

Journal Kept on Board the United States Frigate "Constitution," 1812, by Amos A. Evans,  
Surgeon United States Navy (continued)

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JOURNAL KEPT ON BOARD THE UNITED STATES  
FRIGATE "CONSTITUTION," 1812, BY AMOS A.  
EVANS, SURGEON UNITED STATES NAVY.

CONTRIBUTED BY A. W. EVANS, ELKTON, MARYLAND.

(Continued from page 169.)

*August 19<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday.*—Cloudy and foggy. Course S. & W. Wind N. by E. Lat. observed  $41^{\circ} 42'$  N. Long. by D. R.  $55^{\circ}$  W. At 2 P.M. discovered a large sail to Lee-ward. Made sail and stood down for her. At 4 discovered her to be a large Frigate. When we were within about 2 or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles she hoisted English colours and fired a Gun. We stood towards her with reefed topsails without shewing our colours. She then commenced firing, and gave us several broad sides without much effect before we commenced firing. She kept wearing several times with a view probably of trying to get the weather gauge of us, which we avoided by wearing also. We hoisted our colours and fired the first gun about 15 minutes past 5 o'clock P.M., but did not come into close action until about 6 o'clock, and after 25 minutes from the time we were closely engaged she struck, having previously lost all three of her masts and Bowsprit. Her hull was much injured. Several of her guns were dismounted or otherwise rendered useless on the gun deck by our shot. She had 15 men killed and 62 wounded, most of them very dangerously, immense mischief and destruction having been done by our grape & canister shot. We had

*Killed:*

W<sup>m</sup> S. Bush, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Marines; and Seamen, Jacob Sago, John Brown, Caleb Smith, James Ashford, Robert Brice, James Reed.

*Wounded:*

Charles Morris, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant, Dangerously; J. C. Aylwin, Master, slightly; Rich<sup>d</sup> Dunn, Seaman, Dangerously;

Dan<sup>l</sup> Lewis, do. do. ; Taylor, do. Slightly ; Mullen, Marine, do. ; Geo. Reynolds, Seaman, do. Beside 4 or 5 others so slightly as not to be disabled from coming to Quarters.

During the engagement she came against our stern with her bows twice, and carried away her Jib boom and injured our Taffrail. It was when in that situation that Lt. Morris and Lt. Bush were shot. Mr. Morris first jumped on the Taffrail with an intention of boarding her and was instantly wounded in the parietes of the abdomen. Mr. Bush jump<sup>d</sup> into his place the instant he fell and immediately one musket shot entered his face and pass<sup>d</sup> into his brain. Little or no other injury was done us at that time, and her quarter deck and forecastle were completely swept. Her Second Lieutenant was kill<sup>d</sup>, and the Captain, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant, Sailing master, and one of the Master's mates wounded. She hoisted 3 or 4 flags at the commencement of the action, and struck immediately after she got clear of our stern. Her foremast and mainmast and mizzenmast fell about the time she was in contact with us. After she struck the Capt. Is. R<sup>d</sup> Dacres Esq came on board and informed us that it was His Britannick Majesty's ship *La Guerriere*. We sent Lt. Reed on board and finding the ship in a situation that was considered dangerous to attempt getting in we were employ<sup>d</sup> all night getting the men and crew from on board. She mounted 49 Guns and had about from 260 to 300 men, having sent previously part of her crew in prizes. Capt. Dacres is a pleasant, agreeable young man, 24 years of age.

Our crew behaved very nobly. They fought like heroes, and gave three cheers when the colours were hoisted. They also cheered when each of her masts went over the side, and when her colours were struck. Whilst she was on our stern one of her forward guns was run nearly into our Cabin window and fired, but did (fortunately) little or no execution. A shot that entered our after port on the starboard side of the gun deck killed 2 men at the after Gun and wounded one. From the firing of the first gun to the close of the action was one hour & ten minutes. The *Guerriere* had 15 kill<sup>d</sup> and 62 wounded.

*August 20<sup>th</sup>, Thursday.*—Pleasant breeze. Laying to all day getting the men and their effects from the *Guerriere*. Assisted Dr Irwin, Surg<sup>n</sup> of the *Guerriere*, to dress his wounded and amputate 2 arms & one thigh. Then amputated the leg of Rich<sup>d</sup> Dunn. Had no sleep all last night dressing wounded men as they came on board after dressing all our own wounded. Last night there was a large sail in sight, but she disappeared before morning. We conclude from that she was a merchantman. About 3 or 4 o'clock having got all the men from the *Guerriere* we set her on fire, and before the officer had time to get on board our Ship with the boat she blew up, presenting a sight the most incomparably grand and magnificent I have experienced. No painter, no poet or historian could give on canvas or paper any description that could do justice to the scene.

In the evening we committed the bodies of Lt. Bush and one of the *Guerriere*'s men who died of his wounds, to the deep. Employ<sup>d</sup> all day repairing our rigging, &c—Calm—Lat. ob—at meridian.

*August 21<sup>st</sup>, Friday.*—Calm. Employ<sup>'d</sup> repairing our rigging, fishing our mast that had received some damage from the enemy's shot, &c. In the evening there sprung up a breeze from the — and we made sail: it increased during the fore part of the night and rain<sup>d</sup>. We were running before the wind, with double reefed Topsails, 12 Knots. Lat. ob:

*August 22<sup>d</sup>, Saturday.*—Calm—All day employ<sup>d</sup> fishing the mainmast. Our spanker boom & gaff were carried away when she ran against our stern. Lat. ob: at meridian.

At sun set discovered a sail from the top gallant yard: again lost sight of her.

*August 23<sup>d</sup>, Sunday.*—Blew very fresh and rained hard last night. Were going 11, 12 and 13 knots. Were call<sup>d</sup> to quarters about 3 o'clock A.M. having discovered a sail to Leeward. About day light came up with and spoke the Brig Rebecca from London bound to Boston, having a British license. There was a prize-master from Comm<sup>d</sup> Barney's squadron on board of her. She had been board<sup>d</sup>

some days ago by the *Guerriere*, who sent some prisoners on board and permitted her to pass in consequence of having a license. She was several times spoken by the *Guerriere* after Barney had taken her, but they did not again board her. We discovered at 9 o'clock A.M. two sails off the lee-bow, apparently frigates. We stood on with a fresh breeze and were soon out of sight of them. Before Sun set we discovered another sail ahead; made sail after her: appear to gain on her slowly, & are going 9 knots to the N.W. Lat. ob: at meridian.

*August 26<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday.*—Calm, foggy and damp all day. A small Brig in sight astern when the fog cleared off. Slight breeze from N. after night: steering W. No observations to-day. Sounded in 50 fathoms water at noon. Caught several Cod-fish to-day. A number of Mother Carey's chickens around the ship, and a number of something resembling a parcel of handsome, large beads strung on thread, of a beautiful green and pale blue colour, floating around the ship, some distance under water. Tried the current and found a slight one setting to the Northward.

*August 27<sup>th</sup>, Thursday.*—Light airs—calms—cloudy. No observation. A sloop ahead, sweeping—supposed to be an American privateer. She fired a gun and hoisted a flag, but were not near enough to distinguish the colour. She swept off from us in a calm. Sounded in 100 fathoms of water. Several chicken-hawks, and bats, and butterflies about the ship to-day.

*August 29<sup>th</sup>, Saturday.*—Pleasant breezes from N. & W—and beating up Massachusetts Bay. Several small vessels in sight. By — P.M. were in sight of Boston light house.

*August 30<sup>th</sup>, Sunday.*—Pleasant weather. The wind not permitting us to lay thro' the narrows we ran into Nantasket roads and Anchored. Sent the wounded prisoners to the Hospital on Quarantine Island. A number of boats around the ship, attracted by curiosity.

*August 31<sup>st</sup>, Monday.*—Saw 4 armed ships and a Brig this morning at day light standing in near the light house. Supposed them to [be] the enemy and instantly cut our

cables and beat down to lower part of the narrows under a heavy press of sail with a view of getting up before they would be able to cut us off. We could not understand each other's signals. By the time we arrived at the narrows discovered that they were American Frigates. They proved to be the President, Com<sup>d</sup> Rodgers; U. States, Decatur; Congress, Smith; Hornet, Laurence; and Brig Argus, Sinclair. We ran up near the Navy Yard and anchored. As we pass<sup>d</sup> Long Wharf were saluted with huzzas by a great concourse of people from that place and the different Merchant vessels. Com<sup>ds</sup> Decatur and Bainbridge, Capt. Laurence and Sinclair came on board—a number of other officers; and the vessel was crowded all day with citizens—boats surrounded us, huzzaing, &c.

Sent all the prisoners from the ship. Before sending the men overhauled their bags in which we found a great deal of cloth & silk, plundered from American merchantmen and distributed to the crew without being condemned.

*September 1-3.*—Nothing of consequence has taken place: have been in Town several times—at the Navy Yard and Hospital. Visited the Museum to-day, and had a strong Electrical shock. A report has arrived to-day of an action between two Frigates near Cape Cod—one supposed to be the Frigate Essex—(suspect it is all a Yankee hoax), in consequence of which The President, United States, and Hornet, it is said, will sail to-morrow morning for that place. 60 of our men and 4 or 5 officers have gone on board the President, a great number of her crew being on shore—sick. The scurvy has done much mischief in Comm<sup>d</sup> Rodgers' squadron.

*September 5.*—Wind from N. & E—cold rain. Were honoured with a superb dinner at Faneuil Hall by the citizens of Boston to-day. Much order and decorum were preserved on the occasion. Several excellent Patriotic toasts drank. The Hon. J<sup>no</sup> Coffin Jones presided. In the Gallery, fronting the President's chair, was a model of the Constitution Frigate with her masts fished and the Colours as they flew during the action. The Hall was surrounded with notices

of our principal Naval victories—An elegant painting of Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington by Stewart graced one side of the room, by the side of which hung the names of Preble, Wadsworth, Somers, Israel, &c—surrounded with garlands of flowers. Several guns were mounted on the Galleries. A wreath of flowers were hung above the head of Capt. Hull, who sat on the President's right hand. About 500 persons sat down to the dinner, and much harmony prevailed thro'out. A band of musick played in the Gallery, and every toast was honored by several guns from the street. Previously to the dinner we were taken into the Assembly room at the Exchange where the subscribers were assembled, and introduced to the President. Capt [Hull ?] was greeted on his entrance into the room with the plaudits of the people.

*September 6.*—Windy—N. & E. cool. The Frigates that were to have sailed on a cruise several days ago, did not go out, but are now laying in the inner harbour. Gen<sup>l</sup> Hull's capitulation is the subject of much speculative conversation at the coffee house. A Gentleman at the dinner yesterday observed that, when he heard of it, he could not help saying—we had a *Hub Up*<sup>1</sup> and a *Hull down*—

*September 7.*—Pleasant weather. Employ<sup>d</sup> stripping the ship for the purpose of getting some new rigging, masts, &c. Went on shore in the evening with Lt. Wadsworth who is sick, and afterwards visited some of the British officers. Report on the Coffee House books that two armed Brigs and a three masted schooner are off Cape Ann to-day; probably another Yankee hoax to get us out of the harbour.

*September 8.*—Pleasant weather—Stripping the ship. The ship, as usual, crowded with visitors all day. Report that the Brig Viper is taken by a British Frigate and carried into New Providence.

Confirmation Gen<sup>l</sup> Hull's capitulation and very unfavourable reports concerning him. Ten men on the sick list. Our squadron still in port. Report of the day, that the Essex has had an engagement on the banks with a

<sup>1</sup> *Sic*: Hull up?

British Frigate. Doc<sup>t</sup> Irwin and Lt. Kent of the *Guerriere* visited us to-day. They are highly delighted with the attentions that have been paid them by the citizens of Boston. They say they are overpowered with invitations to dine, &c. I went on board the *Hornet* to-day, and found her a highly finished & handsome vessel.

*September 9.*—Pleasant weather. Dropped the ship up to the Navy Yard. Went ashore to the Exchange in the evening. Fresh reports of English vessels off the coast. Rumour that Detroit is retaken.

*September 10-11.*—A cartel arrives from Halifax, bringing, amongst other prisoners, Capt. Crane and the other officers and crew of the *Nautilus*.

The Admiral detained 6 of our seamen under pretence that they were English subjects, and sent them to England for tryal. When Comm<sup>d</sup> Rodgers heard of it he stopp<sup>d</sup> the cartel, at that moment passing with the *Guerriere's* crew, & took out of her 12 seamen to be dealt with as they treat ours. Report says that they treated our prisoners very badly—That the officers were sent into the cockpit every night & there kept till morning. That one of our Mid<sup>m</sup> who was retaken in a prize had his sword taken from him by the Capt. of the British frigate, who, after stamping on it, threw it overboard, with the expression that there was *one damn<sup>d</sup> Yankee sword gone*.

It appears that the *Statira* Frigate was very near Comm<sup>d</sup> Rodgers' squadron in the night without the latter knowing it, and that the Capt. and crew of the *Statira* confidently expected to be taken. The people of the United States are saying and doing many handsome things in consequence of the Constitution's late victory.

Supped at the Exchange last night and dined there to-day. Purchased a celebrated little work lately published in New York by the author of "*Salmagundi*," call<sup>d</sup> the "*Diverting History of John Bull and brother Jonathan*" by Hector Bull-us, which is making much noise amongst political parties in the United States.

*September 12.*—Went on shore in the evening to see Mr.



Morris, but did not go into Town. Our prize brig, the *Adelaide*, was retaken by the *Statira* and sent into Liverpool (N. S.) with Mr. Madison on board. The men returned in the cartel yesterday. The *Statira* fell in with him in the night on George's bank. The *Statira* mounts 52 guns and is reported as badly manned and otherwise much inferior to our Frigates of equal rate. The Americans that returned in the Cartel are still prisoners of war but are recommended by Admiral Sawyer for an exchange with the soldiers taken by Comm<sup>d</sup> Porter and paroll<sup>d</sup>. One British Army Lieut. and 2 private soldiers will be given in exchange for one of our Navy Lieuts. . . . Report of the day that a Fisherman saw Comm<sup>d</sup> Porter engaged with two British frigates off Cape Ann yesterday, & that he saw them capture him. More Yankee hoaxing.

*September 13.*—Went on shore. Report of the day that Frigate *Essex* has arrived in the Delaware, & has taken the British Sloop of war, the *Alert*, mounting 20 guns, & after dismantling, sent her with 300 prisoners as a Cartel into Halifax. This report comes pretty straight & is probably correct. Heard a parcel of Yankees *as usual* cursing "Madison's ruinous war"! & trying to *hoax* the Navy Officers; or, as Hoffman would say, *pouring cold water down their backs!* I wish all his Majesty's loyal subjects would return to their own much loved, dear old England, and not hang like a wen or excrescence on the back of our government: thwarting all its views, & trying to pull it under water. One domestic traitor is worse than 20 foreign, avowed, & open enemies.

*September 14.*—Went on shore & read the newspapers at the Exchange. Report of the day, That 3 British Frigates have been spoken off Cape Cod, who say they are waiting for Rodgers' squadron to come out of Boston. They have heard of the capture of the *Guerriere*. Confirmation of the report of yesterday concerning the *Essex* and Sloop of war. The *Essex*, it appears had disguised herself as a merchantman, when the Sloop of war commenced a fire on her. The *Essex* opened her ports on her for the space of 8 min-

utes. Kill<sup>d</sup> & wounded several of the enemy—none of the Essex's crew were touched.

*September 15.*—To-day Capt. Hull resigned the command of the Constitution to Capt. Bainbridge who hoisted a broad, red pendant. The crew express<sup>d</sup> publicly much dissatisfaction at the change, in consequence of which the Armourer was put in confinement on board the Gun boat for trial. They gave Capt. H. three hearty cheers as he left the ship. The scene altogether was affecting. This whole crew had a great affection for him. They urged him to remain: said they would go out with him and take the Africa: & finally requested to be transferre<sup>d</sup> on board any other vessel. On being asked by Capt. B., who it was that had ever sailed with him & refused to go again, several persons spoke—one man said he had sailed with him in the Phil<sup>a</sup> & had been badly used—that it might be altered now, but he would prefer going with Capt. H., or any of the other commanders. Several others said they had sailed with him before, and did not wish to sail again.

*September 16.*—Went on shore & was introduced by Mr. Aylwin<sup>1</sup> to the Athaeneum, a public library in the place, containing several thousand volumes of very valuable books on all subjects. In the lower room the newspapers of the day are filed. In the 3<sup>d</sup> story the books of J. Q. Adams are kept; amongst them are many German, Italian & French works. This Institution is free to strangers when introduced. No books can be taken out of the house, but persons are at liberty to sit there and read. In the evening rode out to "Fresh-pond" in a gig, & after amusing ourselves by strolling about the pond, & having taken some coffee & fried chicken for which we paid 62½ cents, returned to town, over a pleasant road, by moonlight. The Gig cost us \$1.25 each. . . . Some ladies came on board to visit the ship in our absence.

*September 17.*—Dined with Comm<sup>d</sup> Bainbridge by invitation, in company with Lieuts. Broom, Hoffman, and Contee,

<sup>1</sup> Probably W. C. Aylwin, brother to Lieutenant Aylwin, United States Navy.

Mr. Aylwin, and Doct. Trevett. Was introduced to Mrs. B., Miss B., Miss & Mrs. Hilager,<sup>1</sup> and Miss Nicholson. Had a pleasant time of it. The Wasp has arrived in the Delaware bay from a successful cruise. Got up the sheers to-day for the purpose of getting the masts out.

*September 19.*—Clear & cool. Had a general exercise of the crew in the afternoon.

*September 20.*—Dined on board of the President with Dr. Thorn to-day. Clear & cool in the evening.

*September 22.*—Received a letter to-day from Mr. G. D., New Orleans, dated early in June and forwarded by Mr. Webster. Got out our mainmast to-day. Report that Jefferson will be appointed Secretary of State, & Monroe Sec'ry at War.

*September 23.*—Dined to-day at the Boston Coffee House, a plain & good dinner served by a pretty girl. Pleasant weather!

*September 25.*—Went to the Navy Agent's on business, & from thence to the Exchange & read the Coffee house books & newspapers.

*September 26.*—Went on shore & in company with W. C. Aylwin Esq. walk<sup>d</sup> over the Town, saw the Theatre, Franklin's monument, State house, &c. Had an elegant view of the Town & surrounding country from the top of the State house. Saw the Senate & representative chambers; in the former are a musket—horseman's sword, cap, & drum taken from the Hefsians at the Battle of Bennington, together with a framed complimentary letter to Gen<sup>l</sup> Stark from the House of Representatives of Mass. on the occasion; in the latter a Cod-fish is hung up as the staple commodity of the State. Over the Speaker's chair is a noble head of Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington. The seats are well arranged, but owing to the number of the members are crowded & leave no room to write—having no tables. They go into the adjoining rooms when they wish to do anything of that kind. The Council chamber is a neat, well finished but plain room. In

<sup>1</sup> Sister and mother of Mrs. Bainbridge.

one of the rooms are the 4 inscription stones of a monument that formerly stood on Beacon hill, but have been removed in consequence of the ground on which it stood being proved to be private property. They point out the principal events & most prominent, fortunate features of the revolution & those that led to it, and an exhortation to their posterity not to forget the expense, toil & trouble with which the surrounding blessings were achieved. Report on the coffee house books that Admiral Sir Jno. B. Warren has arrived at Halifax with 4 ships of the line & 12 Frigates.

*September 27.*—Walk<sup>d</sup> around Town with Lt. Contee & saw many pretty girls, coming from & going to church. Cool & cloudy in the evening—wind N. & W. Corroboration of the report that “*Marmont*” has been defeated with considerable loss, in Spain, by Lord Wellington. Gen<sup>l</sup> Hull has arrived at his seat near Boston. Much speculation on his conduct. The British, Yankees, & Federalists take his part, which is a very suspicious circumstance.

*September 28.*—Dined at the exchange to-day. Went in the Evening to the opening of the Theatre for the Season—to see *The Exile of Liberia* performed, with Catherine & Petruchio, or *Taming of the Shrew*, as altered by Garrick from Shakspeare, for the afterpiece. Both pieces were murdered: all the parts being completely overacted. The house was thin. The pit received the whipping part of *Taming the Shrew* with great applause!! Mr. Young, a mouthing, hectoring, bully like fellow acted the parts of Daran & Petruchio. Mrs. Young, a beautiful woman, the part of “Alexina.” Mr. Entwistle in the part of “Sirvitz” received much applause from the Gallery & pit. He is a tolerable Buffoon & Blackguard song singer. The Orchestra was tolerably filled. The Theatre is small, neat & convenient. The Scenery did not meet my expectations. The actors were drefs<sup>d</sup> out of all character: Russian sailors being drefs<sup>d</sup> like English sailors. The Gov. of Liberia in an American *Colonel's* uniform, with but little alteration, &c—But few females attended—indeed, the Navy officers appeared to form the major part of the audience. I would

recommend Hamlet's advice to the players to be attentively studied by Mr. Young.

*October 2.*—Went to the Theatre in the Evening & saw "The Foundling of the forest" performed, or rather butchered, with a new afterpiece call<sup>d</sup> "Guerriere & Constitution," a very foolish, ridiculous thing.

*October 5.*—Went on shore & purchased some books. Read the papers at the Coffee house, &c—More & more disgusted with the Yankees. Purchased some medical & other books at a book store.

*October 6.*—Went on shore to the Navy agent's with a requisition & from thence to the Apothecary shop & bargained for the medicines.

*October 7-8.*—Went to see 2 Regiments of Infantry, some Artillery & Cavalry reviewed on the commons near the "Mal." They look<sup>d</sup> & marched well, but the Infantry fired very badly. The Boston Huzzars are an elegant corps, & the drefs superior to anything of the kind I have seen. They are uniformed after the Polish huzzars. Sargent's light Infantry are a fine company; march, fire & perform the different evolutions with great precision & exactness.

*October 9.*—Yesterday the Frigates President, U. States, & Congress, & Brig Argus sailed on a cruise. All hands employ<sup>d</sup> busily rigging the ship & taking in stores. Carpenters & Joiners still at work.

*October 13.*—Cleared up in the night very cool. Considerable white frost & very cold this morning. Wind N. & W. Very cold for the season all the evening & night. Wind blew a gale during the day. It is now 12 o'clock at night. A sick man who is delirious insists that he will die at 2 o'clock, & is much disturbed when he hears the bell struck, & counts every half hour. He obstinately refuses to have a blister applied behind his neck, saying it may be done at 2 o'clock. I have requested the officer of the deck to omit striking the Bell at  $\frac{1}{2}$  after one & two: & intend to sit up till that hour to watch the effect of firm impression on a debilitated frame. He has complete possefsi<sup>n</sup> of the superstition of his mefsmates.

*October 14.*—The sick man mentioned above is still alive, and much better. Receive very distressing news of the Elections in Maryland. If all the enemies of this country were in Hell, Democracy would still have been triumphant in Md.

*The Friends of Peace & Commerce!* What a farce! And what miserable dunces the people are to be so easily gull<sup>d</sup>! Alex<sup>r</sup> C. Hanson too is Elected to represent the people of Md. in Congress! I am sick of this rascally world—

*October 15.*—Slept ashore at the Exchange last night. This is the first night I have slept out of the ship since we have been in port.

(To be continued.)