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Essex*  
Chester 2nd Octr 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that on the 27th ult: I got under way and proceeded down as far as the Capes, while there I obtained the following information respecting the enemies force on the coast.

I spoke an American Schooner the Capt of which informed that he had been captured a few days since off the South shoal of Nantucket by a squadron of 7 British Frigates & a Brig, they kept possession of her 36 hours & then liberated her as she was of little value, they had several valuable prizes in company, the Squadron consisted of the *Acasta* 40, *Statira* 38, *Belvidere* 36, *Shannon* 38, *Maidstone* 36, *Aeolus* 32, little *Emulus* late *Nautilus*, & an other frigate.

The Officers of the Squadron informed the Capt of the Schooner, they were on the lookout for Commre Rodgers, who they understood was to sail from Boston on the 24th Sept and stated their intention to run into Boston Bay: From them he also learnt that the *Acasta* was one of the frigates which chased the *Essex*, & was the nearest when they lost sight of us. On the 22nd ult the Schooner was spoke by the British Frigate *Orpheus* of 36 Guns, from the West Indies bound to Halifax, she put some prisoners on board and permitted her to proceed, the Capt informed that the ships would all be drawn from the West Indies for the Halifax Station; that he had spoke the *Southampton* a few days since bound to the West Indies with 3 prizes in company. The *Orpheus* wanted repairs & was going to Halifax to dock, her crew was represented as weak and very sickly: On Sunday last she spoke the ship *Bainbridge* from Liverpool bound to Phile, she had a convoy of 10 sail in company, from the West Indies bound to Halifax.

On Monday last the *Belvidere* & little *Emulus*, were seen off Barnagatt.

I have just arrived here and shall commence stripping the ship & making the necessary repairs immediately: The Bowsprit, Sails & rigging will soon I expect be ready to come on board, and I shall very

shortly endeavour to have her in a state for service. I have the honor to be [&c.]

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 93.

## The Private Life of a Seaman

*Few seamen wrote accounts of their life on the lower decks of American men-of-war during the War of 1812.<sup>1</sup> They were mostly illiterate, and many were foreigners, a good number being naturalized Americans who had been born in the British Isles. When documents are located which shed light on any aspect of their lives, they deserve to be considered. The following document is a letter from the representative of a woman who claimed to be the wife of a blue jacket whom she had not seen for four years. The circumstances of her plight seem typical of the time. Hers was not a casual inquiry: she had paid visits to warships putting in at New York and had twice written to the highest military authorities (secretary of war and secretary of navy). No reply to her letters has been found.*

1. There are at least two exceptional published accounts: Samuel Leech, *Thirty Years from Home or A Voice from the Main Deck* (Boston, 1843) and James Fenimore Cooper, Ned Myers: or, A Life before the Mast (Philadelphia, 1843). Leech's account is an autobiography, while Ned Myers was an account written by Cooper, as told to him by Ned Myers.

HENRY HEDLEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New York October 5th 1812

Hnlb Sir

Were it possible to obtain any information of the Seaman enlisted in the State service in our Navy I would not now trouble you. It is more than four years that a man by the name of Patrick McDonnough or McDonald (his Wife is not sure which it is) entered on board one of the frigates under the command of Commodore Decatur when he first enlisted he used to send his Wife Letters but it is more than nineteen

months that she has not heard a word of him. A Sailor who said he was enlisted told Mrs. McDonnough that her husband died on board the *Constitution* and was burried in Washington on or before the twenty third day of April last past which rendered Mrs. McDonnough very uneasy and distressed in mind<sup>1</sup>—to know whether the assertion of the said Sailor was true or not I wrote to the Honorable Mr [William] Eustis the Secretary of War<sup>2</sup> some time in the beginning of last August (I think it was) but have not as yet had any answer which I expect is owing the business he has to attend to & perhaps that his Honor was not the person I should have addressed my Letter. If your Honor will please to send me an answer with all the possible information that is in Your Honors power to give about him and on board what Vessel he is so that when our fleet arrives in this Port his unhappy and disconsolate wife may go and see him Your Honor will confer a great favour both on his Wife and Your Honors Dutiful Servant

Henry Hedley

N B.

Please direct the Letter to me 190 Duane Street

Henry Hedley Builder

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 173.

1. Patrick "McDonough," ordinary seaman in *Constitution*, died 11 May 1812, while the ship was at Washington for heaving down. DNA, RG45, Muster Rolls and Pay Rolls, U.S.S. *Constitution*, Vol. 3, p. 20.

2. See Hedley to Secretary of War Eustis, 14 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 26. The letters are similar though not identical in content. Mrs. McDonnough is quoted in the first as saying that her husband had served for three years as a marine and then two as a seaman under Commodore Decatur. She added that she had advertised in the newspapers and had visited the navy agent's office in New York to no avail.

## Change of Command at Halifax

*The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty appointed Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren to replace Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer during August 1812. Warren's burden was heavier than Sawyer's, as he was given control of the West Indies station, based on Bermuda, as well as*



the North American station. Warren relieved Sawyer on 27 September and soon made an appraisal of his new command and reported his concerns to the Admiralty. In the following letter, addressed to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Warren expresses his concerns about the small number of ships at his disposal and the rapidly growing threats from American naval vessels and privateers.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N., TO  
SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

Halifax the 5th October 1812

Sir

Emulous lost  
Laura captured  
Juniper Brazils

Enclosed I beg to transmit a Copy of the Disposition of His Majesty's Squadron under the Command of Vice Admiral Sawyer as delivered to me by him on the 27th Ultimo.<sup>1</sup> The Ships named in the margin but upon that List are lost or gone from hence, and their Lordships will observe that the Force of this Station is in a very reduced state.

The demand of Ships for Convoys and the protection of the Commerce, the State of the War which seems to assume a new as well as more active and inveterate aspect than heretofore; the quantity of Shipping detained and now remaining without condemnation in the several districts of the command, and the Enemy's Cruizers being very active and persevering which by the accompanying Copy of a Commission found on the Prize Master of a ship recaptured by the *San Domingo* will be seen already to amount to three hundred and eighteen, a number of large ships from 22 to 32 Guns being fitting out and in the different American Ports, exclusive of the United States Navy of Frigates, which also are to be encreased induce me to believe their Lordships will not disapprove of my requesting your stating for their consideration the necessity of re-inforcing the Squadron on this Coast, and in the West Indies, to enable me to meet the exertions of the Enemy, who seem to be determined to persevere in the annoyance and destruction of the Commerce of Great Britain and these Provinces. I have the honour to be, Sir [&c.]

John Borlase Warren

John Wilson Croker

P.S. The following Ships are off the List of this Squadron as enclosed in your letter to me dated the 8th August last.

Guerriere	}	taken
Laura		
Emulous	}	lost
Chubb		
Indian	}	gone to England
Atalanta		
Coquette	}	gone to the Brazils and East Indies
Juniper		
Leeward Island Squadron		
Barbadoes		lost

LS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, part 3, pp. 613-15.

1. Enclosure not found.

William Jones  
and Commodore Bainbridge

It is generally assumed that naval officers consulted among themselves as to the most favorable tactics and strategies to be used in war. It was natural that they would take advantage of each others' knowledge and experience. It has seldom been shown that they also consulted with civilians on such matters. In September 1812, Commodore Bainbridge received general cruising orders from the secretary of the navy, as did Commodores Rodgers and Decatur. But, on 5 October, Bainbridge wrote his friend William Jones, a Philadelphia merchant and former sea captain, asking his advice on where to cruise with Constitution, Essex, and Hornet. Jones's informative reply was dated 11 October, so it probably reached Bainbridge before his squadron left Boston on 26 October. Bainbridge's track conformed well to the advice Jones provided, indicating at least that their thoughts coincided on the most fruitful way to annoy the enemy. In January 1813, William Jones

became secretary of the navy, an appointment applauded by many naval officers, not the least of whom was Commodore Bainbridge.

COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO WILLIAM JONES

U. S. Frigate *Constitution*  
Boston 5 Octr 1812

My dear Sir,

Your friendly letter of the 30<sup>th</sup> ult has this moment reached me. I trust ere this, that my letter to you, which was forwarded to New York has come to hand. But in case it should not, I beg leave to trouble you with a repetition of my request. Viz. When I had the pleasure of meeting you last in Philada you kindly offered to give me your ideas on a plan of Cruizing, Which I will now thank you for. And entertaining as I sincerely do, the very highest opinion of your able judgement, I must beg you will give me your opinion & advise, freely & fully. My command consist of the Frigates *Constitution* & *Essex* & Sloop of war *Hornet*. The two latter vessels are extremely well Commanded. We can carry between 4 & 5 months Provisions and 100 days water. The *Constitution* will be ready to leave this with the *Hornet* in twenty days. The *Essex* I shall order from the Delaware to meet me at afix place. Which would be the best Place, off Maderia, or the Cape de Verd Islands? In your observations on my intended Cruize be pleased to mention the best places for receiving Supplies of Water & Provisions. I intend to keep my Cruizing Ground as secret as possible, in order that the Enemy may not disturb me by superior numbers. I trust I shall always be freely disposed to meet them, as you say, Ship for Ship & Man for Man—in which event, I pledge you my word, my esteemed friend, you shall have no cause to blush for my conduct. Comr Rodgers Squadron consist of the *President*, (one of the finest Ships in the World—I offered Rodgers \$5000 to change Ship) *Congress* & *Wasp*. Comr Decatur's Squadron is the *U. States*, *Chesapeake* and *Argus*. Rodgers & Decatur, with their own Ships, the *Congress* & *Argus* will leave here tomorrow on a Cruize, but wither bound, I know not. The *Chesapeake* I presume will be manned in the course of a month when she will also leave here. Having had to give the *Constitution* all new lower Masts, and many other Spars, and an entire new Gang of Standing Rigging, besides patching



Captain William Bainbridge, U.S.N.

her Wooden Hull, keeps me very busily employed—last Sunday, I took in the Main Mast and this day, Sunday I am taking in the Foremast. So you'll perceive, that I dare even break the Sabbath in this Religious Land.

I believe the Report which we had sometime since, that there were first rates in the Squadron of Sir J B Warren was incorrect, later information states that he has [only 2] Seventy fours—& one of that class of vessels, I think it probable they would have to Cruize on our Coast, to over-match our large Frigates.

I do not believe the Enemy will make any attack on any Part of our Sea Coast, particularly the Eastern Section, until they find the war is settled to a probable period of duration. At present, I presume, they will so conduct themselves as not to give that initiation which unquestionably would produce a more union of sentiments in the Action of war. I will thank you to say to our mutual friend Mr. Chandr Price,<sup>1</sup> that I received his letter and would if it had been practicable have attended to his request with much pleasure—for Young Hunter is a great favorite with me. Mrs. B. joins in great regard & best wishes to Mrs. Jones & yourself. An believe me Dr Sir, to be with Sentiments of warm friendship, yours

W<sup>m</sup> Bainbridge

William Jones Esqr. Philada

ALS, PHi, Uselma Clark Smith Collection, Papers of William Jones, folder Oct.-Dec. 1812.

1. Chandler Price, of Philadelphia, was seeking a promotion and transfer to a frigate for his nephew, Midshipman William M. Hunter, sailing master in *Vixen*. Hunter was commissioned lieutenant on 25 May 1813, and at first assigned to the sloop of war *Frolic*, at Boston, but was reassigned to *Constitution* on 28 Sept. See Chandler Price to William Jones, 13 Jan. and 3 Mar. 1813, PHi, U. C. Smith Collection, Papers of William Jones, folder Jan.-June 1813.

WILLIAM JONES TO COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE

Philada 11th Octot 1812

Dear Sir

I proceed to comply with your request of my Ideas of a Cruise for the Squadron under your Command, which your own experience & intelli-

gence renders almost superfluous. I perceive by the Stock of provisions you mention and the places you propose for the *Essex* to rendezvous that you probably contemplate the extention of your cruize to the Southern Hemisphere. The positions which I consider the best for intercepting the British trade I will mention in the order of distance from our own Coast. First off Cape Carnaveral in the coast of Florida in the outer verge of the Stream you intercept to a certainty everything from Jamaica through the Gulph and have the ports of Georgia and the Carolinas near you, which your prizes can reach in 3 or 4 days. 2d The Crooked Island passage to intercept the trade from the East end of Jamaica our privateers have fallen in with a great many fine ships through both passages which were too strong for them and go in small squads of 4 or 6 ships these would be fine game for you. 3d. From one to two degrees North of Corvo and Flora [Flores, Azores Islands] this is an excellent position The W I fleets and small squads in order to avoid the fogs and keep together pass to the Southward of the tail of the Bank and near these Islands and then steer a more Northerly course. Commodore Rodgers was too far North when on the Maredian of the Azores. 4th. From the last mentioned position range along the Coast of Portugal in the track of the convoys to a position by Britain & the Straits of Gibraltar and thence pass to the Westward of Madeira Teneriffe and the Cape de Verds or from the Azores direct to the Cape de Verds if it is thought the eastern route does not promise Success or would be likely to expose your route to the enemy. I would pass just to the Westward of the Cape de Verds and cross the Equator in about 22° West where you may in all probability fall in with some of the extra India men out or home or some of the trade to or from the Cape of Good Hope Isle of France &c. Here you may also replenish your water from the rains, as I presume you would not wish to touch at Teneriffe or the Cape De Verds Isles for that purpose. The Next cruising Ground and which I deem a very important one is the Coast of Brazil with which the British drive a valuable trade and the returns are very frequently in a very convenient Commodity Viz Gold in Bars and Coin and other compact valuables. 5th. If you go further South than this I would advise you to touch at Tristan Da Cuna where you can get refreshments and water, an American having a few years Since settled there and carried with him live stock for Breed and the soil and climate being favorable I presume they have greatly encreased. You will find there a good Bay and anchorage. Thence I would look off the Cape of Good Hope for the trade that may be passing and avoid giving alarm as much as pos-



sible. If you can learn of any valuable Vessels lying in Table Bay you may by running in under English Colours perhaps have a chance of Cutting them out. 6th A Brilliant Cruize ought no doubt be made in the Indian Seas, but for the distance and absolute deprivation of a Single friendly Port to refit in Case of Accidents to which you would be much exposed. Which the Men with the dread of disease seems to forbid so hazardous an enterprize. There are numerous places in which you could replenish your water, and the Country ships you would probably make prize of would furnish you with abundance of rice and some other articles of provision. You might also calculate upon getting a partial Supply of Cordage and other Naval Stores out of your prizes but upon mature reflection there appears to be too much of chance and responsibility to warrant the enterprize with so important a part of our Gallant little Navy.

With a view to furnish you with information relative to the trade & Navigation of the India & China Seas Straits &c and the Voyage thence I have deliverd to Mr [George] Harrisons Clerk to be forwarded to you the best practical work extant that I have met with viz "Elmores Indian Directory" and for the China Seas you ought to have Hosburgs Charts and Directions.<sup>1</sup> The Homeward Bound British India Men pass the Cape of Good Hope from the Middle of Jany to the last of March April—the China fleets about a month later—and pass the equator in about Longt 22° W about five weeks after they pass the Cape of Good Hope touching at St Helena on their way down. The Outward Fleets leave the Channel from the latter end of Jany to the beginning of April pass the Equator from 18° to 25° as the Winds admit and pass within 5 or 6° of Brazil some much nearer and sometimes touch at Rio Janeiro. As much time would be lost in your route from the Coast of Brazil to the Cape in which you would meet with Nothing; the only object (unless you mean to pass to the East of the Cape) being to get your casting, look into the Cape and return in the track of the India Men, passing near St Helena and touching at Ascencion where you will in all probability get an abundant Supply of turtle (but recollect the report of cannon will drive them off). You will determine whether it would not be better to limit your cruize to the Coast of Brazil touching at Rio for supplies where they may [be] deposited for you with the Consul by direction &c and if on that station your success should not equal your expectations you can soon return to the Northward ranging along the West India Islands and select your cruising ground according to cir-

cumstances. In this course you will pass near the little Portuguese Island of Ferdinand Noronio [*Fernando de Noronha*] off the NE point of Brazil. It has a good Harbor on the NW side and has a Governor & small Garrison. The colony is said to be made up of male exiles and convicts, who for their sins are deprived of all Sexual Intercourse. If it were an Irish Colony I think the Governor would have trouble unless he had prepared his subjects for the privation. Here you will find wood water and refreshments particularly turtle. I have passed within a league of it on my return from China and as I approachd the Island found a WNW Current which continued for three days at the rate of 40 Miles in 24 hours\*

Wm Jones

\*In whatever situation you may be placed I am well assured that a high sense of National and Personal honor guided by vigilance skill and intrepidity will mark your conduct and that the fruits of your labours may may be a rich harvest of glory wealth and happiness is the Sincere wish of your respectful friend

W J

P.S. You propose the *Essex* to join you off Madeira or the Cape de Verds Isles and ask which I think best. If you adopt the Idea of a short cruize off Corvo & Flores had She not better join you there. If not, I do not think you have much to tempt you to stay long near Madeira where our own vessels will discover and expose your route & therefore she may join you off Teneriffe or the one of the Cape de Verds Isles with more convenience.

Copy, PHi, U.C. Smith Collection, Papers of William Jones, folder Oct.-Dec. 1812. In Jones's hand; endorsed at head: "Copy of my letter to Commodore William Bainbridge Esqr."

1. H. M. Elmore, *The British Mariner's Directory and Guide to the Trade and Navigation of the Indian and China Seas* (London, 1802); James Horsburgh, *Directions for Sailing To and From the East Indies, China, New Holland, Cape of Good Hope and the Interjacent Ports* (London, 1809-1811); and J. Horsburgh [James Horsburgh], *Atlas of the East Indies and China Sea*, London, 1806-1821], to accompany the "India Directory."

## The Promotion of Lieutenant Charles Morris

*In reporting his successful engagement with Guerriere, Captain Isaac Hull had high praise for Lieutenant Charles Morris' skills as Constitution's first lieutenant. In a spontaneous act of gratitude, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton had Morris promoted directly to post captain. This generous act offended many officers both senior and junior to Morris. His peers and superiors generally conceded his competence, but they also considered him merely lucky to have been serving in Constitution at the time of her stunning victory. In their opinions, several others could have done as well, and a more reasonable reward would have been promotion to the next higher rank—that of master commandant.*

*As a major incident in the internal administration of the Navy Department, the promotion controversy reveals the special sensitivity of naval officers in matters of honor and position. They did not hesitate to state their objections to the secretary. Three letters that follow are indicative of the mood of many. Master Commandant James Lawrence's reaction is noteworthy. Although well-liked and acclaimed as a leader of men, Lawrence carried the point of personal honor to an extreme. He declared he was so insulted that he was on the verge of resigning. The succeeding document is Lieutenant Morris's grateful acceptance of the promotion, taken against the advice of some of his friends. The last two documents are Secretary Hamilton's caustic rejection of Lawrence's threat to resign and Lawrence's shocked rejoinder wherein he announces his intention to appeal to the Senate, over the head of his operational commander.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO  
LIEUTENANT CHARLES MORRIS

Nav: Dep'mt  
5 Octo 1812

I have the happiness of transmitting to you herewith, by the special direction of the President of the United States, a Commission as captain in the Navy of the United States dated 19. Aug: 1812. a day which

will ever be remembered with pride by every American for the brilliant achievement to which it gave birth, & in which you so honorably participated.

When your health will permit You will be pleased to proceed to this place and assume command of the frigate *Adams*.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 169.

COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U. S. Frigate *Constitution*  
Boston 8th Octr 1812

Sir,

Agreably to my promise, I forward the enclosed,<sup>1</sup> with my opinion, that the observations contained in it, are such as evidently strikes me to be correct.

I trust that Leut Morris, for whom I have the most sincere regard, and for whose abilities as an Officer I entertain the highest opinion, will receive the promotion of Master Commandant, and an appointment to one of our fine Ships. But I do not think that he or any Leut ought to be promoted over all the Master Commandants, to Post Captain. We have some very valuable officers in the Class of Master Commandants. No man can excel Captain Laurence in the Character of a Brave and valuable Officer. He was first Leiut when he assisted in the *Intrepid* Ketch to burn the *Philad* for which he received no honors. His Commander was promoted, its true, to a Post Captain, but at that time, we had no master Commandants, consequently he went from one Step to another and did not take the leap of two Grades. I have the honor [&c.]

W<sup>m</sup> Bainbridge

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 103.

1. Master Commandant Arthur Sinclair's letter to the secretary of 7 Oct. 1812, following.

MASTER COMMANDANT ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

*Argus* at Sea, off Boston  
October the 7th 1812

Sir

To you, as the guardian of our rights, I feel bound to appeal, whenever there is a probability of their being incroached on, and as it is easier to guard against an evil than to combat it after it takes place, I think it proper to offer you my sentiments on the following subject.

It having been suggested that the friends of Lieut Morris intended using their influence to have him promoted to the grade of a post Captain, in consequence of his officer like conduct in the late brilliant action fought by Capt Hull, I have maturely reflected upon the merits of such an act and cannot find that justice in it, which it might appear to carry with it to persons not immediately interested in its consequences. All of us who have now arrived to the grade of Master Commandant are of fourteen or fifteen years standing in service, and have gained that rank entirely by our long services, without any opportunity having offered by which fortune could aid us; and if we are to be overtopt by every brave Lieut on whom fortune may smile, there will be no stimulus left us: for, Post Capt being the highest rank we can aspire to, however brilliantly we may distinguish ourselves, the Lieut who has been lucky enough to gain this rank at one promotion, will continue to Rank us, although his services may not have been half equal to ours. Were there other grades still higher by which we could derive similar advantages, our case would not then be peculiarly hard as it now is, or rather will be, in case this sytem is addopted. There are none of us who would, were it in our powers take one particle from the merits of Mr Morris, and I pledge my honor, as an officer, were I at the head of the list of Lieuts I should be pleased to see him made a Master Commandant over me, as much as I should to see any junior of my own grade advanced to a post rank above me, under similar circumstances. What would be said by all the old Captains, were it to please the government to say that one of us should take Rank of the whole of them? Wy, they would at once determine that their long services had been thrown away, and they would leave the service without hesitation. There is but one sentiment on this subject throughout the service, and that is, that Lieut Morris should be promoted to a Master Commandant, and as

such he would be greeted, with pleasure by all grades. It is as much as he can expect from this single act, and I believe it to be as much as he wishes. I hope, Sir, you will at once see the weight of the arguments I have used, and the propriety of using them; and that my motives may be appreciated as they deserve and as they are intended; for the good of the service and in justice to the Rank I hold in that service. Let me hope that while I am absent in the service of my Country, that you sir, will be a stickler for my rights, and that this may be brought forward as my remonstrance against an attempt to infringe them in the present case. I have the honor [&c.]

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 104.

MASTER COMMANDANT JAMES LAWRENCE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Ship *Hornet*  
Octr 10th 1812

Sir

I was much gratified this evening with a report of your return to Washington, and hasten to address you as the guardian of our rights, on a subject that nearly concerns me as well as others of my grade in the service. it has for some time past been currently reported in this city (and in fact I have seen two letters from Mr Gouldsbrough that corroborates the report,) that Lieut: Morris was to be promoted to the rank of Captain in the Navy, in consequence of his conduct onboard the *Constitution* in the late action with the *Geurriere*. I have the most exalted opinion of Lieut: Morris, of course cannot wish to detract from his merits, but sir after the most mature consideration, I really cannot discover wherein his exertions as first Lieut: entitle him to the rank to which I understand he is about to be promoted. the appointment of a Master & Commander would in my opinion amply compensate him, and as far as I can judge give universal satisfaction, I have consulted with Commodore Rodgers, who fully agrees with me in opinion and has authorized me to make use of his name in my communications to you on the subject, Commodore Bainbridge's sentiments on the occasion I presume you are acquainted with as he informs me he has writ-



ten you—I am fearful you will consider my remonstrance as improper, but trust on takeing my feelings into consideration, you will make every allowance when I inform you that my friends universally and the officers generally coincide with me in thinking, that the promotion of Lieut Morris to the grade I first mentioned, bears peculiarly hard on me, as I was first Lieut: with the now Commodore Decatur at the time he destroyed the Frigt *Philadelphia* at that time, if not now, thought as much of, as the capture of the *Geurriere*, for which exploit he was promoted to the rank of Post Captain, and I rewarded by the offer of two months pay. After devoting near fifteen years of the prime of my life, faithfully to the service of my country, you I trust will not think hard of my haveing remonstrated thus plainly to you, on the subject of Lt Morris's promotion over me, I assure you I should regret leaveing the service at any time, particularly at this period, but if out rank'd by any officer, who I think has not greater claims to promotion than myself, I have no alternative, trusting to the impartiality of your decision. I have the honor [&c.]

Ja<sup>s</sup> Lawrence

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 106.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES MORRIS TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

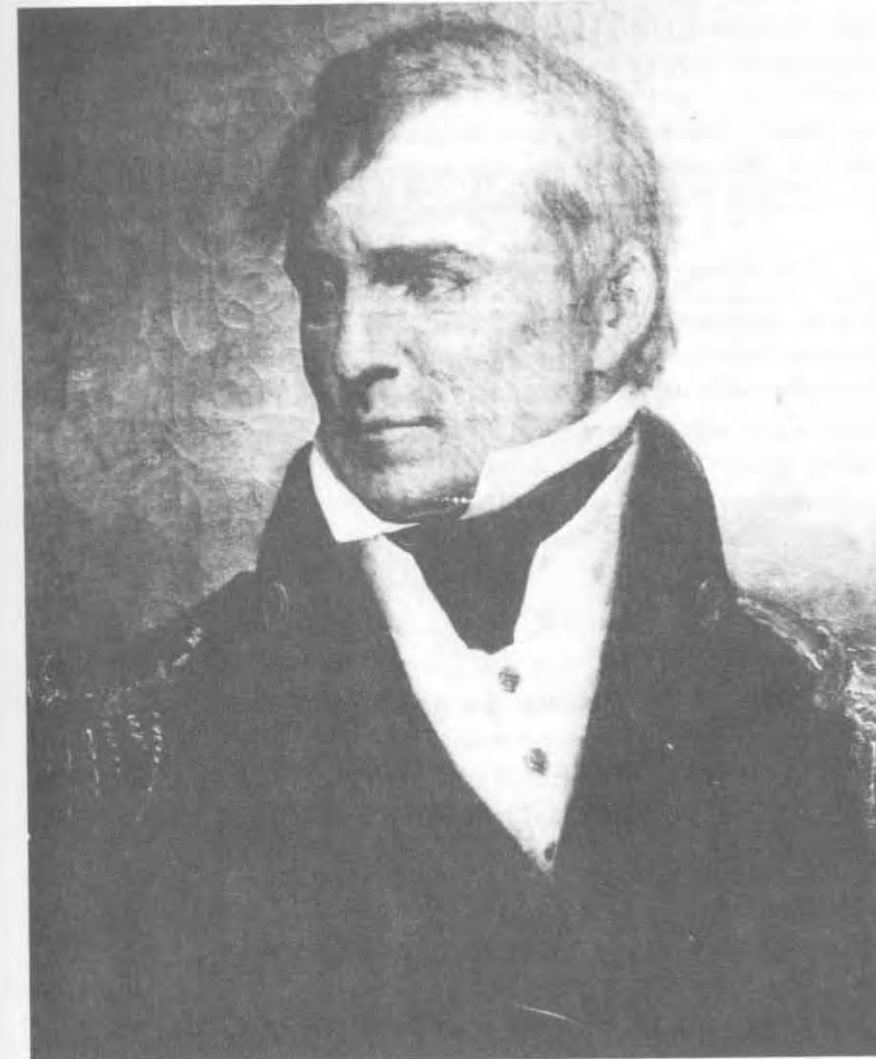
Boston  
Octr 10th 1812

Sir

I have this day received your letter of the 5th inst covering my commission as a Captain in the Navy of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

I have to request that you will be pleased to present my grateful acknowledgements to his Excellency the President of the United States for this unexpected and signal mark of his confidence, and to assure him that my highest ambition will be to prove by my future conduct that it has not been misplaced.

Be pleased also to accept my sincere thanks for your interference in my favor on this occasion, and for the very honorable command you have been pleased to assign me.



*Captain Charles Morris, U.S.N.*

My health is not yet so far restored as to enable me to travel with safety, whenever it shall be I shall lose no time in repairing to Washington in conformity to your orders. With great respect [&c.]

C: Morris

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 105.

1. The Senate delayed confirmation of Morris's promotion until Mar. 1813, and in that month made some allowances for the seniority of Morris's colleagues. Three captains were confirmed by the Senate: Jacob Jones on the 3rd of Mar., James Lawrence on the 4th, and Charles Morris on the 5th. In this way, some of the jealousies caused by the Morris promotion were assuaged. See Charles Morris, *The Autobiography of Commodore Charles Morris* (Annapolis, Md., 1880), pp. 167-69.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO  
MASTER COMMANDANT JAMES LAWRENCE

Capt. Lawrence  
U. S. Ship *Hornet*

Nav Dep't  
17. Octo 1812

Your letter of the 10th Inst has reached me. The Suggestion with which that letter concludes prevents an answer in detail, & confines me to the single observation, that if (without cause) You leave the service of our Country, there will still remain, Heros & patriots to support the honor of its flag.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 180.

MASTER COMMANDANT JAMES LAWRENCE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Ship *Hornet*  
Boston Octr 22d [1812]

Sir

I had the honor of addressing you a few days past on a subject wherein I was deeply interested, (and this morning while under sailing orders) received your answer, I regret that you should have considered my letter as indecorous, indeed I am astonished it should so

have been considered, as it only contained a very respectful representation of my feelings in a cause of complaint in which I was seriously affected, and to you sir as the head of our naval establishment, and the Guardian of our legal rights; I certainly thought that I could address my complaint without giving offence, but your answer has taught me to know that I was mistaken and that an officer in the Navy cannot solicit the navy department for redress without having his patriotism call'd in question. In consequence of which I have consulted my friends, and have drawn up a memorial which will be presented to the Honble the Senate of the U States, and shall be governed by their decision, I really think my holding a commission as Master Commdt: a bar to promotion, inasmuch as I am constantly attached to a frigate, and should she be so fortunate as to capture a vessel of a equal force, her first Lieut:-agreeable to the present arrangement must be promoted over me. very respectfully I remain. [&c.]

Ja<sup>s</sup> Lawrence

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 109.

## Labor and Management at the Washington Navy Yard

*A number of blacksmiths employed at the Washington Navy Yard petitioned the secretary of the navy for redress of grievances relating to their wages, use of liquor, and physical punishment. The secretary forwarded this petition to Commodore Tingey for his reaction. What follows is Commodore Tingey's statement of policy on the questions raised by the petition.*

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn  
7th Octr 1812

Sir

I have maturely considered the Petition of the blacksmiths, which you did me the honor to refer to me, and which is herewith return'd.<sup>1</sup>

Their first charge, of being deprived of "refreshments" (liquor) while at heavy work, is not well founded. my orders were that, if such indulgence was necessary, they should bring it in with them, on the bell ringing to work, the objection was to the breaking off from work, several boys or men for half an hour at a time, in the course of the day, to bring the liquor from outside the Yard.

In respect to raising their wages to that of the Shipwrights, it behoves me to observe that, they certainly are, a valuable set of workmen. most of them of extraordinary ability and industry, but as far as my knowledge goes, I conceive there is no precedent, at any port in the Union, where smiths wages are equal to those of shipwrights: and again should we at this time make a rise of wages in any one class, I conceive that all the others will expect it, the same proportions being paid in the different branches from the first establishment of this yard.

Their third request being granted, would have strong tendency to destroy all organization & discipline in the Yard, my determination being long made known to discharge from this service, any of the men, who should strike another, within the yard. Understanding however that the Negro who was struck, had been extremely careless in his duty, & gave provocation thereby, I only observed to the man who struck him, that, on a repetition of such an act, I would certainly dismiss him. All of which is respectfully submitted. I have the honor [&c.]

Thos: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 102.

1. Petition not found.

## Commodore Bainbridge Orders a Rendezvous

*By the middle of October, Commodore Bainbridge had determined his departure date from Boston and made his cruising plans. Constitution and Hornet would sortie in company, but Captain Porter's Essex was still under repair in the Delaware. Bainbridge therefore sent Porter instructions on where he should attempt to rendezvous with the squadron. The following letters contain these instructions, which were included among documents sent to the Navy Department in 1813 when Bainbridge reported his victory over H.M. frigate Java.*

COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER

(Copy)

U.S. Frigate *Constitution*  
Boston 13th October 1812

Sir,

As soon as the Frigate *Essex* under your command is prepared for sea, you are hereby directed to proceed without delay to join me. Enclosed is a detail of my intended movements which you will please to receive as your guide for finding me. Very Respectfully [&c.]

(Signed) Wm Bainbridge

Captain David Porter  
Commr U.S.F. *Essex*

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 6 1/2.

[Enclosure]

U.S. Frigate *Constitution*  
Boston 13th October 1812

Sir,

I shall sail from this Port by the 25th Inst, and shall shape my course in the most direct way for the Cape De Verd Islands where I shall stop at the Island St Yago in Port Praya Bay to fill up my water, and presume I shall leave there at furthest by the 27th November, and hope I



shall meet you there. From Port Praya Bay, I shall proceed to the Island Fernando Noronha, in Late 3° 53' South, and Longe 32° 27' West, at which place I shall get Refreshments, and expect to leave there by the 15th December, and thence cruise along the Brazil Coast, as far South as Cape Frio in Late 23° South and Longe 41° West, until the 15th January, at which time I intend to pass by Janerio, and cruise between that place and the Island St Sebastian until the 1st February, when I shall stop at said Island (Sebastian) to receive some Refreshments, and shall Leave it on the 3d February and proceed to the Island St Catherine in Late 27° 32' South & Longe 49° 15' West, which place I shall Leave by the 15th February. I shall then proceed off the Island St Helena, and cruise to the Southward of it, occasionally so near as to discover it. In this station I intend to remain to intercept the returning Ships from India, until the 1st of April.

Should any unforeseen cause or accident prevent our meeting by the 1st April next, you must then act according to your best judgment for the good of the Service on which we are engaged. I herewith transmit you a copy of my instructions, in order that you may know the Latitude I am acting under, which I consider completely discretionary.

I shall be extremely anxious for us to meet, to communicate more fully, and for me to receive your able assistance in advice and cooperation. With best wishes for the health & Success of yourself, Officers & Crew, I am [&c.]

(Signed) Wm Bainbridge

Captain David Porter  
Commander US, F. *Essex*

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 6 1/2.

### British Encouragement of Licensed Traders

*On 9 October, Commodore Decatur's United States left Boston to join President, Congress, and Argus. Three days later, as they were*

*cruising as a squadron, United States chased and brought to an American merchant ship, Mandarin. Among the captain's papers was a package of licenses from England which were intended for ship-owners who had applied to the British for permission to trade with Spain and Portugal. Decatur made a prize of the ship and sent the licenses to Secretary Hamilton. The following document was Decatur's letter of enclosure. The incident became an annoyance to Decatur (see pp. 637-38) after his return.*

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U. States Ship *United States*  
at Sea Latitude 41 Longitude 60  
October 12 1812

Sir,

Having yesterday parted with the squadron under the command of Commodore Rogers in pursuit of a Frigate I this morning fell in with the American Ship *Mandarin* William Baker Master from London bound to Philadelphia—on examining her papers I discovered that a large portion of the Merchandize on board her was for British account and I have resolved to put an officer into her and sail her to Norfolk.

I also found a number of licenses from the British Government to Citizens of the United States granting them protection in the transportation of Grain &c to Spain & Portugal. These I have taken the liberty to forward herewith for your disposal. I am very respectfully [&c.]

Stephen Decatur

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 113.

### Captain Porter Requests a Transfer

*As much as David Porter's name is linked with the fortunes of the frigate Essex, it is ironic that she was not his favorite ship. In the following letter, Porter continues to complain of Essex's sailing*

qualities, which had been the object of a refit at New York in June (see pp. 143-44). Porter also objects to commanding a ship armed only with carronades. These guns were devastating at short range, but without longer guns, Essex was vulnerable at ranges greater than 1,000 yards. Essex's last engagement, with H.M.S. Phoebe and H.M.S. Cherub in 1814, provided a tragic commentary on this fact.

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate Essex  
Chester [Pa.] 14th Octr 1812

Sir,

I had the honor to address you on the 6th & 15th ulto respecting the *Alert*. My Officers and men seem very anxious to know how that ship is to be disposed of and the views of the Department respecting her, particularly as they are now destined on a very long cruize and are desirous of having the means of providing themselves with cloathing, Stores &c &c. They have repeatedly requested me to write to you on the subject in order that some arrangement may be made before their departure.

Permit me also to observe that I took the liberty to address a few lines to you on the 23d ulto<sup>1</sup> respecting a transfer to the *Adams* and I beg that the department will indulge me in the exchange on my return from the next cruize as my insuperable dislike to Carronades and the bad sailing of the *Essex*, render her in my opinion the worst frigate in the service. An Officer junior to myself has command of a 36 Gun Frigate and if I should not be so fortunate as to obtain the *Adams*, the probability is that an officer junior to myself will also be appointed to her, should there however be material obstacle to making this change, I endeavour to do my duty to the utmost in *Essex*, and trust to the fortune of war for a better ship. I have the honor [&c.]

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 122.

1. See Porter to Hamilton, 23 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 68.

## Guns for Privateers

As owners of privateers prepared ships for active service, they occasionally encountered difficulties in obtaining guns and other weapons of the desired size and type. Lewis Leroy, a merchant in Washington, North Carolina, was confronted by just such a problem. Hoping for government assistance, Leroy wrote the secretary of the navy describing his need for ordnance and enclosed a letter written on Leroy's behalf by Representative Blackledge, who was actively interested in naval matters (see pp. 452-54). The following documents include Leroy's letter and Blackledge's recommendation. The secretary's response to these supplications is unknown, but it is likely that he discussed the request with Leroy during a personal interview. The Navy Department generally encouraged the equipping of privateers,<sup>1</sup> so it is probable that Hamilton loaned Leroy the required weapons.

1. See, for example, Benjamin Crowninshield to Secretary of War Eustis, 3 July 1812, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 5, No. 12, in which he asks his Massachusetts ally to assist in the procurement of 14 nine-pounders for the privateer *America*; and the letter of Boston Navy Agent J. Vincent Browne to Secretary of the Navy David Henshaw, 16 Sept. 1843, referring to several cannon lying at Crowninshield Wharf in Salem, which were said to have been loaned by the navy for use on board *America*, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 5, (no document number but located between nos. 22 & 23).

CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM BLACKLEDGE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newburn October 11th 1812

Sir

Lewis Leroy Esquire Merchant of Washington North Carolina, is the only person I know of in this part of the Country who has had the spirit and enterprize to engage in fitting out a privateer. He has now a very fine new vessel built for the purpose of two hundred and forty two tons which he could and would have ready for sea in a month if he Could but procure the Cannon Small arms and Cutlasses. But as there are no manufactories of these articles in this State he has it not in his power to procure them here where he is known. His active Capital is and will be exhausted by the time he has got the vessel in all other respects fit for

sea. On laying his circumstances before me I have thought not impossible, but he might on giving bond and good security (which he can give) to restore the arms if not taken by the enemy, obtain from your department one eighteen pounder and the necessary shot. 50 Cutlasses and 50 muskets, the muskets would do even if not in prime order nor of the best quality, he would also like to have if he could obtain it one 24 pound Caronade & two long sixes. From Mr Leroy's judgment in vessels, as well as in Commerce, I have no doubt if he can get this vessel of sea properly equipped she will be as great a thorn in the enemy's side as any afloat of her burthen. He will have her Coppered and in every respect well fitted for a long Cruise, if he can but procure the Arms he wants. Believing as I do that till our navy is increased which will take some time, it is by privateering only that we shall be able much to annoy the enemy, & knowing your anxiety to make the enemy feel as much as possible on his element, I have ventured to address you this to be forwarded or handed you by Mr Leroy under a firm conviction that if it be within the Compass of your power & resources to aid him you will do so. And with sentiments of very great respect remain [&c.]

W<sup>m</sup> Blackledge

P.S. Mr L. can contrive to get the arms without danger of Capture from any port upon the waters of the Chesapeake & will thank you if this is forwarded you by him to address an answer to him at Washington No Carolina.

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 193.

LEWIS LEROY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Washington N Ca  
14 October 1812

Sir,

Having been informed that the Government had in some instances extended their aids to individuals towards arming against our enemies, has induced me to take the liberty of asking whether I could also be aided with the necessary guns, and small arms for a vessel of 240 tons which I have built since the Declaration of war, expressly for to Cruise as aforesaid; Having nearly exhausted my funds in building

and fitting it will be almost impossible to procure the armament unless government will aid me, I was advised to apply to the war Department which I have done and made a demand for these very articles I now write for, but since I am informed that yours is the proper one; have obtained a Letter from Wm Blackledge "Esquire" to you which I respectfully inclosed, with the request, if you have it in your power to grant me the loan of the arms I want, I will upon knowing their value, give my bond with approved sureties to the collector of this Port and authorize some persons to receive them at the place you'll be good enough to order; the arms wanted are as upon otherside;

- 1 18. Pound. cannon; there is several here belonging to government one of these would answer
- 2 6. Pounders. cannon
- 4 24 Pound Caronnades.
- 50 Muskets
- 50 Pairs Pistols
- 50 Sabres or cutlasses. of the latter there is a parcel here belonging to government.

The Muskets and Pistols if not even in the best of order would never be less answer. I pray you to be good enough to inform me where I can send for the above articles, in case my demand is granted. I am with sentiments [&c.]

Ls. Leroy

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 198.

## Captain Isaac Hull Ordered to New York

*Soon after returning to Boston following his defeat of Guerriere, Captain Hull learned of the death of his brother and asked to be relieved of command of Constitution.<sup>1</sup> Secretary Hamilton complied with his request, ordered him to transfer his command to Captain Bainbridge,*



and informed Hull that his request for leave to clear up his brother's estate would be granted.<sup>2</sup> Bainbridge was to continue as commandant of Charlestown Navy Yard while preparing his ship for sea; when Hull returned from leave, he would relieve Bainbridge of his duties as yard commandant.

Meanwhile, Captain Chauncey was making preparations to depart New York Navy Yard for his new command on Lakes Ontario and Erie, and Master Commandant Charles Ludlow had been ordered to relieve him, at least temporarily (see pp. 502–503). At some point, however, the secretary must have had second thoughts about Ludlow's appointment, for on 10 October he peremptorily ordered Hull, who was in New York on family business, to assume command of all warships and gunboats at New York, to ready them for the defense of the city, and to "follow the Instructions of gen Armstrong, with respect to your operations for the public good."<sup>3</sup>

The document which follows is Hull's reply to this sudden change of plans, revealing his willing, though perplexed, state of mind.

1. Hull to Hamilton, 1 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 3.

2. Hamilton to Hull, 9 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 145.

3. Hamilton to Hull, 10 Oct. 1812, DNA, RG45, AF 11.

#### CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newyork  
15th October 1812

Sir

I have had the honour to receive your instructions of the 10th instand and shall proceed to Carry them into Execution as speedily as Possible. but it will Take a longtime to put the GunBoats and other vessels on this Station in a State for Service.

The *John Adams* is without Armament of any sort nor is there a gun in the Yard fit to Put onboard of her nor a gun Carriage had we the Guns. I shall however See what Can be done And in a day or Two make you acquainted with the State of the Yard and the different Vessels on this Station.

I regret to find in your Instructions I am directed to Call on General [John] Armstrong and receive his Instructions And Consult with him on the operations of Vessels Stationed here under my command. There Can be no question but he ought to be consulted on some points And

That the land and sea forces ought to act Together—but I cannot suppose that it is your intention That I receive orders from General Armstrong as to the disposition or Equipment of the force placed by you under my Command. I should be much pleased to be made acquainted with your intentions on that Subject as I yesterday Called on General Armstrong and requested of him to suspend any orders that he might find necessary to give untill I heard from you for untill that Time I could not Consent to act upon any order he might think proper To give. When you was pleased to order me to take charge of the yard at Boston I had hopes of geting a few Months leisure to attend to my Private Concerns, and Came here for that Purpose and having Commenced on the Settlement of my Brothers Estate I must Suffer great inconvenience by being continued at this Yard. I have to make arrangements for the Comfort of a large Famaly & Provide for them against the Winter. My young brothers depend on me to Settle my Brothers Estate and to Provide for them. I hope Therefore situated as I am if the Service will Possibly admit of it you will be pleased to Consider me attached to the Boston Station or Should you have given that yard to some other officer you will give me a Station in Connecticut or if there is none Then grant me a furlough for a few months I could not ask it under any other Circumstances than these I have mentioned to you. The Season will now soon be such that the enemy will hardly attempt to enter our Ports so that there will be but little for the officers to do here. indeed when the Boats are fitted out or even in fitting them out I should suppose that Captain Ludlow is fully Competent to everything they may require. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 123.

### Charleston Under Blockade

*The impact of British ships actively blockading a poorly defended port can be seen in the following report from Charleston. The American navy's few ships were otherwise employed and unavailable to provide a counter-blockading force, hence, Captain John Dent's sug-*

*gestion of other alternatives. His proposal that a local vessel be bought by the state and loaned to the navy is reminiscent of improvised navies during the American Revolution. He provides evidence that in the absence of federal support local communities felt forced to take action to defend themselves.*

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston. 17th October. 1812

Sir

My last acquainted you, that our port was blockaded by three Brigs of War. Since which they have been joined by a fourth, and from the look out last evening a large Ship was seen in the offing, Supposed to be a frigate, as, the Squadron did not chace; She must belong to them. they have captured in Sight of the harbour, twelve Sail, two of which (Coasters) have been recaptured by the *Mary Ann* privateer, and two others drove on shore in the late gale and lost to the Southward of the light. General [Thomas] Pinckney has loaned me thirty Soldiers to do duty in the guard Boats during the night. I have made a requisition on Lieut [Robert D.] Wainwright for fifteen Marines to do duty on board the guard-Ship, if complied with will enable me to take that number of Seamen from her, for the Barges: the Enemy appear well acquainted with our harbour—they approach very near, and avoid the Shoals when in chace which circumstance makes me believe they have pilots.

A Schooner Sailing fast, to carry about 10 or 12 guns would be of infinite Service in this harbour, to protect vessels chased within the Shoals, and after to withdraw the attention of the enemy from the chace, thereby enable them to escape, there is Such a one building and will be ready to launch in two Weeks, well calculated for this Service. there has been meetings of the Citizens here these two days to take into consideration the practicability of equipping the Merchantment & Privateers to engage and drive off, the blockading Squadron. there are no vessels here competent, and their plan will not succeed—they are clamorous for such a vessel as I have requested, and would I presume be purchased by the State and loaned to the Government.

Gun Boat *No 166* since cruizing in the Waters of Beaufort has given great Satisfaction to the Inhabitants in that quarter—her force is not competent to the protection and guard of so large a Bay, divided into many channels, I could purchase a small vessel here (that would go the

Inland passage) would carry one twenty four pounder and four Sixes and manned by forty men—I have suggested the plan for your consideration, Knowing Sir as you do, the Situation of the Inhabitants on the Waters of Port Royal, their exposed Situation to pillage from privateers, that will no doubt make use of that harbour during the winter for the purpose of Cutting off the inland Navigation, and capturing the coasters with rice &c. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 129.

## Commodore Rodgers Takes a Packet

*Not many days after sailing from Boston, Commodore Rodgers's President fell in with a British packet carrying a cargo of gold and silver. It was an easy catch and a highly desirable prize, for there was little question of the value of its contents and of the rapid adjudication that would follow in admiralty court. Packets, while little inclined to resist capture by a large frigate, generally put up a stiff resistance when menaced by smaller warships and privateers.<sup>1</sup>*

1. See Arthur H. Norway, *History of the Post-Office Packet Service Between the Years 1793–1815* (London & New York, 1895), pp. 222–305.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*  
At Sea Octr 17th 1812

Sir

I have the honor to acquaint you that on the 15th Inst., near the Grand Bank, this Ship, the *Congress* in company, captured the British Kings Packet *Swallow*, Joseph Morphew Commander, bound from Kingston, Jamaica, to Falmouth. The rank of the commander of this Vessel is that of Master & Commander in the Navy. She had no Cargo

in, except Eighty one Boxes of Gold and Silver, amounting to between One hundred fifty and Two hundred thousand Dollars: The Specie I took out of her and had intended sending her to England in the character of a Cartel, with her own Crew: Having fallen in at this moment however with the American Schooner *Eleanor*, bound from Baltimore to France, dismasted, induced me to change my first determination and instead of sending her to England have sent her to the U. States in charge of the Master and Crew of the before mentioned Schooner, who at the moment of writing this have charge of the *Swallow* with the Schooner in tow, but which, as soon as the weather will permit, they intend abandoning, after having taken her cargo on board the *Swallow*

I parted company with the *U. States* and *Argus* five days since, they are not however far from [me] at present I apprehend.

We have [fallen in with no] vessel of War as yet, except one Frigate, which the want of wind and the approach of night prevented our chasing with any effect; altho from information afterwards received we must have passed very near a squadron of Five Frigates the evening proceeding that on which we saw the one before mentioned. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 132.

### *Wasp, Frolic, and Poictiers*

On 18 October 1812, Master Commandant Jacob Jones and his sloop *Wasp* achieved a brilliant success in capturing the British sloop of war *Frolic* but then was overtaken and captured by a 74-gun ship of the line, *H.M.S. Poictiers*. The following documents include the Captain's Journal of *Poictiers* and the after-action report of *Frolic's* Captain Thomas Whinyates. Jones was taken prisoner with his crew into Bermuda and was not paroled until November. For his report see pp. 579-83.

JOURNAL OF H.M.S. *POICTIERS*,  
CAPTAIN JOHN P. BERESFORD, R.N.

October 1812  
Sunday 18th

Bermuda Northrock S 3° E 275 Miles

PM fresh Br and clear W. at 1 20 out 3 reefs of the Fore and Mizen Topsails at 2.10 saw 3 Strange sail SSE Made sail in chase & cleared Ship for Action at 4 fired Several Shot at the chase Observed Do hoist American Colours passed a vessel Dismasted at 4.40 Shortnd sail the chase having Struck her colours which proved to be the United States Ship of war *Wasp* Sent Boats with officers and men to Do & recd Prisoners wore Ship towards the Brig *Frolic* having been captured by the above ship sent officers & Men to Do at 6 fresh gales & cloudy Empd getting the Prisoners on Board made and Shortd sail as Necess at 11 up Quarter Boats Prizes and a Merchant Ship (one of the *Frolic* convoy) in Co Prisoners are of-ficers & Men.

Remarks &c  
Monday 19th

Am fresh gales and Squally Prizes and Merchant Ship in Co at 2.40 the Pinnace returned with the captain of HM Brig *Frolic* at 4 Strong gales and Squally with rain Handed the Topsails-at 6 wore Ship, and set the Main Topsail-at 8 fresh Gales and Squally-at 9 made Signal to steer S.W. at 9.20 in Main Topsail-Came to the Wind on the Starbd Tack, and set the Main Staysail-at Noon Strong Gales and Squally Prizes and Merchant Ship in Co.

Bermuda South 3 E 248 Miles

P.M. Fresh Breezes and Squally with Rain at times-made and shortened Sail as necessary-at 4 fresh Breezes & cloudy Wr. Prizes in Co.-at 5.20 down Pinnace, and sent her with a Hawser to the Brig at 5.30 got her in tow. at 6 do. Wr. at 7.30 bore up S.W. at 8 do. Wr. Lost part of the Log-line-at 9 set the Mizen Staysail-at 11 down Do.



Remarks &c  
Tuesday 20

At Midnight Do Wr. Prizes and Merchant Ship in Company.

AM. Fresh Br & cloudy Wr. at 1 up Foresail at 4 modte Breezes and fine Wr. at 5.10 set the Fore & Mizen Topsails-Made and shortend Sail as necessary-at 7 fidded Top Gallant Masts-at 8.30 crossed Top Gallant Yards-at 9.30 saw a strange Sail bearing S.W. by W. at 10.30 hove to, and sent a Cutter to the *Frolic* and Pinnacle to the *Wasp*-recd from Do. [3?] Prisoners, and from the *Frolic* eight wounded Men.

At Noon Fresh Breezes and fine Wr. Up Boats. Prizes in Co. Merchant Ship a head.

Bermuda West Shoal So 22 E 169 Miles

P.M. Fresh Breezes and fine Wr. at 12.15 bore up, and set the Foresail-at 3.15 out all reefs, and set Top Gallant Sails at 4 Do Wr. Brig in tow *Wasp* and Merchant Ship in Co. at 5 close reef'd the topsails at 6 do. Wr. at 7.20 set the Foresail at 8 Do. Wr. *Frolic* in tow.-*Wasp* and Merchant Ship in Co. at 9 set the Jib. at 10.40 out 4th reef of the Topsails-at 10.45 trimmed at 11.30 set the Mainsail. At 12 Modte & fine. *Frolic* in tow-*Wasp* & Merchant Ship in Co.

Remarks &c  
Wednesday 21

AM. Modte & fine at 12.20 trimmed Sails. at 1 out 3rd Reef of the Topsails, and set T. Gt Sail made and shortened Sail as requisite-at 3 in T. Gt Sails & came to the Wind at 4 light Winds and vble with rain at times. *Frolic* in tow *Wasp* and Merchant Ship in Co.-at 7.45 saw a Strange Sail on the Weather Bow.-haul'd up S.S. East and made Sail at 8 Do. Wr.-at 8.50 sent a Boat on board the *Wasp*-at 10 cast off the tow-at 10.15 tack'd Ship, and set Royals. at 11.45 in Royals at Noon Moderate and Cloudy.

Prizes & Merchant Ship in Sight. Stranger North.

Bermuda W Shoal S 30 E 83 Miles

P.M. at 1.40 trimmed Sails-Saw a strange Sail a head. at 2.20 hove to, and boarded an Ameri-

can Ship from Lisbon bound to Philadelphia with Licence-at 2.10 filled & made Sail. set Royals-at 3 wore Ship and shorten'd Sail-at 4 modte and fine Prizes in Co. at 5 up Mainsail-recd 9 Prisoners from the *Frolic*. at 5.30 filled at 6 light Breezes-at 6.15 in T. Glt Sails at 7 back'd the Mizen Topsail at 8 light Airs-Prizes & Merchant Ship in Co. at 8.20 up Foresail at 8.40 backed the M Topsail & in 2nd & 3rd reefs of the Mizen Topsail at 10 Calm at 10.30 a breeze sprung up from the Sd & Ed at 10.50 in 2nd & 3rd reefs of the Fore & Main Topsails-At Midnight Modte & fine-Prizes & Merchant Ship in Co.

D, UkLPR, Adm. 51/2694.

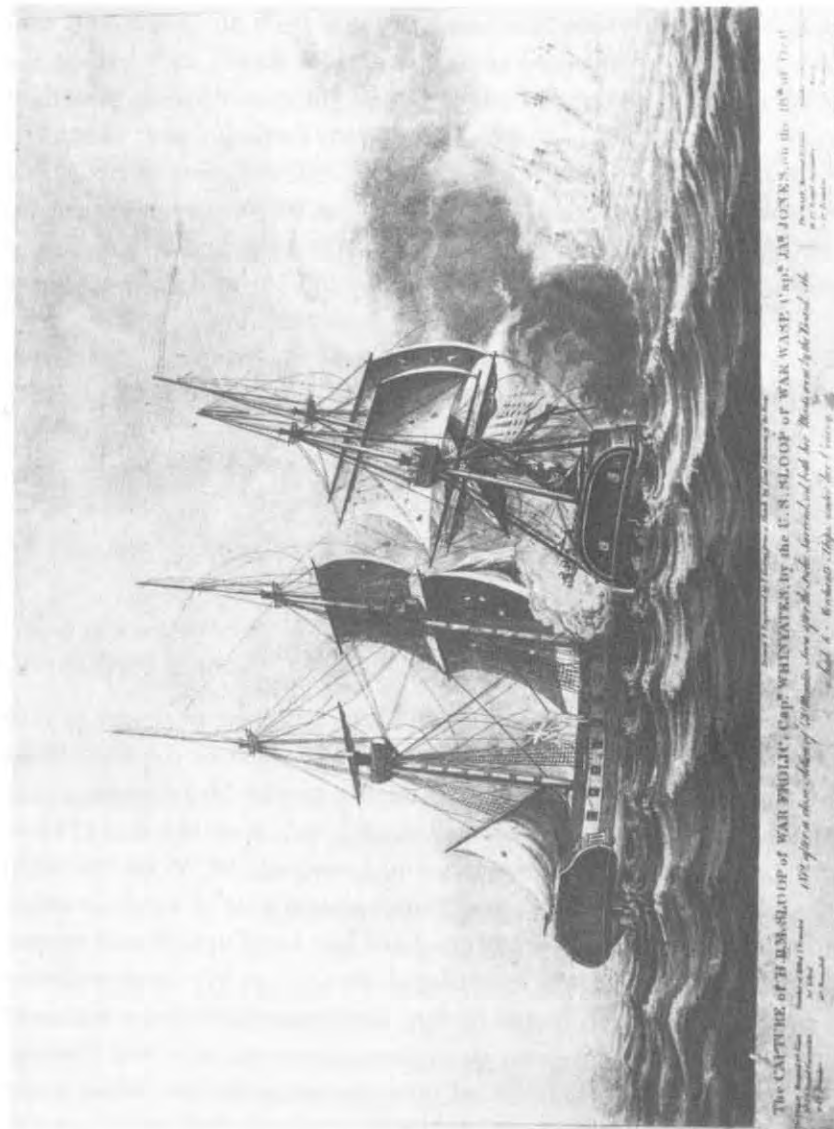
CAPTAIN THOMAS WHINYATES, R.N., TO  
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

His Majesty's Ship the *Poictiers* at Sea  
October 23rd 1812

It is with the most bitter sorrow and distress I have to report to your Excellency the capture of His Majesty's Brig *Frolick* by the Ship *Wasp* belonging to the United States of America on the 18th Instant.

Having under Convoy the home bound Trade from the Bay of Honduras and being in Latitude 56°N and Longitude 64°W on the night of the 17th we were overtaken by a most violent gale of wind, in which the *Frolick* carried away her Main Yard lost her Topsails and sprung the Main topmast. On the morning of the \* as We were repairing the damages sustained in the Storm, and reassembling the scattered ships, a suspicious Ship came in sight and gave chase to the Convoy.

The Merchant Ships continued their voyage before the Wind under all sail the *Frolick* dropt astern and hoisted Spanish Colours in order to decoy the stranger under Guns and to give time for the Convoy to escape about 10 o'Clock both vessels being within hail we hauled to the wind, and the battle began. The superior fire of our Guns gave every reason to expect its speedy termination in our favour. But the Gaff and the head braces being shot away, and there being no sail on the Main-



mast, the Brig became unmanagable and the Enemy succeeded in taking a position to rake her; whilst she was unable to bring a Gun to bear. After laying some time exposed to a most destructive fire, she fell with the Bowsprit betwixt the Enemy's Main and Mizen Rigging still unable to return his Fire. At length the Enemy Boarded, and made himself master of the Brig, every individual officer being wounded, and the greater part of the men either Killed or Wounded, there not being twenty persons remaining unhurt.

Although I shall ever deplore the unhappy issue of this contest, it would be great injustice to the Merit of the Officers and Crew if I failed to report that their bravery and coolness are deserving of every praise, and I am convinced if the *Frolick* had not been crippled in the gale, I should have to make very different report to your excellency. The *Wasp* was taken, and the *Frolick* recaptured the same afternoon by His Majesty's Ship the *Poictiers*. Being separated from them, I cannot at present transmit a list of killed and wounded. Mr Charles McKay the first Lieutenant and Mr [John] Stephens the Master have died of thier wounds I have the honor to be [&c.]

(Signed) T. Whinyates

To The Right Honble.  
Sir J. B. Warren Bart KB  
&c &c &c

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, part 3, pp. 681-83.

## Arrangements for a Hospital in Washington

*The lack of proper hospital facilities for naval officers and seamen was a continuing theme of surgeons' reports to the Navy Department during the War of 1812. The following letter comments on that subject in the nation's capital.*

DR. THOMAS EWELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

[Washington]

Sir,

Agreeably to your permission for me to do my best, in relieving the present wretchedness of the hospital establishment; and providing for the approaching season, I have acted, and I trust you will approve of the act.

At present the public pay two hundred dolls pr annum for a miserable shell & two hundred more for the rent of a house for the Surgeon's mate to reside in: now for the addition of two hundred more, making six hundred dollars I have rented a large & convenient house, in which the Surgeon's Mate will necessarily reside most comfortably, thereby saving the rent he now receives; and in which an hundred sick men may be comfortably accomodated, so convenient as to be immediately under the eye of the Barracks officers.

At New orleans twice this rent is paid, at Washington, twice the demand exists for the building; and as I consider'd the arrangement as a most Judicious thing for the public; I did not decline it from the two conditions, insisted on; namely, that the house should be taken for six years; and that part of the rent should be advanced to the Proprietor;

This Proprietor is Comdr Tingey & the house is the one he lately occupied. Respectfully yr [&c.]

Thos Ewell  
19th Octr 1812

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 114.

## The Observations of a Gunboat Commander

*There are four gunboat logs extant from the War of 1812, but only one of them deals with the first year of the war.<sup>1</sup> William Laughton, commander of Gunboat No. 71 was stationed at the Washington Navy Yard. His duties during the autumn of 1812 were not exciting, but his*

*observations reveal the nature of the mundane but essential work of many gunboat officers and men. Fortunately, Laughton's account is written more in the expansive style of a journal than the terse language of the usual log. He apparently had little sea service but was aware that his treatment of events was unorthodox. On the last page of the log he wrote: "Should the Honorable Secretary of the Navy find any unnecessary observations in these remarks, he will be pleased to excuse them . . . for my own part it is the first remarks I ever made in the Service, therefore be pleased to believe that where ever I have made unnecessary observations it was from no other motive than to throw as much light as possible on how we spent our time."*

1. See Claudia Bradley et al., comps., List of Logbooks of U.S. Navy Ships, Stations, and Miscellaneous Units, 1801-1947: National Archives and Records Service, Special List 44 (Washington, D.C., 1978). The gunboats referred to are No. 6 (Aug. 23, 1813-Nov. 3, 1815), No. 32 (Nov. 25, 1813-Mar. 5, 1815), No. 71 (Sept. 10, 1812-Nov. 3, 1813), and No. 81 (Apr. 5, 1809-Feb. 28, 1814). These logbooks are part of DNA, RG24.

## REMARKS ON BOARD THE UNITED STATES GUNBOAT No. 71 WILLIAM LAUGHTON, COMMANDER

[Extract]

1812. Saturday October 10.	This day Mr Davis the Plumber commences scuppers for Gunboat No. 71. Comodore Tingey agrees that I shall have two Davids for the stern of No. 71 to enable me to hoist up my boat while under Way tending as usual all day in the Yard.
Sunday 11.	This day the colors were hoisted on the Frigate <i>Constellation</i> for the first time since she under went a thorough repair; Went to Church in the Navy Yard, The Hon. the Secretary of the Navy present &c &c
Monday 12.	This day made out a requisition to enable me to recruit a Crew for No. 71. Approved by the Comodore, went to Navy Department and received the sum of four hundred Dollars of the Bank of Columbia; returned to the Navy Yard Where I remained the latter part of the day.



- Tuesday 13. This day Comodore Tingey gave me verbal orders to go to Alexandria to recruit men for *No. 71*. in compliance of which I took my passage in the Packet and went down to Alexandria, took lodgings and kept *Rendesvous* with [Acting] Lieut. [James] Sanders he recruiting for the *Constellation* and I for *No. 71*. We commenced this day, Paid Passage. Twenty five Cents; Do for Baggage Twenty five Cents; The latter part of the day employed procuring Musick for regular attendance at the *Rendesvous* which was opened at Sanguses Sailors Boarding house.  
Alexandria.
- Wednesday 14. Shiped a Man at Alexandria, Robert Forsyth, Landsman, paid his Jail fees on his landlords passing his word he would be his security his crime for being in Jail was only for fighting gave him the latter part of this liberty to take a cruise; No luck at the *Rendesvous* this day.
- Thursday 15. This morning paid Mr Learey the balance of Robert Forsyth's advance he being present and owing it to Mr Learey say two months Adv. at 8\$ prMo is \$16.- Took him on board the Packet and brought him up to Washington Navy Yard. Reported him to Capt Haraden<sup>1</sup> who registered his name, afterwards took him to the Sergeant at the of the Navy Yard; and forbid his passing without my orders, or Orders Accountable persons in the Navy Yard, the put him on board the old *Green*,<sup>2</sup> among the other Gun boat men, and the people of the Ordy and arranged for his eating &c &c
- Friday 16. This Morning after visiting the Navy Yard, and eating breakfast took passage in the Washington Packet to Alexandria to endeavor to procure more men, arrived at Alexandria at 12.  
Passage Money, Twenty five cents. . . . . \$0.25  
This afternoon remained at the *Rendesvous* endeavouring to procure men but not any to be had, owing to the horrid class of Licenced vessels,

- their, Crimps having twice in twenty four hours bribed, and taken away our Music, was to prevent our getting men.  
My bills at Milburn's Tavern 4 d/ys. . . . . \$3.50
- Saturday 17. Alexandria. This day concluded to leave of recruiting at Alexandria owing to the Demand for men for those sweet friends of the Nation, "The licenced traders" and for the opposition that appears to prevail here against us, and for the desire I have to be in the Yard to get the boat fitted out; At 4 P.M. took my passage in Winset's Packet and at 6 P.M. arrived at Washington, Paid passage Money & for Baggage . . . . . \$0.50
- Sunday 18. Washington. This day visited the Navy Yard, several times, a No of gentlemen from the Navy Hill, went from the Navy Yard to Mount Vernon.
- Monday 19. This morning at 10 A.M. I agreed with Mr Henry Burford, ShopKeeper to keep a *Rendesvous* for Gunboat *No. 71*. he not fixing on any particular price but engaging to make it reasonable as possible something however was to depend on the time I may want to keep it open; the remainder of the day attending in the Navy Yard.
- Tuesday  
October 20. This day had scuppers put in the trunk comings or Hatchway, hung the Rudder and had my men scraping the Pitch off the seams &c. Capt Haraden informs me I must go to Georgetown tomorrow to bring Cannon for the boats &c
- Wednesday 21. This morning at 9 A.M. Went with Mr Salvadore Catalano to Geo. Town to prove the Cannon.<sup>3</sup> Capt Haraden told me on Tuesday I was to bring down; returned at 3 P.M. Received several pieces of Iron work from Mr. Smith, Blksmith, that were assigned me by the Comodore & Captain Haraden, Mr. Smith also came into the Navy Yard and took several other dimentions of Iron work for Gun boat *No. 71*. finished the remainder of the day attending in the Yard.
- Thursday 22. This morning at 10 A.M. Captain Haraden sent me off with a Gun-boat and Eighteen Men to carry

twenty one pieces of old Cannon to the Foundry, and to bring back the Ten Caronades proved in my presence by Mr Salvadore Catalano the day before in consequence of the men not having provisions with them and calculating to be back much sooner I was obliged to procure refreshments for them which cost me \$1.68 1/2 Got back to the Navy Yard at 8 P.M. thick black & Unsettled Weather Ends this day's Labour.

Friday 23. This day employed seeing the Cannon delivered to the respective Boats; Received my Steam Devits from the Blockmaker. Cost me, to crews of Gunboats to put my two Cannon on board for Drink Money &c this day till done with the Boat One Dollar \$1.--

Saturday 24. This day attended in the Yard all day, Received Several pieces of Work from the blacksmith which did not fit, sent them back to be altered, this day all the carpenters broke off from the Gunboat except a Mr. Goff, and put on the *Constellation*, little or nothing done. . . .

William Laughton  
Late Comr of U.S. Vessell No 71

ADS, DNA, RG24, Logbook of Gunboat No. 71, 10 Sept. 1812-3 Nov. 1813.

1. Refers to Lieutenant Nathaniel Haraden.  
2. *General Greene*, a frigate built in 1799, served as a receiving ship for gunboat crews and others during the War of 1812.  
3. Salvadore Catalano, Sicilian pilot, guided Stephen Decatur and his crew into Tripoli Harbor to burn the frigate *Philadelphia* in 1804. From that time on, the navy treated Catalano with special consideration. He arrived in the United States in 1805 on board the frigate *Congress* and was paid off with the rest of her crew. On 7 Jan. 1806, Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith instructed Commodore Tingey to receive Catalano "into the public service at the Navy Yard under your Command, and assign him such duties as he may be capable of discharging." By a warrant of 9 Aug. 1809, Catalano was made a sailing master and for many years remained an employee of the Washington Navy Yard, generally working with ordnance. See *Navy Register*, various years, and Knox, *Barbary Wars*, V: 386 and VI: 337-38.

The Supplying of Gunpowder

*The New York firm of Bullus, Decatur, and Rucker was engaged in the manufacture and supply of gunpowder for the Navy Department. The first of the partners, John Bullus, had been associated with the navy since the Quasi-War with France, when he had served as a surgeon on board the frigate United States.<sup>1</sup> He was first appointed a navy agent for the Mediterranean squadron in 1807, and, after returning to the United States, Bullus continued to serve as a navy agent in the port of New York. That Bullus could serve both as a contractor to the navy in the matter of gunpowder and navy agent in charge of procurement in New York, shows that "conflict of interest" in public employees was not then considered as grievous a sin as it has come to be in recent times. Bullus's partners were John P. Decatur, Stephen Decatur, Jr.'s, brother, and John A. Rucker.<sup>2</sup>*

1. See Dudley W. Knox, Register of Officer Personnel United States Navy and Marine Corps and Ships' Data, 1801-1807 (Washington, D.C., 1945), p. 7; Knox, Quasi-War VII: 320; and Knox, Barbary Wars VI: 537.  
2. See real estate indenture of 1 July 1814, New York Historical Society, New York, N.Y., Miscellaneous Manuscripts, John Bullus Papers.

BULLUS, DECATUR, & RUCKER TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New York  
October 27th 1812

Sir,  
We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter of the 21st Inst. The 500 Barrels of Powder which we have delivered was made out of the 50,000 pounds of Saltpetre received from the Navy Department in 1811, & for which no particular price for manufacturing was mentioned, but an understanding that we were to be allowed so many Cents a pound, we think seven, our returning a pound of powder, for every pound of Saltpetre delivered, we finding the Sulpher and Charcoal, having furnished this quantity of powder, we beg to be informed what price we are to be allowed for it.

We beg leave to State that we took no advantage even at that moment when powder was in great demand and selling at \$80., a Barrel of the three months notice which was to be given us before we should be called upon to deliver it, but furnished the whole of it immediately upon the requisition of the Commanding Officer. Having had a good supply of Saltpetre of our own on hand, the last parcel of Saltpetre which we received from Philadelphia, belonging to the Navy Department to be manufactured by us is still in Store, and from an accurate calculation which we have made find that the 13 1/2 cents for manufacturing agreeably to your Letter of the 21st Inst is not equal to 7 cents a pound, returning a pound of powder for every pound of Saltpetre delivered, and the manufacturer to find the Sulpher & charcoal. We have the honor [&c.]

Bullus, Decatur & Rucker

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 243.

### *United States vs. Macedonian*

*After refitting during most of September, the U.S. Navy's small fleet was nearly ready to sail for cruises that would last into the winter months. Three squadrons composed of three ships each were to cruise independently in locations chosen by their commodores. Ideally, each squadron had a large frigate, a smaller frigate, and a sloop of war in company. Bainbridge in Constitution was to sail with Porter's Essex and Lawrence's Hornet; Rodgers in President was to sail with Smith's Congress and Jones's Wasp; and Decatur in United States was to sail with Sinclair's Argus and Evans's Chesapeake. In reality, Essex, Hornet, and Chesapeake were not ready for sea when the larger ships were and departed later. Wasp was captured en route to her rendezvous with President, Essex never made rendezvous with Constitution, and Chesapeake did not sail from Boston until 12 December.*

*Rodgers's and Decatur's ships sailed together from Boston on 8 October. Four days later, Decatur's United States and Argus parted company with Rodgers, sailing in the direction of the Azores and then the Cape Verde Islands. By the 25th of October, United States and Argus had gone their separate ways. Decatur's ship was cruising in a southerly*

*direction about midway between the Azores and Cape Verde Islands when he sighted the new British frigate Macedonian. The following documents are the reports of Captain John S. Carden and Commodore Decatur, respectively, narrating the battle from their own vantage points.*

CAPTAIN JOHN S. CARDEN, R.N., TO  
SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

American Ship *United States*  
at Sea 28th October 1812.

Sir,

It is with the deepest regret I have to acquaint you for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that His Majesty's late Ship *Macedonian* was Captured on the 25th Instant by the United States Ship, *United States*, Commodore Decatur Commander, the detail is as follows.

A short time after daylight steering NW b W with the Wind from the Southward in Latitude 29° 00 N and Longitude 29° 30 W in the execution of their Lordships orders, a sail was seen on the lee Beam, which I immediately stood for, and made her out to be a large Frigate under American Colours, at 9 O'clock I closed with her and she commenced the Action, which we returned, but the Enemy keeping two points off the Wind I was not enabled to get as close to her as I could have wished; after an hours Action the Enemy back'd and came to the wind, and I was then enabled to bring her to close Battle, in this situation I soon found the Enemys force too superior to expect success, unless some very fortunate chance occur'd in our favor, and with this hope I continued the Battle to two hours and ten minutes, when having the mizen mast shot away by the board, Topmasts shot away by the caps, Main Yard shot in pieces, lower Masts badly wounded, lower Rigging all cut to pieces, a small proportion only of the Foresail left to the Fore Yard, all the Guns on the Quarter Deck and Forecastle disabled but two, and filled with wreck, two also on the Main Deck disabled, and several shot between wind and water, a very great proportion of the Crew Killed and wounded, and the Enemy comparatively in good order, who had now shot ahead, and was about to place himself





*H.M.S. Macedonian Figurehead*

in a raking position without our being enabled to return the fire, being a perfect wreck, and unmanagable Log.

I deemed it prudent th'o painful extremity to surrender His Majesty's Ship, nor was this dreadful alternative resorted too till every hope of success was removed even beyond the reach of chance, nor till I trust their Lordships will be aware every effort has been made against the Enemy by myself, my brave Officers, and Men, nor should she have been surrendered whilst a man lived on board, had she been managable. - I am sorry to say our loss is very severe, I find by this days muster, thirty six killed, three of whom linger'd a short time after the Battle, thirty six severely wounded, many of whom cannot recover, and thirty two slight wounds, who may all do well, total one hundred and four.

The truly noble and animating conduct of my Officers, and the steady bravery of my Crew to the last moment of the Battle, must ever render them dear to their Country.

My first Lieutenant David Hope was severely wounded in the head towards the close of the Battle, and was taken below, but was soon again on deck displaying that greatness of mind and exertion, which th'o it may be equalled, can never be excelled; the third Lieutenant John Bulford was also wounded, but not obliged to quit his Quarters, second Lieutenant Samuel Mottley and him deserves my highest acknowledgements, the cool and steady conduct of Mr [James] Walker the Master was very great during the Battle, as also that of Lieutenants Wilson and [George] Magill of the Marines.

On being taken onboard the Enemys Ship, I ceased to wonder at the result of the Battle; the *United States* is built with the scantline of a seventy four gun Ship, mounting thirty long twenty four pounders (English Ship Guns) on her Main Deck, and twenty two forty two pounders, Carronades, with two long twenty four pounders on her Quarter Deck and Forecastle. Howitzer Guns in her Tops, and a travelling Carronade on her upper Deck, with a Complement of four Hundred and seventy eight pick'd Men.

The Enemy has suffered much in masts, Rigging and Hull, above and below water, her loss in killed and wounded I am not aware of, but know, a Lieutenant and six Men have been thrown overboard.

Enclosed you will be pleased to receive the names of the Killed and wounded on board the *Macedonian*, And have the honour to be [&c.]

Jno S. Carden

J. W. Croker Esqr  
Secretary to the Admiralty  
London.

LS, UklPR, Adm. 1/1663. The list of killed and wounded was appended, and a printed version can be found in *The Naval Chronicle* 29: 78-79.

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S.S. *United States* at sea October 30 1812

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that on the 25th Inst. being in the Lat. 29. N. Long. 29. ° 30. W., We fell in with, & after an action of an hour & an half, captured his Britannic Majesty's ship *Macedonian* commanded by Captain John Carden, and mounting 49. carriage guns (the odd gun shifting)-She is a frigate of the largest class-two years old-four months out of dock, and reputed one of the best sailers in the British service. The enemy being to windward had the advantage of engaging us at his own distance, which was so great, that for the first half hour we did not use our carronades, & at no moment was he within the complete effect of our musketry or grape-to this circumstance & a heavy swell which was on at the time I ascribe the unusual length of the action. The enthusiasm of every officer Seaman & marine on board this ship on discovering the enemy, their steady conduct in battle & the precision of their fire could not be surpassed-where all have met my fullest expectations it would be unjust in me to discriminate. Permit me however to recommend to your particular notice my first Lieutenant Wm H. Allen, who has served with me upwards of five years & to his unremitted exertions in disciplining the crew is to be imputed the obvious superiority of our gunnery exhibited in the result of this contest.

Subjoined is a list of the Killed & wounded on both ships our loss compared with that of the enemy will appear small. Amongst our wounded you will observe the name of [Acting] Lieutenant Funk, who died a few hours after the action he was an officer of great gallantry & promise and the service has sustained a severe loss in his death. The *Macedonian* lost her mizzenmast, fore & maintopmasts and mainyard

& was much cut up in her hull The damage Sustained by this Ship was not such as to render her return into port necessary, and had I not deemed it important that we should See our prize [in?] should have continued our cruise. With the highest consideration and respect I am [&c.]

Stephen Decatur

List of Killed & wounded on board the *United States*-  
Thomas Brown New York Seaman-Henry Shepherd-Philadelphia  
ditto-William Murry Boston-Boy Michael ODonnel New York private  
marine-John Roberts-ditto-ditto-Killed-  
\*John Mercer Funk. Philadelphia Lieutenant. \*John Archibald-New  
York. Carpenters crew-Christian Clark ditto Seaman-George  
Christopher ditto-ordinary seaman-George Mahai ditto-ditto-  
William James ditto ditto-John Lalor ditto private marine-Wounded-  
On board the *Macedonian* There were thirty six killed-& sixty eight  
wounded-Among the former were the Boatswain-one masters mate &  
the schoolmaster & of the latter were the first & third Lieutenants-one  
masters mate & two midshipmen-  
\*since dead

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 154. Signature, asterisks, and last line are in Decatur's hand.

## Condition of the Navy Yard at Portsmouth

*The neglected state of the navy yard at Portsmouth is the subject of the report of Purser Tunis Craven which follows. The building of the yard had begun more than ten years earlier during the Adams administration. The failure of later presidents to complete this work had led to the virtual abandonment of the site. Craven's report portrays a navy yard in its crudest state, though blest by natural advantages lent by geography and a numerous population.*

PURSER TUNIS CRAVEN TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Portsmouth N H  
October 31st 1812

Sir,

I had the honor to report to you, my arrival on this station, under date of the 17th ulto and at that time stated the Situation of Public Property at this yard. Since then no alteration has been made. I respectfully beg leave to refer you to that letter, and to repeat, that, the Keel, floortimbers, and many other valuable pieces of Seventy four frames,<sup>1</sup> altho' under sheds, are laying on the ground, and will certainly receive material injury, if not total destruction, unless soon properly Secured. The timbers of the Slip, above high water mark, would be much benefited by a thick coat of pitch.

By this days mail you will receive drafts of this Harbour and Island, which I beg you will honor me by accepting. They are in part copied, from rough sketches, but principally drawn from actual survey, the soundings were taken by myself aided by an able Seaman. From the height of tides, the rapidity, (between 5 & 6 Knots) and vicinity to the Ocean, the navigation of this Harbour is never impeded by ice, and of course is, all important in a Naval point of view, particularly at this Crisis. The Town of Portsmouth and adjacent country abounds in first rate mechanics in every department requisite to the building and compleat equipment of Ships. There are Gentlemen in Portsmouth who would become security for their building a Frigate



*Capture of H.M.S. Macedonian by U.S.S. United States, 25 October 1812*



in ninety working days. From the country bordering on the River, and district of Maine "pasture" Oak, Spruce Pine, esteemed the best for light spars and pitch pine equal to the Southern, can be obtained in any quantity and at very cheap rates. Ball and powder is also easily attainable from Massachusetts. From these circumstances from the Harbour being Safe and Commodious and of easier access than any other during winter I venture to suggest, the advantages that would result, from having at this Yard, such imperishable spare materials, as would enable our Squadron, from disasters of any kind, to obtain the necessary supplies without delay.

On the plan of Navy Yard Island I have taken the liberty of pointing out "Deep Cove" as a suitable place for a Dry Dock, there are many others, but that, appears by nature designed for one. in fact, nearly all the requisite materials for such a work, are on the Spot. from the bold rocky Shores, a labourer can quarry large Square Stones much faster than a mason could lay them. The dwelling house has two tenements one of which, I found, and is still, occupied by a Mr. Bowles employed by the Superintendant, and paid by the Department 300\$ p. annum to take care of the Yard. With your permission, I will most cheerfully take due care of the Yard and property therein without any further compensation than the right of residence you were pleased to give me. I have the Honor [&c.]

Tunis Craven  
Purser, U S Navy

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 7, No. 3.

1. In 1799, Congress authorized construction of six 74-gun ships to be built at Charlestown, Portsmouth, New York, Washington, Gosport, and Philadelphia. Preparatory work was done, but building was never completed. Built with some of the assembled timbers, *Independence* was finally launched at Charlestown 18 June 1814. For other correspondence regarding the neglected state of the timbers purchased for the 74s, see Bainbridge to Hamilton, 14 Apr. 1812, pp. 91-93.

## Hospital Troubles at Charlestown

*A poor relationship between the marine hospital and navy patients resulted in the ouster of several seamen of Constitution. The document*

*that follows states their pitiful condition and makes recommendations for at least a temporary improvement of the situation.*

LIEUTENANT JOSEPH NICHOLSON TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Charlestown 31 Octo: 1812

Sir

Allow me to trespass on a few of your busy moments to represent the situation I am placed in respecting the Sick & wounded Men on this station—two or three days ago Doctor [David] Townsend of the Marine Hospital informed me that a number (say 15) of the men belonging to the *Constitution* & others of our fleet had behaved improperly in the Hospital & must come out immediately, that they did not require Medical aid. the Commdg Officer of the *Chesapeake* offered to take them. they were sent for—but on observing their miserable situation Captn [Samuel] Evans sent them back to me. I then intreated Doctor Townsend to take them & in his presence wrote on the subject, offering every assistance in keeping them in proper Order & represented my having no place whatever to put them in on shore—all to no avail these poor wounded Seamen were turned from the Hospital Gates I have put them on board a Gun Boat. They are principally on Crutches with broaken & shattered limbs & the Surgeon of the Yard reported to me that some of them would shortly die for want of a more propper place to put them in. Captn Evans knowing these circumstances advised me to make this representation to you—Desertions frequently happen & our service suffers from the impropriety of this man. I am daily liable to be treated similarly by him, as he is not in the practice but "Inspector of Pot & Pearlash" & lives at the other extremity of Boston & consequently is obliged to trust & believe all his Fore-man may report of anything improper from a parcel of Sailors uncontrouled by any one.

There is the left wing of the New Barracks unfinish'd & unoccupied allow Me Sir to suggest the propriety of appropriating a part of that Building to accommodate our Sick Seamen this winter. As we have many Sick on this station the Barracks would prevent much

desertion—a very little expence will attend this method. With the highest [&c.]

Joseph Nicholson

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 138.

## The Rate of Exchange of Prisoners

*The question of how prisoners of war were exchanged is a complex one. The following document reveals the agreed-upon valuation of prisoners according to rank. One-for-one exchanges could only be made with men of equivalent rank. Otherwise, ratios were established on the basis of one officer of a given rank for a certain number of enlisted men. Since army officers and soldiers could be and were captured at sea, the same rules applied to their exchange.*

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Boston 31 Octb. 1812

dear Sir

I this morning received a letter from Cpt Jacob Lewis (at Washington) in which he desires, that, I will forward to the Honbl Secretary of State the rate of exchange established by the British Government, and given me by Lieut [William] Miller Agent for prisoners at Halifax—immediately after my arrival at this place I waited upon Comdr Rodgers and gave him all the documents furnished me by Lieut Miller, which after perusal he assured me would be transmitted to the Honbl Secretary of the Navy, amongst them was the original rate of exchange given me by Lieut Miller, I however enclose you a copy, which you will please dispose of as you think best and proper—The Admiral (Sawyer) assured me, that, my Officers crew and self should be exchanged for the Officers and Soldiers taken in the *Samuel and Sarah* transport by Cpt Porter, that is to say, provided our Government approved the arrangement—Lieut Miller did not furnish me with the

papers until after the Cartel had got underweigh, and the number of persons on board prevented me from examining them at that time—: Lieut Miller however expressly told me, that, I should be at liberty to act again immediately after my arrival at Boston, and I left Halifax under that impression—the Officers and soldiers taken in the transport are without doubt either doing duty in the field or in Garrison—I regret giving you trouble but I feel desirous that you should be made fully acquainted with the circumstances and I request you will admit this as my apology—I have been excessively mortified in not being able to join the *Constitution* previous to her departure, the Commodore had asked me in the most flattering way and expressed his disappointment before leaving us—he recommended to the Honbl Secretary my appointment to this Yard until something better could be done for me. I wish for it at this time as I am very much distressed with a bad leg. I was accidentally hurt in the chase and after was left without a Surgeon as I thought it trifling the wound is now greatly enlarged and extremely painful—with very great respect and esteem I am [&c.]

W. M. Crane

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 137.

## The Supply of Timber

*The British had begun to blockade the southern coast of the United States, from Charleston to St. Marys, by November 1812. Trade was interrupted and supplies normally obtained from southern ports could not be depended upon. Commodore Thomas Tingey was concerned about the possible lack of timber needed for the repair of frigates in northern shipyards, much of which had been obtained from Georgia. The following letter demonstrates how the navy's construction plans were affected by these considerations.*

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washn 7th Novr 1812

Sir

Conceiving it proper that speedy arrangements should be made for furnishing the Navy Yard at Portsmouth New Hampshire, with suitable materials for rebuilding one of the frigates, agreeably to appropriations made the last session of Congress—I beg leave respectfully to state for your consideration that, I have proposals for furnishing at said yard, and also at New York from Savanna, Geoga) of their best quality Pine. The Square timber of the various descriptions and dimensions at 48 cents P Cubic foot, and all the sawed stuff, at the rate of 90 cents P cubic foot: the Government also to bear the risk of capture.

While from the vicinity of Portsmouth, the proposals offer their best yellow pine, delivered at that yard at the following prices viz.

<u>Sawed</u> pine Plank & thick stuff	36	cents P	Cubic foot
Do Do Carlines, ledges &c	33	cents	do
Beams and Square timber	33	do	do
White Oak Plank & thick stuff	60	do	do
Do Do smaller <u>Sawed</u> do	37 1/2	do	do
Do Do <u>Square</u> timber assorted	30	do	do
Elm Do Do Do	25	do	do

The obvious great difference in the price, and the certainty of obtaining the timely supplies, in the one case, and uncertainty in the

### Accounts of the Exchange of Prisoners of War With Prisoners Sent from

At  
British Prisoners Received

	In What Ship	
	Whither Sent	
60	Admirals & Generls Command in Chief	
40	Vice Admrls & Genls. of Divisions	
30	Rear Admrls & Genls of Brigades	
20	Chiefs of divisions	
15	Captains of Ships of the Line and chief of Brigade	
8	Captains of Frigates and chiefs of Battalion	
6	Lieutenant in Navy and Captains in Army	
3	Midshipmen or aspirants Master of Merchant Vessels and Commanders of Privateers & sub Lieuts in Army	
2	Second Captains and Lieutenants of Merchant Vessels and Privateers all petty officers in the Navy & non commissd officers in Army	
1	Seamen and Soldiers	Total according to the equivalent in men for officers exchanged
0		Ensigns in Navy and Lieuts in Army
4	When Received	In What Ship
		From What place
60	Admirals & Generals	
40	Vice Admrls & Lieut. Genls	
30	Rear Admrls. & Major Genls	
20	Commodores & Brigad Genls	
18	Post Captains & Colonels	
8	Commanders in Navy Lieut Colonels and Majors	
6	Lieuts in Nay & Captains in Army	
4	Lieutenants in Army	
3	Midshipmen Masters of Merchant Vessels and Commanders of Privateers and Ensigns in Army	
2	Mares, all petty officers and non Commissioned officers in Army	
1	Seamen & Soldiers	Total according to the equivalent in Men for Officers exchanged

N.B. The numbers at the Tops of the Columns of Ranks Signify the equivalent in Men of those ranks respectively and according to which Officers Belonging to either power, may with the approbation of the Naval Commander in Chief, be exchanged where there shall be no Officers of corresponding ranks in possession of the other power

Signed W. Miller  
Agent for Prisoners of War

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 137.



other-leaves only the consideration whether-the intrinsic value of the southern materials, over the other-will justify that difference of expence, risque, and uncertainty. I conceive it my duty respectfully to state my opinion that it will not-if the materials are carefully selected in the north, by a judicious and experienced person.

All which is respectfully submitted for your consideration and instructions thereon. I have the honor [&c.]

Thos Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 170.

## A Merchant in Search of his Goods

*There are many victims in wartime, and merchants may have suffered more than most civilians during the War of 1812. In peacetime, communication between ports was slow and merchants were denied timely information concerning the existence of ready markets and good prices for their products. Those shipping goods overseas or importing from abroad faced vast uncertainties, against which they attempted to insure themselves. During the war conditions worsened and produced situations such as those experienced by the author of the next document. The ship carrying his goods had the misfortune to be captured by the British frigate Guerriere before her engagement with Constitution.*

STEPHEN SINGLETON TO CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL

Commodore Isaac Hull Esqr  
New York

Philadelphia 9 Novr 1812

Dear Sir,

I have taken the liberty to address you on the subject of some property that I had on board the *Gurriere* (say twenty Bales of Cloth) at the time of her capture by you, which Cloths were originally shipp'd for my account at Cadiz on board the Brig *Hiram*, Elijah

Adams Master to Boston, said vessel being captured by the *Gurriere* on the 13th of August and my twenty Bales of Cloth together with a number of other Articles belonging to the Captain taken out, and put on board the *Gurriere* particulars of which I have in a protest dated Boston Sept 4 1812.

Now my Dear Sir the object of the inquiry is wether any such Goods were on board the *Gurriere* at the time of her Capture, and what became of them afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

You will not think me impertinent in this inquiry when I inform you that the above shipment composed my all, after many years hard struggling with the boisterous Elements; and when in Cadiz last June, conceived this shipment as the only means of getting my property home in safety, not having the smallest idea that I should not arrive in time to cover the said goods by Insurance, which unfortunately was the case, and I am again obliged to apply to the smiles of Old Neptune for a livelihood.

I therefore flatter myself that the moment your many engagements will permit, to have your answer and that you may live long for our Countrys sake and Glory is the sincere prayer of Dear Sir, Your [&c.]

Stephen Singleton

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 7, No. 41.

1. Answer not found; but see Hamilton to Bassett, 21 Nov. 1812, pp. 577-79, which discusses the proposed terms of evaluating *Guerriere* and cargo for the purpose of assigning prize money to *Constitution's* crew.

## Oliver H. Perry at Newport, Rhode Island

*Although anxious for a command at sea, Master Commandant Perry had to content himself with chores at the Newport naval station, where he was responsible for the activities of a small gunboat flotilla. The future commander of the Lake Erie squadron is shown in the*

*following documents as an officer assiduous in the care of men and materiel under his control. He had still two months of suspense to endure while awaiting the department's decision on his future duty station, but he did not leave this entirely to chance. He would soon write to the department requesting a command on the lakes.<sup>1</sup>*

1. See Perry to Hamilton, 28 Nov. 1812, p. 354.

MASTER COMMANDANT OLIVER H. PERRY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newport Novemr 10th 1812

Sir,

In a conversation this day with Doctr [Edmond T.] Waring who superintends the Marine Hospital at this place, I am informed by him that he has written you on the subject of a Naval Hospital—such an establishment has become indispensably necessary, as the Collector for this District (by order of the Secy of the Treasury) has absolutely refused to admit into the Hospital under his direction, any seaman belonging to the public service. The Gun-boats afford no accommodation for the sick. I have therefore been under the necessity of procuring a small room in one of the Barracks on Rose-Island for a temporary one, until I shall be honored with your orders on that subject. This is attended with many inconveniencies, and should the number of sick encrease, would be totally inadequate to the purpose.

Should you therefore Sir, think proper to order a House to be hired for a temporary Hospital, to be under the direction of Doctr Waring it would doubtless add much to the comfort of those who may be so unfortunate as to need one, while on this Station. Requesting you would pardon the liberty I have taken in suggesting the above, I am with respect Your Obt Sert

O. H. Perry

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 111.

MASTER COMMANDANT OLIVER H. PERRY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newport Novemr 10th 1812

Sir,

With the assistance of Mr Palmer, the proprietor of the Diving-bell, I have been so fortunate as to regain Gun, anchors, cables & Small quantity of the Shot &c of the late U.S. Gun-boat *No 46*.<sup>1</sup> Mr Palmer charges the Dept with one third the value for Salvage, which with your permission I will cause to be paid him—his vessel was considerably exposed in this business, & he has exerted himself to save as much of the public property as possible—the Gun above referred to is a 32 pounder, and is at present on Fort Wolcott, loaned to the U.S.—for which I have the comg officers rect until your pleasure is known. Respectfully [ &c. ]

O. H. Perry

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 112.

1. Gunboat *No. 46* capsized and sank in heavy seas off Conanicut Island on 29 Sept., drowning half the crew of eighteen men, including Lieutenant Samuel G. Blodget. See Perry to Hamilton, 1 Oct. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 7, No. 122.

## A Sea Ruse

*While it was still legal for American merchant ships to trade under British license, the practice was frowned upon by U.S. naval officers who attempted to check the practice. The document which follows presents an unusual, amusing incident by which an American navy purser, as prize master of a licensed trader, managed to evade capture by two British ships and return to the United States.*

PURSER HENRY DENISON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Philadelphia, 11th November 1812.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I arrived here last evening in the Ship *Ariadne* of Boston, cleared from Alexandria for Cadiz, with a cargo of above 5,000 barrels of flour, but detained by the U.S. Brig *Argus*, Capt [Master Commandant Arthur] Sinclair, for being under British licence. The *Argus* fell in with her on the 15th Ulto in Lat. 35.°49.' Long. 56.°59.' & by boarding under British colours obtained possession of her passport. I was ordered to take charge of her and bring her into the first port I could make in the United States. On the passage I fell in with two British cruisers, Viz. the Sloop of War *Tartarus* & Brig *Colibri*, & was strictly examined by each, but by making use of the licence and a little finesse, we escaped capture; the *Tartarus* even put on board of us nine American Seamen (prisoners) to assist in working the Ship. All the papers found on board I have submitted to Mr [Alexander] Dallas (District Attorney) but as yet he has not given me any decided opinion relative to the case.

The *Argus* separated from the squadron on the 13th Ulto & when I left her she had fallen in with nothing but the *Ariadne*. I have the honour [&c.]

Henry Denison

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 153.

## American Trade with the British West Indies

*The existence of war notwithstanding, the British West Indies were habitually dependent upon trade with the United States for supplies of food and other provisions. It was part of British policy to encourage American merchants to send their ships, protected by licenses, to ports easily accessible to West Indian planters. The following documents show a concern that this American trade be protected from interrup-*

*tion by United States naval vessels. To do so, the British urged American merchantmen either to sail under a foreign flag or to use a license which proclaimed the ship in question to be sailing to a neutral port, such as the Swedish island of St. Bartholomew. If any merchantmen were halted by the United States Navy, their papers would be scrutinized for proof of trade with British colonies. Thus the Admiralty effectively encouraged Americans to work against the best interests of their own government.*

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N., TO THE  
LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF THE ADMIRALTY

Halifax 11th Novr 1812

My Lord

I beg leave to enclose the Copies of a Letter from Mr. Allen the Consul at Boston, together with some Instructions given to a Mr Nash from that place, who arrived here yesterday.

I should wish to be informed whether it is the intention to allow of St. Bartholemews, to be the Entrepot, for the Supplies of the West Indies, from the American States; or if Bermuda should be the Emporium for American Vessels navigated under the Swedish, or Portuguese Flags. I further beg leave to State, that I have been informed several Licenses from His Majesty's Government have lately been sent out to the United States; permitting American Vessels to Sail direct for Places in Spain and Portugal; if this should prove to be the fact, it is very necessary that some orders should be given to the several Flag Officers, upon the United Stations of Halifax, Bermuda, & the West Indies to enable them to act in conformity to the wishes of the British Government; and Copies or a note of such Licenses, should be transmitted, as on many occasions Forged Licenses have been discovered, which were manufactured in the American States, and from their multiplicity; will have a very bad effect in the Event of the War continuing between America and Great Britain. I have the honour to be [&c.]

John Borlase Warren

The Rt Hbl Lord Viset Melville &c &c &c

LS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, pp. 51-52.



[Enclosure]

Private

Copy

Boston 21st Octr 1812.

Sir,

I have been requested to introduce to you the bearer Captain Joshua Nash, deputed by one of the most respectable mercantile houses in this Country to procure from your Excellency, should it be deemed consistent with the views of His Majesty's Government, such protections as will enable him, or his principals, to furnish a supply of dry and wet Provisions necessary for the West Indian Islands, under American or other Colours. I have been given to understand, that the entrepot intended is the Island of St Bartholomews, and I am induced to believe, that under existing circumstances this destination is the best calculated to secure the successful execution of the object in question.

From my knowledge of the principals in this proposed business, and from the assurances which they have given me, I beg leave to observe, that whatever engagement may be entered into by the Bearer will in my belief be most honorably and completely fulfilled. I have &c.

Signed Andw Allen Jr.

His Excellency

Sir John Borlase Warren KB &amp;c

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, pp. 53-54.

[Enclosure]

Memo. for Captain Nash

You will on your arrival at Halifax present to His Excellency Sir J:B: Warren your letter of Introduction from Mr Allen.

The object of your Mission is to procure from Adml Warren & Adml Sawyer (if the authority of both are necessary to the security of the object) Licences to Transport free from British molestation, supplies of Dry & Wet Provisions from any Port of the United States under American or other Colours, to the Port of St. Bartholomew. It has occurred to us that this Island may be made, during the present

War an entre pot from which supplies necessary to the West India Islands may be securely and easily distributed. St Eustatia & St Thomas during former Wars have been rendered the Mediums of communication whence the neighbouring Islands have been furnished with such Articles of Provision as their respective exigencies required.

It would be inexpedient & dangerous for Vessels sailing under American Colours to receive and use Licences from any Officer of the British Government, to proceed to a Port in possession of Great Britain, the existing laws of the United States rendering not only the use, but even the receipt of such Licence highly penal; Subjecting the Parties engaged in such Commerce, not only to a forfeiture of double the value of Vessels and Cargoes so destined, but also to Fine and Imprisonment.

Under such Penalties no individual on whom due reliance could be placed would engage in the undertaking. The impossibility of extending the object with impunity and the extra expences necessary to cover the hazards would render it utterly abortive. Whereas a neutral destination such as the Isle of St Bartholomew, would be attended with less difficulty in the outset and promise, with more certainty the accomplishment of the Ultimate Object.

If it should be found consistent with the views of the British Govt to afford you the necessary Licences to compass the end in view, we flatter ourselves you will be enabled to shew that the confidence which may be placed in yourself & in your principals will not be abused.

Should it be found inexpedient from any unforeseen event to use the Licences you may procure we pledge ourselves that they shall be delivered to our friend Mr Allen or disposed of in any way which the Admiral may see fit to direct.

We refrain from furnishing you with letters to any individuals at Halifax, persuaded, as we are, that no reference to private characters will be necessary when you are provided with the recommendation of Mr Allen.

You must particularly remark that under the existing laws of the Union no Citizen can with safety receive a Licence which even gives him an Option to proceed to a British Port and that it is therefore necessary that any protections you may obtain, shall not only be

restricted to the Swedish Port of St. Bartholomew, but that all others shall be absolutely interdicted.

Boston Octr 23d 1812.

Copy, UklPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, pp. 55-58.

## Expansion of the American Navy

*Despite initial successes at sea, it had not escaped U.S. policymakers that ships of the line, mounting 60 or more guns, would be essential if the American navy was ever to compete meaningfully against British sea power. During the summer of 1812, the British had but a small portion of their battle fleet on the North American station. Most Royal Navy ships of the line carried 74 guns and were stationed in the English Channel, in the Bay of Biscay, or in the Mediterranean on blockade duty. Until November 1812, the U.S. government believed that a few heavily built frigates would suffice to protect American commerce and seaports. But it was becoming clear that should the British achieve a land victory over the French, a much more menacing naval threat would appear on the American coast. American naval officers, conscious of this possibility, were anxious to commence a buildup of the fleet. To present the navy's case to Congress, Secretary Hamilton elicited a well-reasoned letter from Captain Charles Stewart of the frigate Constellation. The document which follows contains Secretary Hamilton's argument, bolstered by Stewart's opinions. Hearings took place before the House of Representatives' Naval Committee during the period 4-27 November 1812. Virginia's Representative Burwell Bassett chaired that committee and presented its recommendations to Congress. For almost a month, naval and anti-naval spokesmen argued the merits of a larger navy.<sup>1</sup> Finally, on 23 December, Congress voted the first major naval construction bill in more than a decade. President Madison signed the "act to increase the navy of the United States" on 2 January 1813.<sup>2</sup> It provided for the building and fitting out of four 74-gun ships and six frigates of 44 guns each.*

1. For a close study of the controversy surrounding the building of 74-gun ships, see Symonds, *Navalists and Anti-navalists*, pp. 171-91.

2. *Peters, Public Statutes at Large*, II: 789.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO BURWELL BASSETT,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE NAVAL COMMITTEE OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

[Extract]

Navy Depart  
13 Novr 1812

I have the honor of transmitting herewith for the information of the Committee of the House of Representatives, of which you are the Chairman, certain papers marked A. B. C. & D.

From the paper A it appears, that a 76 gun ship mounting 86 guns, discharges in one round 3176 lbs of cannon ball: that a 44 gun frigate mounting 54 guns, discharges in one round 1488 lbs of cannon ball: that a 76 discharges at one broad side 1588 lbs-and that a 44 gun frigate discharges at one broad side 744 lbs of ball. The question then arises, what is the intrinsic relative force of a 74 & a 44.

Suppose two 44 gun frigates should be brought into combat with a 76-one on the larboard-the other on the Starboard quarter-Each frigate presenting a broadside of 744 lbs of ball will have to contend against a battery of 1588 lbs. As 744 lbs is to 1588 lbs so would be the relative metal of a 76 & two large 44 gun frigates-difference against the frigates 844 lbs weight of metal. It is obvious then, that two 44 gun frigates could not contend with a 76 with the least probability of Success.

Suppose a third frigate, attacking alternately on the Starboard & Larboard quarter should join in the combat. While two of the frigates should be operating on one quarter with a difference in weight of metal against them of 100 lbs-the third frigate would be contending on the other with a difference against her of 844 lbs.

It might be observed that the frigates would all attack on one quarter & then with 2232 lbs of metal they would have to contend with only 1588 lbs having a difference in their favor of 644 lbs. In reply it may be observed; that three frigates could not take such a position, on any one quarter, as would enable them, to bring all their broad sides to bear at once upon an object moving through the water with as much celerity as themselves. Moreover a frigate would always avoid the broad side of a 76-for one well directed broadside from a 76, at close shot, would irresistibly blow her out of the water. Witness the *Randolph* with the *Yarmouth*.<sup>1</sup> Frigates would attack in

various directions, change their positions frequently, and avoid the tremendous battery of a 76 as much as possible.

Besides a 76 is built of heavier timber is intrinsically much stronger, than a frigate, in all her works and can sustain battering much longer & with less injury. A Shot which would sink a frigate, might be received by a 76 with but little injury-it might pass between wind & water through a frigate, when it would stick in the frame of a 76.

All things considered it must be admitted that one 76 gun ship mounting 86-is equal in combat to three frigates mounting 162 guns. Admitting this equality, other questions present themselves for consideration, &

1st What is the relative expense of building & equipping these vessels?

2nd What is the relative numbers of their crews?

3rd What is their relative annual expense in actual Service?

To ascertain the expense of building & equipping a frigate, we will take the actual cost of one of our largest viz the *President*-which was \$220,910-a frigate would then cost .....\$220,910

The cost of a 76 cannot be easily ascertained, however from the papers B & C-we may I think, estimate the expense of building & equipping a 76 at not exceeding .....333,000

The Construction then of a force in frigates, equal in combat, to a 76 gunship, would cost .....\$662,730  
and in this view a difference in favor of the 76 of .....\$320,730  
as then \$333,000 is to \$662,730-so would be the relative expense of building & equipping a 76 and a force in frigates equal to a 76 making a difference in favor of the 76 of .....\$329,730.

By the paper A it appears, that a 76 requires to man her, 650 men and that a 44 requires 420-To man three 44 gun frigates, or a force in frigates equal to a 76, would then require 1260 men, and in this respect we find a difference in favor of the 76 of 610 men. that is 650 men on board of a 76 can direct as much force as 1260 can on board of three frigates.

As to the relative expense-we have heretofore estimated the annual cost of a frigate of 44 guns @ \$110,000 and from the best information we can obtain upon the subject, the annual expense of a 76 will not exceed .....\$202,110.  
The annual expense then of three frigates, or a force in frigates equal to a 76 would be \$330.000-while a 76 would not cost exceeding

\$202,110: making in this respect, a difference in favor of the 76 of \$127,890 annually.

In examining the relative strength of frigates & ships of war, and of ships of war & gunboats, we shall find similar results in favor of the larger class of vessels.

Hence if the only object in view was to employ the greatest intrinsic naval force, at the least expense, I should think, there would be no difficulty in deciding, that we ought to have none but ships of the greatest magnitude. But in providing a naval armament, there are other considerations of the highest importance. We should enquire what kind of force will most probably be brought against us-with what description of force can we meet the enemy with the greatest probability of success; and afford the most effectual protection to our commerce; and upon these highly interesting points I will take the liberty of submitting a very valuable communication received from Charles Stewart esquire,<sup>2</sup> a captain in the Navy of the United States-an officer of great observation, distinguished talents and very extensive professional experience-observing, that I believe all the most enlightened officers in our Service concur in the opinions, he has expressed. I have the honor [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

1. On 7 Mar. 1778, east of Barbados, the 32-gun Continental frigate *Randolph* engaged the 64-gun British ship of the line *Yarmouth*. Just when she seemed to be on the verge of victory, having shot away *Yarmouth's* bowsprit and topmasts, *Randolph* blew up. Gardner W. Allen, *A Naval History of the American Revolution*, 2 vols. (Boston and New York, 1913), 1: 296-97.

2. Captain Charles Stewart to Hamilton, 12 Nov. 1812, *ASP, Naval Affairs*, 1: 278-79.



A  
Statement shewing the number & description of guns mounted on vessels of different classes—the weight of ball in a round in each—the weight of a broadside, the number of men required for each: the annual expense in actual service of each, the annual expense computed by the gun: by each man: by the weight of metal; and the relative power of each man, in each description of vessel computed in weight of metal

power of each man computed in weight of metal		lbs	oz
annual expense pr each pound of metal		cts	
annual expense pr man		doll	cts
annual expense pr gun		Dollars	
whole annual expense in actual Service		Dollars	
number of men	650		
weight of ball in a broad side	1588		
weight of ball in a round	3176	1488	24
No of guns in a broad side	43	27	10
whole number of carriage guns	86	54	20
No of 9 pound long cannon			2
No of 32 pd Carronades on the Fore castle		8	
No of 42 pd carronades on the Fore castle		8	
No of 32 pd carronades on the main deck or qr deck		16	18
No of 42 pd carronades on the qr deck		16	
No of 24 pd long cannon on the upper Deck	28	30	1
No of 42 pd long cannon on the lower gun deck	30		
No of 68 pd carronades on the poop	4		
Rrate of ships	76	44	16
			g-boat

B

Estimate of the expense of building & equipping a 74-gun ship of 1620 tons prepared some years since by Joshua Humphrey esq. of Philadelphia—as ship wright of great respectability & professional Talents.

Live oak timber	40,000
White oak & pine &c	30,000
Labor	85,100
Cables, rigging &c	32,400
Smith's work	30,400
Anchors, marling	8,700
Sailmaker's bills, two suits including canvas	16,200
Joiner's bill including stuff	7,800
Carver's bill	1,620
Tanner's Do	700
Rigger's do	2,240
Painter's Do	3,240
Cooper's Do	4,860
Blockmaker's Do	3,240
Boat builder's Do	1,620
Plumber's Do	2,430
Ship chandlery	9,720
Turner's bill	1,215
Copper bolts	10,960
Sheathing copper, nails &c	17,440
Woolens for sheathing	1,215
	311,100
Contingencies	31,600
	\$342,700

Notes by an experienced gentleman.  
"Labor" this item was calculated at a time when ship carpenters wages were \$2.50 pr day. They can now be obtained @ \$2.  
"Cables & rigging" when the above Estimate was made the price was 16\$ they can now be obtained @ \$15.  
"Carvers bill" expensive carving on the head & Stern is abolished 1000\$ may be deducted from this item  
"Riggers bill" we employ Seamen-@ 12\$ pr month-this item may be considerably reduced.

"Painter's bill" the present practice of painting our ships of war differs so much from that first adopted, both in point of labor & colors, that one third of this item may be safely deducted.

"Woolen for sheathing" now exploded—experience having established the fact, that it occasions an absorption & retention of salt water which corrodes the copper inside &c nor could the copper be laid on so smooth as without it.

"Contingencies" at the time the above Estimate was made we had no yards, of course wharfage or rent of yard was then included & we do not now, as then, give such quantities of rum to laborers. This item may be reduced one half.

## C

The frigate *President* of 1444 tons cost 220,910\$ say pr ton 153, a 76 will ton 1620.

Then to ascertain the probable cost of building and equipping a 76.

1620 tons @ 153\$	\$247,860
additional guns & gun carriages	18,599
additional cubic feet of timber in the frame at 4000 feet @ \$125	5,000
Additional weight of rigging anchors & other materials	
10 pr Ct on the cost of the Tonnage viz 247,860	24,786
	<hr/>
	\$296,245
Say 300,000	

## D

Statement shewing the proportions of able Seamen ordinary Seamen & Boys required for a ship of the Line—say a 76—and a 44 gun frigate

	able Seamen	ordinary Seamen & boys
a 76 requires	280	233
44	140	172

Note 280 Able Seamen is considered by practical men as too great a proportion for a first rate 76. The whole no of able & ordinary Seaman & boys is 513—and practical men say that they may be classed thus

able Seamen	ordinary seamen &c
220	293

It is observed by those acquainted with ships of the Line that to manage their Sails does not require more able Seamen than are required to manage the sails of a large frigate.

A force in frigates equal to a 76 would then require 420 able Seamen—a 76 would require 220 making a difference in this respect of 200 able Seamen in favor of the 76 . . . .

Copy, DNA, RG45, Secretary of the Navy Letters to Congress, Vol. 1, pp. 117–24.

### *Guerriere's* Worth as a Prize

*Constitution* fought *Guerriere* so effectively that the British frigate was an unmanageable hulk at the end of the battle. She was destroyed several hours later, after the wounded and killed had been taken off. The destruction of the enemy ship meant that *Constitution's* crew would be unable to obtain material reward for *Guerriere's* capture, unless the government acted to compensate them in lieu of prize money. In the following letter, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton explains the method of evaluating *Guerriere*, her stores, and the prize goods that were captured on board. Hamilton recommended to Congress that Captain Hull, his officers, and men be rewarded with the sum of \$100,000 in lieu of prize money. On 26 November, Representative Burwell Bassett offered such a resolution and won a favorable vote, but the matter was tabled until pertinent documents could be printed.<sup>1</sup> The matter was not reconsidered until February 1813, when news of *Constitution's* victory over the frigate *Java* had reached Washington. Commodore William Bainbridge had been obliged to destroy *Java* for the same reason that Hull sank *Guerriere*. As a result, Congress decided to combine the rewarding of both Bainbridge and Hull in the same resolution.<sup>2</sup> To this was added a reward to Master Commandant Jacob Jones and crew for the capture of *Frolic*.

When the final resolution was passed, on 3 March 1813, congressional generosity had diminished, and the final award was \$50,000 for Hull, officers and crew; \$50,000 for Bainbridge, officers and crew; and \$25,000 for Jones, officers and crew.<sup>3</sup>

1. U.S. Congress, Annals of the Congress of the United States, 42 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1834-1856), 12th Congress, Second Session, pp. 199-200.

2. Ibid., pp. 1113-14.

3. Ibid., pp. 1349.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO  
BURWELL BASSETT, CHAIRMAN OF THE NAVAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Navy Department  
21st November 1812.

Sir

In order to enable the Committee to form a satisfactory opinion as to the compensation to be provided for the officers and crew of the frigate *Constitution*, for the capture and subsequent destruction of the British frigate, the *Guerriere*, I have the honor to state to you, that the *Constitution* rated 44, and mounted 55 guns, - that the *Guerriere* rated 38, and mounted 54 guns. The *Guerriere* altho entirely dismasted and in other respects much crippled, could have been brought into port, without incurring any other risk than that of recapture; but Captain Hull conceived that if he had manned the *Guerriere* for the purpose of sending her into Port, he would have so far reduced the crew of the *Constitution*, that he might have subjected both vessels to capture. He presumed that, under all circumstances, it would be better for him to destroy the *Guerriere*, and preserve the force of the *Constitution* unimpaired - and his having done so unquestionably proceeded from the most patriotic considerations.<sup>1</sup>

The *Guerriere* was a frigate of the first class in the British Navy; and no doubt when the engagement between the *Constitution* and her commenced, she was completely fitted in all respects for the most serious service. The cost of such a ship, independently of her stores, could not have been less than 200,000\$ and her stores were worth, in all probability 50,000 at least - besides she had on board a number of prize goods, the value of which can't be ascertained - but was prob-

ably equal to 50,000\$ more. So that the whole value of the *Guerriere*, her stores and prize goods at the time the action commenced may fairly be estimated at 300,000 Dollars.

Had Capt. Hull have incurred the risks before mentioned and succeeded in getting the *Guerriere* into Port. The Officers and crew *Constitution*, considering the *Guerriere* as her equal, would have been entitled to the whole of the *Guerriere*, her stores and prize goods. - sooner however than run the risk of losing the *Constitution*, he determined to destroy the whole. The question then arises, what, under these circumstances, ought the officers and crew to be allowed? For my own part, I have no hesitation in offering it as my opinion, that the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, would not be too liberal a provision, or too great an encouragement for the great gallantry, skill, and sacrifice of interest displayed on the occasion - and am persuaded that if such a provision were made, the difficulties of manning our frigates, at present experienced, would vanish.

It may further be remarked, that Capt. Hull, while on the cruize, in which he captured and destroyed the *Guerriere* burnt two enemy's vessels, viz. the brig *Lady Warren*, and the Brig *Adeona*, and obliged the enemy to burn the brig *Dolphin*, with a Cargo of hemp and Russia Goods, and to abandon an English barque laden with Timber - For no part of which have the officers or crew of the *Constitution* received any compensation. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, Reports of the Secretary of the Navy, 1811-1819, Vol. 2, pp. 76-77.

1. See also letter of Captain Isaac Hull to Burwell Bassett, 23 Nov. 1812, which responds with similar information to a question from Bassett, DNA, RG45, Reports of the Secretary of the Navy, 1811-1819, Vol. 2, p. 77.

## The Loss of U.S. Sloop *Wasp*

*The events of 18 October 1812 may have marked both the highest and lowest points of Master Commandant Jacob Jones's career. In a*



savage action only five days after having sailed from the Delaware, Wasp captured H.M. sloop Frolic. But Wasp was not destined to arrive at her rendezvous with Constitution, for only hours later the 74-gun Poictiers came up with Wasp as Jones was repairing battle damage. Wasp was unable to escape and to resist would have been suicidal. About one month later, Jones and his men were paroled and returned to New York where Jones wrote the following report. Congress awarded the Wasp's officers and crew \$25,000 prize money and the Navy Department promoted both Jones and James Biddle, his first lieutenant. Jones received command of the captured Macedonian and Biddle soon became commander of the sloop Hornet.

MASTER COMMANDANT JACOB JONES TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New York the 24th Novemr 1812

Sir,

I here avail myself of the first opportunity of informing you of the occurrences of our cruise, which terminated in the capture of the *Wasp* on the 18th of October by the *Poictiers* of seventy four Guns, while a wreck from damages received in an engagement with the British sloop of war *Frolick* of twenty two guns, sixteen of them thirty two pound carronades, and four twelve pounders on the main deck and two twelve pounders, carronades on the topgallant fore-castle, making her superior in force to us by four twelve pounders. The *frolick* had struck to us and was taken possession of about two hours before our surrendering to the *Poictiers*.

We had left the Delaware on the thirteenth—the sixteenth had a heavy gale in which we lost our jibboom and two men, half past eleven on the night of the seventeenth, in the Latitude of 37° N. & Longitude of 65° W. we saw several sail, two of them appearing very large, we stood from them for some time, then shortened sail and steered the remainder of the night the course we had perceived them on. At day light on Sunday the eighteenth we saw them ahead,—gave chase and soon discovered them to be a convoy of six sail under the protection of a Sloop of War, four of them large ships mounting from sixteen to eighteen guns. At thirty two minutes past eleven A.M. we engaged the Sloop of War having first received her fire at the distance of fifty or sixty yards, which space we gradually lessened



Captain Jacob Jones, U.S.N., and the gold medal presented to him by Congress for the capture of H.M. sloop Frolic by U.S. sloop Wasp

until we laid her on board, after a well supported fire of forty three minutes; and altho so near while loading the east broad side that our rammers were shoved against the side of the enemy our men exhibited the same alacrity which they had done during the whole of the action. They immediately surrendered upon our gaining their fore castle, so that no loss was sustained on either side after boarding.

Our maintopmast was shot away between four and five minutes from the commencement of the firing and falling together with the maintopsail yard, across the larboard fore and fore topsail braces, rendered our head yards unmanageable the remainder of the action. At eight minutes the gaft and mizen top gallant mast came down and at twenty minutes from the beginning of the action every brace and most of the rigging was shot away. A few minutes after separating from the *Frolick* both her masts fell upon deck, the Main mast going close by the deck and the foremast twelve or fifteen feet above it.

The courage and exertions of the officers and crew fully answered my expectations and wishes. Lieut. [James] Biddles active conduct contributed much to our success by the exact attention paid to every department during the engagement and the animating example he afforded the Crew by his intripidity. Lieut [George W.] Rodgers, [Midn. Benjamin] Booth & Mr [Midn. Henry B.] Rapp shewed by the incessant fire from their divisions that they were not to be surpassed in resolution or skill. Mr [Sailing Master William] Knight and every other officer acted with a courage and promptitude highly honourable, and I trust have given assurance that they may be relied on when ever their services may be required.

I could not ascertain the exact loss of the enemy as many of the dead lay buried under the masts and spars that had fallen upon deck, which two hours exertion had not sufficiently removed. Mr. Biddle who had charge of the *Frolic*, states that from what he saw and from information from the Officers, the number of the killed must have been about thirty and that of the wounded about forty or fifty—of the killed is her first Lieutenant and sailing master, of the wounded Capt. [Thomas] Whinyates and the Second Lieutenant.

We had five killed and five wounded as per list the wounded are recovering. Lieutenant [Alexander] Claxton who was confined by sickness, left his bed a little previous to the engagement and tho' too weak to be at his division, remained upon deck and shewed by his

composed manner of noting its incidents, that we had lost by his illness the services of a brave Officer. I am respectfully yours,

Ja<sup>c</sup> Jones

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 118.

## The War Comes to Charleston

*Nestled in the embrace of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers and guarded by Fort Moultrie, Charleston provided a natural harbor where commerce thrived in peaceful times. During the first year of the War of 1812, the British gradually extended their blockade southward from the Delaware and Chesapeake capes. By the fall months, ports along the southeastern coast of the United States were being closely watched. The letters which follow give expression to the concerns of Captain John H. Dent, commander of the Charleston naval station. Of particular interest, are those which refer to his purchase of two schooners for the navy. The smaller Ferret saw duty along the Carolina coast, but the better-known Carolina eventually arrived at New Orleans and played an important role in the defense of that city during the British amphibious attack of December 1814–January 1815.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT

John H. Dent  
Charleston, S.C.

Nav: Dep't  
24. Octo: 1812

Your letter, of the 17 Inst: has been received.

Comr Bainbridge, with the squadron under his command, has been ordered to Charleston, to clear the coast of the Enemy's cruisers.<sup>1</sup>

You will procure the two vessels on the best terms in your power, prepare them, with all possible expedition, for the purposes suggested by you.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 186.

1. Evidently, Secretary Hamilton's orders did not reach Commodore Bainbridge before he sortied from Boston, and a similar order sent to Captain Porter at Chester on the Delaware also did not arrive in time; see Hamilton to Dent, 22 Oct. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 185.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 5th Nov. 1812.

Sir

Your letters of the 22nd & 24th ult. I had the honor to receive.

I have purchased the vessels required one a new Schooner, will carry 14 Guns and ninety men, will be launched on Tuesday next. She is a remarkable fine vessel, constructed for war and will Sail fast, all her materials are in hand and will be ready for Sea in thirty days if men can be procured. The other a Small Schooner Sails fast will carry, eight, 6 pound, and one long, 12 on a circle, fitted and will proceed to her Station, Beaufort, in ten days called the *Ferret*.<sup>1</sup> The new Schooner is not named. I have in her bills &c called her the *Carolina*, untill officially named.

By the Arrival of the Cartel from Providence, I learn that the Squadron lately cruising off this port, had returned to port to refit, having sustained some injury in the late gale; they were to sail in a few days for this station. I hope the *Essex* will be here in time I also learn from our prisoners, that they are very apprehensive a force will be sent to cut them off, and are on the look out. I would recommend, that the Squadron approach the bar from the Southward, by which the enemy being close in will be embayed. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 166.

1. This was the second vessel named *Ferret* to be commissioned in the U.S. Navy. The first *Ferret*, a schooner built at Gosport Navy Yard, was commissioned in 1809. She was rigged as a brig and renamed *Viper* in 1810.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston. 14th November 1812.

Sir

Your letter of the 4th Inst I have had the honor to receive, and have communicated its contents to Major General [Thomas] Pinckney

I have been very successful in recruiting the last week, having entered Thirty men for the service. The Schooner *Ferret* mounts nine guns, and will Sail for Beaufort in five days, having no commissioned Officers and but one Midshipman. I have made Mr John Smith an acting Master in the Service, and given him the command of the *Ferret* He is an active intelligent Gentleman & (if confirmed) will be of infinite benefit to the Service, as he is well acquainted with this Coast and its inlets. The late rains have prevented the new Schooner's launch at the specified time, She will be launched this day all her materials are ordered and in hand. The grape Shot and Sabres lost on Cape Hatteras are much wanted, none can be had here. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 177. Endorsed at foot of letter: "Confirm him P.H."

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 14th Novr 1812

Sir

The British Frigate *Southampton* was close in with our bar all day yesterday. She has been on the coast about ten days with two brigs in company; I have been in daily expectation of seeing or hearing from Capt Porter or Commodore Bainbridge and have kept a pilot boat Cruizing in the offing and off Cape Roman with the private Signal, charged with letters, giving information of this Squadron. They are not in Sight this morning. it is a great misfortune that the *Essex* did not



come directly off this harbour as Sir James [Yeo] would have been gratified in meeting Capt Porter. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 178.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston Novr 16th 1812.

Sir

I have the honor to enclose for your information, the copy of a letter and an extract from the log book of Gun Boat *No 166*, commanded by Sailing Master [James] Mork, also an extract of a letter from Lieut [Charles F.] Grandison, relative to the Situation of the Barges at Sunbury.<sup>1</sup>

The Enemy's cruizers have not been seen since Saturday, when a frigate was at anchor off the bar; The *Ferret* will be so far manned as to dispatch her to Port Royal in a few days, the remainder of the men can be sent to her in a barge. The deportment and activity of Sailing Master Mork since at Beaufort Justifies the good opinion entertained of him as an officer. The new Schooner [*Carolina*] was launched on Saturday, and if Men can be procured will be ready for sea in 25 days as every thing is in hand and her rigging all ready to go over mast head; the want of greater part of the munitions of war on this station is greatly felt. the grape, Shot, Sabres, &c lost on Cape Hatteras can not be supplied here; will you order a commissioned officer & ten Midshipmen to this Station, as little confidence can be placed in these. I am obliged to employ as Substitutes, Mr [John H.] Carr the purser has been in very bad health for some time & not able to attend to duty, which devolves upon me. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 181.

1. The enclosures, filed with the letter, consist of Mork to Dent, 9 Nov. 1812, "Extract from the log book of U.S. Gun Boat *No 166*" for 5 and 6 Nov. 1812, and an extract from Grandison to Dent, 12 Nov. 1812.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 24th Novr 1812.

Sir

I am sorry to inform you the Surgeon's House (Doctor Logan's) was burn't in the late fire with all the medicines, Hospital Stores, and instruments belonging to this Station—a list thereof I enclose.

I have been desirous that the Naval Hospital should be established in the Navy Yard, where a Small building could be erected to answer that purpose; there is no establishment at present, and if authorized I could at a small expence erect the necessary buildings, the Surgeon's instructions authorizes him to rent such quarters as he requires in Town, and the expence of this establishment has been greater than was necessary. I have the Honor [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 190.

[Enclosure]

(Copy)

Return of Medicine and U.S. Hospital Stores accidentally destroyed by Fire in the Night of the 19th Inst. viz

One large Medicine Chest complete.

One Small Ditto.

One Sett Amputating instruments.

Sundry Articles of Hospital Stores.

The Surgeon having lost all his Books, papers and documents, in the Said Conflagration, is unable to determine with precision the number & value of the foresaid articles.

(Signed) George Logan  
Charleston, S.C. 23rd Novr 1812.

Commodore Dent.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 190.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 26th November, 1812.

Sir,

The irregular proceedings relative to prisoners of war in this port has been attended with much difficulty and Some loss to the Service, as I apprehend from permitting them to be landed and not regularly transferred to the Marshal, Several have entered the Service, as American Citizens, and taken the necessary Oaths, and advance; I have discharged all such claimed, from the Service; this might be easily remedied, by Stopping all privateers and prizes at the guard vessel, taking out the prisoners and delivering them, to the proper person appointed to take charge of them; I have in every instance offered my assistance to the Marshal in preventing this abusive proceeding, and suggested this mode which does not appear to be agreeable to his ideas on the Subject; also the proceeding of the Cartel while in this port was irregular and contrary to the established usages of all other nations, She was permitted to come to the wharf, without a guard, to make Such alterations in her crew, as her Commander required, and to refit and grave his vessel to go only on a voyage to Providence where She had been fitted for this service; these proceedings have given great dissatisfaction, and I was not without fears that she would have been dismantled by a Mob, as they prevented many Articles from being Shipped on board, there has also been three Midshipmen prisoners, those gentlemen have been paroled, and permitted to go indiscriminately in all parts of the City, wharves & afloat, and have since joined the Squadron now off this coast, possessed with all the information, Such advantages afforded them to obtain: as Commanding the port I cannot but feel Mortified when I am applied to prevent those abuses, and have to reply I am not authorized, as not coming within my department. I have suggested those hints in hopes Sir, that some arrangement may be made in future, to prevent such irregularities, and reflections on the Officers of the government. I had fitted a prison Ship in Co-operation with General [Thomas] Pinckney in hopes that it would have been adopted, which under the arrangement made between us, would have prevented any irregularities. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 192.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 5th Decr 1812.

Sir

Considering the Navy Yard as rented, and not purchased. I have not made any improvement of moment altho' much wanted to render it Capable of receiving and docking a vessel of war. there are several houses much wanted to accommodate the Crews and artificers; if authorized I could immediately have such built. the old wharf is intirely gone and requires a new one, the foundation is good and can be put in complete order for heaving out or building Ships, for the Sum of Two thousand dollars—it is daily washing away and requires immediate attention. I Have the Honor [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 208. Endorsed at foot of letter: "Make such repairs and improvements as are really needed avoiding unnecessary expense. P.H." The wording of this endorsement is the same as that of Hamilton's formal reply, 18 Dec. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 5, p. 219.

## The Need for Winter Clothing

*By mid-November, the lack of sufficiently warm clothing began to have an effect on sailors at the New York Navy Yard. The commandant, Charles Ludlow, shows his determination to look out for the needs of his men in the document that follows. Ludlow was one of the navy's abler officers, but he resigned from the service in March 1813 because he felt humiliated by the sudden promotion of Lieutenant Charles Morris over the heads of officers who, like Ludlow, were masters commandant.<sup>1</sup> Ludlow had two brothers in the navy: Augustus, who was first lieutenant on board Chesapeake when he died in the battle with H.M.S. Shannon on 1 June 1813; and Robert, who was purser on board Constitution at the time of her engagement with H.M.S. Java on 29 December 1812.*

1. See Ludlow to Jones, 7 Apr. 1813, DNA, RG45, BC, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 123, and its enclosure, the duplicate of an earlier letter, Ludlow to Jones, 17 Mar. 1813, DNA, RG45, BC, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 124.

MASTER COMMANDANT CHARLES LUDLOW TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Navy Yard New York  
November 18th 1812

Sir,

The frequent applications from the Men belonging to this station for bedding cloaths &c in this inclement season, & being witness to some of their distresses (some entirely destitute of thick cloathing) have been induced, deeming it for the good of the Service to order the Purser to supply those that are much in want (even if they are in debt to the U States) with one Mattress, two blankets, 1 pr of shoes & stockings and a suit of thick Cloaths. The heedlessness of the Sailor while on Shore, & their receiving three months advance has been the cause of their present distress, to prevent its continuation, induces me to Solicit the honor of an answer, whether my proceedings meets your approbation or not. I have the honor [&c.]

Ch<sup>s</sup> Ludlow

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 172.

## Hospitalization of Gunboat Seamen

*During the warm months, gunboats from Philadelphia were based at Newcastle to facilitate the cruising of Delaware Bay. Likewise, Captain David Porter used Newcastle as a home port for his frigate Essex. But when he departed for his cruise to the South Atlantic and Pacific he left behind men whose poor health would not allow their absence from good medical care. Surgeon Edward Cutbush normally looked after the health needs of the Delaware Bay gunboat flotilla, but he also had responsibility for other naval personnel in the area. Thus, his concern was aroused when, with the onset of cold weather, it became evident that sick and hurt seamen could not be allowed to remain outside of Philadelphia. In the letter which follows, Dr. Cutbush suggests the removal of his medical care facilities to that city.*

SURGEON EDWARD CUTBUSH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sir,

Nine invalids were sent to the Hospital under my direction at New Castle from the frigate *Essex*; Capt Porter observed in his letter of the 20th ult. that "neither of the men will ever be suitable for the service, and did time and circumstances admit, he should discharge them." On the arrival of the men, I wrote to the Purser of the *Essex* for a statement of their accounts but have never received it, presuming that some information may be obtained from the returns made to the Department, respecting their wages, I beg leave to ask your order on this head; as the weather is becoming cold, they will probably stand in need of clothing, which I am not authorized to furnish. Several of the men, I presume, would be glad to return to their families could they be paid off. As the Gun Boats are laid up, and no probability of any of our ships of war coming into the Delaware during the winter season, I am instructed by Commodore [Alexander] Murray to ask your opinion, whether the Hospital shall be continued at New Castle for these nine men? The Commodore thinks it would be better to remove them to the Navy Yard at Philadelphia, if they are not discharged from the service. Should you approve of the Commodore's plan I will discharge Dr McLane at New Castle. That it may not be supposed at the Department that I have had two mates on this station, I beg leave to state, that Dr P. [Peter] C. Whittelsey who was ordered here on the 15th of August last, did not report himself 'til this morning!! he is a youth of about 18 years of age what his acquirements are I know not, but conceive from his age that he is not capable of acting in any situation alone. I have now no duty for him to perform here, unless Dr [William P. C.] Barton should be ordered where surgeons are wanted. I have, however requested him to remain in Philada until I receive your order. I have the honor [&c.]

E Cutbush  
Philada Novr 16. 1812.

List of men sent from the United States Frigate *Essex* Commanded by Capt Porter on the 21st of October 1812.

1. Charles Smith-Fistula in Perineo [*Perineum*]
2. John Smith-Diseased Testicle



3. Wm Hubble-Scrophula
  4. James Wallace-ditto-
  5. John Francis 2nd An old syphilitic Case.
  6. Peter Johnson-Rupture
  7. -[Robert] Stanwood-Stricture in the Urethra
  8. -[Charles] Frederic-Scrophulous Abscess
  9. John Anderson An old syphilitic case.
- Peter Johnson says he was ruptured in the time of his duty at New York, therefore conceives that he is entitled to a Pension-

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 7, No. 65.

## Frigate *New York* in Disrepair

*Although she had once been a strong element of the Mediterranean squadron, the frigate New York had been laid up in ordinary at the Washington Navy Yard since 1805. By 1812, her timbers and those of the frigate Boston were "so rotten as to be not worth repairing," in the words of one notable maritime historian.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that the navy was considering the rebuilding of New York. The following document contains a proposal forwarded to the Navy Department from a Baltimore builder who wanted such a contract.*

1. *Chapelle, American Sailing Navy, p. 244.*

MASTER COMMANDANT CHARLES GORDON TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Baltimore 17th Novr 1812

Sir,

The Agent & myself are about to conclude our arrangements with the Master builder at this place for the rebuilding of the Frigate *New York*. He has proposed to us, his terms by the Ton, also his terms by the days work, that is for him to superintend & the U.S. to pay the bills. The former (That is by the Ton) we conceive to be most to the interest of the U.S. As the days work in the latter would enable the

workmen to nurse the job & keep the Ship on hand as long as possible besides, the builder no doubt would procure the timber much lower on his own account, than he would for the U.S. He however has made another very fair offer which I conceive the best. That is he will compleat the *New York* for the same price & as well as such a Ship can be compleated in any port South of the City of New York. Now Sir, as Mr [Thomas] Turner the acctt can no doubt in a few minutes favor us with a copy of the cost of the Frigates *United States*, *Philadelphia*, *Chesapeake* & *John Adams*, it would enable us to make such an agreement as would prevent extravagance which was so much complain'd of in the price of the *Constellation* when first built. If Mr Turner will inform us of the price pr Ton of any of the Ships built by the Ton it will enable us to fix upon the very lowest price possible. For I assure you the builder is extremely anxious that she should be the first at Sea, the fastest ship & promises that if she is not as well built as any ship in service he will forfeit the whole. All this added to the cheaper is all we can wish. He has a stern, stem & keel already engaged in case the old ones should prove rotten, & all fells point have come forward to try Baltimore against any other Ship commenc'd at the same time. Our only object now is to know from Mr Turner the lowest price, that any of our ships have or can be built for in any port South of New York either by the Ton or otherways. The U.S. to furnish all the Copper, all the joiners work, the wharf & the ware houses. The builder to furnish all the timber, spars, & workmen.

As this no doubt will make a considerable difference in the cost of the ship, & prevent imposition, I have conceived it my duty to call on Mr T for such information as he may have in his office. I have been thus particular in stating it to you in order that you may urge (to Mr Turner) the necessity [of] my getting such information [as soon] as possible, so that I may be [able] to compleat the agreement immediately & report to the Secretary.

I also write Mr Turner in which I shall enclose this. very respectfully &c

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 114.

## Southampton and Vixen

*This pair of star-crossed ships met in battle, and the British frigate won. Only five days later, however, both capturer and prize were lost on a reef. The British lost a venerable frigate which had been in service since the Seven Years War. The United States lost not only a fine brig, but her captain as well.*

CAPTAIN JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL CHARLES STIRLING, R.N.

His Majes: Ship *Southampton*<sup>1</sup>  
At Sea, 22d Novr 1812.

Sir,

His Majesty's Ship under my command this day Captured the United States Brig *Vixen* Capt [Master Commandant] George Reed,<sup>2</sup> mounting twelve 18 Pr Carronades, two long nines, and One hundred and thirty men. She had been out five weeks, and I am happy to say had not made any Capture. I have &c.

(Signed) James Lucas Yeo. Captain

Charles Stirling Esqr  
Vice Admiral of the White  
&c. &c. &c.

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, p. 117.

1. *Southampton*, 32 guns, was built in 1757. J. J. Colledge, *Ships of the Royal Navy: An Historical Index*, 2 vols., (New York, 1969-1970), I: 515, called her "the first true frigate in the RN."

2. Reed died in captivity in Spanish Town, Jamaica, on 8 Jan. 1813.

CAPTAIN JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL CHARLES STIRLING, R.N.

His Majesty's Ship *Rhodian*<sup>1</sup>  
Off the Mole, 11th Decr 1812.

Sir,

It is my most painful duty to announce to you, the loss of His Majesty's late Ship *Southampton*, on a reef of sunken rocks Off the desolate Islands of Conception, on the night of the 27th of Novr.

I am proceeding with the Crew to join your Flag (in the *Rhodian*, a Schooner & Cutter) with all possible dispatch, but as the *Rolla*<sup>2</sup> Schooner sails very fast, I have ordered Lieut: [William] Rawlins to make the best of his way to Port Royal. I have &c.

(Signed) James Lucas Yeo. Captain

Charles Stirling Esqr  
Vice Admiral of the White  
&c. &c. &c.

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, p. 119. Warren to Croker, 2 Jan. 1813, enclosed the above letters regarding *Southampton* and *Vixen*. A detailed account of the *Vixen*'s capture and the grounding of both *Southampton* and *Vixen* will be found in Lieutenant Glen Drayton's letter to the secretary of the navy of 8 Feb. 1813, DNA, RG45, BC, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 46.

1. *Rhodian*, 10 guns, was a brig-sloop of the *Cherokee* class.

2. *Rolla*, 10 guns, was originally a brig-sloop of the *Cherokee* class, later rerigged as a schooner.

## A Naval Presence at Savannah

*That there was a small U.S. naval force, made up largely of barges, on duty at Savannah, Georgia, is one of the least known facts of the War of 1812. The men who served there have remained virtually anonymous and their deeds may have been ignored by all but avid local historians, but documentation in the National Archives yields clues to what took place. The officer in command of navy barges at Savannah was Lieutenant Charles F. Grandison. During the month of November 1812, he reported directly to the Navy Department. It is clear from his detailed and frequent letters that he felt isolated and was*

*often uncertain where to turn for support. But he was conscientious and tried to keep the secretary of the navy informed of his actions, despite little response from Washington. Anxious about the boldness of the British, who were cruising the coast and frequently raiding up local rivers, Grandison at one point exceeded his authority. He purchased an armed ship for the navy which had formerly served as a British packet and had been captured by Joshua Barney's Rossie earlier in the year. While this step may have pleased Savannah's merchants, it gained only grudging approval from Secretary Hamilton. The following letters reveal the naval war from the perspective of the Georgia seacoast.*

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Savannah 7th Novbr 1812

Sir

I have the Honour to inform you that I arrived here on the 5th Inst at night, and found one of the Barges here. She had lost six of her men by desertion. The officer Commanding her informd me that the Barges have lost 13 of their Men by desertion—that they had also lost 2 Anchors and 2 Cables, and have expended all the Powder I left with them (5 Barrels) I fear there has been great remisness in the officers Conduct who was left in Command by Captn [Master Commandant George W.] Reed all this I shall be able to ascertain on my arrival at Sunbury and punish accordingly. There is now laying in this Port a very fine Schooner privateer Calld the *Matilda* Built at Baltimore in 1809 – 6 ms under the imediate inspection of Captn George Stiles—she is 221 Tons & Coppered to the Bends with heavy Copper.<sup>1</sup> She sails uncommonly fast, and is well Calculated for the Service—She has a profusion of stores of every kind requisite for a vessel of War—and may be perfectly equipt for the Service at a very trifling expence

She has 2 Suits of good Sails	11 Carriage Guns
2 good Cables	80 Muskets
3 Anchors	20 Pistols
1 Hawser	60 Cutlasses
2 Sets New Rigging	20 Boarding Pikes
	36 Batle Axes
2 Tons Cannon powder	50 Bbbs Salt Provision
5000 Musket & Pistol Cartridges	35 Bbbs Bread, and
80 Water Casks 100 Gals each	25 Tons of Shot

The other Articles are too numerous to mention in a Letter. This Vessel may be purchased as she now lays for 30,000 Dollars—which in my oppinion is very reasonable—had we this Vessel we might man her imediatly, as Seamen are very Numerous here at present. She would be an exellent Vessel to guard the entrance of this River—and occationaley run out as petty depredators may appear—and being a good vessel to recieve such men as may enter for the Service. I could always draw men from her for the Barges, as the seamen will not enter for the Barges under any circumstances—the above Vessel I have carefully examind in Company with the Collector & others, all of whom are of oppinion that she would be a Valuable acquisition to to the force in this section of the Union, particularly at this moment, as there is now, and has been for a Number of days, a British Cutter Privateer, Mounting But 8 Guns and mand Chiefly with Blacks about 70 in Number, Cruizing between Savannah and Charleston—and has already done a great deal of mischief.

The following is a Copy of a letter which was given to the Collector this morning by the owner of a Vessel which was Captured by her last tuesday on her way to Charleston.

Cutter *Caledonia* at Sea

Sir

The Persons named in the Margin being Citezens of the U.S. and taken by the Private Cutter of War *Caledonia*, in the Sloop *William* from Savannah to Charleston and by me liberated. I hope you will have the goodness to send by the first oppertunity as many subjects of great Britain, Prisoners of War in their Stead, the said persons being liberated by me on this Patrole of Honor, and you will oblige Dear Sir Yours

Richd Corelson  
Commander

directed  
to the Commissioners for  
the Department of War  
United States



The following are the names of the persons thus liberated. Willm Wilkie, Robt Frazier, Thos Lindsay, Robt Webber, and Anty Gurney I have the Honor to be [&c.]

C. F. Grandison

[P.S.] The *Southampton* frigate is actually off Beaufort, She boarded a Ship Just arrived and impress'd one Seaman from her Yesterday. N.B. the Collector is this moment informd that the British Cutter is now actually anchored inside the Light-House & we have nothing to go in pursuit of her. I have done all I could to raise Volunteers and take the *Matilda* down to her, but the men 200, in number will not proceed unless I command them. the Captn however is opposed to this, but has no objections to go himself, and the people will not go with him I think it possible that something may be done before night, as I have promised to repair whatever damage She may sustain, and replace such munitions of War as May be expended on this occation Respectfully Sir

C. F. Grandison

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 147.

1. The same *Matilda* privateer, with 11 guns, which is discussed in Read to Hamilton, 13 July 1812. See pp. 191-92.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Savannah 17th Nov: 1812

Sir,

I hasten to inform you that it was officially reported to me by Major [Lawrence] Manning the Comander of the Land forces on this station, that the Boats of the blockading Squadron off this Bar, had actually sent their Boats in, man'd with 150 men; and had sounded as high as a place call'd 7 fathom-about 5 miles below Fort Jackson. That they had taken a Major Pope, who was gunning on the River, & had detain'd him 9 hours in their possession. Yesterday in the evening the alarm was

so great, that the alarm Bell was rang, and the Militia were under arms during the night-the British having threatned to burn all the Shipping at the Wharves. The two Barges which were here I ordered down the River to co-operate with the Fort-the Barges with the assistance of the Privateers, I thought would be a sufficient force to impel the invaders.

The commanders of the Privateers-*Matilda-United we Stand*, and *Divided we fall* are entitled to the thanks of their country for their promptitude in volunteering their services for the defence of the City and Shipping. As their vessels could not go down (owing to wind & Tide) they went down in their Boats, and kept guard below the Forts during the night. However the Enemy did not apper. This morning the report of their having been in the River was corroborated by the the arrival of a Brig, which was boarded by the Boats from the *Southampton* a little distance from the Fort. As the Gun-boats are not yet arrived, and as there is a necessity to keep the Barges in the Inlets (as the inhabitants of the Sea Islands and about those waters are very clamorous for the aid of the Naval forces here) I have at the earnest solicitation of the Citizens of this state purchased a vessel for Eight thousand Dollars, for a guard Ship in this River. I was the more inclined to make this purchase, as she had her Guns and amunition on board, and will be ready for sea in a few days. From those inducements, and my anxious desire to protect the Coast I have the honor to Command, I hope this purchase will meet your approbation.

The want of officers on this station has induced me to detain Midsm [Samuel] Le Compte, who lately arrived here on his way to St. Marys'. Officers are very much wanted on this station. Inclosed is the Inventory of the vessel I have purchased. Be pleased to observe, that the Ordnance and pig Iron Ballast, is worth the sum paid for the whole. Should peace take place this vessel will always sell for a much greater price than what has been now paid for her. I also take the liberty to enclose the Memorial of the Most respectable residents in this City.<sup>1</sup>

The cold and inclement season fast approaching renders it absolutely necessary that the men which compose the crew of the Barges, should have a vessel of some kind to sleep on board of, or, I very much fear we shall loose the whole of them, either by Death, or desertion. All these considerations, taken in a clear view, I feel convinced will justify the steps which I have taken for the public good in the Eyes of my

Country & the Honble the Secretary of the Navy. I have the honor  
[&c.]

C. F. Grandison

P.S. In the memorial of the Citizens of Savannah, I have only selected those of the first distinction, as it would require a volume to send the names of all the Citizens of Savannah.

#### Inventory of the Ship *Princess Amelia*

The *Princess Amelia* is a prize to the American privateer the *Rosie* [Rossie] of Baltimore, She was a British Packet mounting 8 Guns. She is about 5 years old and her burthen 180 Tons. Her Hull is sound and strongly built & she is newly coppered. Her Masts and Spars (of which she has a full set) are good, and require no expense, except some of her yards which have shot holes in them. Her sails are very good, only pierced with shot.

Of Rigging-Tackle-&c-&c-&c. She has the following  
One fore, & Main Top Sail half worn-Three Top Gallant Sails-half worn-Two Royals half worn-One Foresail, nearly new-One Main Sail half worn-One Spanker & mizen half worn-Two Mizen Stay Sails & one Top Mast Staysail, half worn-One Jibb & Flying Jibb, half worn-One fore Staysail, half worn, One Gaft Top Sail, half worn-One Main, Main Top mast & Middle Staysail, half worn-One Main Top Gallt Staysail, half worn-Three top mast Studg Sails, half worn-Two top Gallt, Studg Sails, 1/2 worn-One fore, Main & Mizen top Sail, Indifferent-One fore sail, Indifferent-2 Top Gallt Sails, Indift-two Stay sails, Indifferent-One Awning, very good-One 14 1/2 in Cable, best Bower, very good-One 13 in Cable, Small Bower, very good-One 9 1/2 in Cable, Stream, very good-One hawser, Indifferent-Two Bower Anchors-One Stream Anchor-One Kedge Anchor-running rigging complete, very good-Standing Rigging complete, much cut, but being good will answer Spliced-Lower Masts very good but pierced wt. Small Shot-Top Masts & Top Gallant Masts, slightly cut-The rest of the Spars in good order.

Ordnance.

Eight 9 wt Carronades, with sponges, rammers, worms, &c complete.

Shot-Round, grape & cannister-Fourteen Boarding Pikes-Six Cutlasses-Powder horns-Cartridge boxes and every other utensel-Three Keggs Gun powder, & one bundle unfill'd Cartridges-26 fine Water Casks-one box Signal Lights-Two Binnacle compasses, & other articles-70 Tons Pig Iron, as Ballast-a Long Boat & Cutter-Cabouse-& 3 Signal Lanterns.

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 169.

1. See following document.

CITIZENS OF SAVANNAH TO LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON

M-E-M-O-R-I-A-L.-

To Charles F. Grandison Esquire

Lieut: commanding the U.S. Naval forces on the Sunbury Station.

The Memorial of the undersigned Citizens of Savannah,

Respectfully Represent-

That the port & harbor of the City of Savannah is evidently destitute of every kind of Naval protection, at a period when we have every reason to apprehend the enemy to visit our Sea board, & particularly the entrance of the River leading to the metropolis of this State- That understanding a Ship called the *Princess Amelia* is for sale and would not only answer the purpose of a Guard Ship, but is well calculated for Sailing and would answer the purpose of going over the Bar occasionally, and defending the neighbouring Sea coast from Privateers and Picaroons- That your Mem. relying on your judgement and discretion, would beg leave to request the favor of you Sir, to examine the said Ship called the *Princess Amelia*, or any other in the Port, and should you be of opinion that she, or any other will answer the purpose for which she is wanted, you would exercise all the discretionary power you possess from Government to purchase her, or any other, from the owners, for and on acct of your Government. -

W. Stephens

A. S. Bulloch

Matt: McAllister

[T.] Bourke

Jno Bolton

Hampdin McIntosh

Alexr. Telfair

Thos. F. Williams

J. Bond Read

Jno Cumming

Nicholas Long  
Chas. Harris

Richd. M. Stiles  
Thos Mendenhall  
Robt. Mackay.-

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLR, Vol. 6, No. 208.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Savannah 19th Novr 1812

Sir,

The enclosed is a memorial which was this day handed to me by a delegation from a meeting which was held in this City by the principal proprietors of Estates on the Sea Islands between the Savannah River and the Skidaway Island.

I am afraid Sir I shall offend you by so many communications from this Station. I am very anxious to provide for the defence of those Islands and to gratify the Citizens of Georgia: But on the other hand, I am afraid of committing myself in the eyes of the Department. As there is no force as yet on this station, and as my instructions do not extend to purchase, or hire, I know not how to act to give general satisfaction. I can, and have sent the Barges: But these Boats will kill all our men as the weather is so inclement. Decked Vessels should be with them to protect the men.

I should be very happy to have power to station (either by hire, or purchase) such small vessels for Harbor defence as the exposed situation of this State requires.

The *Princess Amelia* (now the *Georgia*) will soon be ready for service. She will be a Brig of 14 Guns.

I have appointed Lieutenant N. [Noah] Allen her first Lieutenant pro: tem:<sup>1</sup> I know not how this officer stands with the Department: But as he says he has accepted his commission, and is here commanding a Privateer, I thought it my duty to give him these orders, presuming no officer can be allowed furlow to command a privateer when their services are required for the public Vessels.

I have opened a Rendezvous for Manning the Brig. Waiting the honor of a reply I have the honor [&c.]

C F Grandison

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 174.

1. Noah Allen does not appear in any *Navy Registers*. Allen left Savannah for Washington in Dec. 1812, having read a newspaper account of the protest lodged against him by the crew of the privateer *Matilda*. See Read to Hamilton, 13 July 1812, pp. 191-92, and Grandison to Hamilton, 12 Dec. 1812, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 215.

[Enclosure]

To Lieutenant Grandison, Commanding the Barges of the  
United States on the Georgia Station.

The Memorial of the Undersigned, Proprietors and Planters of the  
Islands of Wilmington, Skidaway, Whitmarsh &c.

Respectfully Represents,

That your memorialists and others, proprietors of Estates, between Savannah River and the South end of Skidaway Island, feel themselves greatly alarmed at their exposure to the Privateers, Picaroons & marauding parties of the Enemy.

Your Memorialists would venture to affirm, that there are not two points on the Sea, - Board of the State of more real importance to be guarded & protected than the entrance of Warsaw river, which passes between Wilmington & Skidaway Islands and leads directly up to Thunderbolt & from thence four miles to Savannah; & that other point which passes by the south end of Skidaway up Vernon River to Montgomery, ten miles from Savannah. These two important passes being left altogether unprotected by Government, furnishes the Enemy with an easy & ready passage for vessels of almost any burthen, in a single tide to pass up and land either at Thunderbolt or Montgomery and be in Savannah in two or three hours. Besides Sir, the Enemy by landing either at Wilmington or Skidaway would have under their countrol in the course of a few hours upwards of One Thousand slaves and a vast quantity of provisions & other property.

Your Memorialists would further beg leave to state, that they understand, the Gun Boats and Barges when ordered to cruise, seldom come as far as Warsaw River, in consequence of the Intricacy of the route through, Rumney Marsh, their passage requiring high tides and fair winds.

A Gun Boat stationed at the South end of Wilmington and a barge at the South end of Skidaway would afford great protection, to all the



Islands between Savannah & Great Ogeechee. A Barge would with any tide that would allow an enemy to run up to Montgomery through Rumney Marsh be able to pass through Rumney Marsh and give notice to the Gun-boat in Warsaw River. Warsaw Bar is but a few miles below Wilmington & Skidaway Islands and which can be passed by vessels drawing sixteen feet water. These Islands were visited during the last war and all are in hourly apprehension of being visited by the same enemy again.

Your Memorialists, therefore do most earnestly request that you will exercise all the discretionary powers you possess, to let us have a Barge & Gun-boat as early as possible; The former to be stationed at the south end of Skidaway, & the Gunboat in Warsaw River which will furnish not only security to the Islands but which is of still greater importance, additional security to the City of Savannah.

Proprietors of Estates on the  
Islands within mentioned

We recommend an early  
attention to the prayer of  
the memorialists

W. B. Bulloch  
J: Lawson  
John Bolton  
W Stephens  
[T] Bourke  
A. S. Bulloch  
H. M. Intosh  
Barack Gibbons  
Jno Cumming

Math. McAllister  
Charles Harris  
Geo. Jones  
W Jones  
Robert S Gibson  
Lewis Turner  
Richd Turner  
Warren Percival  
Mat. W. Stewart  
John W. Barnard  
Timoy Barnard Jr  
John Barnard  
Edmd Jarvis  
S. Shad  
George Herb  
Gardner Tufts attny  
for Ebn Jackson  
N. Turnbull

I Minis  
J Y Noel  
Bryan Morel (North ossabaw-

DS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 174.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Savannah 25 Nov: 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inclose herewith the result of an enquiry made on the conduct of Midshipman Hemersley [*Hamersley*], as regards the man he wounded on Board Barge *No 1*, and who is since dead.<sup>1</sup> It appears from all the evidence that Brown (the deceas'd) was guilty of Mutiny in the extreme and that he met his death in an attempt to destroy Mr Hemersley.

The witnesses in favor of Midsn Hemersley are as follows-

Mr P.A. Bush-Sailing master  
Mr Thos. Legare-Actg Sailg master  
Mr Thos. Allisone [*Allison*]-Midshipman  
John Esbrone-Seamn  
Henry Barton-Seamn  
Henry Newman-Seamn  
James Hill-Seaman

And but one Seaman, Sanders, in favor of the deceas'd, and this man deposath that the deceas'd was drunk and nothing farther. From these circumstances I am induced to believe that Midsn Hemersley only acted in self defence. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Cha<sup>s</sup> F. Grandison

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 198.

1. Upon arriving at the Sunbury station on 8 Nov., Grandison found appalling conditions: ammunition nearly exhausted, arms unfit for use, anchors, cables, and sweeps lost and broken, men deathly ill from exposure, one officer and three men dead, thirteen men having deserted, and the remainder in a state of indiscipline. Grandison attributed these conditions to the cruelty and intemperance of the officers in charge. He reported that one man, then dying, had been "most inhum[ane]ly stabd" by Hamersley. See Grandison to Hamilton, 9 Nov. 1812, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 149.

[Enclosure]

Capt: Grandison,

14th Nov: 1812

Sava Georgia

Sir,

As I was walking down on the Bluff I heard a noise on board of *No 1* Mr [Lachlan] Cuthbert was then going off—he asked me if I would not accompany him, I answered yes—when we came alongside of her, Mr Cuthbert and myself address'd them and ask'd them if they were not ashamed of themselves making such a Riot they still in it. We then demanded them to keep silence which they pay'd no attention to our orders—in a few minutes after, this fellow Brown came aft and asked me if I thought any thing of what he had said to me a few evenings before? I answered him I did not—in reaching his hand dropt a long Spanish Knife drawn. I immediately arose and ask'd him what he meant to do with it, his reply was, he did not know. I then mentioned to Mr Cuthbert to make himself contented until I returned. I then went on board of *No 4*, the Boat which I commanded and got my side arms and ordered my men to get in the Boat and I went alongside of *No 1*—in stepping on board this fellow Sanders ask'd me what I meant to do with the Sword. I then struck him over the shoulders with the Scabbord twice or three times—then immediately this man Brown rush'd from aft and swore that before his ship-mate should be struck by a damned white liver'd Son of a Bitch he would suffer death. My Mate and several of the men seized him to prevent him from gaining me. I was then standing forward—he still made use of mutinous and insulting words and making every exertion to gain me—he caught Mr Cuthbert by the back of the neck and threw him down. After that I was convinced his determination was to destroy me in which I made two passes at him with my Sword, not for the intention of destroying him or giving him any mortal wound.

Signd: George Hamersley

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 198.

[Enclosure]

This is to certify that Brown who was wounded by Midsn Hemersley was not drunk when that circumstance happened, but was in all respects qualified for duty.

Signd by	Jno Bush	Sailing Master
	Thos Legare	Acting Sailing Master
and	Thos Allisone	Midshipman
	Jno Miller	} Seamen
	Henry Barton	
	Henry Newman	
and	James Hill	

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 181.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sunbury 2 decr 1812

Sir

I have the honour to inform you, that in consequence of the enormous expence attending the Hospital establishment on this Station. I have sent all the sick round to savannah there to be sent to the Marine Hospital—where they will meet with better attendance—and at a much less expence—than at Sunbury. on my Arrival here, yesterday, I was informed that Doctor [James] Troup has been appointed to this station, as Surgeon, that he had been here, and had returnd again, not liking to accept the situation, as it would Interfere too much with his profession at Darien. Doctor [Samuel J.] Axsam who has attended the sick heretofore and whose Bill is so great, tells me that he will accept the Appointment of Surgeon on this station if you will accept of his Services—but as I have removed the sick to Savannah I do not think there is any occasion for one now, except in the event of Attack. In breaking up the Hospital Establishment at Sunbury I have reduced the Monthly expence—at least two hundred Dollars. it will now remain at six Dollars per month for storage untill I get a Vessel to recieve the stores. Since I last had the honour of writeing to you seven Men have deserted from the Barges—but none indebted to the dept. It appears almost imposible to

keep them on board their Boats for they desert in spight of all the Vigilance of the officers, nothing but keeping them at a distance from the Shore on a deckd Vessel will prevent ther constant desertion.

My Next Communication will inform you Sir of all the expences which has attended the Barges on this Station since their first Arrival up to the close of the Present Year—with the statement of the Peoples accounts—the Number of desertions—and the Number of deaths. Another Bill for Medical attendance since the 9th of November is this Moment handed to me amounting to \$86.50. In consequence of which I have suspended the doctors Attendance in, toto, and have taken away the Medicine Chest which Captn Reed Lent him.<sup>1</sup> I have the Honour [&c.]

Chas F. Grandison

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 198.

1. Master Commandant George W. Reed commanded the barges at Sunbury for two months before being ordered to command *Vixen* in Sept. 1812, following the death of her commander, Master Commandant Christopher Gadsden.

CONGRESSMAN GEORGE M. TROUP TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Washington  
30th Nov 1812

Dear Sir

I enclose the letter, Memorial, & Exhibit,<sup>1</sup> the subject of which is the purchase of the *Princess Amelia* for Harbor defence. There being no prospect of the gun boats (which you were so good as to promise) being able to reach Savannah, having no means of defence on the water, & the enemy having actually invaded them The Citizens of Savannah of the greatest respectability united in urging Lieut Grandison to purchase the *Princess Amelia* which you will see by the Exhibit has been purchased for a sum considerably below her value. As Lieut Grandison acted in this affair without express authority from you he anxiously awaits your decision on his conduct. The Memorial has the signature of the District Judge the Collector & all the public agents at Savannah.

This vessel will under the direction of Grandison I trust keep the People of Savannah in tolerable humor until you have a favorable opportunity to furnish a few gun boats. With high respect & consideration

Geo M Troup<sup>2</sup>

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 7, No. 135.

1. Enclosures not filed with document. In addition to the letter printed on pp. 598-600 above, they probably consist of copies of the memorial from the citizens of Savannah and the "Inventory of the Ship *Princess Amelia*," pp. 600-602.

2. George Michael Troup was a member of the House of Representatives from Georgia, 1807-1815. He later served as a U.S. senator and as governor of Georgia.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO  
CONGRESSMAN GEORGE M. TROUP

Savannah 18th Nov: 1812

My dear friend,

I wrote my letter to you last evening in such haste (owing to the closing of the Mail) that I had not time to examine it, consequently omitted to "Enclose the Memorial" therein mentioned: But tho' it's never too late to correct our errors, still they cannot be removed too soon—the longer their existance, the greater their attendant evils—therefore I took no time in sending the memorial in full chase after my letter, or, rather a copy of it—the Original being sent to the Honble: the Secretary of the Navy as I should have told you before. Here my dear Sir, let me reiterate my request of you to wait on the Secretary and be my advocate in in the purchase of the *Princess Amelia*. Herewith you will receive a copy of her Inventory, Examine it, and say if she is not a bargain. Her Ordnance & Ballast is worth, nay, would this day fetch as much as I have given for her and all her appendages.

You may say, perhaps, that I am over zealous in behalf of the portion of our Coast assigned to my protection. I certainly feel as much interested for its safety as tho' it belonged to me, and I feel as much desire to catch a party of English on it, as ever one of its inhabitants [does] to catch a gang of run-away Negros. Accept the assurance of my most respectful consideration.

C. F. Grandison

Cong George M. Troup Member of Congress



LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 7, No. 74.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO  
LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON

Nav: Dep't  
3 December 1812

Your several letters have been received.

The purchase of the *Princess Amelia* is not disapproved: tho there exists no authority to make such a purchase.

You will communicate Your proceedings to Comre Campbell, undere whose order You are to act; Change her name, & call her the *Troup*

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 214.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Sloop *Troup*  
Savannah 20th dec: 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your esteem'd favor of the 3rd inst: this day, the contents of which shall be punctually attended to. The *Troup* is nearly ready for Service, and ere you receive this she will be quite so, except having her crew. Most of the men now on board belong to the Barges-also the Officers. I dispatched two Barges to St Marys three weeks since for Men-they have not yet returned. The *Troup* will mount 20 guns namely, 16-9 lbers, 2-12 lbers, & 2-18 lbers, Carronades, and as amunition is scarce here I wish to take her to St Mary's for the purpose of getting a sufficiency from Commodore Campbell. We have no Signal Book on this station neither have we the private Signal, nor the Privateers private Signal. May I solicit those Signals. Agreeable to your instructions I shall in future communicate my proceedings to Commodore Campbell. I am sorry to inform you that all the Officers, with the exception of one, and all the

men have been very ill, myself included. Ten are in the Hospital here, the rest are on board and on the recovery. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Cha<sup>s</sup> F Grandison

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 228.

## Men for the Frigate *Adams*

*Charles Morris's promotion to captain gave him priority in gaining a command at sea. He was ordered to Adams, a small 28-gun frigate which was undergoing a partial rebuilding at the Washington Navy Yard. To obtain seamen, Secretary Hamilton issued orders for the opening of a rendezvous. Morris and his ship were delayed more than a year in departing by the British blockade off the Virginia Capes. After breaking out in 1814, Morris made several captures, but was ultimately obliged to destroy Adams when threatened with capture in the Penobscot River. The document which follows contains the Navy Department's recruiting order on behalf of Morris.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN

Capt John Cassin  
Navy Yard Gosport Va

Navy Depart  
30 Novr 1812

Be pleased to order a Rendezvous to be opened at Norfolk to enter thirty able & thirty Ordinary Seamen, directing the recruiting officer to report from time to time his progress to Capt Morris at this place-the men being intended for the *Adams* under his command.

The wages to Able Seamen are 12\$ pr month-and if absolutely necessary, a bounty of from 10 to 20\$ may be given-to Ordinary Seamen & boys from 6 to 10\$-and to all two months advance upon good Security being given, to indemnify the public in the event of desertion-to be entered to serve two years from the time the ship first weighs anchor for a cruize. Give the recruiting officer orders to enter none but white able bodied Citizens.

The Navy Agent will furnish the necessary monies upon the requisitions of the recruiting officer approved by you.  
Blank shipping papers are herewith transmitted.

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 346.

Commodore Tingey's Concerns

*The correspondence of Thomas Tingey, commandant of the Washington Navy Yard, is rich in detail for the study of ship repair and the procurement of naval stores, timber, rope yarns, iron, and ordnance for the Washington yard and others along the east coast. Tingey's concerns during early December 1812, focused on three subjects: repairs and recruitment for the frigate Adams at Washington Navy Yard, the possible rebuilding of the decaying frigate New York, and the disposition of naval gunboats at the various naval stations in Chesapeake Bay and southward. An offer had been made by a Baltimore builder for work on New York (see pp. 592-93) and preparations had been made to escort the ship to Baltimore with gunboats from the Chesapeake Bay flotilla based in that city. But a decision was reached not to proceed with the work. In the long run, this may have been the wisest choice. New York was so far gone that she would have required extensive work, and she probably would not have been able to break through the blockade even if completed. Constellation was ready for sea by late 1812, yet was unable to leave Chesapeake Bay until the end of the war. The documents which follow reflect activities at the Washington Navy Yard during the last month of 1812.*

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn:  
3d Decr 1812.

Sir

By a representation from the Master smith, it appears eligible, for expediting the repairs and armament of the frigate *Adams*, that we should have orderd from the Baltimore forge five tons of flat Iron 4 1/2 inches wide 7/8 inch thick-Three tons 3 1/2 in. wide 3/8 inch thick-Five tons flat bar 2 to 3 inches wide, Five tons 2 1/2 & 2 inch square. Five tons 1 1/2 inch square, Five do: 1 1/4 inch square. Six ton rounded bolt iron 1/2 inch to 1 inch diameter & fifty bundles spike rods.

Also the following assortment of thimbles viz'

Open thimbles	welded thimbles
4 gross 1 1/2 inch	5 gross 1 1/2 inch
9 do 2 do	10 do 2 do
5 do 2 1/2 do	5 do 2 1/4 do
5 do 2 3/4 do	5 do 2 1/2 do
5 do 3 do	

The Patent thimbles made in New York, are equally good, and can be had for half the price that we can make them. All which is respectfully submitted. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Tho<sup>s</sup>: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 204.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn 3d Decr 1812

Sir

On an examination of the five Gun Boats, sent here by Captain [Master Commandant Charles] Gordon, (intended to take round the frigate *New York* to Baltimore) it appears that they are not in a state, fit to send outside the Capes, for a southern station. I therefore beg

leave respectfully to recommend that they be ordered to return to Baltimore, or sent to the Norfolk station, I have the honor to be [&c.]

Tho<sup>s</sup> Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 205. Endorsed at foot of letter: "No. 135 Richd J Cox 136 Geo J Davis 139 Horace Smyth 142 Jno Nantz 143 Jas Lawreson Order them to Norfolk P.H."

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn 4d Decr 1812

Sir

I have received information from the Navy Agent at Boston, that, a number of men for the frigate *Adams*, have embarked in a sloop for this port. As we shall need a comfortable and safe place to lodge them, I will have the frigate *New York*, prepared for that purpose, should it meet your approbation. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Tho<sup>s</sup>: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 206.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn 12th Decr 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that, in consequence of the appearance of the weather, I yesterday directed Sailing Master William Fleetwood, commanding Gun Boat No 144, with Nos 137, 140 & 141 under his direction, to proceed down near Alexandria and there wait until I should receive your Instructions, where to order them, for their winter station.

The Gun Boat No 135, sailing Master R. J. Cox, with four others attach'd to his command, are also here, and ready to proceed, wherever you shall be pleased to direct. Mr Cox, having on board the Signals, for

the Baltimore Squadron of Boats, it may be most eligible that, he with the Boats attach'd to his command, be ordered back to Baltimore. And Fleetwood with the others, to the Norfolk Station.

All which is respectfully submitted for your instructions. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Tho<sup>s</sup>: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 212. Endorsed at foot of letter: "Let it be so ordered P.H."

## The Return of *United States* and *Macedonian*

*After defeating Macedonian off the Azores Islands on 25 October, Captain Decatur's crew spent several days jury-rigging her, then commenced the long voyage back to the United States with the prize in company. During the first days of December, the two ships slipped through the blockade and entered coastal waters. United States sailed into Long Island Sound and made for New London, anchoring off that port on 4 December. Macedonian, however, was beset with fog and went into Newport two days later. Macedonian's arrival raised great excitement since this was the first news local inhabitants received about Decatur's success. The Newport Mercury welcomed the news under the headline "ANOTHER BRILLIANT NAVAL VICTORY," remarking "with emotions of heartfelt pride and pleasure, we place before our readers another proof of the superior skill and bravery of our officers, seamen, and marines which will secure to them the unanimous applause of a grateful country."<sup>1</sup>*

*Master Commandant Perry, commanding the Newport station, was immediately involved in taking care of the prize and her crew, among whom were a number of sick and wounded seamen. In the following two letters Decatur reports his safe arrival at New London, and Perry informs the secretary of his having rendered assistance to Macedonian's crew.*

1. Newport Mercury, 12 Dec. 1812, p. 3.



COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

December 4th 1812. U.S.S. *United*  
*States* at anchor off New London

Sir

I have to acquaint you with our arrival at New London this morning & beg leave to refer you to the enclosed<sup>1</sup> for the details of an action between this ship & His Britannic Majesty's ship *Macedonian*—The last night being very dark we unavoidably parted with our prize off Montaug [*Montauk*] point and the weather is still so thick that she cannot come into port. She has a pilot on board and is capable of standing any weather—the moment she can see her way I have no doubt she will be in.

'Tis with great pleasure I inform you that our wounded are all doing well—and have the honour to be [&c.]

[Stephen Decatur]

AL, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 207.

1. Probably refers to Decatur to Hamilton, 30 Oct. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 154. See pp. 552–53.

MASTER COMMANDANT OLIVER H. PERRY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newport Decr 10th 1812

Sir,

A number of wounded having arrived in the *Macdonian* who it was absolutely necessary to land immediately I have in consequence, taken a few rooms as a temporary hospital for their accommodation, as well, as for the sick belonging to the GunBoats who cannot have the necessary conveniences onboard—and have placed it under the direction of Doctr [Edmond T.] Waring of this Town. I hope Sir, this arrangement will meet your approbation. I have the honor to be [&c.]

O. H. Perry

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, No. 123. Endorsed at foot of letter: "Entirely approved. Let them have every necessary comfort of every kind. P.H."

## The Loss of His Majesty's Packet, *Princess Amelia*

*Among the many prizes taken by American ships during the War of 1812 were a number of British packets, which were official vessels, though not a part of the Royal Navy establishment. They carried mail and specie from England to British possessions in North America and the West Indies, and to the British civil servants and citizens living in South America. One of the first packets to become a victim of the war was Princess Amelia, carrying eight guns and 14 men, en route from St. Thomas to Falmouth. She had the misfortune to encounter Joshua Barney's *Rossie* during the second part of that ship's successful cruise. There was a long, hard-fought contest, during which the packet suffered the death of her captain and master and many other casualties.*

*As has been seen in earlier documents, Princess Amelia survived the engagement, was taken prize and sent into Savannah. She was eventually taken into the U.S. Navy as Georgia, but was renamed Troup in honor of Congressman George Troup from Georgia who had urged Secretary Hamilton to make the purchase.<sup>1</sup> The following documents consist of an official account of the capture of Princess Amelia and a request by postal officials that the officers and men of the ship be compensated for their injuries with "gratuities" for severe wounds and "smart money" for slight wounds. Pensions were allotted to the families of those who were killed.*

1. See Troup to Hamilton, 30 Nov. 1812, pp. 608–609 and Hamilton to Grandison, 3 Dec. 1812, p. 610.

THE EARL OF SANDWICH AND THE EARL OF CHICHESTER TO  
THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF THE TREASURY

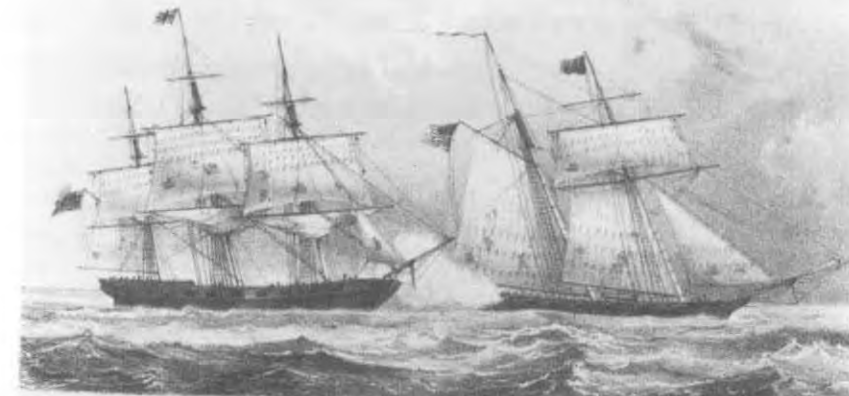
To the Right Honorable The Lords Commissioners  
of His Majesty's Treasury—

My Lords

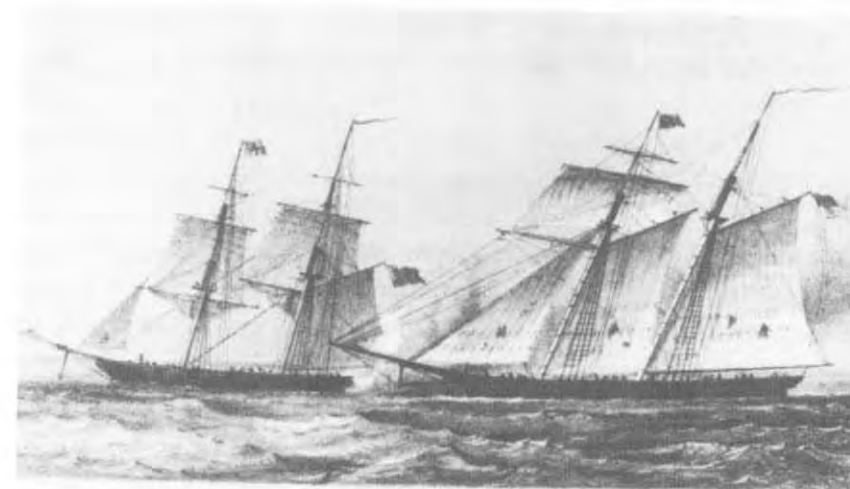
We deem it highly necessary to represent to your Ldps the Circumstances of a very gallant Action which occurred on 15th Sept last, in Defence of the *Princess Amelia* Pkt, agst an American Privateer of very superior Force; & though that Defence proved unsuccessful, we think it proper for the Sake of Example, & for the good of the Service, as well as on acct of the excellent Conduct of the Officers & Men, to propose such Pensions to the Widows & the Relatives of those who fell in the Action, & Rewards & Smart Money to the Remainder of the Crew, as have been usual in Cases of a like Nature.

The *Pss Amelia*, armed with eight guns, & carrying 28 Men, Officers included, sailed from St Thomas' for Falmouth on 12th Sept last, & on the 15th of that Month she was attacked by the American Privateer *Rossie* of 12 guns & 95 men, agst which she was defended upwards of 50 Minutes, when the Captain, & the Master, & a Boy, having fallen, & the Mate & ten Seamen being wounded, & every further Effort to save the Vessel become unavailing, she was surrendered to the Enemy & the Mail & dispatches sunk.

Capt: Moorsom who has thus lost his Life in the Service, & Mr Nankeville the Master were truly worthy Men, & deserving Officers. They have both left Widows to lament their Fate, & the Master has besides left an aged Mother who entirely depended upon him for her support. We therefore submit that it may be right to allow Mrs Moorsom a Pension of £ 60 per Ann: during her Life or Widowhood; & a Pension of £ 20 per Ann: to the Widow of Mr Nankeville during her Life or Widowhood, with an additional allowance of £ 5 per ann during the Life of his Mother whom he supported. We also beg leave to propose a gratuity of £ 10 to the poor aged Mother of Richard May, the Boy, who was killed in the Action; & Smart Money to the Master, and wounded Seamen, with gratuities to the remainder of the Crew, as stated in the enclosed List, & we request your Lordships Authority to pay the same amounting for the Pensions to Mrs Moor-



BATTLE between the SCHOONER ROSSIE, and the SHIP PRINCESS AMELIA,  
on the 15th of Sept. 1812.



BATTLE between the SCHOONER SARATOGA, and the BRIG RAULLE,  
on the 15th of Dec. 1812.

som, & Mrs Nankeville & the Mother, to the Sum of £ 85 per ann: & for Smart Money & gratuities to £ 261.4- We are [&c.]

Sandwich [John Montagu, 5th Earl]  
Chichester [Thomas Pelham, 2nd Earl]

General Post Office  
Decr 1st 1812

Pensions, Smart Money, & Gratuities, proposed to the Officers & Crew of the *Prss Amelia* Packet & to the Relatives of those who fell in Action with the American Privateer *Rossie* of 12 guns & 95 Men-15th Sept. 1812.

<u>Killed.</u>	<u>Pensions.</u>	£	s	d
Isaac Moorsom Esqr Commander-Pension per Ann: to his Widow during life or Widowhood		60	-	-
John Nankeville Master-Pension per Ann: to his Widow during Life or Widowhood		20	-	-
Ditto-to an Aged Mother whom he supported		5	-	-
	Annual £	85	-	-
	<u>Gratuities</u>			
Richd May-Allowance to an aged Mother		10	-	-
<u>Wounded severely</u>	<u>Smart Money</u>			
Wm Edmonds-severely wounded uncertain if he will recover		10	-	-
Jno: Hayman-ditto-Ball thro' his right Arm, doubtful if he will recover its use		10	-	-
Jno: Macklaine-Ball in the Thigh, not yet extracted		10	-	-
Jno: Francisco-Wounded in the Head, part of his Scull carried away by a Musket Ball		10	-	-
	Carrd Ford £	50	-	-
	Brot. Forwd £	50	-	-
<u>Wounded slightly</u>				
Wm Redgard-Mate, wounded in the Head by a Musket Ball		100	-	-
James Jones-Splinter in the Arm		5	-	-

John Rodney-Burnt by the Explosion of a Cartridge	5	-	-
Lewis Brown-ditto	5	-	-
Robt Wright-wounded in the Leg	5	-	-
Thos Bryant-By a Splinter slightly	5	-	-
14 Able Seamen at £ 3-3s/-each	44	2	-
1 Ordinary at £ 2-2s/-	2	2	-
	£261	4 <sup>1</sup>	

Copy, General Post Office, London, Treasury Letter Books, 1783-1859, Vol. 22, pp. 321-24. The letter books, together with Packet Report Books and Packet Minute Books, constitute a rarely used source of information concerning actions between American privateers and packets. This and the following document are reproduced by courtesy of Post Office Archives.

1. The figures total only £ 221 4s.

SIR GEORGE HARRISON TO THE POSTMASTER GENERAL

Treasury Chambers  
11th Dec 1812

(Copy)  
My Lords

Having laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, your Lordships letter of the 1st Inst: enclosing a List of Pensions, Smart Money & Gratuities proposed to be allowed to the Officers & Crew of the "*Princess Amelia*" Packet, & to the Relatives of those who fell in action with the American Privateer "*Rossie*" of 12 guns and 95 men on 14th September last, the former amounting to £ 85 per Ann: and the latter to £ 261 4s-which under the Circumstances stated, your Lordships request authority to pay-I have it in command to authorize your Lordships to pay the same accordingly. I am [&c.]

Geo: Harrison<sup>1</sup>

The Postmaster General

Copy, General Post Office, London, Treasury Letter Books, 1783-1859, Vol. 22, pp. 325.

1. Harrison had served as assistant secretary of the treasury since 1805.



## Saratoga: A New York Privateer

*One of the most active American privateers in the Caribbean during the first year of the War of 1812 was Captain Charles Wooster's schooner Saratoga. During her career in this war, Saratoga took approximately 22 ships.<sup>1</sup> As can be seen from the following journal, Captain Wooster was not one to shrink from close action.*

*1. Maclay, American Privateers, p. 454.*

### LIEUTENANT'S JOURNAL OF THE SCHOONER SARATOGA

[Extract]

11 December 1812

Moderate Trades and pleaseat weather At 1/2 past 12 a Sail hove in sight to windward Tacked and Stood in for our boat being on shore for the Capt at 2 PM our boat returned with the Capt, immediately, made all Sail in chase at 1/2 Past 3 perceived an English Jack at the foretopmast head of a schooner at 4 Tacked Stood in shore to endeavor to cut her off. on which she hauled in for the land Sent our small boat with six men armed, in order if possible to take charge of her before she could reach the shore at 1/2 past 4 the boat boarded her She hauled down her colours within half Pistol Shot of the beach, took possession of her and stood off Laguira bearing at the same time S.W. 4 Leagues dist. She proved to be the British schooner *Mariah*. belonging to St Thomas 4 days out bound to Laguira Laden with 40 bbls Flour & 50 Boxes Trunks of dry goods retained one prisoner on board Sent the remainder with their baggage on shore they being English French and Spaniards at the request of the american consul took Capt Moncreef and 10 men on board who had been 5 or 6 months on shore at Laguira at 6 PM Laguira bore S. S.W 6 Leagues dist Stoot [*stood*] off and on under Easy Sail Prize in [Com] 6 a.M Laguira bore S 5 Leagues distant. Tacked and Stood in at 8 AM Saw a Brig to the westward Standing to the North by the wind Hauled the Prize along Side and took out a part of the most valuable Goods Put Mr Boggs and F Bergman his mate on board with 4 men gave instructions for her to Stand in Shore in case we lost Sight of her she

would lay off and on for two or three days if we should not be able to find her in that time to proceed direct to Carthagen and there await our arrival, At 1/2 past 8 aM made all Sail in chase of the Brig at 9 Set English Ensign and Pendant on which she Hoisted an English Ensign, Called all hands to quarters and cleared for action at 10 gave her a shot and hoisted American Ensign and Pendant the shot cut away her Stern boat, she returned our fire with her Stern chasers, At 1/4 past 10 the action commenced, distant from Each other 1/4 mile at 11 the shot from the Enemy carried away our fore topsail yard at the same time the Axeltree of the after gun gave away which rendered it unfit for Service Torn Breechings of the principal guns in the waist parted; finding She would not Strike made Sail to get in shore to windward of her in order to board 10 minutes past 11 the firing ceased on both Sides all hands Employed repairing damages at meridian the Enemy a Stern Standing the Same way with us

12 December 1812

commences with Strong Breezes E. NE. Heavy swell on could not fight with our Lee guns Sent up a new topsail Yard 1/2 past 12 the Enemy Tacked at 1 having repair'd all damages Tacked and made sail after her 1/2 past one came up to the windd of him Hove too, to send a flag of truce on board to inform him of the force and number of men of the *Saratoga* with the determination that if they did not haul down her colours Every man on board should be put to death he heaving too for the space of five minuites then made Sail from our boat, Set our English Jack forwarded and made Sail after him 1/2 past 2 came up within hail of him Sumoned him frequently to Strike otherwise abide by the consequence, which he refused to do at the same time having his colours nailed to the Peak we Stood ready for Boarding the Enemy shot ahead we recommenced with round and grape at 3/4 past 2 Bore up athwart his stern and raked him, rounded too, to board him fired several vollies of musketry into him which drove all his men below who were able to get there we ceased fireing she fell off along side of us we grapld to her the grappling Lanyards parted, one officer Mr Dexter and 2 men Richd Pemberton and Charles Rowland got on board by the Jib guys found only one man on deck alive who was trying too haul down the colours at 3 his Colours were hauled down by Mr Dexter one of our own officers on our part 2 men wre wounded (not mortally) the capt. and 2 men of the

Enemys Ship Lay dead on deck and two wounded one of which died soon after Nothwithstanding the careful and humane attendance of our Surgeon, she proved to be the Brig *Rachel* from Greenock commanded by Capt N Dalmarhoy mounting 14 guns mounting, 14 Guns maned with 36 men out 57 days—the damages done the *Saratoga* were of no great consequence Three shrouds shot away, mainsail fore top Sail and Jib were cut by the shot of the Enemy, a number of Grape shot in our foremast. Brails Braces &c cut away our stabourd Bulwark stove in (a little) by the vessels Strikeinng each other.

The Enemys damage, Four shot 2 between wind and water his sails rigging and spars cut very badly, Sent our carpenter on board to repair her at 4 PM Lost Sight of our prize schooner Received the greater part of the Brig *Rachels* Prisoners on board, All hands employed repairing damages At 5 PM another Brig hove in sight cleared ship for another action our Prize Brig in Co at 5.50 Cape Blanco W. S.W Distant 6 Leagues at 9.30 Beat to Quarters at 9.40 came up with the chase Brought her too and boarded her she proved the Spanish Brig *San Hosa* [*José*] 57 days from Cadiz bound to Porto Cabello, at 10 permitted her to pass Tacked and stood in shore prize in Co at 11 calm continued calm all night at 8 am. Light Breezes from the Eastward run under the Lee of our prize took out some canvass stores &c sent on board 2 casks water kept 4 of the prisoners on board the *Rachel* and 2 on board the *Saratoga*. gave the remainder 27 in number the Long boat of Brig to proceed to Lagaira we being too Short of water to detain them, Supplied them with provisions and water and they made sail for the land, all hands employed repairing sails rigging &c.

Wind E NE. Land near, Lagaira in sight

D, "Journal Kept on Board the Private Armed Vessel *Saratoga* Charles W. Wooster Esq Commander By Abram Judah for John Backus 2d Lieut'," Navy Department Library, Special Collections, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.

## Midshipman Feltus of the Frigate *Essex*

*One of the surviving accounts of Captain David Porter's Essex and her exploits in the Pacific is to be found in the journal of Midshipman William W. Feltus. Little is known about Feltus, except that he received his appointment on 1 September 1811, and served at the New York Navy Yard and in Gunboat No. 106. He joined Essex on 25 September 1812 at Chester on the Delaware River. In December 1813, Feltus was transferred to Greenwich, one of Essex's prizes. He was one of several officers left under the command of Marine Lieutenant John Gamble, on the island of Nuku Hiva, when Captain Porter sailed for Valparaiso. Gamble's men were to take care of Porter's prizes, but they became involved in disputes with the natives. Midshipman Feltus is reported to have been murdered with several others on 7 May 1814.<sup>1</sup>*

*The following accounts are drawn from Feltus's journal: the first describes a typical "crossing the line" ceremony, remarkably similar to those held today. The ceremony was a traditional diversion from ship-board routine, even in time of war, affording an opportunity for considerable sport and good humor. The second journal excerpt shows how rapidly such diversions could melt away to the more serious business of taking prizes. Essex chased and captured a handsome ship on the following day. She was Nocton, 10 guns, bound from Brazil to England.*

1. Porter, *Memoir*, pp. 249–51.

### JOURNAL OF MIDSHIPMAN WILLIAM W. FELTUS "KEPT ON BOARD THE US. FRIGATE *ESSEX*"

[Extracts]

[23 November 1812]<sup>1</sup>

DESCRIPTION OF THE CEREMONIES performed on board the *Essex* on Crossing the line or tropics.

When the ship was supposed to be about on the line the man at the mast head was directed to cry Sail OI & being asked by the officer of the deck where away & what she looked like he answered. a small boat on the Lee bow. then the officer of the deck hailed and asked what

boat that was, he was answered that it was Neptunes the god of the seas, & that he wished permission to come on board with his train. as soon as It was granted one of the B Mates with some others being in the fore chains, came over the Bows and mounted their carriage (made of some boards lashed together on an old gun carriage having two chairs lashed there on for Neptune & his wife) this carriage was drawn by 4 men some with their shirts off & their Bodies painted & others with their trowsers cut off above the knees & their legs painted & their faces painted in this manner accompanied by his Barbers with their razors made of an Iron hoop & constables & Band of music they marched on the quarter deck where he dismounted with his wife and spoke to the Captain for permission to shave such as had not crossed the line before officers excepted, provided that they would pay some rum, this was granted. they immeadiately got into one of the boats filled with water with all his barbers (those that had not been across the line before were ordered below) and 1 was brought up at a time.

\* \* \*

Remarks Dec 12th 1812.  
Commences moderate and Pleasant at 2 disced a sail on the weather Bow 1 pt. made sail in chase at 4 tacked still in chase Squally and flying clouds at sun down chase still on the weather Bow having the appearance of an armed Brig Beat to quarters and cleared for action at 7 PM drew up to the chase Hailed her and told Her to heave too she attempted to run to Leeward at which we fired a volley of Musketry at Her. Killed 1 man and cut her Rigging very much she proved to be his Britannic Majesties Packet *Nocton* of 10 Guns from Rio-Bound to England having on board 12000 £ sterling at 7 AM ran foul of Her & carried away part of Her Starbd quarter & our Sprit-Yard & cat Head.

Lat acc	Long in	Correct Long	variant
[0°] 38 South	25° 49 'W	27° 30 'W	1 1/2 W

Remarks Dec 13th 1812  
at 1 Mr [Midshipman William] Finch went on board with Mr [Midshipman Thomas] Conover and his crew and departed for the US at 1/2 past 2 made sail at 4 Brig out of sight set up the rigging Ends Pleasant.

Lat acc	Obsvd	D Long	Long in
1° 18 'S	1° 33 'S	30	26° 19 'W

ADS, PHI, Journal of William W. Feltus, 1812-1814.  
1. This passage, entered at the end of Feltus's journal, is undated. The *Essex* crossed the Tropic of Cancer, on her southward journey, on 23 Nov. 1812. David Porter, *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (New York, 1822; reprint ed., Upper Saddle River, N.J., 1970), I: 15 and chart between pp. 22 and 23.

Preparations for Manning the 74s

On 23 December 1812, Congress passed legislation vital to the growth of the navy. Spurred on by several single-ship victories and by the active lobbying of officers and naval-minded citizens, Congress authorized the building of four 74-gun ships of the line and six 44-gun frigates. Acting quickly, Senator Samuel Smith, who had at one time been acting secretary of the navy, requested Secretary Hamilton to provide a projection of the numbers of officers and men that would be required in the larger navy. The documentation which follows is that provided by Hamilton in response to this request. The ships, when constructed, would more than double the navy's manpower needs. In fact, the ships of the line were only partially completed by the end of the War of 1812. The real impact of this legislation was felt in the post-war era when it became the basis of a permanent navy which in time would rival those of Britain and France in size, reach, and capability.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO  
SAMUEL SMITH

Honble Genl Saml Smith  
Chairman of a Committee  
of the Senate  
Navy Depart.  
24 Decr 1812



The papers herewith transmitted & marked A, B, C, D, E & F will I hope furnish all the requisite information upon the points contemplated in the Memoranda which I had the honor to receive from you yesterday. I have the honor [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

A

Exhibit shewing the number of Commission officers & midshipmen requisite for the vessels of War now in Commission & ordered to be fitted for the Service of the United States specifying the vessels.

Vessels	Captains	Masters Comm	Lieutenants	Surgeons	Surgeons' Mate	Chaplains	Midshipmen
Frigate							
<i>President</i>	1		5	1	2	1	16
<i>Constitution</i>	1		5	1	2	1	16
<i>United States</i>	1		5	1	2	1	16
<i>Constellation</i>	1		5	1	2	1	12
<i>Chesapeake</i>	1		5	1	2	1	12
<i>Congress</i>	1		5	1	2	1	12
<i>Macedonian</i>	1		5	1	2	1	12
<i>Essex</i>	1		4	1	2	1	12
<i>Adams</i>	1		4	1	2	1	12
<i>John Adams</i>		1	3	1	1		8
<i>Hornet</i>		1	3	1	1		8
<i>Alert</i>		1	3	1	1		8
<i>Argus</i>		1	2	1	1		6
<i>Siren</i>		1	2	1	1		6
<i>Vixen</i>		1	2	1			4
<i>Oneida</i>		1	2	1			6
<i>Madison</i>		1	2	1			6
<i>Enterprise</i>		1	2	1			4
<i>Viper</i>			3	1			4
<i>Scorpion</i>			2	1			2
	9	9	69	20	23	9	182

B

List of Midshipmen appointed in U S Navy prior to 20th June 1806, the [date] on which those now nominated was appointed.

Walter Boyd	date of warrant	4th Augt 1800
Walter G. Anderson		1st May 1803
John R. Sherwood		30 May "
Charles Jones		6 July 1804
Jacob Hite		2 April "
Charles W. Rivers		" " "
St Clair Elliott [Elliott]		" " "
Robert Speden [Spedden]		" " "
James McGlaughon		18 June "
John R. Madison		28 " "
Charles A Budd		22 Novr 1805
Samuel Renshaw		4 July "

C

Periods of actual Service of the Midshipmen, now nominated to the Senate for Lieutenants in the Navy

Decr 24th 1812

Wm Finch	with occasional furloughs for short periods has been in actual Service since his appointment	
Wm B. Shubrick	In actual Service nearly the whole period since his appointment	
Henry Wells	the same	} They have all been in actual Service on ship board Six years.
B.W. Booth	the same	
Alexr Claxton	the same	
Glen Drayton	the same	
Enos R. Davis	the same	

D

List of Pursers in the Navy who have been nominated and confirmed by the Senate, & who are now commissioned with their employment

Names.	Where employed
Isaac Garretson	<i>Constellation</i>
Samuel Hambleton	Newport R.I.
Clement S. Hunt	<i>President</i>
Gwinn Harris	St Mary's Georgia
John H. Carr	Charleston S. Ca
Nathl Lyde	Settling his accounts
James R. Wilson	New York Yard
Samuel Robertson	<i>Congress</i>
Samuel Maffitt [ <i>Maffit</i> ]	<i>Chesapeake</i>
Robt C. Ludlow	<i>Constitution</i>
Robt Pottinger	<i>Siren</i>
John B. Timberlake	<i>United States</i>
Thos J. Chew	Boston Yard
Thos Shields	New Orleans
Richard C. Archer	Gosport Yard
Lewis Deblois	Washington Yard
George S. Wise	<i>Macedonian</i>
Francis A. Thornton	<i>Hornet</i>
Humphrey Magrath	<i>Viper</i>
Edwin T. Satterwhite	<i>Vixen</i>
James M. Halsey	Wilmington N.C.
Edward Fitzgerald	Gunboats Lake Ontario
Alexr P. Darragh	<i>Oneida</i>
Edwin W. Turner	<i>Enterprise</i>
Robert Ormsby	<i>Argus</i>
Ludlow Dashwood	Portland, Maine

## E

The number of Commission Captains in the Navy is	17
of this number there are	
at Navy Yards	4
at St Mary's Georgia	1
at Charleston S.C.	1
at Sackett's harbor N.Y.	1
at New Orleans	1
Suspended by Court Martial	1

Leaving for Service on shipboard	8
The number required for service on shipboard is pr paper A	9
Deficient	1

Decr 24. 1812

The number of Commission Masters Commandant in the Navy is	9
of this number there are	
at Baltimore	1
Late Commander of the <i>Wasp</i>	1
at New York Yard	1
On Lake Ontario	1
At Newport R.I.	1
	5

Leaving for Service on Shipboard	4
The Number required for Service on shipboard is pr paper A	9
Deficient	5

This deficiency is at present supplied by Lieutenants commanding

## F

If the Bill authorizing the building of Four ships of the Line & Six frigates, should be passed into a Law, the following additional Officers will be necessary

	Captains	
For the 4 Ships of the Line & frigates	10	
deficient pr paper A	1	
So that the present number of Captains must be encreased		11

This would raise all the Masters Commandant & two of the Lieutenants to Captains.

Masters Commandant		
Required for the vessels in Commission		
pr paper A	9	
for shore stations		
pr paper E	4	
whole number required		13
Lieutenants		
The number deficient pr paper E	25	
By promotions to Captains & masters commandant this number will be encreased	15	
The 4 Ships of the Line will require	24	
The 6 frigates will require	30	
Whole number of additional Lieutenants that it will be necessary to nominate	}	94
of this number there is now before the Senate		7
Leaving to be nominated hereafter		87
Pursers		
Number of Ships & Stations		
pr paper D	33	
The 4 Ships of the Line & 6 frigates will require	10	
whole number required		43
of this number there are now in Commission & confirmed in the Senate	27	
appointed during the late Recess and now nominated	7	
Gentlemen not heretofore appointed but now nominated	}	2
		36

So that when the nine now nominated  
are nominated there will still be a  
deficit of 7 pursers

Copy, DNA, RG45, Secretary of the Navy Letters to Congress, Vol. 1, pp. 127-31.

Tightening the Blockade

*Despite Admiral Warren's requests from Halifax, reinforcements for the Royal Navy on the North American station were slow in arriving. At the same time the Admiralty had in mind a more rigorous blockade, particularly of the southern ports of the United States. Strengthening the blockade meant pulling ships from fleets in the English Channel, in the Mediterranean, and on blockade duty in the Bay of Biscay. The following document shows that British orders for blockade emanated from the highest level of government. Orders of this type brought the shock of war to Chesapeake Bay during 1813 and 1814 with a severity that surprised Washington, Alexandria, Baltimore and the surrounding area.*

LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF THE ADMIRALTY TO  
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

Secret  
Whereas the Earl Bathurst one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State,<sup>1</sup> hath by his Letter of the 25th instant, signified to us, the Pleasure of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent that immediate Orders be given for establishing the most complete and vigorous Blockade, of the Ports and Harbours of the Bay of the Chesapeake and of the River Delaware; We do in addition to our Order to you of the 27th of last Month herewith send you a copy of Earl Bathurst's abovementioned Letter & do hereby require and direct You to establish the most complete and vigorous Blockade of the Ports and Harbours of the Bay of the Chesapeake and of the River Delaware, and to maintain and en-



force the same according to the usages of War under the Regulations pointed out in his Lordships said Letter.

Given under our Hands 26th Decr 1812

Melville  
W. Domett  
Geo. J. Hope<sup>2</sup>

To  
The Right Honble  
Sir John Borlase Warren Bt & K.B.  
Admiral of the Blue &c &c  
Bermuda

Copy, UklPR, Adm. 2/1375 (Secret Orders and Letters), pp. 337-38.

1. Henry Bathurst, 3rd Earl Bathurst (1762-1834), secretary for war and the colonies in the cabinet of Lord Liverpool.

2. Robert Saunders Dundas, 2nd Viscount Melville (1771-1857), first lord of the admiralty, 1812-1827; Vice Admiral Sir William Domett (1754-1828), commissioner, 1808-1813; Rear Admiral Sir George Johnstone Hope, K.C.B. (1767-1818), commissioner, 1812-1818.

## William Jones, Future Secretary of the Navy

*The singular success of U.S. Navy frigates in ship-to-ship combat was a tonic to the nation at a time of military defeats on the Canadian frontier, but all was not well within the Navy Department. Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton had performed as a satisfactory administrator during peacetime, but under the pressure of war, he was unable to keep pace with the work and had developed an addiction to alcohol.<sup>1</sup> While this was widely known at that time, it had been difficult for Hamilton's opponents to effect his removal because of the pending reelection of President Madison. Once Madison's reelection was certain, his party exerted pressure to remove both Secretary of War Eustis and Secretary of the Navy Hamilton. A prime candidate for the navy post was William Jones of Philadelphia, but it was not known whether he would accept the post. Congressman Jonathan*

*Roberts of Pennsylvania wrote a persuasive letter on 28 December to convince Jones to accept the post if it were offered.*

1. See Irving Brant, James Madison, Commander in Chief, 1812-1836 (New York, 1961), pp. 125-26.

CONGRESSMAN JONATHAN ROBERTS TO  
WILLIAM JONES

Washington  
Dec 28th 1812

My Dear Sir

I wishd to have seen you as I came onto this place but the evening I spent in your City was unpropitious to that wish. It was that on which Mr Connelly was buried as well as that of your electoral election. I have forborne to intrude a letter on you hitherto as from the commencement of this session ours has been a state of suspense of oscillation between light hopes & strong apprehensions. It early suggested itself that under the strongest convictions of the public mind of the incompetency of the heads of the War & Navy Offices that it would be right to wait the issue of the election which was at least doubtful before plain dealing with the president should be commenced on those subjects. The fourth Wednesday in december came round & secured to us a Prest. in whose virtue we have unlimited confidence & whose feelings as a gentlemen appear to be the only blemish in his character. With one accord our friends in both houses resolved in our places & out of our places to press the appointing powers to an exercise of its functions. This disposition had its foundation in the purest wishes for the public good no local or personal feeling had the slightest operation in it. Dr [William] Eustis gave ground at once & however he might have faild to fill his office with success he quit it with a mgnanimity that has enabled him to [carry] away a very general respect. It is now impossible Mr Hamilton [can] remain no point was ever more clearly ascertaind than that he ought not to remain in office. I have more than once intimated [to our] revered friends Fox & Connelly that it was I believed the universal wish that in case the office became vacant you should take it. The reply I got from our friends to this part of my letters was not [plain?] as to the probability of your willingness to lend your aid to your country's councils. When I learnd from Mr [Nathaniel] Macon

yesterday that you had directly declined to be considered as eligible to appointment I felt a disposition to despair for the fate of the ark of our public safety more than ever. On a little reflection a hope revived that as your objections tho' weighty being all of a private character might be removed when a public call should [be] made upon you under a state of public suffering to be relieved only by your saving hand. We would in that case have decreed that your private affairs should be conducted at the public expence as was greatly done by the ancient Romans when they called a citizen from his field to be their Dictator. Be assured sir the vacancy about to occur has not been effected thro' a hope of getting your services but from the impossibility of proceeding with Mr Hamilton. Get who we may we cannot get a man so little fit for his duty. To induce you to enter the public service I am sure it is not necessary to tell you that the office which it is wished you should fill is popular & that it would be impossible but it must become more so the moment you enter it. The temper of your mind is of another character it would be stimulated by obstacles. Here there can be no hazard of success while there is enough to employ all your faculties. Our country to use our friend Fox's words "have indeed a treasure in Mr Gallatin" he wants support.

Great as he is yet one opposed to all  
oppressed by multitudes the best may fall

he must quit the field of the revenue unless the expenditure is brought within more reasonable bounds. I know not what to say to overcome your repugnance to enter the councils a great & intrepid mind must see these are no ordinary inducements a virtuous one can hardly fail to yield to the pressing instance of the times. I know it can be no reason for you to accept the office we wish to tell you we mean to place it on a footing as to salary with the offices of State & the Treas. I only mention it incidentally.

Let me obtest you my dear Sir to let no private considerations allow you to decline the public service if you are called upon & I have no doubt but you will be called upon. The Nation & the Navy point to you as the fittest man we have & what is to become of us if the fittest man will not come forward in a moment of public danger. I beg you to forgive my importunity my apology for it is that I am urged to use it from such considerations only as would govern your conduct were

you to enter the cabinet—a regard for the public good. With sincerest respect & friendship I am &c.

Jonathan Roberts<sup>1</sup>

Capt W. Jones

ALS, PHI, U. C. Smith Collection, Papers of William Jones, folder Oct.-Dec. 1812.

1. Jonathan Roberts, a Republican from Pennsylvania, served as a member of the House of Representatives from Mar. 1811 to Feb. 1814, when he was elected to the United States Senate to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of Michael Leib. Roberts was reelected as a senator in 1815 and served in that capacity until 1821. For the political context in Pennsylvania, and Roberts's and local Republicans John Connelly and Edward Fox's support for the war, see Victor A. Sapiro, *Pennsylvania & the War of 1812* (Lexington, Ky., 1970), esp. pp. 132-45.

## Licenses and Rewards

*Not long after his celebrated return in United States with the prize frigate Macedonian, Commodore Decatur wrote the secretary of the navy on a matter of previous concern (see pp. 526-27), but which was still unresolved. This was the question of the licensed trade, so annoying to navy commanders, who thought Congress should prohibit such practices. Decatur's seizure of several licenses found on board Mandarin had become an embarrassment, with the owners importuning him for their licenses.*

*At the time, however, the secretary of the navy was more concerned with how to compensate Decatur and his crew for their capture of Macedonian. It was of critical importance to determine whether Macedonian was of equal or inferior force compared to United States. If Macedonian had been of equal or greater force, Congress would have voted the whole of her value as prize money to the crew of United States. This, however, was not the case. Decatur's ship was larger, heavier, carried more guns, and had a larger complement.<sup>1</sup> The second document contains Secretary Hamilton's thoughts on Macedonian's evaluation, prior to the event.*

1. See Roosevelt, *Naval War of 1812*, pp. 70, 112.

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New York December 28 1812

Sir,

On the 12th of october last, I had the honour to forward for your disposal a number of British licences addressed to Citizens of the United States which I found on board the Ship *Mandarin Baker* Master-from London bound to Philadelphia. These licences were thus diverted from the course of their original destination, under a belief I then had, that the Government of the United States would interdict the use of such protections to their citizens, by the time of the *Mandarins* arrival at Norfolk, where I intended to send her. I thought too, it might be of some service to have the Government apprised of the extent to which this trade seemed enlarging itself under the protection of the Enemy, and of the individuals concerned in it; especially as it could be done with so little inconvenience to the owners of the licences. These purchases having been answered & the trade not having been made illegal it is my wish that the licenses should be transmitted to their respective owners unless the Government think proper to dispose of them otherwise-in which case, I beg to be advised of it, that I may satisfy owners who are becoming importunate in their applications to me for them. With the highest respect [&c.]

Stephen Decatur

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 224.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO  
COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR

Comr Decatur  
N York

Nav: Depm't  
29 Decem 1812

The President of the U.S. desires me to express to You & to Lt. [William H.] Allen through You, to the officers & crew, of the frigate U.S. his warmest thanks & highest approbation of Your & their conduct on the defeat & capture of his Britanic Majesty's frigate the

*Macedonian*. I assure You, sir, that it affords me real happiness to be the Medium of Conveying to You the expression of his feelings & sentiments upon this subject. Permit me also to congratulate You upon this brilliant achievement which adds another laurel to those already justly earned by You.

With respect to the prize, two points namely, her relative force & her value must be immediately ascertained. This can best be done by the appointment of referees on the part of the Department. I nominate Jacob Lewis Esqr now at New York as one of the referees. You will be pleased to appoint another & should the two so appointed disagree, they will choose a third whose decision shall be conclusive.

The objects to be particularly attended to by the referees, are 1. the relative force of the two frigates, the *United States* & the *Macedonian* including her rigging, apparel, armaments, & everything belonging to her-at such valuation the Navy Depmt will purchase her & put her in commission. Should She be considered equal in force to the *United States*, the Department will pay to the Captors the whole amount of her valuation-if of inferior force, one moiety only unless Congress should vote the whole to the captors.

Be pleased to apprise Capt Lewis of his appointment as a referee, & give to the referees a Copy of such parts of this letter as belongs to the Subject.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 220-21.

### *Constitution vs. Java*

*Commodore William Bainbridge sailed from Boston in company with U.S. sloop of war Hornet, commanded by Master Commandant James Lawrence. In accordance with Secretary Hamilton's cruising orders of 9 September, Bainbridge selected his own hunting grounds, sailing toward the Cape Verde Islands and then southwest to Brazil. On 13 December, Constitution and Hornet arrived off São Salvador (Bahia), Brazil, where they found the British sloop of war Bonne*



*Citoyenne in port. While Hornet remained to blockade São Salvador, Constitution cruised southward along the coast. She was about thirty miles offshore on 29 December when H.M. frigate Java, 38-guns, hove in sight with a prize in company. In the following pages Commodore Bainbridge and Lieutenant Henry Chads describe the ensuing action as experienced from the decks of their respective vessels.*

JOURNAL OF COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE

Extract from Commodore  
Bainbridge's Journal Kept  
on board the U.S. Frigate  
*Constitution*

Tuesday 29th December 1812

At 9 AM, discovered two Strange Sails on the weather bow, at 10. AM. discovered the strange sails to be Ships, one of them stood in for the land, and the other steered off shore in a direction towards us. At 10.45. We tacked ship to the Nd & Wd and stood for the sail standing towards us, -At 11 tacked to the Sd & Ed haul'd up the mainsail and took in the Royals. At 11.30 AM made the private signal for the day, which was not answered, & then set the mainsail and royals to draw the strange sail off from the neutral Coast.<sup>1</sup>

Wednesday 30th December 1812, (Nautical Time) Commences with Clear weather and moderate breezes from E.N.E. Hoisted our Ensign and Pendant. At 15 minutes past meridian, The ship hoisted her colours, an English Ensign, -having a signal flying at her Main Red-Yellow-Red At 1.26 being sufficiently from the land, and finding the ship to be an English Frigate, took in the Main Sail and Royals, tacked Ship and stood for the enemy

At 1.50. P.M, The Enemy bore down with an intention of rakeing us, which we avoided by wearing. At 2, P.M, the enemy being within half a mile, of us, and to wind ward, & having hawled down his colours to dip his Gaff, and not hoisting them again except an Union Jack at the Mizzen Mast head, (we having hoisted on board the *Constitution* an American Jack forward Broad Pendant at Main, American Ensign at Mizzen Top Gallant Mast head and at the end of The Gaff) induced me to give orders to the officer of the 3rd Division to fire one Gun ahead of the enemy to make him show his Colours, which being done

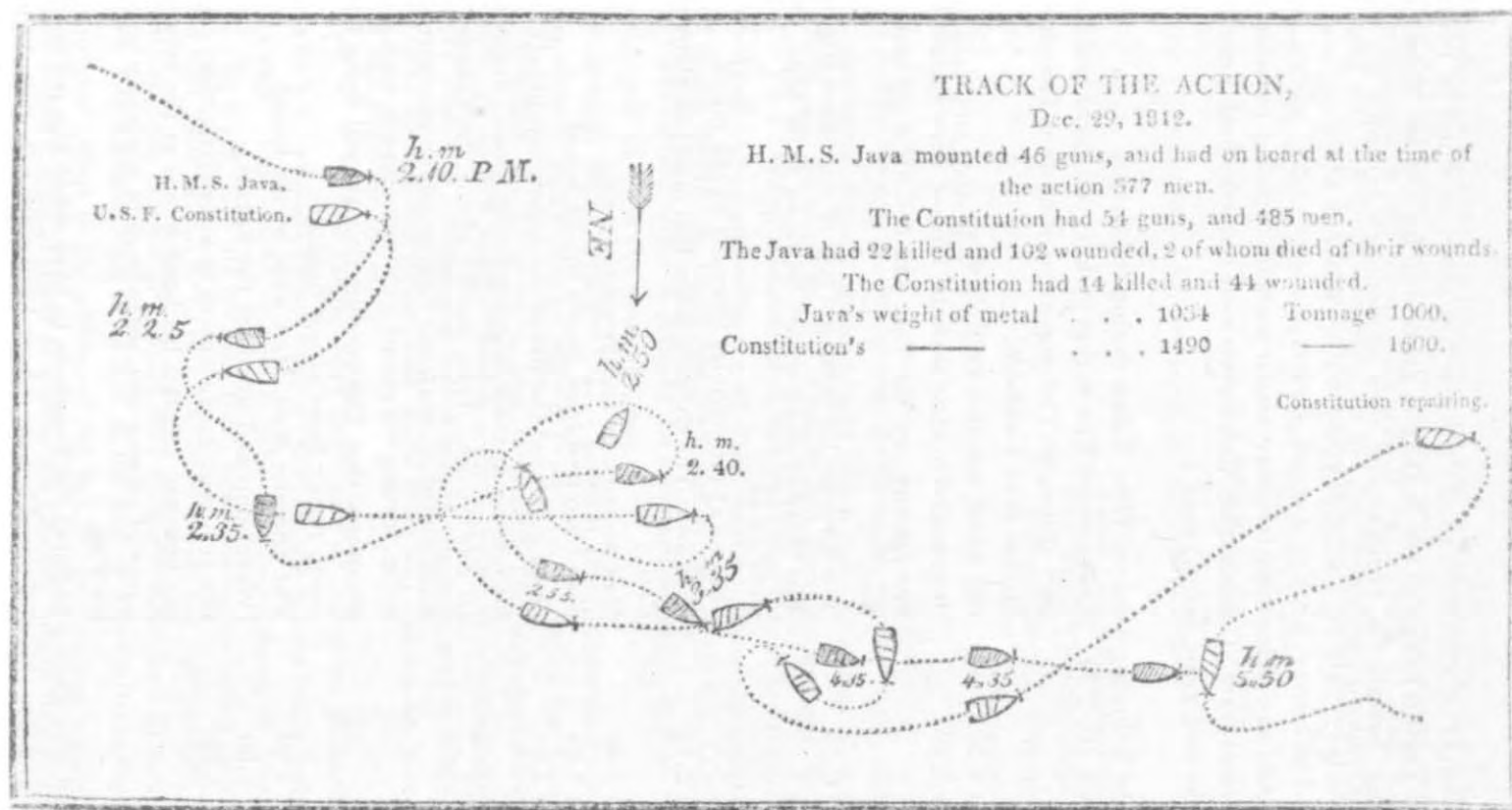
brought on afire from us of the whole broadside, on which he hoisted an English Ensign at the Peak, and another in his weather Main Rigging, besides his Pendant and then immediately returned our fire, which brought on a general action with round and grape.

The enemy Kept at a much greater distance than I wished, but Could not bring him to closer action without exposing ourselves to several rakes. -Considerable Manoeuvres were made by both Vessels to rake and avoid being raked.

The following Minutes Were Taken during the Action.

At 2.10. P.M,	Commenced The Action within good grape and Canister distance. The enemy to windward (but much farther than I wished).
At 2.30. P.M,	our wheel was shot entirely away
At 2.40.	determined to close with the Enemy, notwithstanding her rakeing, set the Fore sail & Luff'd up close to him.
At 2.50,	The Enemies Jib boom got foul of our Mizzen Rigging
At 3	The Head of the enemies Bowsprit & Jib boom shot away by us
At 3.5	Shot away the enemies foremast by the board
At 3.15	Shot away The enemies Main Top mast just above the Cap
At 3.40	Shot away Gaff and Spunker boom
At 3.55	Shot his mizen mast nearly by the board
At 4.5	Having silenced the fire of the enemy completely and his colours in main Rigging being [down] Supposed he had Struck, Then hawl'd about the Courses to shoot ahead to repair our rigging, which was extremely cut, leaving the enemy a complete wreck, soon after discovered that The enemies flag was still flying hove too to repair Some of our damages.
At 4.20.	The Enemies Main Mast went by the board.
At 4.50	[Wore] ship and stood for the Enemy
At 5.25	Got very close to the enemy in a very [effective] rake-ing position, athwart his bows & was at the very instance of rakeing him, when he most prudently Struck his Flag.

Had The Enemy Suffered the broadside to have raked him previously to strikeing, his additional loss must have been extremely great laying



*H.M.S. Java Engaged by U.S.S. Constitution off the Coast of Brazil,  
29 December 1812*

like a log upon the water, perfectly unmanageable, I could have continued rakeing him without being exposed to more than two of his Guns, (if even Them)

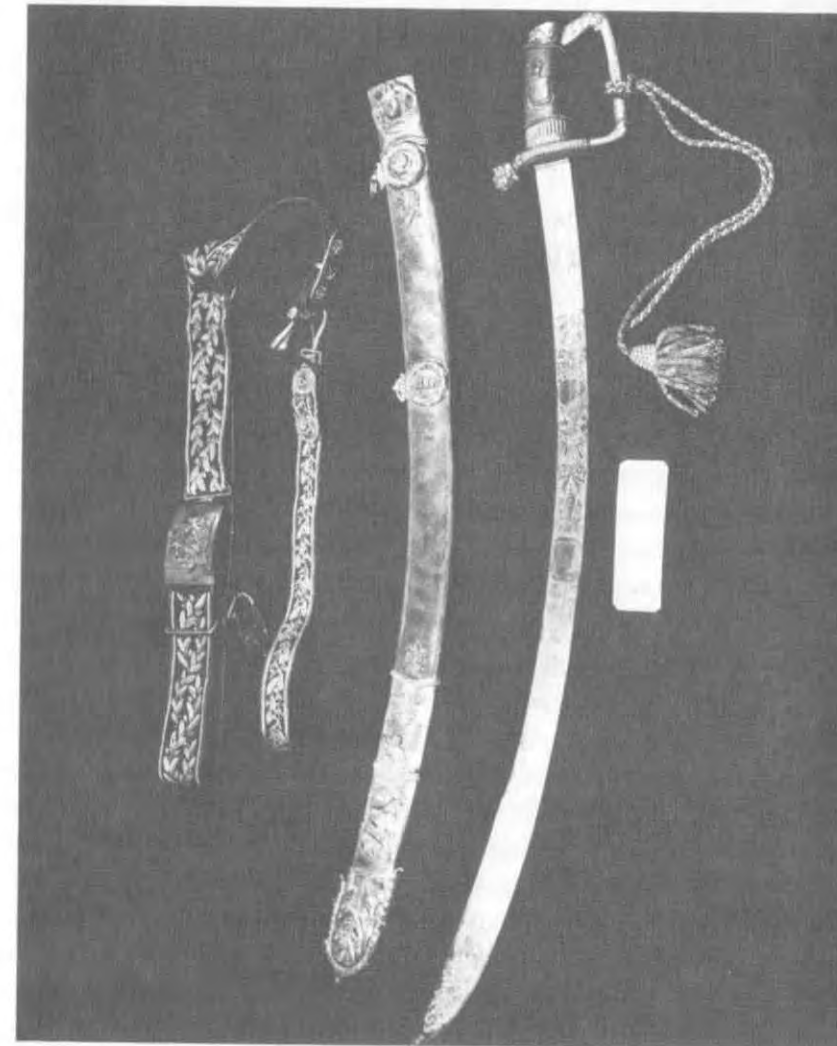
After The Enemy had struck, wore Ship and reefed the Top Sails, hoisted out one of the only two remaining boats we had left out of 8 & sent Lieut [George] Parker 1st of the *Constitution* on board to take possession of her, which was done about 6. P.M, The Action continued from the commencement to the end of the Fire, 1 H 55 m our sails and Rigging were shot very much, and some of our spars injured—had 9 men Killed and 26 wounded. At 7 PM. The boat returned from the Prize with Lieut. [Henry D.] Chads the 1st of the enemies Frigate (which I then learnt was the *Java* rated 38 – had 49 Guns mounted—)–and Lieut Genl [Thomas] Hislop—appointed to Command in the East Indies,–Major Walker and Capt Wood, belonging to his Staff.–Capt [Henry] Lambert of the *Java* was too dangerously wounded to be removed immediately.

The Cutter returned on board the Prize for Prisoners, and brought Capt [John] Marshall, Master & Commander of The British Navy, who was passenger on board, as also Several other Naval officers destined for ships in the East Indies. The *Java* had her whole number complete and nearly an hundred supernumeraries. The number she had on board at the commencement of the Action, The officers have not candour to say; from the different papers we collected, such as a muster book, Watch List and Quarter Bills, she must have had upwards of 400 souls, she had one more man stationed at each of her Guns on both Decks than what we had The Enemy had 83 wounded & 57 Kill'd.

The *Java* was an important ship fitted out in the compleatest manner to [carry out] the Lieut. Genl & dispatches. She had Copper &c. on board for a 74 building at Bombay, and, I suspect a great many other valuables, but every thing was blown up, except the officers baggage when we set her on fire on the 1st of January 1813 at 3 P.M. Nautical Time.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 8 1/2. Two amended versions of Bainbridge's account of *Java*'s capture are in AF 4.

1. The second vessel was American merchant ship *William*, prize to *Java*, which ran in for the safety of neutral São Salvador only to fall prey to *Hornet*.



Sword of Captain Henry Lambert, H.M.S. Java



LIEUTENANT HENRY D. CHADS TO  
 SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

Triplicate

United States Frigate *Constitution*  
 off St Salvador Decr 31st 1812

Sir

It is with deep regret that I write you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that His Majesty's Ship *Java* is no more, after sustaining an action on the 29th Inst for several hours with the American Frigate *Constitution* which resulted in the Capture and ultimate destruction of His Majestys Ship. Captain Lambert being dangerously wounded in the height of the Action, the melancholy task of writing the detail devolves on me.

On the morning of the 29th inst at 8 AM off St Salvador (Coast of Brazil) the wind at NE. we perceived a strange sail, made all sail in chace and soon made her out to be a large Frigate; at noon prepared for action the chace not answering our private Signals and backing towards us under easy sail; when about four miles distant she made a signal and immediately tacked and made all sail away upon the wind, we soon found we had the advantage of her in sailing and came up with her fast when she hoisted American Colours. she then bore about three Points on our lee bow at 1:50 PM the Enemy shortened Sail upon which we bore down upon her, at 2:10 when about half a mile distant she opened her fire giving us her larboard broad-side which was not returned till we were close on her weather bow; both Ships now manœuvered to obtain advantageous positions; our opponent evidently avoiding close action and firing high to disable our masts in which he succeeded too well having shot away the head of our bowsprit with the Jibboom and our running rigging so much cut as to prevent our preserving the weather gage At 3:5 finding the Enemys raking fire extremely heavy Captain Lambert ordered the Ship to be laid on board, in which we should have succeeded had not our foremast been shot away at this moment, the remains of our bowsprit passing over his taffrail, shortly after this the main topmast went leaving the Ship totally unmanageable with most of our Starboard Guns rendered useless from the wreck laying over them At 3:30 our Gallant Captain received a dangerous wound in the breast and was carried below, from this time we could not fire more than two or three guns until 4:15 when our Mizzen mast was shot away the Ship then fell off a little and brought many of our Starboard Guns to bear, the Enemy's rigging was so much

cut that he could not now avoid shooting ahead which brought us fairly Broadside and Broadside. Our Main yard now went in the slings both ships continued engaged in this manner till 4:35 we frequently on fire in consequence of the wreck laying on the side engaged. Our opponent now made sail ahead out of Gun shot where he remained an hour repairing his damages leaving us an unmanageable wreck with only the mainmast left, and that tottering; Every exertion was made by us during his interval to place this Ship in a state to renew the action. We succeeded in clearing the wreck of our Masts from our Guns. a Sail was set on the stumps of the Foremast & Bowsprit the weather half of the Main Yard remaining aloft, the main tack was got forward in the hope of getting the Ship before the Wind, our helm being still perfect. the effort unfortunately proved ineffectual from the Main mast falling over the side from the heavy rolling of the Ship, which nearly covered the whole of our Starboard Guns. We still waited the attack of the Enemy, he now standing toward us for that purpose. on his coming nearly within hail of us & from his manouvre perceiving he intended a position a head where he could rake us without a possibility of our returning a shot. I then consulted the Officers who agreed with myself that on having a great part of our Crew killed & wounded our Bowsprit and three masts gone, several guns useless, we should not be justified in waisting the lives of more of those remaining whom I hope their Lordships & Country will think have bravely defended His Majestys Ship. Under these circumstances, however reluctantly at 5:50 our Colours were lowered from the Stump of the Mizzen Mast and we were taken possession a little after 6. by the American Frigate *Constitution* commanded by Commodore Bainbridge who immediately after ascertaining the state of the Ship resolved on burning her which we had the satisfaction of seeing done as soon as the Wounded were removed. Annexed I send you a return of a killed and wounded and it is with pain I perceive it so numerous also a statement of the comparative force of the two Ships when I hope their Lordships will not think the British Flag tarnished although success has not attended us. It would be presumptive in me to speak of Captain Lamberts merit, who, though still in danger from his wound we still entertain the greatest hopes of his being restored to the service & his Country. It is most gratifying to my feelings to notice the general gallantry of every Officer, Seaman & Marine on board. in justice to the Officers I beg leave to mention them individually. I can never speak too highly of the able exertions of Lieuts. [William A.] Herringham & Buchanan and also Mr. [Batty]

Robinson Master who was severely wounded and Lieuts Mercer and Davis [David *Davies*] of the Royal Marines the latter of whom was also severely wounded. To Capt Jno Marshall RN who was a passenger I am particularly obliged to for his exertions and advice throughout the action. To Lieutt Aplin who was on the Main Deck and Lieutt Sanders who commanded on the Forecastle, I also return my thanks. I cannot but notice the good conduct of the Mates, & Midshipmen. many of whom are killed & the greater part wounded. To Mr T. C. [Thomas Cooke] Jones Surgeon and his Assistants every praise is due for their unwearied assiduity in the care of the wounded. Lieutt General [Thomas] Hislop, Major Walker and Captain [J. T.] Wood of his Staff the latter of whom was severely wounded were solicitous to assist & remain on the Quarter Deck I cannot conclude this letter without expressing my grateful acknowledgement thus publicly for the generous treatment Captain Lambert and his Officers have experienced from our Gallant Enemy Commodore Bainbridge and his Officers. I have the honor to be [&c.]

W [H] D Chads, 1st Lieut  
of His Majestys late Ship *Java*

To John Wilson Croker Esquire  
Secretary  
Admiralty.

PS. The *Constitution* has also suffered severely, both in her rigging and men having her Fore and Mizen masts, main topmast, both main top-sailyards, Spanker boom, Gaff & trysail mast badly shot, and the greatest part of the standing rigging very much damaged with ten men killed. The Commodore, 5 Lieuts and 46 men wounded four of whom are since dead.

Force of the two Ships

<i>Java.</i>				<i>Constitution</i>			
Guns		Crew		Guns		Crew	
28 long	18 pors	Ships Compy	277	32 long	24 prs		
16 Caros	32 "	Boys	32	22 Caros	32 "		

2 long 9 "	Supernumery	1 Car 18 "	485
46 weight of metal	description	68 55 weight of metal	
1034	377	1490	
Tonnage 1000		Tonnage 1450	

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/5435. List of killed and wounded can be found in *The Naval Chronicle* 29: 348-49.

Admiral Warren Requests Reinforcements

*On the same day that Constitution defeated Java off the Brazilian coast, Admiral Sir John B. Warren wrote from Bermuda to the Admiralty requesting additional ships and men. His principal complaints concerned the advantage which the large American frigates enjoyed over their British counterparts, the propensity of British seamen to join the American navy after being captured, and the damaging effects of American privateering in the Caribbean and northern waters.*

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N., TO  
SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

Bermuda 29th Decr 1812

Sir,  
In former letters I have already stated the diminution this squadron had undergone, prior to my arrival here, and the inadequacy of the Forces in the present state of the War, to counteract the Enterprizes of the Enemy on the American Coast, and in the West Indies.  
I consider it my duty to acquaint their Lordships, that the Ships of War belonging to the American Government, are of very large Class, and altho' denominated Frigates, are constructed to carry 24 Pounders on their Main Deck, with another complete Tier of Guns along the Quarter Deck, Gangway and Forecastle, and manned with from Four hundred and twenty, to upwards of Five hundred prime Seamen and Gunners, which from their superiority in sailing and the number of

Riflemen and Musquetry, give them a manifest advantage over any of our single Frigates, and as the American Cabinet from the recent captures, of the *Guerriere*, *Macedonian*, and Sloops of War have obtained a confidence, and are actively employed encreasing their Marine, and seducing our Seamen into their Service and converting them into American citizens by every art and means in their power, and as many possibly receive aid from some of the detached Squadrons escaping from France. I trust their Lordships will permit [me] to suggest, that the Squadron here would be much benefited by Six or Seven good Sailing, old Ships of the Line, such as the *Canada*, *Captain*, *Bellona*, *Monarch* cut down and reduced as Razies to carry their Lower Deck Guns and heavy carronades on their Quarter Deck, Gangways and Forecastle, manned with three hundred Seamen and Sixty [Marines] likewise, for the reasons I have given that twenty five or thirty Marines and some Seamen should be added to the complement of the Frigates on this Station.

I have endeavoured by keeping two Frigates and a Sloop of War together as divisions, to obviate as much as possible these difficulties, but the Force under my Orders is so extremely small, the extent of Coast very considerable, and with many Convoys to furnish, it is impracticable to cut off the Enemy's resources, or to repress the disorder and pillage which actually exists in a very alarming degree, and will continue, both on the Coast of British America, and in the West Indies, as will be seen by the Copies of Letters herewith enclosed from Sir George Beckwith and Governor Elliot upon that subject, as well as by the representations made to me by Rear Admiral Sir Francis Laforey Bart.<sup>1</sup>

I have ordered the *Junon*, (*Orpheus* as soon as she is refitted at Halifax) and the *Wanderer*, to join Sir Francis Laforey at Barbadoes.

The Swarms of Privateers and Letters of Marque, their numbers now amounting to 600, and the Crews of several having landed at points of the Coast of Nova Scotia and in the Leeward Islands, and cut out of the Harbours some Vessels, render it too necessary immediately to send out a strong addition of Ships, as well as light Gun Brigs for the Nova Scotia District and Bay of Fundy and Gulf of St Lawrence, or the Trade must inevitably suffer, if not be, utterly ruined and destroyed—I have the honor [&c.]

John Borlase Warren

PS

I request you will inform their Lordships that I have not received any communication from Jamaica since my arrival and consequently cannot make any return of events in that part of my Command—altho' I have written thither by two several conveyances.

Jn Warren

John Croker Esqr

ALS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, pp. 99–102.

1. The enclosure Beckwith to Warren, 22 Nov. 1812, is in UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, pp. 103–105. The enclosure from Hugh Elliott has not been found. Beckwith was governor of Barbados, and Elliott of the Leeward Islands.