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ENNIAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
YARD AT PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

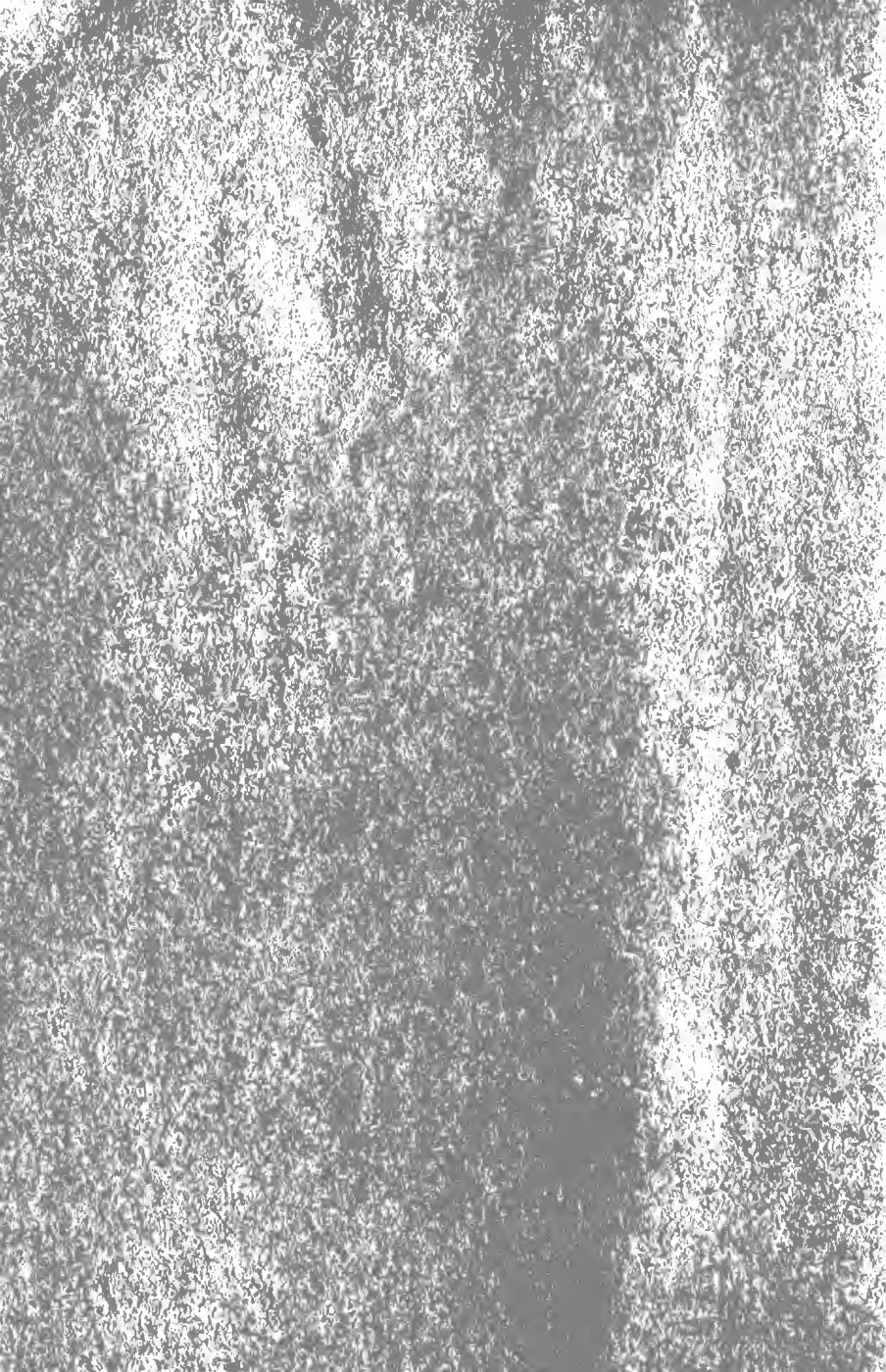


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1775.

Centennial History

OF THE

United States Navy Yard,

PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

1875.



1775.

1875.

Centennial History

OF THE

United States Navy Yard,

AT

PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

PUBLISHED BY PERMISSION OF THE BUREAU OF YARDS AND
DOCKS, NAVY DEPARTMENT.

BY

WALTER E. H. FENTRESS,

LATE AN OFFICER IN THE VOL. NAVY.

PORTSMOUTH:

O. M. KNIGHT, PUBLISHER.

1876.

.....

DEDICATED
TO
COMMODORE JOHN C. HOWELL, U. S. N.
CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF YARDS AND DOCKS,
Navy Department,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the office of the
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PREFACE.

MAY 6 '41

Having been engaged during the past year in collecting material preparatory to a history of the Navy Yard at Portsmouth, for the use of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, and having been successful beyond my most sanguine expectations in procuring much, which was thought buried beyond recovery, I asked and received permission to use the same matter, in publishing this little pamphlet for circulation in this vicinity.

I do not claim any originality in its compilation, for I have culled from every authentic source, particularly from the records of the Commandants Office, which date back seventy-five years; and from the State Papers of one hundred years ago. Among the authorities consulted, and quoted, are : Adams Annals, Champlain Papers, Records of York County, state documents of New Hampshire. James' History of the British Navy, Abbot's Maine, Life of Admiral Lord Exmouth. Royal Naval Chronicle 1794, Goldborough's Hist. of the Navy. Cooper's Naval History, Sherburne's life of Paul Jones, Emmon's Vessels of the Navy, etc., etc.

In thus collecting and arranging records, anecdotes, statistics, etc.. I have endeavored to bring up some old incidents which in these days of Centennial rejoicings may be received with pleasure.

The prominent part taken by this port, in the early Naval History of our country, adds much to the interest felt in the perusal of these pages.

I am deeply indebted to Mr. B. F. Chandler, Civil Eng. U. S. N., for many incidents connected with the Yards and Buildings, and also to the Hon. Mark Dennett of Kittery for much valuable information, which his long life of 92 years in this vicinity has rendered him pre-eminenty able to give.

To other gentlemen who have kindly afforded me assistance by allowing the perusal of old family papers. etc., I return sincere thanks.

W. E. H. FENTRESS.

W. E. H. Fentress

Commandants of the Yard.

Captain	ISAAC HULL.	-	-	-	1812.
“	THOMAS MACDONOUGH.	-	-	-	1815.
“	CHARLES MORRIS.	-	-	-	1818.
“	W. M. CRANE.	-	-	-	1823.
“	C. G. RIDGELEY.	-	-	-	1825.
“	J. O. CREIGHTON.	-	-	-	1826.
“	J. D. HENLEY.	-	-	-	1828.
“	W. M. CRANE.	-	-	-	1832.
“	JNO. D. SLOAT.	-	-	-	1840.
“	GEO. W. STORER.	-	-	-	1843.
“	DAN'L TURNER.	-	-	-	1846.
“	THOS. W. WYMAN.	-	-	-	1849.
“	JOS. SMOOT.	-	-	-	1852.
“	JOHN T NEWTON.	-	-	-	1855.
“	JOHN POPE.	-	-	-	1857.
Commo.	G. F. PEARSON.	-	-	-	1860.
“	T. BAILEY.	-	-	-	1864.
“	JOS. LANMAN.	-	-	-	1867.
“	JNO. A. WINSLOW.	-	-	-	1869.
“	A. M. PENNOCK.	-	-	-	1870.
“	J. C. HOWELL.	-	-	-	1872.
“	A. BRYSON.	-	-	-	1874.

CENTENNIAL HISTORY.



A Hundred years had passed since the discovery of America, and yet the noble river Piscataqua was undiscovered by the white man, and bore upon its waters only the rude craft of the savage tribes whose homes were upon its banks.

Passing by the Mythical history of the discoveries made by the Northmen, of which we know nothing, we find the first visitor to this river in the person of Martin Pring, who in the spring of the year 1603 entered its waters with two vessels of small size, the "Speedwell" a ship of one hundred tons and thirty men, and the bark "Discoverer" of fifty tons and twenty men.

This small fleet was fitted out by the Mayor, Aldermen and Merchants of the opulent city of Bristol in England, for the purpose of "extending the discovery of the northern portions of Virginia, in the contrie of America". After discovering Penobscot Bay and River, and York River, he continued his voyage along the coast westward until he arrived at the Piscataqua River, which he calls the "Westernmost river," and after anchoring the "Speedwell" in the lower harbor, he made an excursion with the "Discoverer" some twelve or fourteen miles inland, and as the time of year, (it being June,) was well calculated to impress the voyagers with an exalted idea of the country, we are not surprised when we read in his report of this trip, the following: "The river Pishcataqua, which is the westernmost river, and the one which pierceth farthest inland; it is a noble sheet of water, and

of great depth, with beautiful islands and heavy forests along its banks.”

There is no doubt that the description of this expedition, upon its return to England, had its weight in inducing the emigration which followed, some years later.

In 1605 Sam'l DeChamplain sailed from Havre de Grasse in France, on a voyage of discovery to New England, or as it was then called Northern Virginia. On the 15th of July 1605, he discovered the “Isle of Shoals,” and “Cape of the Isles” as he named the point of land now known as Odiorne's Point, and where soon afterwards, a settlement was to be made by the English Company. After sailing up the river several miles, and finding no natives, he altered his course to the southward, and on the 17th inst. discovered “a grate and wide river” which he named the “Riviere du Gas,” probably the Merimack.

There does not appear to have been any other visit made to the Piscataqua until 1614 when Captain John Smith, who was engaged with a small fleet at Manhagan in fishing, taking a party in his boats, explored the coast from Penobscot to Cape Cod; entering the various bays and rivers, and making surveys of the harbors. The Isles of Shoals he discovered, and called Smith's Islands, and sailed up the Piscataqua River some twenty miles from its mouth. His report shows that he was very favorably impressed with what he saw of the river and its surroundings.

Upon his return to England he presented a chart of the coast to Prince Charles and requested that the country should be called New England. This chart of the coast of New England was the first made and is said to be very correct.

In 1621 Captain John Mason was among the first who entered zealously into the scheme of making a fortune by

means of trading with New England and forming a permanent settlement there. He was a merchant of London and afterwards engaged in the fisheries at Newfoundland, of which place he was Governor.

On his return to England he was appointed Governor of Portsmouth in Hampshire; he was also elected a member of the council established at Plymouth in the county of Devon by a royal charter "for the planting, ruling, ordering and governing of New England in America," and not long after was chosen their Secretary.

On the 10th day of August 1622, the council granted to Mason and Sir Ferdinando Gorges jointly, "All the land situated between the rivers Merrimaek and Sagadehock, extending back to the great lakes and the river of Canada," by the name of Laconia. Several merchants of London were admitted as associates with them. They styled themselves "The Company of Laconia."

Arriving at the Piscataqua, they erected upon the peninsula now known as Odiorne's Point, the first house built in New Hampshire, which they named Mason Hall.

This house was built under the direction of David Thompson, was no doubt a garrison house or strongly fortified post of the company. The month in which they arrived is supposed to have been May.

A few rods southwest of the fort at Odiorne's Point they erected their fishflakes, which gave the name of Flake Hill to the knoll, which is still retained.

During the first few years of the existence of the colony, the people suffered every hardship; and not being acclimated, many of them were carried off by disease. A number of graves are still to be seen a few rods north of the site of the fort, and it is worthy of remark that the moss-covered cobble stones at the head and foot of the graves still remain as placed by mourners two hundred and fifty-two years ago; while a walnut and a pear tree,

(each of immense size, and probably of equal age with the State,) stand like sturdy sentinels extending their ancient arms over the sleepers below.

In the year 1631, Humphrey Chadborn built a house near the bank of the river, and about three miles from its mouth. The site of this house is what is now known as the southeast corner of Court and Water streets. This house was also a part of Mason's property, and was the second house built in New Hampshire. It may also be called the commencement of Portsmouth.

The two islands which are to claim our particular attention in this history, were at this time occupied by John Puddington as a place for drying fish, and were known as Puddington's Islands. We find in the Records of York County, a copy of the Grant upon which Sir Ferdinando Gorges held these islands, an extract of which is given, to wit :

Charles, King of England &c., &c., to Sir Ferdinando Gorges of "a parte and portion of ye countrie of America nowe commonly called or known by ye name of New England. Ye portion of ye maine land and premises aforesayd shall forever hereafter bee called and named ye province or countrie of Maine. Also, all woods, trees, lakes and rivers and islands within the said province of Maine".

Dated April third in the fifteenth year of our reign, 1639 A. D.

In the same book we find a commission from Sir Ferdinando Gorges appointing Thomas Jocelyn, Richard Vines, Francis Champernon, and others as Councillors of the Province, naming Richard Vines as his Steward General, Dated September 2d, 1639.

In the records of Deeds, Book 1, page 16, is recorded the following grant:

"Richard Vines, Steward General of the Province of

Maine, in behalf of Sir Ferdinando Gorges to Thomas Fernald of Kittery, of two islands lying and being on the Northeast side of Pischataqua river, commonly called or known by the name of Puddington's Islands. The said Thomas Fernald of Kittery, to pay to the Lord proprietors of the land, the sum of Two shillings and sixpence yearly, if demanded."*

The British Government had caused surveys of the harbor to be made, and attracted by the fine timber lands in the immediate vicinity, selected this port for a place to build ships for the Royal Navy. As early as 1650 we find records of timber for masts being selected and marked with the King's "Broad Arrow," as the property of the Crown. The first ship that we have any authentic record of having been built here for the Royal Navy, is the Frigate Falkland of fifty-four guns, built in the year 1690, by Mr. John Taylor, and as no account could be found here of this ship beyond the bare mention of her name, and that, only in Adams' Annals of Portsmouth, I have undertaken to add to the interest of this book, by giving some description and history even of these ancient specimens of an early attempt at naval architecture on the Piscataqua. With this view I addressed a letter to B. F. Stevens, Esq., U. S. Despatch Agent at London, Eng., requesting him to employ some person in the record office of the Board of Admiralty, to furnish me with the necessary data of the vessels built in Portsmouth, N. H., and the following are copies of two letters from him on the subject:

"With regard to the ships that you requested me to hunt up, I have to say that the following description of these vessels is all that we have been able to find up to this time, but will continue the search as far as possible. I find in a MMS. volume, the following:

*Dated May 3d, 1645.

‘A list of ships, yachts and vessels of each Rate and Sort which have been added to the Royall Navy from the 5th November, 1688, with their Rates, Burthens, whether Built, Bought or taken as Prizes, Time of addition and Establishment of Mens & Guns.

Falkland, 4th Rate, built in New England by Mr. Taylor, added to the Navy 2d March, 1695. 637 tons. Establishment,—War, 226 men, 54 guns at home, 115 men abroad. Peace, 149 men, 42 guns at home.

Bedford, 5th Rate, built at New England by Mr. John Taylor, 372 tons, added to the Navy, 3d May, 1697. Establishment,—War, 135 men, 34 guns at home, 115 men abroad. Peace, 90 men, 28 guns. Bedford, 5th Rate, converted from this rate to ffireship by order of the Admiralty, 19 February, 1716.’ I hope shortly to be able to give some hours in searching other volumes of Records in the same office, and in the meantime shall be glad to learn from you what sum I am to expend in this matter, and what is the limit to which you will authorize me to go.”

I am Dear Sir, Yours faithfully,

B. F. STEVENS.

London, Eng., Nov. 14th, 1875.

“Sir:

I am glad to be able at last to furnish you with some additional information relating to the old ships built at your town for the Royal Navy. ‘The information altho’ meagre, will enable you to know something of their final disposition. In a MSS. volume I find under the following head, ‘Shippes, frigats, yachts, vessells of the Royall Navy, lost, captured, or put to other uses, or sold from 1696 to 1730:’—‘Falkland, 34 culverins, 10 sakers, lost on the coast of Ireland, May, 1699;’ and in another volume dated 1799, this entry: ‘America, 60, condemned, and made into

a masting hulk at Portsmouth Dock Yard, March, 1799.

Impetueux, 74, captured June 1794. In use as a store ship at Bahia, May, 1833. This last is from the Royal Navy Register of 1833."

(signed) CHARLES COTGRAVE.

Thus the two old ships, Falkland and Bedford, are traced, until we find them recorded as vessels of the Royal Navy. As it may be of interest to some, to know the fate of these early ships, I have inserted these letters from my London correspondents relative to them. In 1749, the Frigate America of 54 guns, was built here by order of the British Government, under the supervision of Col. Nathaniel Meserve. This ship is mentioned several times in the Naval History of Great Britain, but no mention is made of any celebrated action in which she took a part until 1796. We find her commanded by Captain John Blankett, and one of the ships in the fleet of Vice Admiral Sir George Keith Elphinstone, at the surrender of the Dutch fleet under Rear Admiral Engelburtus Lucas, consisting of two 66 gun ships, one 54 gun ship, five frigates and sloops, and one store ship.*

In 1775 the 74 gun ship Scarborough, Captain Barelay, was at anchor in the harbor, and remained until the fort at the entrance was seized by the colonists, when she left the harbor and remained between the Isles of Shoals and the mainland. The Scarborough had been undergoing some repairs to her rigging and sails, but the threatening appearance of affairs between the Mother Country and the Colonics, caused the commanding officer to leave the harbor before war was actually declared. When it became apparent that a war with England was unavoidable, and that it was necessary to build a navy to protect our seaboard from the incursions of the enemy, the natural posi-

*James' Naval History, Vol. 1.

tion of this port for the purpose of a naval station, became obvious, and measures were at once taken to establish a building Yard here.

The island now known as Badger's Island, was then the property of the Hon. John Langdon, and with that spirit of patriotism, which was so conspicuous in him, he tendered its use to the Continental Congress. It was accepted and almost immediately the keel of a frigate was laid. On the 21st day of March, 1775, work was begun upon the Frigate Raleigh, 32 guns. This ship was built by Messrs. Hackett, Hill & Paul, master builders, under the inspection of Thomas Thompson, Esq. of Portsmouth, who was to command her. So rapidly had her construction been carried on, that on the 21st of May she was launched, having been completed in just sixty days from the laying of her keel.

I have dated the origin of our Navy Yard from this year, as indeed it should be, for the island from 1775 to 1800, (the time of purchase of the present Yard,) was used exclusively by the Government for naval purposes,—and it cannot fail to interest every American, in thus viewing, from our present stand-point, the early resources of our then infant navy.

As the intention is to make this little work as interesting as possible, we will follow as far as we can, the history of each ship built here and her ultimate fate, when it can be obtained. The Raleigh was built under the Act of Congress, passed Dec. 13th, 1775, authorizing the building of thirteen sail of cruisers, three to carry 24 guns, five to carry 28, and five 32 guns. She carried a battery of 32 twelve pounders, and sailed from Portsmouth under command of Captain Thompson, in Aug. 1775, in company with the Alfred, 24 guns, Captain Hinman, bound for France, where military stores were in waiting to be trans-

ported to America.

The following account is taken from Cooper's Naval History, Vol. I, page 82:

“The Raleigh and Alfred had a good run off the coast, and they made several prizes of little value during the few days of their passage. On the 2d of September, they overtook and captured a Snow called the Nancy which had been left by the outward bound Windward Island fleet the previous day. Ascertaining from his prisoners the position of the West Indiaman, Captain Thompson made sail in chase. The fleet was under convoy of the Camel, Druid, Weasel and Grasshopper, the first of which is said to have had an armament of twelve pounders. The following day, Sept. 3d, the Raleigh sighted the convoy from her mast-heads, and by sunset was near enough to ascertain that there were sixty sail, also the positions of the men-of-war. Captain Thompson had got the signals of the fleet from his prize, and he now signalled the Alfred as if belonging to the convoy. After dark he spoke his consort, and directed her commander to keep near him, it being his intention to run in among the enemy and to lay the commodore aboard. At this time the two American ships were to windward, but nearly astern. In the course of the night the wind shifted to the northward, and the convoy hauled by the wind, bringing the American ships to leeward. At daylight the wind had freshened, and it became necessary to carry more sail than the Alfred, (a tender-sided ship,) could bear. Here occurred one of those instances of the unfortunate consequences which must always follow the employment of vessels of unequal qualities in the same squadron, or the employment of officers not trained in the same high school. The Alfred would not bear her canvass, and while the Raleigh fetched handsomely into the fleet under double-reefed top-

sails, the former fell to leeward more than a league. Captain Thompson did not dare to shorten sail, lest his character might be suspected, and despairing of being supported by the Alfred, he stood boldly in among the British ships alone, and hove-to his ship in order to permit the merchantmen astern to draw ahead of him. When his plan was laid Captain Thompson filled away and stood directly through the convoy, luffing up towards the vessel of war that was most to windward. In doing this he spoke several of the merchantmen, giving them orders how to steer as if belonging himself to the fleet, and repeating all the commodore's signals. Up to this moment the Raleigh appears to have escaped detection, nor had she had any signs of preparation about her, as her guns were housed and her ports lowered. Having obtained a weatherly position, the Raleigh now ran alongside of the vessel of war, and when within pistol shot, she hauled up her courses, run out her guns, set her ensign, and commanded the enemy to strike. So completely was this vessel taken by surprise that the order threw her into great confusion, and even her sails got aback. The Raleigh seized this favourable moment to pour in a broadside, which was feebly returned. The enemy were soon driven from their guns, and the Raleigh fired twelve broadsides into the English ship in twenty minutes, scarcely receiving a shot in return. A heavy swell rendered the aim uncertain, but it was evident that the British vessel suffered severely, and this the more so, as she was of inferior force. A squall had come on, and at first it shut in the two ships engaged. When it cleared away, the convoy was seen steering in all directions in the utmost confusion, but the vessels of war, with several heavy, well armed West Indiamen, tacked and hauled up for the Raleigh, leaving no doubt of their intention to engage. The frig-

ate lay by her adversary until the other vessels were so near, that it became absolutely necessary to quit her, and then she ran to leeward and joined the Alfred. Here she shortened sail, and waited for the enemy to come down, but it being dark, the British commodore tacked and hauled in among his convoy again. The Raleigh and Alfred kept near this fleet for several days, but no provocation could induce the vessels of war to come out of it, and it was finally abandoned. The ship engaged by the Raleigh, proved to be the Druid, 20, Captain Carteret. She was much cut up, and the official report of her commander, made her loss six killed and twenty-six wounded; of the latter, five died soon after the action, and among the wounded was her commander. The Druid was unable to pursue her voyage and returned to England. The Raleigh had three men killed and wounded in the engagement but otherwise sustained little injury.

The Raleigh and Alfred, after taking in military stores in France sailed for America, making a circuit to the southward, as was then quite usual with cruisers thus employed, in order to avoid the enemy's vessels of force, and to pick up a few prizes by the way. They sailed from l'Orient, in February 1778, and on the 9th of March, were chased by the British ships Ariadne and Ceres, which succeeded in getting alongside of the Alfred and engaging her while the Raleigh was at a distance. Believing a contest fruitless, after a few broadsides, the Alfred struck, but the Raleigh though hard pressed, in the chase that succeeded, made her escape."

In consequence of the investigation connected with the Alfred, Captain Thompson was relieved from the command of the Raleigh, and that ship given to Captain Barry. Under the orders of this new commander, the Raleigh sailed from Boston on the 25th day of September,

at six in the morning having a brig and a sloop under convoy. The wind was fresh at N. W. and the frigate run off N. E. At noon two strange sail were seen to the leeward, distant fifteen or sixteen miles. Orders were given to the convoy to haul nearer to the wind and to crowd all sail it could carry, the strangers in chase. After dark, the Raleigh lost sight of the enemy,—as by this time the two ships were ascertained to be;—and the wind became light and variable. The Raleigh now cleared for action and kept her people at quarters all night, having tacked towards the land. In the morning it proved to be hazy, and the strangers were not to be seen. The Raleigh was still standing towards the land, which she soon after made ahead and quite near. About noon, the haze clearing away, the enemy were seen in the southern board and to windward, crowding all sail in chase. The weather became thick again and the Raleigh lost sight of her pursuers, when she hauled to the eastward. No more was seen of the enemy that night, and at daylight Captain Barry took in everything, with a view to conceal the position of the ship, which was permitted to sail under bare poles. Finding nothing visible at 6 A. M., the Raleigh crowded sail once more, and stood S. E. by E. But at 9.30 the two ships were again discovered astern, and in chase. The Raleigh now hauled close upon the wind, heading N. W. with her larboard tacks aboard. The enemy also came to the wind, all three vessels carrying hard with a staggering breeze. The Raleigh now fairly outsailed the strangers, running 11 knots 2 fathom on a dragged bowline. Unfortunely at noon the wind moderated, when the leading vessel of the enemy overhauled the Raleigh quite fast, and even the ship astern held way with her. At 4 P. M. the Raleigh tacked to the westward, with a view to discover the force of the leading

vessel of the enemy, and about the same time she made several low islands, the names of which were not known. At 5 P. M. the leading vessel of the enemy having nearly closed, the Raleigh edged away and crossed her forefoot, brailing her mizzen and taking in her staysails. The enemy showed a battery of 14 guns on a side, including both decks, and set St. George's ensign. In passing, the Raleigh delivered her broadside, which was returned, when the stranger came up under the lee quarter of the American ship, and the action became steady and general. At the second fire, the Raleigh unfortunately lost her fore-top-mast and mizzen-top-gallant-mast, which gave the enemy a vast advantage in manœuvring throughout the remainder of the affair. Finding the broadsides of the Raleigh were getting too hot for him, the enemy soon shot ahead, and, for a short time,—while the people of the former ship were clearing the wreck,—he^t engaged to windward at long range. Ere long, however, the English vessel edged away and attempted to rake the Raleigh, when Captain Barry bore up, and bringing the ships alongside each other, he endeavored to board, a step that the other, favored by all his canvass, and his superiority of sailing in a light breeze, easily avoided. By this time the second ship had got so near as to render it certain she would very soon close, and, escape by flight being out of the question in the crippled condition of the ship, Captain Barry called a council of his officers. It was determined to make an attempt to run the frigate ashore, the land being then within a few miles. The Raleigh accordingly wore around and stood for the islands already mentioned, her antagonist sticking to her in the most gallant manner, each ship continuing the action with spirit. About midnight, however, the enemy hauled off and left the Raleigh to pursue her course towards land. The engagement had lasted

seven hours, much of the time in close action, and both vessels had suffered materially, the Raleigh in particular, in her spars, rigging and sails. The darkness, soon after, concealing his ship, Captain Barry had some hopes of getting off among the islands, and was in the act of bending new sails for that purpose, when the enemy's vessels again came in sight, closing fast. The Raleigh immediately opened a brisk fire from her stern guns, and every human effort was made to force the ship towards the land. The enemy, however, easily closed again and opened a heavy fire, which was returned by the Raleigh until she grounded, when the largest of the enemy's ships immediately hauled off, to avoid a similar calamity, and gaining a safe distance both vessels continued their fire from positions they had taken on the Raleigh's quarter. Captain Barry finding the islands were rocky and might be defended, determined to land and burn his ship; a project which was rendered practicable as the enemy had ceased firing, and anchored about a mile distant. A large party of men landed, and the boats were about to return for the remainder, when it was discovered, that by the treachery of a petty officer, the ship had surrendered. The officers and men on the island escaped, but the ship was got off and placed in the British Navy under the same name.

The two ships which took the Raleigh were the Experiment, 50 guns, Captain Wallace, and the Unicorn, 28 guns. The latter was the ship which engaged the Raleigh so closely, long and obstinately. The American loss was 25 killed and wounded. The island on which the crew landed is called "Wooden Ball," and lies twenty miles from the Penobscot river.

I have followed thus closely the history of this ship, as she was the first American man-of-war built at this port, and as such, must possess a greater interest than others

built later. The next ship which was built here for the Colonial Navy was the ship *Ranger* a sloop of war of 18 guns, six pounders, and a crew of one hundred and fifty men. She was built on the same blocks as was the *Raleigh*, upon what is now known as Badger's island, and was launched in May 1777. On the 18th of June, 1777, John Paul Jones, Captain, Colonial Navy, was ordered to take command of her. The following letter will give more fully the intentions of Congress, with regard to this Ship.

(The designation of the Flag and appointment of Captain Jones to the command of the *Ranger* on the same day would seem to imply some connexion between the two circumstances. The *Ranger* was probably the first ship that bore the national Flag to Europe.)

Philadelphia, June 18th, 1777,
In Marine Committee.

“JOHN PAUL JONES, ESQ.,

SIR:—Your letter of the 26th of May to the secret committee was laid before Congress, and in consequence thereof, the design of fitting the *Melish* is laid aside, and you are appointed to command the *Ranger*, ship of war lately built at Portsmouth. Col. Whipple the bearer of this, carries with him the resolves of Congress, appointing you to this command and authorizing him, Col. Langdon, and you to appoint the other commissioned as well as the warrant officers necessary for this Ship, and he has with him blank commissions and warrants for this purpose. It is our desire that you get the *Ranger* equipped, officered and manned as well, and as soon as possible, and probably we may send you other instructions, before you are ready to sail. However the design of the present is to prevent your waiting for such

after you are ready for service in every other respect, and if that happens before the receipt of farther orders from us, you must proceed on a cruise against the enemies of these United States, conforming to the orders and regulations of Congress made for the Government of the Navy; and in conformity thereto, take, sink, burn, or destroy all such of the enemy's ships, vessels, goods and effects as you may be able. We will not limit you to any particular cruising station, but leave you at large to search for yourself where the greatest chance of success presents.

Your prizes you will send into such safe ports in these United States as they can reach. Your prisoners must also be sent in, and we recommend them to kind treatment. Any useful intelligence that comes to your knowledge must be communicated to us whenever you have opportunity. You are to preserve good order and discipline, but use your people well. The ship, her materials and stores must be taken good care of, and every officer to answer to any embezzlements that happen in his department. You are to make monthly returns of your officers, men etc., to the Naval Board, you are to be exceedingly attentive to the cleanliness of your ship and preservation of the people's health. You are to afford assistance and protection to the American commerce whenever in your power; and on your return from this cruise, lay copies of your journal and log-book before the Naval Board, and inform us of the events of the voyage.

We are, Sir,

Your friends and servants,"

(signed) JOHN HANCOCK,
 ROBERT MORRIS,
 PHILIP LIVINGSTON,
 BENJ. HARRISON,
 A. MIDDLETON,
 NICHOLAS VAN DYKE,
 GEORGE WALDRON.

The resolutions referred to are as follows ;

In Congress, June 14th, 1777.

Resolved: That the flag of the thirteen United States, be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white, in a blue field, representing a new constellation.

Resolved: That Captain John Paul Jones be appointed to command the Ranger, ship of war.

Resolved: That William Whipple, Esq., member of Congress, and of the Marine Committee, John Langdon, Esq., continental agent, and the said John Paul Jones, be authorized to appoint lieutenants and other commissioned officers, and warrant officers, necessary for the said ship; and that blank commissions and warrants be sent them, to be filled up with the names of the persons they appoint, returns whereof to be made to the Naval Board in the Eastern department.

This vessel, which is described as having been both crank and slow, was not thought by the Marine Committee worthy of so good an officer as Captain Jones had proved himself to be, and he was promised a better ship; but the exigencies of the service did not admit of the fulfilment of this engagement, and Capt. Jones, after a long delay, had been induced to take this command, in preference to remaining idle. It is said, however, that he came from Europe with the hope of obtaining the *Indien*, but that vessel had been presented to the King of France previous to his arrival.

He sailed from Portsmouth, Dec. 2d, 1777, bound for France, and after refitting, sailed with the *Ranger* on the 10th of April, 1778, on a cruise in the Irish Channel. As the *Ranger* passed along the coast she made several prizes, and getting as high as White Haven, Captain Jones decided on the 17th to make an attempt to burn the *Colliers*

that were crowded into that narrow port. The weather, however, prevented the execution of this project, and the ship proceeded as high as Glentine Bay, on the coast of Scotland, where she chased a revenue vessel without success. Quitting the Scottish coast, the Ranger next crossed to Ireland, and arriving off Carrackfergus, they were boarded by some fishermen. From these Captain Jones ascertained that a ship which lay anchored in the roads, was the sloop of war, Drake, Captain Burden, a vessel in force about equal to the Ranger, and he immediately conceived a plan to run in and take her. It blew fresh in the night, but when the proper hour arrived, the Ranger stood for the roads, having accurately obtained the bearings of the enemy. The orders of Captain Jones were to overlay the cable of the Drake, and to bring up on her bows, where he intended to secure his own ship, and abide the result. By some mistake, the anchor was not let go in season, and instead of fetching up in the desired position, the Ranger could not be checked, until she had drifted on the quarter of the Drake, at a distance of half a cable's length. Perceiving that his object was defeated, Captain Jones ordered the cable cut, when the ship drifted astern, and, making sail, she hauled by the wind as soon as possible. The gale increasing, it was with great difficulty that the Ranger weathered the land and regained the channel. After cruising in the channel and making an unsuccessful attempt to burn the shipping at Whitehaven, he again encountered the Drake, and after an action which lasted an hour and a half, the Drake struck her flag and called for quarter, being much cut up both in hull and aloft; her loss was computed at about forty men. Captain Burden and the First Lieutenant of the Drake were mortally wounded and died shortly after the engagement. The Ranger suffered less, having Lieutenant Wallingford

and one man killed, and six wounded. The Drake was not only a heavier ship, but she had a much stronger crew than her antagonist. She had also two more guns. After being repeatedly chased, she arrived safely with her prize at Brest on the 8th of May.

Captain Jones being transferred to the command of another vessel, the First Lieutenant, Mr. Simpson, was ordered to take command of the Ranger, and return to the United States; he arrived at Portsmouth on the 29th of July, 1778.

The Ranger, Captain Simpson, was captured at Charleston in 1780 by the British under Sir Henry Clinton, as also were the Providence, 28 guns, Captain Whipple; Queen of France, 28 guns, Captain Rathbone; Boston, 24 guns, Captain Tucker; all of which fell into the hands of the enemy.

On the 9th of November, 1776, Congress ordered "the building or purchase of three ships of seventy-four guns, five of thirty-six, one of eighteen and one packet"

Under this order the keel of the America was laid soon after at Badger's Island, which at that time, was the property of the Hon. John Langdon, and sometimes called Governor's Island. Mr. Langdon was Continental Agent and had the entire charge of building vessels for the colonial service and furnishing the material. The America was, in her time, the heaviest ship that had ever been laid down on the continent for which she was named, and she was also the first ship of her class ever built by the Confederated Colonies after their rupture with the mother country; and, moreover, the only one built, or even begun, of the three seventy-fours authorized. A year and a half after she was authorized, on the 29th of May, 1778, the Marine Committee reported in favor of making her a two-decker, carrying twenty-eight twenty-four pounders on

the lower battery, and twenty-eight eighteen pounders on the upper deck,—in the whole fifty-six guns. This suggestion appears, however, not to have been adopted; and we learn nothing more about the ship until the 23d of June, 1779, when it was resolved in Congress, “that Robert Morris should be authorized to take measures for speedily launching and equipping for sea, the *America*, then on the stocks at Portsmouth, N. H. ;” and on the 26th, John Paul Jones was unanimously selected to command her.

Captain Jones proceeded to Portsmouth about the last of August, and found the *America*, instead of being ready to be launched, as he had supposed, not yet half built; and there was neither timber iron, nor any other material for finishing her. Money would have procured the necessary articles of equipment and men, before winter; but money was wanting. The Navy Board at Boston had otherwise applied the funds which the Minister of Finance had destined for the *America*, and he found it impossible to make the necessary advances. The business was, however, commenced immediately, and some progress made in her construction before winter.

As soon as the enemy had advice that there was a prospect of the *America* being finished, various schemes were suggested for her destruction, intelligence of which was sent in cypher to Portsmouth by the Minister of Marine. Captain Jones applied to the Government of New Hampshire for a guard to protect the vessel, and the Assembly voted to comply with his demand. None was furnished however, and on the second alarm sent by General Washington, the master builder, Mr. Hackett, and his associate were prevailed upon to mount guard with a party of carpenters by night. For some time Captain Jones paid this guard himself, and took command of it in turn with the master builders. Large whale boats, filled with the

enemy, pulled into the river with muffled oars night after night, passing and repassing the *America*, but not daring to risk landing.

The dimensions of the *America* were:

182 feet 6 in. on upper gun deck	} 1884 Tons.
174 " 4 " " lower " "	
56 " 6 " extreme breadth of beam	

At the close of the summer of 1782 the *Magnifique* a seventy-four gun ship belonging to the French Squadron, under the Marquis de Vandreuil, was lost by accident in the harbor of Boston. Policy, and perhaps equity, rendered it expedient for Congress to present to France this, its solitary ship-of-the-line, and a resolution to that effect was passed on the 3d of September.

In Congress, September 3d, 1782.

Whereas the "*Magnifique*," a 74 gun ship belonging to the fleet of His Most Christian Majesty, commanded by the Marquis de Vandreuil, has been lately lost by accident in the Harbor of Boston, and Congress are desirous of testifying on this occasion to his Majesty, the sense they entertain of his generous exertions in the behalf of the United States.

Resolved That the Agent of Marine be, and he hereby is instructed to present the "*America*" 74 gun ship, in the name of the United States to the Chevalier de la Luzerne for the service of His Most Christian Majesty.

Marine Office, Sept. 4th, 1782.

CHEVALIER JOHN PAUL JONES,

DEAR SIR:—The enclosed resolution will shew you the destination of the ship "*America*." Nothing could be more pleasing to me than this disposition, excepting so far as you are affected by it. I

know you so well as to be convinced, that it must give great pain, and I sincerely sympathize with you; but, although you will undergo much concern at being deprived of this opportunity to reap laurels on your favorite field, yet your regard for France will, in some measure, alleviate it, and to this your good sense will naturally add the delays which must have happened in fitting this ship for sea. I must entreat of you to continue your inspection until she is launched and to urge forward the business. When that is done if you will come hither, I will explain to you the reasons which led to this measure, and my views for employing you in the service of your country. You will on your route, have an opportunity of conferring with the General, on the place you mentioned to me in one of your letters,

I pray you to believe me,

Your Affectionate friend &c.,

ROBERT MORRIS.

Captain Jones, notwithstanding his disappointment, continued to urge forward the launch of this ship with the utmost energy. The difficulties were great, as Langdon's Island was small, and between the stern and the opposite shore, Church Hill, which was a continued rock, the distance did not exceed one hundred fathoms. From a few feet above the stern, a ledge of rocks projected far into the river, making an angle of twenty degrees with the keel; and from a small bay on the opposite shore, the flood tide continued to run with rapidity directly over this ledge for more than an hour after it was high water by the shore. It was necessary to launch the ship exactly at high water, and to give her such a motion as would make her pass around the point of ledges without touching the opposite shore, then a difficult matter. When everything was pre-

pared, Captain Jones stood on the highest part of the bow, a position where he could see her motion, and determine by a signal the instant when it was proper to let go one or both of the anchors that hung at the bows, and slip the cable that depended on the anchor fixed in the ground on the island. The operation succeeded perfectly to his wish and to the admiration of a large assembly of spectators.

Thus was the *America* launched with the flags of allied France and America displayed from the poop. After seeing her safely moored, Captain Jones, the same day (Nov. 5th, 1782,) delivered her to the Chevalier de Martique, who had commanded the *Magnifique*.

Major Hackett, the master builder who drew her plans had never seen a ship of the line; and he never had more than twenty carpenters at work at any time while her construction was in progress, and it is due to him to say that this ship is reported as one of the finest ships afloat.

After various adventures and cruising in the French Navy, she was captured by the British fleet under Lord Hood, 1st June 1794 at Toulon,* and her name changed to *Impetueux*, as there was in the Royal Navy at the time, a sixty-four gun ship named *America*, the same built here in 1749. The *Impetueux*, under her new name, held the highest possible reputation, and was sometime the flag ship of Sir Edward Pellew.

In the Life of Sir Edward Pellew (Admiral Lord Exmouth) is the following:

“In 1798 he was complimented with the command of

* At the capture of Toulon, the following named ships were taken by the British: *Sans-Pariel* 100 guns, *Inste* 100 guns, *America* 74 guns, *Impetueux* 74 guns, *Northumberland* 74 guns, *Achilli* 60 guns.

The *Impetueux* was almost an exact model of the *America* and very nearly the same size. Upon her arrival at Portsmouth Dockyard in Eng., she took fire and was destroyed; her close resemblance to the *America* was probably the reason that her name was retained by the latter named ship.

the 'Impetueux,' the most beautiful, and probably the finest ship of her class." This fact as well as a note in the Naval Chronicle of 1799, which speaks of her model as being "so fine, that several ships of the Royal Navy were built from her moulds," induced me to identify, without the shadow of a doubt the Impetueux, as *our* America, and to claim for Major Hackett the credit of furnishing so fine a model to the Royal Navy.

I was led to make this inquiry, from the fact that some grave doubts existed as to whether the America, captured at Toulon was the same ship that was built at this port as James, in his History of the British Navy, vol. I page 178, says: "The Vengeur, Impetueux and America had only been launched the preceding year; and the two latter were considered as the finest 74s that had ever been seen in a British port."

I addressed a letter to the Navy authorities at Toulon through our Consular agent at that port, requesting information relative to that ship, the reply to which letter I here give:

Toulon, France, Nov. 2d, 1875.

Mr. W. E. H. FENTRESS,
U. S. Navy Yard, Portsmouth, N. H.,
U. S. of America,

DEAR SIR:—In reply to your letter of the 4th inst. requesting information relative to the Ship America, I have the pleasure of sending you the enclosed note (with its translation into English,) received from the clerk of records at the Naval Depot at this place.

Hoping it may give you the information required,

I am Sir, Your Serv't.,

I. GEORGES PLATTNER.

The following is taken from the records of the Naval station at Toulon:

“List of ships, vessels and boats captured at Toulon on the 1st of June 1794.”

Name.	Tons.	Where built.	No. Guns.	Men.	Killed.	Wounded.
America. Capt. Louis L'Heritur.	} 1884	U. S. of America	74	720	134	110
Impetueux Capt. Bertram Douville		} 1878	Rochfort	74	713	100

Upon the arrival of these ships at Portsmouth, Eng., the Impetueux was accidentally burned; and there being already a 54 gun ship in the Royal Navy named the America, (the same that was built at this port in 1749,) the name of the captured seventy-four, was changed to Impetueux. There can be now no doubt that the Impetueux spoken of in such glowing terms by the Naval Authorities of that period, was our own Piscataqua ship. I regret to record here, that on board of this beautiful ship, when commanded by Sir Edward Pellew, (afterwards Admiral Lord Exmouth,) was planned one of the most terrible general mutinies that ever disgraced a flag, but by the coolness of that very superior officer, it was frustrated on board his ship and the ringleaders hung at her yard arms in Bantry Bay.

From 1783 to 1798 nothing was done here in building or repairing, in connection with the Navy; that branch of the service having been allowed to fall into decay, and disappear; the only naval force which appears during these years, is a few armed vessels belonging to the States, as individuals. The result of this measure can be seen at once, we quote from Cooper's Naval History:

“In the mean time, the Dey of Algiers, discovering that a new country had started into existence, which possessed

merchant vessels and no cruisers, as a matter of course began to prey on its commerce."

Many vessels were captured by these Algerine pirates during these years, and their crews sold into slavery.

On the 9th of July 1790, or a year after the organization of the Federal government, there still remained in captivity, fourteen of the unfortunate persons who had been thus seized. Of course five bitter years had passed in slavery, because at the period named, the United States of America, the country to which they belonged did not possess sufficient naval force to compel the petty tyrant at the head of the Algerine government to do justice!

In looking back at events like these, we feel it difficult to persuade ourselves that the nation was really so powerless, and cannot but suspect that in the strife of parties, the struggles of opinion, and the pursuit of gain, the sufferings of the distant captives were overlooked or forgotten. One of the first advantages of the new system, was connected with the measures taken by the administration of Washington to relieve these unfortunate persons.

Peace having been proclaimed between Portugal and Algiers, and the fleet of the former, having been removed from the Straits of Gibraltar, a free passage to the Atlantic was opened to these Corsairs, and their depredations now reached a pass that further submission became impossible, and in March 1794 an act of Congress was passed, authorizing the construction, or the purchase of six frigates, or of such other Naval force, that should not be inferior to that of the six frigates named, as the President might see fit to order, providing no vessel should mount less than 32 guns. All these preparations, however, were suddenly suspended by the signing of a treaty with Algiers in Nov. 1795, one of the articles of which, was the presentation by the U. S. of a frigate of 32 guns to the Dey.

On the 18th January 1798, the frigate *Crescent*, mounting 32 guns sailed from this port for the Mediterranean. She was built for the Government by Col. James Hackett, upon the blocks of the *America* 74, on Badger's Island, and was intended as a present to the Dey of Algiers. Cooper says, "the peace obtained from the Dey of Algiers cost the government of the United States near a million dollars, a sum quite sufficient to have kept the barbarian's port hermetically blockaded until he should have humbly sued for permission to send a craft to sea."

The following article taken from a daily paper of the day, will give the reader some idea of the spirit which may prevail in a nation, when it does not possess, or neglects to use, the means of causing its rights and character to be respected.

"CRESCENT FRIGATE.

Portsmouth, N. H., Jan. 20th

On Thursday morning about sunrise, a gun was discharged from the '*Crescent*' frigate, as a signal for getting under way; and at 10 A. M. she cleared the harbour with a fine leading breeze. Our best wishes follow Captain Newman, his officers and men. May they arrive in safety at the place of their destination, and present to the Dey of Algiers one of the finest specimens of elegant naval architecture which was ever borne on the *Piscataqua's* waters.

·Blow all ye winds that fill the prosperous sail,
And hushed in peace be every adverse gale.'

The *Crescent* is a present from the United States to the Dey, as compensation for delay in not fulfilling our treaty stipulations in proper time. Richard O'Brien, Esqr., who was ten years a prisoner at Algiers, took passage in the above frigate, and is to reside at Algiers as Consul General of the United States to all the Barbary States.

The Crescent has many valuable presents on board for the Dey, and when she sailed, was supposed to be worth *three hundred thousand dollars*. Twenty-six barrels of dollars constituted a part of her cargo.

It is worthy of remark, that the captain, Chief of the Officers and many of the privates of the Crescent, have been prisoners at Algiers."

A new act was passed without delay, ordering the completion and equipment of two of the forty-four frigates, and three of the thirty-eights, and in 1797 as soon as the Crescent was launched, the Sloop of War Portsmouth, 24 guns, was laid down, and in Feb'y 1798 she sailed for the West Indies under Capt. H. McNeill, where she cruised during 1798-9, and in 1800 she was sent to France for our minister, and upon her return in 1801 she was sold at Baltimore for \$34,366.

The Scammel, 14 guns, (schooner,) was next built, and was launched in 36 days from the laying of her keel, and sailed for the West Indies under the command of Lieutenant J. Adams, where she served in the squadron of Commodores Barry, Truxton and Decatur, against the Buccaneers and French privateers.

The keel of the Congress, 36 guns, was laid as soon as the sloop Portsmouth was launched, and was so far advanced that in August 1799 she was launched. She was built by Col. James Hackett of Portsmouth, N. H.

In December 1799 the Congress 38, Captain Sever, and Essex 32, Captain Preble, sailed from Portsmouth with orders to convoy vessels as far as Batavia, war having been declared between the United States and France. The former vessel having, by her rigging slacking, lost her three masts and bowsprit, in a gale encountered a few days out, was compelled to return to port under jury masts; the Essex continued her cruise to the East Indies. The

Congress did not rejoin her consort until 1801. After ending her cruise, she again sailed from this port under the command of Captain John Rodgers, bound for the Mediterranean in 1804, cruising there until 1806, being—during this cruise—commanded also by Captain Stephen Decatur. In 1806 she brought home the first Ambassador from the Barbary powers. During the last war with great Britain she made several captures under Captain J. Smith. Soon after peace was ratified, she sailed for Europe and the Mediterranean under Captain Charles Morris, returning to the U. S. the same year. In 1816 and 1817 she cruised on the coast and in the West Indies, under the same commander. In 1818 to 1821 we find her in the East Indies under command of J. D. Henley. The cost of the Congress was \$197,246, and after an honorable service of 37 years, she was broken up at Norfolk Va. in 1836.

The Yard of the Hon. John Langdon appears to have been used up to 1800, by the Government for Naval purposes and a quantity of timber, anchors etc., had been collected at that island. The necessity of having Navy Yards owned by the Government, became more and more apparent, and although there was no express authority to purchase these yards, yet it became a measure of necessity. An appropriation of one million dollars had been made by Act of Congress, approved 25th February, 1799, for the building of six seventy-four gun ships, and from this sum, it was proposed to purchase land for the use of this branch of the Government service.

On the 25th April, 1800, in the State Papers on Naval Affairs there is recorded the following :

"A"

"The Hon. Secretary of the Navy, recommends the purchase of the island in Portsmouth harbour called Dennett's Island, for the site of a Navy Yard."

In 1794 Mr. William Dennett of Kittery Me., believing that one of the islands in the harbor would, at some not far distant period, be selected by the Government for the purpose of establishing a permanent depot for Naval stores etc., proposed to Samuel Sheafe, Esq., of Portsmouth, the purchase of the island, now the Navy Yard. Mr. Sheaf immediately arranged the terms of purchase, with the heirs of Thomas Fernald, and in June paid the sum of 650 dollars, having the deed made out in his name. In September he sold the island to Wm. Dennett for 1700 dollars, thus realizing the handsome profit of 1050 dollars in three months.

In the State Papers, Naval Affairs, we find recorded the following:

No. 21.

6th Congress, } 2d Session. }	Naval Establishment and its expenses. Navy Department, Jan'y 12th, 1801.
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Ground purchased in Portsmouth for a Navy Yard.

HARRISON GREY OTIS,

Chairman of Committee on Naval Affairs.

October 1st, 1800, Portsmouth, N. H.	For purchase of Land	\$ 5,500
	Improvements	26,304
Fifty-Eight Acres.		<hr/>
		\$31,804

Thus Mr. William Dennett after holding his purchase five years, realized the snug little profit of \$3,800.

I will here give a brief description of the general appearance of the Island at the time of its purchase by the Government, as received from the Hon. Mark Dennett, a brother of the former owner of the Island now ninety-two years old, perfectly well and in the possession of every faculty, who says :

“The Island as I remember it when a boy was hilly and covered with a dense undergrowth ; there was only one tree on the island worthy of the name, and that is now in the grounds of the Commodore, and known as the ‘Old Elm.’ In 1798, I remember it lost some of its branches in a gale, but there is very little difference in its general appearance between then and now. From the tree, a small stream, or swamp, extended to what is now the Dry Dock Basin. In the centre of the island was a high ledge of rocks covered with undergrowth. My brother built a house of two stories near where the Commodore’s house is now located ; it was the only house on the island excepting a small fish house near where the shiphouse No. 5 now stands.”

As soon as Government took possession of the island, work commenced at once in repairing a building for the use of the Superintendent of the Yard, removing the material from the adjoining island, building a shed for timber and a wet dock for seasoning the same.

The following report made by Mr. J. Humphries, the Naval Constructor, may be of interest and I insert it in full.

REPORT OF MR. HUMPHRIES.

“A”

“November 25th, 1800.

Great quantity of stone is in this Island, I think sufficient to erect all the buildings that would be wanting for

the use of a ship-yard, and I believe enough to build a dock except the steps, which, I am told, can be dressed at half a dollar per cubic foot at this place.

Seavey's Island, which is called Jenkins', or Trefethen's Island in the draught, is fortified on its heights, that is rough works thrown up last war; this Island should be fortified at Henderson's Point also.

The Island opposite Seavey's is called Pierce's Island and is only about one quarter of a mile distant. Works have been thrown up on this Island. These islands well fortified will effectually protect the harbor.

Between these two islands there is an amazing rapid current, and which is the only ship channel. The fort on Pierce's Island is called Fort Washington, that on Seavey's Island is called Fort Sullivan.

The principal part of the workmen reside on the opposite shore from the town and are as handy to work on Dennett's Island as at Langdon's or in the town of Portsmouth.

This island has several places that will do for docking timber. I cannot consider the harbor of Portsmouth above the islands, mentioned before, sufficient for a large fleet, and the harbor below the islands as afore mentioned and fortified, cannot be a secure one. Ships passing in rapid currents are always in danger unless they have plenty of room which they have not in this port. From all information I can obtain, this place is never troubled with ice; that vessels may pass up and down at any time in the season. This port is troubled with fogs in the months of August and September.

On Langdon's Island there is belonging to the Government the following property:

- 1 Anchor, 3,500 lbs., belonging to 'Crescent' frigate.
- 2 " 4,500 " each bought for 'Congress.'
- 1 Wooden House, one story, stone, 42 by 16 feet.
- 1 " Shed, rough boards.
- 1 House, wooden (addition to Mr. Langdon's stores.)
- 17,687 cubic feet of Live Oak."

In 1801 a shed for timber was finished and the timber from Langdon's Island removed and stored; a wet dock was finished and a large quantity of live oak was placed in it. Mr. Jacob Sheafe had charge of the depot as Navy Agent, a superintendent or master carpenter being employed on the island. In 1803 a house was erected for a dwelling, barracks for marines, and a bell tower built. An octagon fort, of earth and heavy timber, with embrasures for eight heavy guns also platforms for the same, was built upon the hill; and a flag staff erected.

Nothing more was done on the Yard, except to collect timber for building purposes, until 1806, when a first lieutenant of marines, Mr. J. M. Gamble, with one sergeant, two corporals, fifteen soldiers and two musicians were ordered by the Navy department to this Station as a garrison to protect Government property on the island. A small gunboat called the Bee was ordered for the protection of the harbor, and to act as guard ship. No work other than the clearing of the island and erection of sheds, smith shop, saw pits and the building of a few small boats for the use of the Yard, was done until the year 1812, when the Government changed their former policy in the government of the Navy Yards, and placed them under the command of a naval officer as Commandant.

In March 1812, the Wasp sloop of war, Rattlesnake schooner, and Enterprise brig, were reported as being at the yard, and received some slight repairs. Several gunboat, (four or five,) were also ordered to do duty here,

On the 4th of October, Captain Isaac Hull took command of the Navy Yard as Commandant. Sailing Master Nathaniel Stoodley was ordered to the command of the gun-boats at the Yard.

On the night of the 22d of December, 1813, a fire broke out in Portsmouth which in eight hours destroyed 180

dwelling houses and 188 stores. Captain John Smith of the Congress at the alarm, sent his fire apparatus on shore with half of his crew, placing himself at their head; and by his exertions, and the exertions of the officers and crew much property was saved from destruction and the fire arrested by the use of powder.

During the year 1814, it was almost impossible to leave or enter the harbor without capture, so vigilant were the enemy; a quantity of oak knees for the 74 gun-ship then building, had been landed at Gloucester by a vessel from the South, and now awaited transportation to the Yard. As some time would be required to team it from that place and the knees being needed, Capt. Hull resolved to transport them by water to the Yard in spite of the blockade. Captain Henry Trefethen, an old and experienced fisherman, proposed to the Commandant to bring those knees in his smack, and being satisfied that the veteran seaman would accomplish his object he employed him. The smack Yankee made several trips in safety, bringing a good load of the knees each time; the last load was attended with some interruption and very nearly cost the old Sea Dog his craft, as well as his liberty. After leaving the harbor he made all sail with a stiff breeze from the S. S. W. and thick hazy weather which soon became a dense fog. At about one o'clock P. M., he came suddenly upon a ship at anchor; the wind had decreased and the smack was moving at about four or five knots. A hail came from the ship; soon afterwards a broadside was fired in the direction that she was last seen, which cut the Yankee's sails so badly as to almost render them useless; but the brave old captain kept on, though altering his course; when the fog lifted he found himself off Rye, and a sloop of war about two miles distant to leeward. He crowded on all sail, and succeeded in reaching the harbor in safety

without the loss of a stick of timber; his foresail was riddled by the broadside of the enemy, his jib much cut and a shot had hit his main-boom. Upon relating the circumstances to Commodore Hull he was rewarded with a complete set of sails and a new main-boom in addition to his pay for services.

In 1814 the port was closely blockaded by the British vessels of war; the Bulwark 74; Poitiers 74; Endymion 32; Vulture 24, and at times the Tenedos 74, were in plain sight between the mainland and the Isles of Shoals cruising, and an attack was daily expected from the fleet. The Congress, after being put out of commission was towed up the river some four miles and anchored in a safe place.

LIST OF OFFICERS AT PORTSMOUTH NAVY YARD

JAN. 1ST, 1814.

		Pay per month.
Isaac Hull,	Capt. Commandant.	\$100.00
Tunis Craven,	Store Keeper.	83.33
Joseph Watson,	Com'd't's Clerk.	25.00
Adam Hill,	Cockswain.	19.00

LIST OF BUILDINGS ETC., ON THE NAVY YARD

JAN. 1ST, 1814.

Dwelling House (originally built).	
Barracks.	Large Timber Dock.
Small House.	Small " "
Store.	Bellhouse.
Covered Saw-Pit.	Flag House and Staff.
Saw-Pit.	Ways for 74 gun ship.
Two timber Sheds.	Smith Shop.
Boat House.	

In March 1814, the keel of the 74 gun ship Washington, was laid, two sheds having been removed to make room

for the ways. Work progressed upon this ship very rapidly and by the following September she was well advanced, and a house built over her, (now Ship-house No. 5,) she was not launched until January of the year following. During the year that the Washington was building, much anxiety was felt lest the enemy should send a party by night in boats and burn her, and precautions were taken to prevent it. Mark Dennett, Esqr., of Kittery, who has kindly assisted me in preparing incidents of that time from his memory, gives the following:

“In the Fall of 1814, the British fleet could be seen plainly outside the harbor blockading the port, and it being the impression of Commodore Hull that an attempt would be made by them to burn the Washington, then almost ready to launch, he requested the officers of the local militia to meet at the Yard, and agree upon some plan of co-operation should any attack be made. It being agreed that in case of an alarm at the Yard, three guns should be the signal for the assembling of the troops. I was then about 29 years old, and an officer in a company of minnte men at Kittery. One cold night the heavy report of three cannon came booming over the water, and in a few minutes, our men could be seen hurrying to the rendezvous in numbers. When I arrived, I found about sixty assembled and we took up our line of march to the Yard by way of Kittery. One old gentleman, who has passed away long since, was eager for a fight, and wished to drink British blood before night, but his patriotism was allowed to cool, for before taking boats for the island, an officer sent by the Commodore met us and reported the alarm as caused by some fishing vessels sailing in, which were mistaken for the enemy’s boats.”

Many were the false alarms, caused by various circumstances during this year, the prevailing idea being that a

destruction of the seventy-four had been ordered by the officer in command of the enemy's ships outside, and that the opportunity was only wanting for its consummation. When the Washington was nearly ready for launching, Commodore I. Chauncey was sent by the Department to superintend her equipment, as she was to be his Flag ship when ready for sea. The Washington was launched July 1815, peace with England having been declared the February previous.

The launching of so large a ship as a seventy-four, was an event of uncommon occurrence in this vicinity, and thousands of persons were attracted hither by it. On the day of the launch, the weather was fine; and the shores lined with an enthusiastic multitude; as the great mass began to move slowly out of the ship-house, the cheers were deafening; the band played a national air, while the roar of the cannon from the surrounding forts added to the din. Commodore Chauncey stood upon the bows, and with him a youth of about fifteen years, who is now an old and very prominent citizen of Portsmouth.

At the time of launching, a young gentleman in undress uniform, was arrested as being an English Naval officer, but he proved to be a brother of Commodore Chauncey; this incident has given rise to a story that a British spy was arrested on the Yard at that time.

The Washington was fitted out immediately, as the flag ship of Commodore I. Chauncey, commanding the Mediterranean squadron. In August there was a strike among the workmen employed in equipping the ship¹ and some difficulty was experienced in getting men to work, owing to the depreciation of Treasury notes. The following extract of a letter from the Hon. B. W. Crowning-shield, Secretary of the Navy, will explain more fully the state of affairs at the Yard at this time:

August 21, 1815.

“If the work of the ship is suspended in consequence, measures will be taken to equip the ship, in order to proceed to New York, where the payments in Treasury notes are equal to those in gold and silver. This will eventually drive all the Naval operations and equipment, from the Northern to the Middle and Southern States. You will be pleased to report to me the present state of the ship and the time necessary to fit her for sea, so as to proceed to New York.”

The Washington sailed in October for Europe, where she remained as flag ship of the squadron until 1818. On her return she became receiving ship at New York, and was broken up in 1843. Thus passed away the third ship of the line built in the United States, this port having the honor of building two out of the three. The Washington was built by contract by Messrs. Badger & Magraw, and cost \$235,801.

On the 1st of July 1815, Captain Hull was relieved from command of the Yard by Captain Thomas Macdonough. The following is a list of officers ordered to the Yard and who reported at the same time as did the Commandant:

Henry Wells,	First Lieutenant.
Joseph Smith,	Second Lieutenant.
Walter A. Montearth,	Third Lieutenant.
Wm. M. Robins,	Fourth Lieutenant.
Robert L. Thorn,	Surgeon.
Nath. Lyde,	Purser.
Joel Abbot,	Midshipman.
Samuel P. Chamberlain,	Sailing Master.
James. H. Ferguson,	“ “
Nath. Stoodley,	“ “
Antonia Corrcia	Gunner.
Marines.	
Archibald Henderson,	Brvt. Major Commanding.
Samuel E. Watson,	Second Lieutenant.

The Yard now began to assume the appearance of a Naval Station. A Lodge was erected for the Ordinary men, and that force increased. A store house was erected with one story for a rigging loft, and a new wharf was also built.

The house which had been fitted for the Commandant from the old dwelling originally on the island, was remodelled and rebuilt, and the grounds were also enclosed.

The six gunboats were sold at public auction, and one was kept for a time, as a tender to the Yard. From 1815 to 1818, there was no work done on vessels at the Yard, the entire force being employed in laying out walks and making preparations to erect buildings. Quite a number of negro seamen were employed at the Yard in the ordinary force, but orders from the Department caused their discharge and none were allowed to be employed excepting as servants to officers.

In February 1817, orders were received to lengthen the ship-house (now No. 5) twelve feet, and to build a ship-of-the-line to measure nine feet more in length than the Washington; accordingly on the 15th of April the keel of the Alabama, seventy-four, was laid in the lengthened ship house.

In July 1818, Commodore Macdonough was relieved as Commandant, by Captain Charles Morris. This year saw the regular establishment of the Yard increased by the addition of the following list:

- One Boatswain,
- “ Gunner,
- “ Carpenter,
- “ Boatswain’s Mate,
- “ Carpenter’s Mate,
- “ Steward,

Twelve Seamen, Twelve Ordinary Seamen.

The pay-roll of workmen on the Yard at this time did

not number more than fifty mechanics, and they were required under appropriation "Improvement." A wharf was built to the West of the ship-house, and the foundation of the building, now the Naval Store, was made.

In September 1818 the order regulating the size and description of the flag to be used in the Navy of the United States was received, and as there is sometimes a question among persons on shore as to what is the flag of the United States, I will here insert the order that was received:

"That from and after the 4th day of July 1818, the flag of the United States be thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white; that the union have twenty stars, white in a blue field, and that in making all flags for the Navy the following rules will be observed. The "union" will occupy one fourth of the flag, and will rest on a white bar or stripe; the stars to be placed in parallel lines."

The first portion of wall, at this Yard was laid west of the ship-house, in March 1819, and the earth filled in; the wall was extended some five or six hundred feet to the West. The force on the Yard was largely increased, as a new ship-house was building (now No 4) to the West of the old one, and the ship was being hurried along.

The old custom of firing the morning and evening gun was dispensed with, and the remains of the old octagon fort were removed to make room for the improvements which were daily being added. In 1820, the ship-house (4) was finished and the "slip" begun. Captain E. Watson, U. S. M. corps, received permission to erect a barracks for the Marine Guard of the Yard, using an old house, which is now on the island, in addition to the small one now occupied by them. The work was almost entirely done by the Guard and the expense of the new barracks

was trifling ; it stood where the Gun and Shot Park now stands.

The unsettled state of affairs, internal revolution, feeble governments, a low state of morality in surrounding communities and the debasing influence of war, had conspired to foster a system of piratical enterprises in the West Indies. In the Fall of 1820 the accounts of these piracies were received in the United States, and the Government immediately ordered the building of several small vessels of light draught and heavy armament for the purpose of exterminating the outlaws.

The schooner Porpoise was begun in Sept. 1820, and launched on the 26th day of November following ; she was built at the slip near the "Landing." Her cost, when ready for sea, was \$25,529 ; her tonnage about 178 ; and battery ten 6 pounders and one long 18 pounder. Her first cruise was made under Lieut. Ramage, and after making five cruises was lost in the West Indies in 1833 in command of Lieut. Wm. Taylor ; her crew were all saved.

In 1821 \$12,000 were appropriated for improvements on the Yard. The store house and offices was commenced this year ; this building (now No. 1) was the first brick one erected on the Yard. The keel of a 44 gun frigate was laid in the new ship-house, to be named the Santee, and the present fine timber dock with its sea wall etc., was finished this year.

In May 1821, application was made to the State of Maine, "for the cession of the jurisdiction of the Island, on which the Navy Yard at Portsmouth is situated," and in the month following it was granted ; the State reserving the right to serve processes on the Yard and to arrest criminals.

Wooden buildings for officers' quarters were erected

upon the site now occupied by those elegant structures of brick. In May 1823, Captain Wm. M. Crane relieved Captain Morris as commandant.

The store house had advanced so far towards completion, that the offices were removed into it on the 1st of January, 1824, together with the Naval stores. The cost of this building was \$4,000. In 1827 the addition was made to this building, (which may be noticed by the roof being higher,) and it is now the stores of Steam Engineering, Equipment, Navigation and Sail-loft, the cost of which was \$15,000. The old wooden building which had been used as offices was removed to the rear of the Marine barracks, and used as a cook house for the Marines and Men of the Ordinary. The stone wall from the ship-house (5) to the blacksmith shop, was finished in 1824; it was 687 feet long, 10 feet high and 2 1-2 feet wide.

Nothing more was done to improve the Yard, excepting to finish the Mast and Spar House (now No. 7) until 1826.

Captain Crane was relieved by Captain Chas. G. Ridgely in March 1825. The following is a list of officers attached to the Yard 1823-25:

W. M. Crane,	Captain Commandant.
John Porter,	Master “
Thos. W. Wyman,	Lieutenant.
Wm. Berry,	“
Robert L. Thorne,	Surgeon.
Nath. Lyde,	Purser.
Nath. Stoodley,	Master.
Nath. Prentiss,	“

In the year 1825, the bridge leading to Kittery was built and the Commandant made propositions to the owners of the land adjoining the bridge to cut a road leading to the main high-way of Kittery; the owners of the land

objected to such a road, although the Government offered to purchase their land for this purpose. Finding that nothing could be affected by negotiation, application was made to the Selectmen of Kittery, with the assurance that the damages would be paid by the Government. The road was then laid out by them according to the Laws of State and became a Town way. The damages were paid by the United States, and communication by road opened with Portsmouth in the summer of this year.

In 1826 activity was resumed and much work in the way of improvement done. Orders were received to select a proper site for the building of suitable barracks on the Island. All wooden buildings and sheds were demolished and removed, especially those in the vicinity of the ship-houses. The upper story of the Mast House was finished for a Rigging-loft and the Blacksmith shop enlarged by two additions being built to it. Work was being forwarded also on the seventy-four gun ship and the frigate in the ship-houses.

In November 1826, Captain J. O. Creighton relieved Captain Ridgeley as commandant. In the Spring of 1827 the foundation of four brick buildings for officers' quarters was commenced and in the Autumn following they were finished. In the Summer of the same year a brick block was built for the accommodation of the Warrant Officers, Petty Officers and seamen. Three Timber sheds were also built, 200 feet long, 65 feet wide and 15 feet to the eaves, the roofs were slated and supported by stone pillars ten feet apart; they are Nos. 45, 46 and 48. The cost of these sheds was \$9,250 each. In March 1827 the keel of the sloop-of-war Concord was laid at the little slip where the Porpoise was built. The levelling for the purpose of building the Barracks was completed and the foundation laid; the spot selected for the Barracks was

the extreme N. E. point of the island. In August 1828, Captain J. D. Henley relieved Captain Creighton in command.

The following is a list of the Officers of the Yard 1829 to 1833:

John D. Henley,	Commandant.
Geo. W. Storer,	Master Com'd't.
John C. Long,	Lieutenant.
Chas. Chase,	Surgeon.
Jos. H. Terry,	Purser.
R. S. Tatem,	Master.
John Floyd,	Nav. Constr.
S. E. Watson,	Capt. U. S. M. C.
Wm. W. Dulany,	1st Lieutenant.
Cons't Smith,	2d " "

On the 24th day of September 1828, the sloop-of-war Concord was launched, the day was very fine and quite a crowd assembled to witness her baptism, at noon the order came, and the crash of top-mauls told the anxious crowd that the time was drawing near. At a little past 12 M. she glided beautifully into her destined element, and was christened Concord by a beautiful lady of Portsmouth. The cost of the Concord was \$115,325. She sailed from Norfolk, Va. in 1830, with John Randolph of Roanoke, Minister to the Court of St. Petersburg, and after a cruise of three years in the Mediterranean under Master Commandant M. C. Perry, and two cruises in the West Indies under Commodores Mix and Fitzhugh; she was lost Oct. 2d, 1843, on the east coast of Africa. Her Commander, William Boerum; and Purser, Mr. Hart, with one man were lost with her. The First Lieutenant J. M. Gardiner chartered a brig to bring home the remaining officers and crew, and in the following year the brig Chipola was sent out to recover her guns etc.

The brick building for the Ordinary men of the Yard was finished and was large enough to accommodate two hundred men; the grounds were levelled and fenced, and as soon as convenient a draft of men was sent for to equip the *Concord*, the rigging and masting being done entirely by the seamen who were to sail in the ship. Oct. 1830 saw a draft of one hundred fine seamen sent to this Yard from the *Independence* and they were quartered in the new building, which (possessing so many agreeable features over the Receiving ship *Independence*,) they named the Sailors' Snug Harbor, this name it retained until converted into quarters for Warrant Officers, and in many papers from the Department, this *Sobriquet* was mentioned in connection with the building.

On the 21st of November, 1828, the Yard was visited with one of the most severe gales of wind, ever experienced in this vicinity, and great damage was done to the slate roofs of the buildings; the timber dock also suffered much damage, and a large portion of the "Old Elm Tree" in the Commandant's grounds was torn away. An instance occurred at this time which will serve to illustrate how justice was administered by the Naval court's martial of that day. Elias W. Chase, an ordinary seaman belonging to the Ordinary force of the Yard, deserted, and after a time was discovered and arrested in Portsmouth. He was brought to the Yard, tried by a Naval Court and sentenced "to be flogged with thirty-nine lashes of the cat-o'-nine-tails on his back and be discharged from the service," which sentence was carried out at the Yard on the Green before the men's quarters.

During the years 1829-31 nothing of importance was done in improving the Yard, except the building of a timber shed of the same description as the former ones, at a cost of \$9,500, (No. 43), no appropriations having been made for improvements and repairs

In August 1832 the sloop-of-war *Vincennes* arrived from a cruise in the West Indies, under command of E. R. Shubrick; this was the first ship that had arrived at the Yard to be paid off, since the late war with Great Britain. In Dec. of the same year the *Concord* arrived, was paid off, and both ships were then placed in Ordinary.

In September, 1832, Captain Henley was detached from the Yard, and Daniel Turner, Master Commandant—the Executive Officer—took temporary command of the Yard until the 9th of October following, when Captain W. M. Crane was again appointed Commandant.

The Winter of 1832-33 was one of unusual severity, and all work out of doors was in a great measure suspended until the month of April, when in compliance with orders received from the Department, a brick dwelling was commenced, adjoining the Quarters recently built. It was the original intention of the Department to build two dwellings in uniformity with those already built, but it was afterwards decided to build a large dwelling for one family. The building (now Quarters B) was finished in December of 1833, and cost \$15,000.

In the year 1834, orders were received from the Department to build a third ship-house on the Yard, and after some delay in selecting a site, the present one was chosen for it, and work begun at once on the foundation and slip. The *Vincennes* sloop-of-war had been fitted out, and sailed the year previous, leaving only one ship, the *Concord*, at the Yard, and she was being rapidly equipped for a cruise—when the sloop-of-war *Lexington*, Captain McKeever, arrived from a cruise and put out of commission. During this year many improvements were made on the Yard; extensive repairs being made to the bridge leading to Kittery, which had fallen into decay during the past nine years; the Timber dock was enlarged to accom-

moderate the amount of timber which was required yearly for building and repairing vessels.

The Quarters were now completed and occupied by the officers, and the old building which had been occupied by the Lieutenant of the Yard, was fitted up at small expense as a temporary hospital for the Station.

Lieut. Joseph Cutts, attached to the Yard, had for some time showed signs of mental aberration, and in September of this year he shot himself through the head; his death cast a gloom over the Yard, as he was much respected by all who knew him.

In 1815, the ship-house had advanced so rapidly towards completion that preparations were made to build a ship in it. In 1838, this magnificent structure was entirely finished; the total cost being \$71,000. I do not think that a more elegant ship-house exists than this; certainly not in any Dock yard of England, France, or Spain, have I seen a building more adapted to the purpose for which this was designed, and in the Yards of the United States it is unequalled. The Lexington and Concord were both fitted for sea, and sailed from the Yard in 1837.

The barracks of the Ordinary were raised one story, and made into dwellings for the Warrant Officers at a cost of \$4000.

In 1836, the entire Marine force of the Yard, was ordered to duty, with the Army in Florida, against the Creek Indians, thus leaving the Yard without a Marine guard; although a force of watchmen were employed in their stead, at a monthly pay of \$28.

On the 14th of April, 1838, Mr. John Floyd, Naval Constructor stationed at this Yard for several years, died very suddenly of fever, he having contracted a severe cold in laying the keel and setting up the frame of a sloop-of-war in the new ship-house. He was succeeded by Mr.

Samuel M. Pook who reported in November of the same year. The new ship-house was now finished and a small sloop was being built therein. On the 14th of June, 1839, the sloop-of-war Preble was launched, having been completed in thirteen months from the laying of the keel, and when ready for sea her cost was \$112,782. On the 2d of June 1840, the sloop Preble, Comd'r. Breese sailed from this Station bound for the coast of Labrador, and after making six cruises upon different stations, she was converted into a Practice Ship for Midshipmen and afterwards sold.

For some time past a wharf was being built from the old ship-house to the eastward. The manner of building was by cob-work of timber filled in with stone as a foundation. On the 1st of August, the entire fabric gave away with a loud noise, and was precipitated into the deep water. The following account of the accident is taken from the Portsmouth, N. H., Journal of that date:

"On Thursday afternoon, August 1st, at about low water a portion of the sea wall, of the new stone wharf now building at the Navy Yard, separated from the main body and fell into the river, carrying with it a worthy laborer by the name of Mugridge belonging to Kittery, and slightly injuring another. No satisfactory cause for this accident has yet been discovered, altho' it is supposed to be owing to the giving way of the cobwork foundation on which the upper portion was erected. Fears had for some time been entertained with regard to the eastern wall, but it was not until the morning of the accident that suspicions were had of the front section, at which time however, a cracking of the stone being heard by the workmen, and the premises above water being examined by Commodore Crane himself, while those below were inspected by means of the diving bell, it was found that

fourteen stones, each ten feet by eighteen inches, had broken in two altho' the under layers of all had not, as some have supposed, slipped from the rock bottom on which the south-eastern corner of a part of the front is located."

About 100 feet of sea wall was destroyed by this accident, and the Department at once decided that the services of a Civil Engineer were required at the Yard, to obviate any future accident of this nature, consequently Mr. Calvin Brown was employed as Engineer and Draughtsman at a pay of three dollars a day, and from this date the services of a Civil Engineer have never been dispensed with at this Yard.

As soon as the Preble sloop-of-war had been launched from the new ship-house, preparations were made to immediately build a frigate of the largest class, and in August, 1839, the keel of the Congress was laid, and on the 16th of August, 1841, she was launched; the Army and Navy Chronicle of Aug., 1841, gives the following account of the event:

"The frigate Congress was launched at Portsmouth, N. H., on Monday Aug. 16 about fifteen minutes past eleven, amidst a salute of thirteen guns and the cheers of a large number of citizens from the wharves and surrounding hills. She is a beautiful ship of 1867 tons and carrying fifty guns. The day was fine and there were many persons collected to see the sight. There were several steamboats in attendance."

The Old Congress was launched from the adjoining island at noon, August 15th, 1799, just 76 years ago. She was 190 feet long on the spar deck, 50 feet beam and 1700 tons burden. The cost of the old Congress was \$197,246, and that of the new \$399,088, over twice the cost of the former. This frigat had a fine record, and as she was

one of the early victims of the rebellion we will pass hurriedly over her history.

First cruise was made to the Mediterranean 1842-3, under Captain P. F. Voorhees; second to Brazil, 1844-5, under the same commander; third to the Pacific, 1846-7, under Comd'r. S. F. Dupont; fourth to Brazil, 1850-1, under Capt. I. McIntosh; fifth to the Mediterranean, 1853-5, under Capt. Long; sixth, Mediterranean Squadron, 1857-9, Comd'r. Thos. F. Craven. Burned in Hampton Roads, Va., in action with the Rebel iron clad Merrimac, 8th of March, 1862, while under command of Joseph B. Smith, her First Lieutenant, her commander being absent on duty. The description given by Boynton in his admirable work, will serve to paint the destruction of the noble ship.

“At a little past 2 P. M., the huge mailed frigate had approached the Congress within grape shot distance; and then every man in his place, the guns trained to the proper elevation, the lanyards in the gunner's hand, scarcely a sound was heard throughout the devoted ship while they awaited the attack of the dreaded foe. A puff of smoke from one of her bow guns, and every breath stopped an instant, till a storm of grape swept over the deck and rattled on her sides. A long breath of relief that it was no worse. Keeping on her course, she was passing the Congress at less than one fourth of a mile distant, heading for the Cumberland. At that distance the Congress delivered her broadside. Her heaviest shot glanced harmless from the side of the mailed monster, and all felt that the battle was already decided, and that nothing remained but to surrender or to be destroyed with their ship. The return fire of the Merrimac only confirmed their worst fears. Her shells came crashing through the sides of their ship, spreading death and ruin on every side. They knew

that success was hopeless, escape impossible and resistance ruin. Yet an American fifty gun ship could not be surrendered thus, so the strong hearted martyrs stood by their flag and to their guns. But it was not the intention of the rebel commander to finish his work then. Passing the Congress at a distance of about three hundred yards, he ran direct for the Cumberland."

The reader of these pages can imagine for himself the feelings of the officers and crew of the Congress as they gazed in silence at the sinking of the Cumberland, and perfectly helpless, awaited their doom. As soon as the fate of the Cumberland was seen, the jib and top-sails of the Congress were set, and with the aid of a tug the ship was run ashore under the heavy fire of the smaller steamers, whose guns being rifled did fearful execution. The ship had been set on fire in many places by the hot shot from the Merrimac and no hopes were entertained of saving her. Manning such boats as remained, the wounded and crew were removed, and in a short time the flames reached the magazine, and the fragments of the shattered and bloody ship, were scattered over the waves; the commanding officer of the Congress was killed and a large number of the officers and crew. Thus perished the first frigate built upon the new Yard.

Captain Crane was relieved from the command of the Yard in October, 1840, by Captain John D. Sloat.

The following is a list of the Officers of the Yard in 1840:

J. D. Sloat	Capt. Commandant.
T. W. Wyman,	Commander.
Geo. F. Pierson,	Lieutenant.
Chas. Chase,	Surgeon.
Thos. Breese,	Purser.
Jacob Mull,	Master.
Lawrence Gallagher,	Boatswain.
Wm. Black,	..
Jno. Green,	Carpenter.

The former practice of masting vessels by erecting sheers on board, being tedious and expensive, Capt. Sloat received permission to build a pair of permanent sheers, which he did, using the lower masts of the 74 Alabama for that purpose; when erected they cost \$2,240. The masts of the Congress frigate were the first put in with the new sheers.

A diving Bell was purchased for the use of the Yard and work immediately began by removing the debris of the fallen sea wall, under the superintendence of the Civil Engineer of the Yard.

Orders were received to build a first class sloop at the Yard, and as soon as the frigate Congress had been launched, work began upon the Saratoga and continued without interruption until July, 1842, when she was completed, and upon the 26th of that month was launched.

On the 15th the Congress sailed for the Mediterranean. Work was continued this year upon the Sea Wall, and bridges were built over the slips of the ship-houses. The work of levelling the hills was being carried on, and filling in to the Sea Wall.

In October of 1842, the old system of a Board of Commissioners for the Navy was superseded by the Bureau System, and the organization was as follows:

Bureau of Yards and Docks, Commodore L. Warrinton, Chief.

“ “ Ordinance and Hydrography Commodore Wm. Crane, Chief.

“ “ Construction, Repair and Equipment, Captain David Conner, Chief.

“ “ Provision and Clothing, C. W. Goldsborough, Chief.

“ “ Medicine and Surgery, Dr. W. P. C. Barton, Chief.

The weather during the winter of this year was unusually severe, and work out of doors was a matter of impossibility; the force was reduced to the lowest possible number that was necessary to the efficiency of the Yard. On the 15th of February, 1843, a tribute of respect of thirteen guns was paid to the memory of Commodore Isaac Hull, the first Commandant of this Yard, who died at his residence on the 13th inst.

On the afternoon of the 16th of March, 1843, the sloop of war *Saratoga* sailed from the Yard under command of Commander J. Tatnall: the weather was threatening, but it was thought that she could obtain an offing and clear the coast before the weather would prove too stormy. Before night a strong N. E. gale accompanied with a blinding snow-storm, compelled her to return, and the thickness of the snow and darkness of the night rendered it impossible to see any light or landmark, and the lead alone was her guide: the gale increasing with such violence, all control of the ship was lost, and every anchor let go, backed with some of her heaviest guns; and to prevent her drifting on shore all three of her masts were cut away and she was left a mere hull; this saved the ship and she rode out the gale in safety; when it moderated she was discovered about two cable lengths from the shore at Rye Beach—had she driven but a short distance farther she would, in all probability, have gone to pieces, and but few would have been left to tell the tale, for only a short distance from her stern a reef of rocks of the most dangerous character, lay between the ship and the shore. As soon as the gale abated, a small steamer was sent and the ship towed back to the Yard, where she was refitted.

The appropriation for improvement of the Yard for this year (1843) was \$41,000, which allowed some work to be done on the walls and buildings. The sloop of war *Ports-*

month was built and launched this year; she was an exact counterpart of the Saratoga, and built in the ship-house recently vacated by that vessel.

On the 2d of November, Captain Sloat was relieved by Captain George W. Storer as Commandant of the Yard.

The Boat house and landing stage was built in 1844, at a cost of \$1221.50, and work commenced in blasting away the ledge in the middle of the island, with this exception no other improvements were made on the Yard until 1846.

The Portsmouth sloop of war sailed in December, 1844, having been fitted for sea during the Fall of that year.

Nov. 1846, Commodore Daniel Turner relieved Capt. Storer in command.

The attention of the Department had been attracted to the subject of a Dry Dock at this Yard, and a board of Civil Engineers, under Mr. Sanger, were ordered to examine the island for the purpose of locating the site. The subject was discussed in all its points, and the Board finally decided that a floating dock would be much cheaper and better suited to the requirements of this Yard than a stone Dock, and reported their views to the Bureau. A controversy then arose between the two inventors of Floating Docks. Messrs. Gilbert & Secor, the inventors of the Floating Balance Dock, claiming for their invention a superiority over that of the Sectional Dock of Messrs. Moody & Dakin; the Bureau was much embarrassed by these conflicting claims, and finally settled the controversy by building two of each at the different Yards. Cisterns were built in different parts of the Yard at a cost of \$31,528.

In May of 1847, the keel of the U. S. Steamer Saranac was laid in the new ship-house, and work commenced in earnest. Mr. Parris reported as Civil Engineer of the Yard, retaining Mr. Brown as his assistant. In 1848,

work again resumed in earnest on the Yard, and under the directions of the Civil Engineer, Mr. Parris, the work of levelling was carried on with vigor. The Smithery was enlarged and rebuilt, and the Sea Wall finished to the Knee Dock. In November, 1848, the side wheel steam frigate Saranac was launched. As this ship was the first steamer built at the Yard we will trace her history until we find her sinking in the blue water of the Pacific.

Her first cruise was made in the Home Squadron, 1850-1, under Captain J. Tattnall; second cruise, Brazil, 1852, Captain Pendergast; third cruise, Mediterranean, 1854-6, Captain J. C. Long. During the war she was variously employed, afterwards cruised in the Pacific and finally was lost June 1st, 1875, at Seymore Pass, near Vancouver's Island, under command of Captain Wm. Queen. The following account is taken from the Army and Navy Journal of the 26th of June, 1875:

“The United States Steamer Saranac, having on board as passengers, Lieut. Washburn Maynard, U. S. N., and Dr. Emil Bessels of the Smithsonian Institute, left this port (San Francisco) June 8th for Sitka and Behring Straits, on a scientific expedition and to make a collection for the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. On her way north she took the inside channel between Vancouver's Island and the mainland, called at Nanaimo, and at a quarter of 9 A. M., on Friday the 18th inst., struck the famous mid-channel rock in Seymour Narrows. This is the rock so much talked of in connection with the proposed bridge at the Narrows for the Canadian Overland Railroad.

The ‘Saranac’ was going fourteen knots, with a seven knot current, at the time of striking. After striking she hung for a few minutes and then swung off. Her bow was immediately run into the Vancouver shore and made

fast with a hawser to a tree. An hour afterwards she had sunk completely out of sight, not even her mastheads being visible, But little of the stores or personal effects of the officers and crew were saved. The ship's company were encamped on the beach, with no shelter and little provisions. Lieut. Comdr. Sander with the pilot and thirteen men, made their way on foot to Victoria, V. I., where they arrived last night. The steamer 'Otter' left this morning for the wreck. No lives were lost. Rear Admiral Cochrane with H. B. M. iron clad 'Repulse,' has left for the scene of the disaster."

The Powder Magazine which had been commenced the year previous, was finished in 1849. The Decatur sloop-of-war arrived in Nov., and after being put out of commission was placed in Ordinary. Captain Thos. W. Wyman relieved Commodore Turner as Commandant on the 2d of November, 1849.

The following is a list of the Officers of the Yard Jan. 1st, 1850 :

Captain T. W. Wyman, Com'd't.	Boats'n. Wm. Black,
Comd'r. J. R. Jarvis,	Gunner. R. F. Dunn,
Lieut. S. Hazard,	Carp't. W. D. Jenkins,
" H. French,	Sailmaker J. G. Gallagher.
Surgeon, C. Chase,	Putrser. H. Bridge,
Master, John Robinson,	Marines.
Benj. Delano, Naval Constructor.	Capt. Ward Marston,
Alex. Parris, Civil Engineer.	" A. Brevoort.

The principal object of interest and most important feature of this establishment, is the Floating Balance Dock, without this, the Navy Yard would be deficient in the most important element of a Naval establishment. In a publication of this nature, a description in detail can hardly be expected ; still, without citing some of the more important facts connected with the Dock, this little history would not be complete.

In 1851, a contract was entered into with Messrs. John S. Gilbert and Zeno Secor of New York, to construct, with all the necessary machinery and appendages, a Floating Balance Dock and Railway to the satisfaction of the Superintending Engineer. The test was made in June, 1852, and the works accepted.

Mr. Parris, the Civil Engineer, having died after a long sickness, B. F. Chandler, Esq., was appointed to fill the vacancy, and commenced at once upon his duties. The site having been selected, a coffer dam was constructed, within which the excavations were to be made for the foundations, floors and walls of the Dock Basin. The whole was to rest on pile foundation, three thousand of which were driven through the earth to solid rock. They were driven three feet from centre to centre and the interstices filled with clay; they were then cut off twelve feet below high water mark, capped with timber, and the entire surface covered with five inch plank. Five courses of hammered granite in the direction of the length of the Dock were laid, of one foot rise, and a bed of concrete six inches thick, between the stone bearings. The Basin completed is three hundred and sixty feet in length and one hundred and twenty-five feet in width, with granite walls fourteen feet high of large stone, hammered beds, builds, joints and face and laid in cement; at the outer end of the walls of the Basin, and across the bottom in the stone work, is a groove cut two inches wide and six inches deep, to receive the keel and stems of a boat gate, which when in place, encloses the dock within the stone basin. The Dock was constructed on the island opposite the Navy Yard, called Pierce's Island, and when completed, was floated across the river. The length of the Floating Dock is three hundred and fifty feet; breadth outside, one hundred and five feet, four inches, and walls thirty-eight

feet high. The walls or chambers on each side are seven feet, eight inches wide, the entire length of the Dock. On these walls and amidship of the dock is the machinery for working it while docking or undocking vessels. On each wall is an engine and boiler of fifty horse power geared and connected with twelve pumps. These pumps are each two feet square and four feet stroke, and when in operation, will raise seventeen thousand, four hundred and eighteen tons of water per hour. There are fifty-two gates in the Dock, by which, with proper manipulation in connection with pumps, the Dock is raised or depressed with facility and perfectly balanced; it is capable of raising a ship of five thousand tons weight. When a ship requires extensive repairs, she is docked on a frame called a "cradle," and while resting on this cradle supported by a railway of three lines of timber, she is drawn out of the Dock upon the land, on an elevation of one inch in eight feet. She is then shored and repaired. The Dock is now at liberty and may be used for docking another ship should occasion require it.

The apparatus by which a ship is drawn upon the railway on the land, is an exceedingly ingenious and complicated piece of mechanism. It is an hydraulic engine operated by steam; the weight of the cylinder alone, is eleven tons and the piston nearly two tons. In returning the ship to the water the operation of hauling up and docking is simply reversed. The hauling power of the hydraulic engine is five thousand tons up the railway or inclined plane, before mentioned. The rate at which the ship is moved is generally one foot in one minute.

The necessity of excavating a basin with a depth of 32 feet at high water became obvious. In this the Dock is sunk, in order to receive the ship—preparatory to pumping out the Dock—thereby raising the ship entirely out of

the water with the Dock, in readiness to enter the stone basin. Soundings were made in the Piscataqua, in front of the basin and the bottom was found to be uneven, consisting of gravel, sand, clay and large masses of ledge; a dredging machine being procured, thousands of cubic yards of sediment were removed and deposited on the Yard for filling low grounds and grading. By these means the ledges were laid bare and submarine blasting commenced, to remove the rock formation to the depth required. The extremely uneven surface and hardness of the material was a formidable obstacle. A Diving Bell was necessary, and an organized force was selected from inexperienced workmen. The work was staked out beneath the tide, entirely by the Civil Engineer and under his sole control. For two seasons this work was in progress, and during that time the Engineer descended daily to inspect the work and direct the workmen. The large excavations were made by blasting with Gove's battery; and before the task was accomplished more than ten thousand cubic yards were detached, removed and deposited in deep pockets, within or outside the limits selected for this deep basin. This excavation was continued in this manner until a level floor was secured, (and no sharp projecting rocks could injure the coppering of the Dock,) upon which the Dock could rest thirty-two feet below high water mark. For the security of the Dock, and safety of both Dock and ship, three stone mooring piers were erected twenty-two feet square at the base and battering on three sides to twelve feet square at low water. These piers were raised twelve feet square, above high water, with a stone mooring post in the centre. They were composed of large blocks got out to exact dimensions, bed, builds and joints hammered, and the blocks above low water mark secured together with copper bolts. This work also was laid with the Diving Bell to low water mark.

The Floating Dock has been in successful operation from the day of its acceptance, and more than one hundred ships have been docked without accident or damage. During the twenty-three years in use no very extensive repairs have been made, and the machinery and Dock are now in almost as good condition as when the Department accepted them of the Contractors. The deep basin was excavated in the shortest possible time without the slightest accident, and to the entire satisfaction of the Department. As an evidence of absence of floating sediment in the waters of the Piscataqua River, the deep basin has been examined with the Diving Bell, and the marks of the tools left by the workmen years before have not been obliterated. The entire cost of this extensive addition to the Yard, with the repairs of twenty-three years added etc., has fallen short of a million dollars, and a more effective Dock is not to be found on this side of the Atlantic. The fine granite building now known as the Head House was finished in 1853. It was formerly of only one story, and was intended for the engine house connected with the Dry Dock; but in the year following, it was remodelled by Mr. C. and another story and a half added, together with an addition for the boiler and engines. This building is one of the finest on the Yard, being built of undressed granite with hammered granite coignes, dormer windows and slate roof. In October, 1852, the Bureau tested the power of the Dry Dock by taking the old Line-of-Battle-Ship Franklin into it, and hauling her out upon the railway. This old 74 was very heavy, and was considered as a complete test of the powers of the new Dock; she was taken successfully from the Dock by means of the Hydraulic, and left in a position to be taken to pieces, which was done at once.

On the first day of November, 1852, Captain Wyman

was relieved by Captain Joseph Smoot. During this winter but little was done on the Yard in the way of improvements. The weather being severe, out of door work was entirely suspended.

During the year 1853, the sloop Decatur, frigate Princeton, frigate Fulton and sloop Cyane arrived at this Yard, the squadron in command of Commo. W. B. Shubrick.

The new ship-house was lengthened fifty feet, and the keel of the frigate Franklin laid therein, the old ship being under process of demolition upon the railway. In the month of February, 1855, the frigate Santee was launched from the ship-house in which she had remained under process of construction since the year 1820. This ship was built upon the old plan and was 1726 tons burden, mounting eight 8 inch guns and forty-two 32 pounders, making a total of 50 guns. The keel of a Light-Ship was laid in the ship-house soon after the launching Santee, and in the summer of the same year she was launched. This ship was built for the Light House Board and intended for Nantucket Shoals, where soon afterwards she was taken; it is but just to remark in this connection, that she was pronounced as the "most excellent Light Vessel in service."

In June of this year the frigate Constitution, (familarly termed "The Old Ironsides") arrived at this Yard from Key West, wearing the Broad Pennant of Commodore Mayo; she had made the passage from Key West in nine days, and was put out of commission and placed in Ordinary soon after her arrival. The appropriation for the Yard this year being \$59,000, some improvements were made. A Cooper shop was erected, and Watchmen's quarters built. The Shell house was finished and work on the Dock Basin continued. Sewers were built and the main sewer finished, to carry the drainage from the Officers' Quarters to the river.

Commodore John T. Newton relieved Captain Smoot as Commandant of the Yard in October of 1855, and the remainder of this year was devoted to finishing up the work already begun, and in hurrying to completion the frigate Franklin, now well under way.

In April, 1856, permission having been obtained from the Navy Department by the inhabitants of Seavey's Island, a bridge was built from the Navy Yard across the narrow stream which separated it from that island; this bridge was of course to be subject to the discipline of the Yard, but as may be readily seen, was the occasion of much annoyance to the Yard authorities, as well as discomfort to the inhabitants of the island. In order to avoid theft from the Government, persons carting private material through the Yard were compelled to submit their loads to the inspection of the Watchmen; and at night, even packages carried by persons were subjected to examinations; the continued vexations attending this privilege of passing through the Yard, ultimately led to the purchase of the adjoining island by the Government.

The sloop *Vandalia* arrived at the Yard in October of 1856, from the East Indies, put out of commission; and her officers and crew were detached and paid off and the ship placed in Ordinary.

In July of 1857, Commodore J. T. Newton, while on a leave of absence, was smitten with paralysis, and after a few hours of great suffering, expired, surrounded by his family and relatives. During the twenty months that Commodore Newton had been in command of this Station, he had, by his many acts of kindness, won the esteem of all classes, and the entire community was much shocked by his sudden death. Commander Chas. W. Pickering, being senior officer present, assumed the command of the Station until relieved by Captain John Pope on the 11th

day of August. During this year the fine building for Offices and Muster-room, was finished and occupied, the entire cost of which was \$28,633. The appropriation made in 1857 for this Yard was \$104,422, which admitted of many improvements being made that were much needed. The Head house was raised one story and a half, and fitted with machinery; the Magazine buildings finished, a Lodge built for the Ordinary men of the Yard at a cost of \$4845, and iron fences substituted for the wooden ones around the quarters. The Dry Dock was in use the greater part of the year; the *Vandalia*, *Constitution* and sloop *Falmouth* having received repairs upon it; and during the year following, the sloops *Portsmouth* and *Jamestown* having arrived from a cruise, were both docked and extensively repaired.

In June, the Turkish Minister, M. Said Saleman Effendi, visited the Yard in company with the Turkish Vice Admiral Mehmed Pasha and suite; and were received with all the honors due their exalted rank. The ship-house, which, since the launching of the Light-vessel, had been vacant, was now made ready to receive the keel of a new steam sloop, which had been ordered to be built at this Yard, and in July the steam sloop of war *Mohican* was begun. The Gun Park, Shot Park, Anchor Parks and small Park, in front of the Commandant's house, were made, and the present Flagstaff erected in place of the old one.

In 1859, the large screw steam ship *North America*, belonging to the Portland and European Line, arrived in port disabled, having had a collision with floating ice, upon her passage across the ocean; there being no facilities here for taking so large a ship out of the water, application was made to the Department for permission to repair her in the Dry Dock, at the request of the Company, which per-

mission was granted. On the 15th day of February, a second steamer was launched from the Yard, the sloop of war Mohican; this ship was the first screw steamer built at this Yard, and proved in every way to be an excellent and efficient vessel. During the year, the sloops Portsmouth and Mohican were fitted out and sailed from the Yard, and repairs on the sloop of war Dale were hurried to completion. The Cumberland sloop of war arrived with the flag of the Home Squadron and was paid off and put out of commission. The Magazine building was finished and the drains completed during this year.

1860 opened with poor prospects for the Yard, the appropriations were exhausted, and no work of any importance could be accomplished. The saluting Battery upon the wall near the timber dock was built and the guns mounted. On the 1st of October, Captain John Pope was relieved as Commandant by Captain G. F. Pierson.

Orders were received to send the frigate Constitution to Annapolis to be used as a school ship for midshipmen, and Lieut. David D. Porter was ordered to command her. Her crew having arrived from Boston, she sailed on the 6th of August with a light breeze from the North. The Macedonian and Marion sloops of war arrived at the Yard and were ordered out of commission, and after being dismantled were placed in Ordinary. In Dec. the Cumberland fitted for sea and sailed for New York under command of Capt. John Marston.

The very threatening aspects which the political affairs of the country had assumed, caused the Commandant to request permission to fortify the defences of the harbor, early in 1861. In April, the news of the attack upon Fort Sumter by the Confederate troops, brought affairs to a crisis there, and the strong arm of the Government was brought to bear upon treason wherever it appeared. Loud

threats were made to burn the government works at this Yard, and precautions were taken to double the guard; efficient and trusty men were also added to the watchmen of the Yard.

On the 27th of April the Commandant of the Station, received orders to put the Yard on a war footing; fortify the earth work on Seavey's Island with eight inch guns; open a rendezvous in Portsmouth for recruiting men both for the Navy and Marine corps. He was also empowered to examine and appoint officers, subject to the approval of the Department. The Santee frigate, Marion and Dale sloops of war and Sabine frigate were fitted out and sailed on a cruise. War was now considered as declared with the Southern States that had seceded. All officers in command of ships of war were instructed to capture, sink, burn or destroy vessels on the high seas, hostile to the U. S. Government, or having on board articles contraband of war. The keels of two steam sloops of war were laid, the Kearsarge and Ossipee. The latter was launched in November and the former in December. The Kearsarge having made for herself such a brilliant history in the destruction of the Confederate cruiser Alabama, we will devote a little space in this brief work to that vessel.

On the 5th of February 1862, the steam sloop Kearsarge sailed from this Yard under command of Com'd'r. C. W. Pickering; after a year spent in the Mediterranean and among the Western Islands in fruitless search of the Confederate steamer Alabama, the command was transferred to Captain J. A. Winslow late in 1863. After many months search, the rebel vessel was discovered and blockaded in the port of Cherbourg, France, in June, 1864. On the 16th of June, 1864, the Commander of the Alabama sent a challenge to Captain Winslow to meet him upon the sea beyond the limits of jurisdiction—the challenge was at once accepted.

On Sunday morning, June 19th, 1864, the Alabama, having made all possible preparations to insure success, steamed out of Cherbourg harbor accompanied by the French iron-clad frigate Couronne. The morning was a fine one, the sea was calm, and a light haze spread like a transparent veil over the water, adding beauty to the scene, without obscuring the movements of either ship. The French frigate accompanied the Alabama only so far as to make it certain that she would not be attacked until beyond the line of French jurisdiction. A small steamer bearing the flag of the royal yacht squadron of England also came out of Cherbourg; but this attracted no attention at the time. The Alabama was discovered by the Kearsarge at just 20 minutes past 10 o'clock, and immediately the Kearsarge was cleared for action and her head put seaward with the double intention of avoiding all question about jurisdiction, and of drawing the enemy so far from shore that, in the event of her being disabled, she could not escape by running into French waters. Having reached a point seven miles from shore, the Kearsarge was put about and steered directly for her antagonist with guns pivoted to starboard. The moment the Kearsarge came around, the Alabama sheered, presented her starboard battery and slowed her engines. When at the distance of a mile the Alabama opened her broadside hoping to cripple her antagonist, but, except cutting some of her rigging no damage was done. The Kearsarge was now given more speed although no shot had yet been fired. A second and third broadside were fired by the Alabama, but did no great execution. The two ships were now distant about seven hundred yards, and Captain Winslow did not deem it prudent to expose his ship to another raking broadside fire, and accordingly the order was given to fire. The ships were now broadside to broadside, and to prevent the

Alabama from making for the shore, the Kearsarge was kept at full speed with the design of running under the stern of the Alabama so as to secure a position for raking. To avoid this the Alabama, being also under a full head of steam, was sheered so as to keep her broadside exposed to that of her antagonist; thus both vessels were forced into a circular movement, steaming in opposite directions around a common centre, this centre shifting with each revolution, on account of a current setting westward at the rate of three miles per hour. Had the action been fought in parallel lines with the Alabama heading in shore, she would have reached the line of jurisdiction and thus escaped; but by being compelled to steam in circles she was five miles from the shore at the close of the action.

The action lasted for one hour, the heavy shot of the Kearsarge telling fearfully against the sides of the Alabama. It became apparent to Capt. Winslow that the intention of Capt. Semmes was now to escape, and the quickened fire of the Kearsarge told the fate of the Rebel was sealed; she was discovered to be sinking, her flag was struck and in a few minutes, throwing her bow high in air, she sank stern first below the waters of the channel.

It is not the design of the writer to make comments on the results of battles etc., that being out of his province, so he leaves the reader to search history, should he wish to know the perfidious part taken after this action by the yacht *Deerhound* in *stealing* the prisoners from their captors. It is enough for us to trace our little ship to victory.

The steam sloops *Sebago*, *Mahaska*, *Sacramento*, *Sonoma* and *Connemaugh* were commenced this year; the two former were finished during the Autumn but the two last not until the Spring of 1862. The Yard now being worked to its fullest capacity, over two thousand workmen were employed. Additions were built to the Ord-

nance building, and the Inspection building of provisions and clothing also built, at a cost of \$12,580.

During the years 1862-3, the following ships and gunboats were built, launched and fitted for sea at this Yard:—Sebago, Sonoma, Sacramento, Connemaugh, Mahaska, Ossipee and Sassacus. The Constellation, Colorado and Minnesota were also repaired and fitted for sea, and work during these two years had progressed upon the steam frigate Franklin so as to insure her completion in a short time should she be needed. Several temporary sheds were erected about the Yard to accomodate the different departments, which were now being crowded to their utmost extent with work.

During the year 1863, the following named steam sloops and gunboats were built, launched and fitted for sea—Patuxet, Nipsic, Shawmut and the frigate St. Lawrence; the bark Fernandina, steam sloops Alabama, Decota and Agawam were repaired and fitted for sea, in addition to those already mentioned. On the 18th of Nov. the keel of the iron-clad Passaconaway was laid in ship-house No. 4. On the 4th of February the Porter's Lodge took fire and was entirely consumed in a short time, a heavy wind blowing from the N. W. and the mercury being 13 degrees below zero rendered all assistance impossible.

A temporary barracks was erected upon Seavey's Island for the colored soldiers who were ordered from Hampton Roads to the fort on that island; these troops were commanded by white officers.

The year 1864 opened gloomily for the country; the war dragged along, and the Yard still continued to teem with workmen and the wharves to be crowded with vessels. The sloop of war Vandalia had been ordered to this Station for a guard as well as a receiving ship. On the 23d day of January, the ship-of-the-line New Hampshire

was launched, (she was the Alabama 74, whose keel was laid on the 15th of April 1817,) having been upon the stocks 47 years. She was fitted as a store ship and sent to Port Royal, S. C.

During this year the Colorado was repaired, docked and fitted for sea; two tugs built and launched, the Port Fire and Blue Light; the iron clad Agamenticus launched and fitted for sea; Iosco taken into Dock and repaired; San Jacinto repaired and fitted; the steam sloops of war Piscataqua, Minnetonka and Illinois built; the frigate Franklin finished and launched and the sloop Contocook launched, also several of the small purchased vessels were docked and refitted. The Boat and Carpenter shop was built this year by contract, Messrs. Clement & Cressey doing the work. Numbers of vessels were now arriving at the Yard from Southern ports, and many cases of yellow fever were discovered which caused much alarm in this vicinity.

In July the De Soto arrived and after remaining a short time in the lower harbor steamed up to the Yard and was put out of commission. Immediately the fever broke out among the workman on this ship and in many cases proved fatal! The sail Loft was closed, the Yard put, in Quarantine and the ship removed to the lower harbor.

In October Commodore T. Bailey relieved Commodore Peirson as Commandant of the station.

With the New Year 1865, came the dawn of peace, and April brought an order from the Department to fire a salute of one hundred guns in honor of the fall of Richmond and the surrender of the Rebel army under Genl. Lee. While the people were rejoicing at this success as perhaps no nation ever rejoiced before, the appalling news of the assassination of President Lincoln spread a gloom which hung like a funeral pall over the entire nation.

The war was now regarded as over, and large numbers of vessels were arriving at the Yard, to be put out of commission and sold. The reduction of the force employed on the Yard left but a small number, and those were mostly in the Construction department.

In 1866 it became obvious that the adjoining island would be purchased by the Government as the matter had been brought to the attention of Congress some time during the war.

In the same year the purchase was effected and \$105,000 paid to the owners, a deed having been made giving the Government a clear title. This island contains about one hundred and five acres, with an extensive water front having bold water the entire length; the general appearance of the island is uneven and will admit of much filling in and levelling; a fine quality of granite can be quarried upon the island sufficient for foundations and quay walls.

The stream separating the two can be filled in, and the islands made one, the area thus added will in all probability be sufficient for the requirements of the Yard for many years to come.

The wings of the Office building were raised and extended, a crane built; and a new steam fire engine added to the fire department of the yard, this year.

In the month of October 1867, Commodore Joseph Lamm relieved Commodore Bailey as Commandant. The great demand for labor which had existed in all the departments of the yard, now, since the termination of hostilities, having ceased the force was at once reduced; although a sufficient number were retained under the cognizance of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, to make the additions to buildings etc., which had been called for, by the extreme necessity for room.

Coal sheds were erected on Seavey's island, and resi-

ences furnished upon that island for the Naval Constructor and Civil Engineer attached to the Yard; an iron building erected for a boiler shop, for Steam Engineering department at a cost of \$15,000. The U. S. S. "Benecia" was finished and launched, and the steam sloop "Monongahela" was taken upon the railway to be rebuilt, having been thrown ashore by the tidal wave following the great earthquake at the Island of St. Croix, W. I., the year previous. During the year following, 1869, Commodore J. A. Winslow relieved Commodore Lanman. Vessels continued to arrive from Southern ports and the necessity of at once establishing a Quarantine station somewhere in the lower harbor became at once apparent, and the attention of the Department was called to the fact. The town of Kittery offered the island at the mouth of the river, known as Wood Island, to the Department, to be used as a Quarantine for all vessels with infectious diseases on board. The offer being accepted, in the month of July an order was received from the Bureau of Yards & Docks "to erect, with all possible despatch, a building upon the island (given by the town of Kittery) for the use of the sick, who are expected to arrive at Portsmouth in about a month or five weeks from this date."

Mr. Chandler the Civil Engineer of the Yard was at once entrusted with this work; and by removing the old barracks from Seavey's Island, and transporting them to Wood Island, and using almost superhuman exertions, the present commodious and comfortable buildings were erected. The necessity of haste will be at once apparent, for as the workmen were leaving the Island the yellow fever patients were being brought to the building, the ships having arrived sooner than was expected.

The time occupied in erecting this work, and of building a wharf, was just thirty two days the cost of the same was \$2,500.

The fire engine house was also built this year at a cost of 8,940 dollars and the wings which were added by Commodore Howell several years after, at an expense of \$800 made the entire structure cost \$9,400. In July 1870, Commodore A. M. Pennock relieved Admiral Winslow in command of the Yard. But little improvement was made to the Yard owing to the meagre appropriations for that purpose during the years 1870-71 and 72.

The "Narragansett" was fitted out, work was progressing on the "Monongahela," and the sloop "Illinois" which had been completely destroyed by dry rot in the shiphouse, was taken to pieces. Admiral D. G. Farragut while on a visit to his relative the Commandant was taken ill and after a brief period of suffering, expired on the 14th of Aug.

In the death of Admiral Farragut the whole nation lamented its loss, as an officer and skillful sailor his fame is world wide. His valor and patriotism were never questioned; and modesty which always make a really true man, was peculiarly characteristic of him.

On the 10th of October 1872, Commodore John C. Howell relieved Admiral Pennock who on his promotion was ordered to command the Asiatic Squadron.

The appropriation for this yard having been increased, work was at once begun in the various departments of the yard. A chain-shed was built; the Floating Dock extensively repaired; a truss bridge built to connect the yard with Seavey's Island; Gas pipes laid, Gas Works built and Gas introduced for lighting the Yard and Quarters; Wharf and Bridge built on Seavey's Island; Tool-House built and Portico, etc., added to the Comdt's Quarters. In addition to these repairs and improvements the beautiful Waiting house at the Portsmouth landing was built to take the place of the miserable shed which had been in use many years.

The "Monongahela" was rebuilt and refitted and the Marion steam sloop launched. Two steam sloops of war were begun in 1873 and both launched the year following. The "Enterprise" being the first of these two sloops launched: she was built by contract by Mr. J. Griffiths, the Government furnishing every thing excepting labor. The sloop "Essex" the other of the two sloops constructed at the yard was built entirely by the Government. Much difficulty was experienced during the Summer of 1874 in supplying the yard with fresh water, owing to the dryness of the season, in fact it was the occasion of much anxiety, as the various workshops in the yard are dependent upon fresh water to fill their boilers. The fact was laid before the Department, and several propositions were made one was to cover an artesian well on the island, the estimated cost of which did not fall short of \$60,000 dollars - owing to the peculiar formation of the strata. By an accidental discovery of several springs upon Seavey's Island, it occurred to the Commandant that a dam might be so constructed as to save the water that escaped and form a pond in the valley which was already swampy. It was done at small cost and in a short time a large pond was formed which is now a never-failing source of supply, being conducted by pipes to a cistern on the yard. The entire cost of this work including a steam engine for pumping the water into the reservoir for distribution, was less than five hundred dollars. This pond has never failed to supply the yard with water, and in the winter also with a large supply of heavy ice, which is stored for the use of the Yard, and the sick at Quarantine; several hundred tons of this refreshing commodity is thus saved every year.

Kittery Bridge which for sometime had been considered as unsafe, was extensively repaired and put in complete condition.

In October 1874 Commodore Howell was ordered to Washington as Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks and was relieved from command of the Yard by Commodore Andrew Bryson the present Commandant.

During the years 1874 and 1875 the U. S. Steamers Ticonderoga, Lancaster and Kansas arrived with the yellow fever on board and after a strict Quarantine were removed to the Yard. The Plymouth was fitted out and sailed, orders were received to hasten the equipment of the sloops Marion and Enterprise, and at the close of the year 1875 the new sloop Marion was put in commission and sailed on a cruise. The Frigate Sabine which had for three years past been Receiving ship at this yard was fitted up as a training ship for boys, under the cognizance of the Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting, and one hundred boys were enlisted and under training at the close of this year. Since the present commandant assumed the command there have been but very small sums allotted this Yard, and consequently little could be done excepting the equipping of the ships mentioned, and preserving the property entrusted to his care. Quantities of building material have been received and placed in the Wet dock for preserving it, and the timber sheds are well supplied.


We have now arrived at the close of one hundred years review of this important Yard: step by step, we have traced its growth from infancy to manhood. We have followed also the immense strides that improvement has taken, both in the construction of ships, and in ordnance; these we have traced from the bluff bows, high poops, and six pounder guns of the frigate Falkland in 1690, to the yacht-like model, powerful armament and elegant engines of the sloop Marion now lying at the wharf and ready to sail on a cruise; the wide superiority of the one over the other, is greater than even the lapse of time would seem to indicate.

The "Giant Steam," so modestly and so cautiously introduced on the island now revolves the wheels of the entire establishment.

The deep water front and wharves accessible at all seasons, bear testimony to the sound judgment of those through whose influence this site was secured for Naval Station. While the harbors of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, are obstructed with ice to a great extent during the severe Winters, the waters of the Piscataqua ebb and flow as the pulses of nature free and deep. The heat of Summer is modified by the hills of New Hampshire the Switzerland of America, making this port the refuge, of fever afflicted ships, which hasten from the tropics to breathe the health inspiring air. A station having so good a record, and possessing so many peculiar advantages, we doubt not will be cherished by the Government, till developed and furnished with means for constructing the finest of ships.

Nothing remains to remind us of the early days of our republic save indeed the "Old Elm Tree," now standing in the grounds of the Commandant. That has witnessed the scenes of the past two hundred years unchanged; the restoration of the Stuarts, and the surrender of Lee's army, are events which are embraced within the life of this venerable patriarch, and it still stands the connecting link between the present and the past.

"Old Tree! still brave the Storm"

 ERRATA: On page 12, ninth line and on third line from bottom of page, please read 1776 instead of 1775.

List of Vessels of War built at this Station.

<i>Names.</i>	<i>Guns.</i>	<i>Class.</i>	<i>Year.</i>	<i>Names.</i>	<i>Guns.</i>	<i>Class.</i>	<i>Year.</i>
Falkland,	54	Frigate,	1690	} Built for the Royal Navy.			
Bedford,	32	"	1696				
America,	60	"	1749				

Built for the Colonial Navy, from 1775 to 1800.

Raleigh,	22	Frigate,	1775	America,	74	Ship of Line	1776
Ranger,	18	Sloop,	1776	Portsmouth,	24	Sloop	1797
Crescent,*	32	Frigate.	1778	Scammel,	14	Schooner	1798
Congress,	38	"	1799				

*Presented to Algiers.

Built for the Navy of the United States.

Washington,	74	Ship	1814	Ossipee,	9	Steam Sloop,	1861
Alabama,	} 74	"	1817	Kearsarge,	9	" "	1861
changed to				Sebago,	9	" "	1861
N. Hampshire,	} <i>Launched</i>		1864	Mahaska,	9	" "	1861
Porpoise,		11	Schooner	1820	Sacramento,	10	" "
Santee,	} 44	Frigate,	1820	Sonoma,	10	" "	1862
			<i>Launched</i>	1855	Connemaugh,	10	" "
Concord,	24	Sloop,	1827	Sasacus,	10	" "	1863
Preble,	20	"	1839	Franklin,	60	S. Frigate,	1863
Congress,	50	Frigate,	1841	Patuxet,	9	Steam Sloop,	1863
Saratoga,	24	Sloop,	1842	Nipsic,	9	" "	1863
Portsmouth,	24	"	1843	Shawmut,	10	" "	1863
Saranac,	11	S. Frigate,	1848	Decota,*	10	" "	1863
Light Ship, (for Nantucket,)			1855	Contoocook,	15	" "	1864
Jamestown,*	24	Sloop,	1857	Benecia,	11	" "	1865
Mohican,	9	Steam Sloop,	1857	Monongahela* ¹⁰		" "	1869
Passaconaway	4	Ironclad,	1864	Marion,	10	" "	1873
Port Fire,		Tug,	1864	Enterprise,	7	" "	1873
Blue Light,			1864	Essex,	7	" "	1874
Agamenticus,	4	Ironclad,	1864				
Piscataqua,	15	Sloop of War,	1864				
Minnetonka,	"	"	1864				
Illinois,	"	"	1864				

*Rebuilt.

APPENDIX.

By the kindness of William L. Dwight Esquire, of Portsmouth N. H. a descendant of Captain Thomas Thompson U. S. N. I am enabled to insert some very interesting original documents. The following is a copy of the commission of Captain Thompson of the Frigate "Raleigh."

IN CONGRESS.

The Delegates of the United States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode-Island, Connecticut, New York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia To.

THOMAS THOMPSON, Esquire.

*We, reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Patriotism, Valor, Conduct and Fidelity. Do, by these Presents, constitute and appoint you to be Captain in the Navy of the United States of North America, fitted out for the defence of American Liberty, and for repelling every hostile Invasion thereof. You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the Duty of Captain by doing and performing all manner of Things thereunto belonging.

And we do strictly charge and require all Officers, Marines and Seamen under your command to be obedient to your Orders as Captain. And you are to observe and follow such Orders and Directions from Time to Time, as you shall receive from this or a future Congress. Dated at Philadelphia October 10th 1776.

By order of the Congress.

JOHN HANCOCK,
President.

(Attest.) CHAS. THOMPSON, Sect'y.

*Number Six. The number of Commission determines the rank,
JOHN HANCOCK,
Pres't.

In the Travels of the Marquis de Chastelleux, who was in Portsmouth in 1782, it is said of Captain Thompson: "That he was born in England, he is a good seaman and an excellent ship builder and is besides a sensible man, "greatly attached to his new country, which it is only fifteen years since he adopted."

In the "Journals of Congress" under date of Thursday June 6th 1776 is the following. "Resolved that Thomas Thompson be appointed Captain of the frigate built at New Hampshire." And again under date of Oct. 10th 1776 we find a second commission as Captain in the Navy of the United States granted him, making him number six on the list of Captains; this is the commission, a copy of which is given above.

With regard to the loss of the "Alfred" mentioned upon page 15. I have endeavored to find some record of the court martial which was called upon Captain Thompson, upon his return to the United States. In the "Journals of Congress" under date, August 5th, 1778, is the fol-

lowing. "Ordered—That the proceedings of the trial "of Captain Thompson lie on the table."

Cooper in his "History of the Navy" passes by the subject of the court martial of this gallant officer, so slightly as to leave the impression that Captain Thompson, had been guilty of some neglect; he says, "Captain Thompson was blamed *in the journals of the day*, for not aiding his consort on this occasion, and he appears to have been suspended in the command of his ship to await the result of a trial.

The truth is that the two ships "Raleigh" and "Alfred," were deeply laden with military stores for the Government of the United States, the loss of which would have been disastrous to the colonies at that time, and Captain Thompson not only showed his good judgement in making good his escape, but in all probability obeyed his private instructions from Congress. To risk the uncertain result of single combat when the fate almost of an entire nation, depended upon the safe arrival at home of his ship, loaded as she was with arms for Washington's army, was not the character of a "sensible man."

He displayed upon his outward trip a knowledge of seamanship and courage of no inferior order when he sailed into the fleet of sixty sail of vessels, and singling out the commodore, all this in signal distance of three sloops of war, attacked him. The state of New Hampshire to show that she had not lost confidence in his valor and patriotism appointed him Colonel of Artillery. His commission as Colonel is signed by Governor John Langdon, and is dated the 11th day of August 1785.

Captain Thompson died at Portsmouth in 1809.

LIST OF OFFICERS AND PETTY OFFICERS OF THE U. S.
FRIGATE RALEIGH, August, 1775.

Names	Rank	Where belonging
Thomas Thompson	Commander	Portsmouth
Peter Shores.	1st Lieut.	"
Josiah Shackford.	2d "	"
Hopley Yeaton.	4th "	"
Thomas Manning.	Master	"
John Yeaton.	Mate	"
Robert Curtis	"	"
John Adams.	Purser	"
John Jackson.	Surgeon	"
John Quinn.	Surg' Mate	Kittery
George J. Osborn.	Capt' Marines	Exeter
Stephen Meads.	1st. Lt. Marines	New York
Nath'l Thwing.	2d " "	Boston
William Bray.	Boatswain	Portsmouth
William Cambridge.	Gunner	England
Simeon Fernald.	Carpenter	Portsmouth
Ben'j Dam.	Sailmaker	Kittery
John Frost.	Midshipman	Portsmouth
Sam McClintock.	"	"
Rich'd Littlefield.	"	"
Dan'l Durgan.	"	"
Dan'l Lang.	"	"
Rich'd Langdon.	Capt's Clerk	"
Sam'l Parher.	Steward	New Hampshire

Wm. Ward.	Coxswain	New Hampshire
Robert Whipple.	Armorer	Portsmouth
Robert Cockran.	Cooper	"
James Furlong.	Boat's Mate	"
Henry Williams.	"	"
Philip McCann.	"	Newburyport
Wm Stevens.	Cook	"
Henry Cate.	Mas't at Arms	Portsmouth
Francis Little.	Gun's Mate	"
Nicholas Bufford.	Yeoman	"
Ebenezer Pray.	Corp's Mate	"
Mathias Bell.	Boat's Yeoman	"
Joseph Clements.	Capt's Steward	"
Thomas Passmore.	Quartermaster	"
John Mendum.	"	"
Wm. Mendum.	"	"
Peter Merserve.	"	"
John Fernald.	"	"

June 6th 1776

"Resolved: that Thomas Thompson be appointed Captain of the rigate built in New Hampshire."

July 22d 1776.

"The Marine Committee having recommended the following gentlemen for officers of the Raleigh, namely, Peter Shores John Wheelwright, Josiah Shackford, Lieutenants; George Jerry Osborne Captain of the Marines; Stephen Meads, first lieutenant, Nathaniel Twing second lieutenant. Resolved: That they be accepted and that commissions be granted them accordingly.

September 9th 1776.

Resolved: That in all Continental Commissions and other instruments, where, heretofore the words 'United Colonies' have been used, the stile be altered, for the future, to the 'United States.'

October 10th 1776.

The Marine committee reported that they have had under consideration the rank of Captains of the Navy, and agreed to a report which was read; whereupon Resolved. That the rank of the Captains be as follows: (Here follows a list of twenty four Captains, with the names and rate of the ships to which they were appointed, in which Thomas Thompson is named as the sixth, to be Captain of the Raleigh, 32 guns)

In a note, in the translation of the Travels of the Marquis de Chastelleux, page 310, written by the translator, probably in 1786. or 1787, it is stated that 'The America' is now at Brest, and is esteemed one of the handsomest ships in the French Navy."

Toulon Feby 4th 1876.

MY DEAR MR. FENTRESS.

Yours of the 1st ulto. was received, and I feel sorry that I cannot aid you, in more clearly tracing the ship. The record that was found by M. Lebean, and extract from which I sent you in my first letter, is all that can be found, of any kind or descrip-

tion of the ship, altho in a Log Book is a mention of the arrival of "l'Amérique" "74" at this Station in Oct 1791. I do not think that there is any doubt about the ship captured, being the ship that was built at Portsmouth, she was probably rebuilt, and that would explain the term "neuf" which you mention. I would not rely too much upon the dimensions as quoted, for it is more than probable, that they were not exactly correct.

I think that enough has been found to identify the America captured as the America presented to France by the U. S. Government.

Wishing you every happiness

I am Sir

Yours truly

J. G. PLATTNER.

FROM SIR WM. PEPPERRELL TO GOV. B. WENTWORTH.

MARCH, 1747.

SIR:

The Honorable Peter Warren Esq. having signified to me in a letter dated the 24th of October last that the Right Honorable, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty by letter to him, dated 13th of March last had directed him to build four ships of war in New England, two of them of twenty-four guns and two of forty-four guns, and the said Peter Warren Esquire, having in his aforementioned letter to me, desired that I would undertake to agree with some shipwright or shipwrights for the erecting and building one of the said ships of forty-four guns in Pascataqua, and whereas I have been treating with Col. Nathaniel Messerve of this province, and have proposed his coming under contract for his Majesty's service in England, and being desirous of advice concerning the value of such a ship, I beg you will be pleased to appoint, three or moae gentlemen of probity, skill, and judgement in ship-building, to take the premises under consideration, and report in writing to your Excellency as soon as may be what such a ship is worth oer ton, to be built and completely furnished in the manner aforesaid.

I am Sir Your humble Serv't

WILLIAM PEPPERRELL Bar't

TO HIS EXCELLENCY,

GOVERNOR BENNING WENTWORTH,

Portsmouth.

Gov. B. Wentworth ordered Joshua Pierce, Jotham Odione, and Mark Hunkiug Wentworth to estimate the value of such a ship, who reported nine pounds per ton as a fair price for government to give for the vessel, to be completely fitted with forty-four guns.

This undertaking opened a correspondence between Sir. William, and the Lords of the Admiralty, who furnished him with models and directions, and honored his drafts while the vessels were building. The ship built at Portsmouth was called the "America" and was launched on the 4th day of Msy 1749; when finished, she was loaded with spars and naval stores and sent to London under convoy having only one tier of guns mounted. She was esteemed one of the best frigates in the British Navy.

Parson's Life of Sir Wm. Pepperrell.



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