THE
DAYBOOK
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HAMPTON ROADS NAVAL MUSEUM
Local History. World Events.

About The Daybook *and the Museum*

The Daybook is an authorized publication of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum (HRNM). Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official view of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy, or the U.S. Marine Corps and do not imply endorsement thereof. Book reviews are solely the opinion of the reviewer.

The HRNM reports to the Naval Historical Center's Museums Division. The museum is dedicated to the study of 225 years of naval history in the Hampton Roads region. It is also responsible for the historic interpretation of the battleship *Wisconsin*.

Call for information on the museum's and *Wisconsin*'s hours of operations. Admission to the museum and *Wisconsin* is free. *The Daybook*'s purpose is to educate and inform readers on historical topics and museum related events. It is written by the staff and volunteers of the museum.

Questions or comments can be directed to the Hampton Roads Naval Museum editor. *The Daybook* can be reached at 757-322-2993, by fax at 757-445-1867, e-mail at gbcalhoun@nsn.cmar.navy.mil, or write *The Daybook*, Hampton Roads Naval Museum, One Waterside Drive, Suite 248, Norfolk, VA 23510-1607. The museum can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.hrnm.navy.mil.

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NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER

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Cover Illustration: Eight years after the City opened its new City Hall, the U.S. Government brought to the building's courtroom a case of enormous moral implications. It involved the captain and crew of the sailing bark *William G. Lewis*. After being captured by the sloop-of-war USS *Dale*, the Government accused the *William G. Lewis* of engaging in the hideous practice of slave trading.

One For the History Books

The Director's Column

by Becky Poulliot

As I write this article, the Hampton Roads Naval Museum is in the process of receiving its very own UIC, or Unit Identification Code. This one little acronym represents a major reorganization of the museum, from its chain of command to where it gets its funding. Since its inception in 1979, the Museum has belonged to the regional naval commander. Known by a variety of names over the years, the incumbent of this office has always held ultimate responsibility for the Naval Station Norfolk and its constituents, to include our museum. All eleven Naval museums were likewise decentralized, born of and reporting to, a specific constituency.

Effective October 1, 2005, all museums became part of one system, reporting to the Museums Division of the Naval Historical Center, headquartered in the Washington, D.C. Navy Yard. The intent behind this merger, enacted by a Chief of Naval Operations' directive of August 5, 2005, is to insure a more efficient business operation for museums as a whole. Rapid change causes a lot of uncertainty and an occasional misstep, but also the opportunity for creativity and improvement.

The staff of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum remains devoted to its local constituency-the Mid-Atlantic Region and Fleet Forces Command, while looking forward to the collaborative opportunities that can arise as being part of a true museum system. We'll keep you posted.

Other changes keep coming to include staff hails and farewells. After five years, our devoted first Battleship Operations Manager Mary Mosier has left for new adventures—to include becoming an HRNM volunteer and assuming a parttime position as Membership Manager for the Hampton Roads Naval Historical Foundation. What a win-win situation! We are also fortunate to report the arrival of Captain Lee Duckworth (Ret.) as the new *Wisconsin* skipper. Lee served on active duty for twenty-eight years and has an extensive aviation and ships' operations background, qualifying as both a pilot and Surface Warfare Officer. Prior to coming aboard *Wisconsin,* Lee served as manager for pilot training for a civilian airline. We are sorry to report the departure of public relations coordinator extraordinaire Emily Cass. She has left us for a more lucrative position, and we wish her well.

The year 2005 has certainly been one for the history books in terms of business structure and staff change. I am happy to report the constancy of the military, volunteer and public support for our institution. This support forms the bedrock of our operation, and I would like to close with a reflection of an enjoyable Saturday in October. The afternoon was spent having lunch with a group of people that are genuine friends of the museum. They were members of the *Wisconsin* Association, and several of them had traveled hundreds of miles just for this occasion—to present the Hampton Roads Naval Museum with two artifacts for exhibit loan. A cruise book and a silver pitcher, both belonging to BB-9 (the "aunt" of BB-64), have now been added to our collection. Also onhand was Mr. McClintock, the son of BB-9's captain, whose name is engraved on the pitcher. What a great day filled with the best the museum has to offer—unique artifacts, and the sea stories to go with them.

May 2006 be as fruitful!

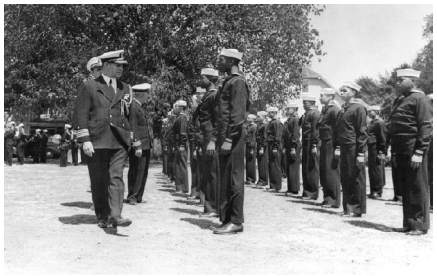
Becky

Museum director Becky Poulliot and Wisconsin Association representative Dave Patrykus with two items from the first battleship Wisconsin*, Battleship Number Nine. The USS Wisconsin Association has loaned both items to the museum (Photo by Lindsey Sigafoos)*

Museum Announces 2006 Speaker Series

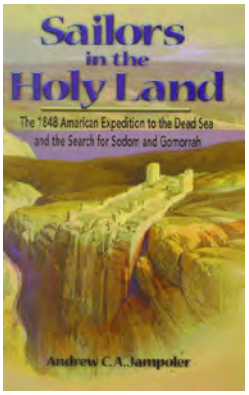
The Hampton Roads Naval Museum is pleased to present its speaker series for 2006. There are two sets of speakers for the year. First, the museum's Luncheon Lecture Series will be held at the Breezy Point Officers' Club at Naval Station Norfolk (passes can be provided). Cost is $10 and reservations are required. The second series, The Dunderfunk Society, focuses on wide-ranging research and topics and will be held at the Courtyard by Marriot hotel in downtown Norfolk. The cost is $12 and free parking is provided. For all talks, call 757-322-3109 for reservations or for more information.

Luncheon Lecture Series



February 16
The Messmen Chronicles
Presented by Richard Miller, Author

From 1933 to 1942, African-American Navy recruits attended Mess Attendant School at Naval Station Norfolk. These recruits battled segregation and limited advancement opportunities to affect real change in the Navy. More than 1,000 members of the messman branch were killed during World War II. Join Richard Miller as he reveals this hidden history.



May 18
Sailors in the Holy Land
Presented by Andrew Jampoler, Author

The Navy has always been in the forefront of world exploration. One of its more unusual missions was the 1848 exploration to the Holy Land in search of scientific evidence of the existence of Sodom and Gomorrah. Andrew Jampoler has traced the voyage and crew of USS *Supply* and her voyage to the Holy Land.

Date TBD
"Waging War in Global Terror"
Presented by Harlan Ullman, National Security Analyst for the *Washington Times*

Join us for a discussion on the role of religion in the terrorist agenda and where the real danger lies. Harlan Ullman will discuss what we have done right and what have done wrong in the War on Terror.

Dunderfunk Society

March 23
Evelyn M. Cherpat discusses the history of the Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services or WAVES units during World War II.

April 20
Historical interpreter Paul Rice presents a first person interpretation of John Holland, inventor of the modern submarine.

July 27
Dave Parker, chief meteorologist for WTKR TV-3, presents his work and discussions with local World War II veterans.

New Temporary Exhibit Focuses On Navy Panoramic Photos

by Joe Judge

Shortly after the invention of photography in 1839, the desire to show overviews of cities and landscapes prompted photographers to create panoramas – photographs much longer than they are tall. These unique photos were commonly taken of ships, groups of people, banquets and other subjects that lent themselves to this wide-angle format. These photographs were quite popular during the first several decades of the Twentieth Century.

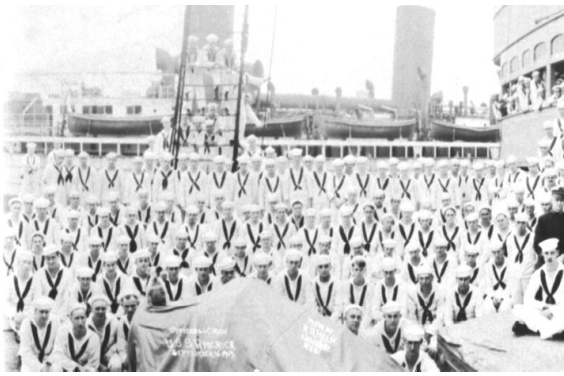
Early nineteenth century photographers made panoramic images by placing a series of smaller images side-by-side. In the late nineteenth century, cameras were manufactured specifically for producing panoramas. These cameras were either swing-lens cameras, where the lens rotated while the film remained stationary, or 360-degree rotation cameras, where both the camera and the film rotated. The first mass-produced American panoramic camera, the Al-Vista, was introduced in 1898.

The following year Eastman Kodak introduced the #4 Kodak "Panoram" panoramic camera that proved popular with amateur photographers. In 1911, Sears, Roebuck & Co. sold the Conley Panoramic Camera through its catalog. Mass-produced panoramic cameras worked on the swing-lens principle, used roll film, and did not need a tripod.

Mass produced panoramic cameras made small panoramas, measuring no more than twelve inches long with a field of view of almost 180 degrees. Developing the film was easy, and the resulting negatives could be contact printed or used for enlargements. The Cirkut camera was patented in 1904. It used large format film, ranging in width from five to sixteen inches and was capable of producing a 360-degree photograph measuring up to twenty feet long. Both the camera and the film rotated on a special tripod during the exposure.

Unlike conventional cameras, many panoramic cameras distort images. Distortion is most evident in street scenes where the camera is positioned at the intersection of two streets. In this panorama, the straight street, which is parallel with the camera, seems curved. Distortion occurs as the distance between the lens and the subject changes.

Naval subjects lent themselves readily to this popular art form. The collection of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum contains examples of panoramic photos that celebrate ships, like the first battleship *Wisconsin*; buildings, like the baseball stadium on the Naval Station; and people, like the members of the Port Watch of the Naval Air Station, Hampton Roads in 1918.



One company in particular, the G.L. Hall Optical Company, produced many of these images. Little is known about G.L. Hall, other than the fact that it was in business in Norfolk during the years 1918-1920. These long images provide a window into the development of the Navy in the Hampton Roads area – the 1920 image of the Naval Station in particular giving a useful frame of reference for the changes that have occurred at Sewell's Point over the last 88 years.

Panoramic photographs continue to be produced today, with more modern equipment. Subjects such as groups of buildings, cities, universities and sporting events suit the format. Information for this article was provided by the Library of Congress American Memory web site, which has some excellent pages on panoramic photos: http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/panoramic_photo/index.html.

The exhibit opens March 1, 2006 in the Forecastle Gallery next to the museum. Call 757-322-2987 for more information.

Naval Operating Base Hampton Roads, 1918

Ship's Company, Troop Ship USAT America*, 1917*

picture perfect...

A Panoramic View of the Navy

Opening March 1, 2006
Forecastle Gallery at Nauticus

United States v. The Bark William G. Lewis

The Navy Brings a Slave Ship to Norfolk

by Joe Mosier

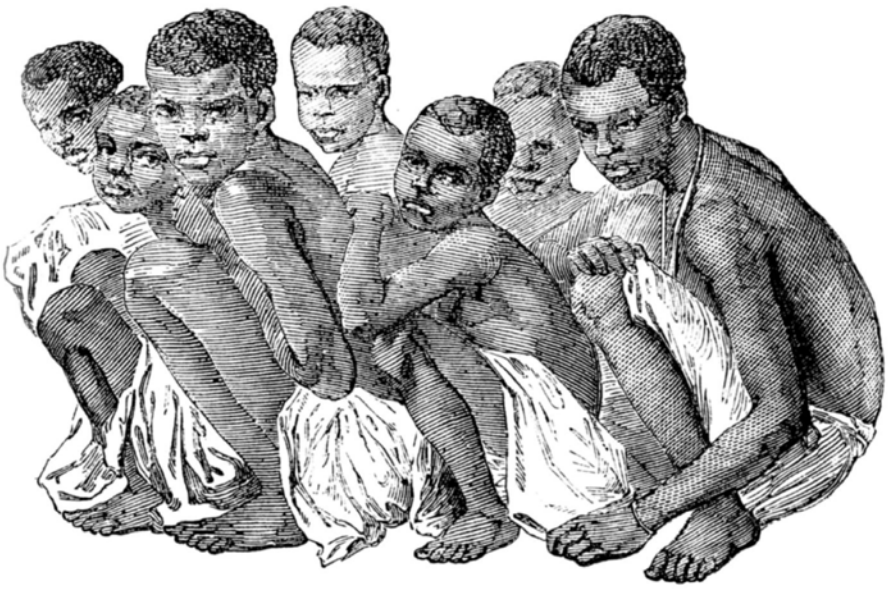
On May 5, 1857, the Sloop-of-War *Dale* departed Norfolk to join *Cumberland*, *Vincennes*, and *Marion* in forming the U. S. Navy Africa Squadron. The primary assignment of this squadron was the interdiction of the slave trade between Africa and the Americas.

Since 1843, this effort had been shared with a larger contingent of Royal Navy ships. The two navies operated under differing rules. The British had signed treaties over the years with a number of countries (excluding America) allowing for search and seizure of vessels suspected to be engaged in the slave trade. The U. S. Navy was restricted to the search of American-flagged vessels. Moreover, the British maintained a commissioner at Sao Paulo de Loando who could provide the Royal Navy with intelligence and supplies. The forward base of the U. S. Navy was located at Proto Praya, more than a thousand miles from their patrol areas.

After stops in Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands, *Dale*, under the command of Commander William McBlair, finally reached the southern patrol area centered on the mouth of the Congo in September. The sloop cruised for weeks meeting only a single American whaler.

McBlair grew increasingly frustrated. He felt it was futile to send sailing warships into a littoral situation where steam power was required. Also, there were far more dire consequences to an American slaver of being captured by a U. S. rather than British warship. As a result, this yielded captures to the Royal Navy at the expense of U. S. Navy successes.

McBlair wrote to Navy Secretary Isaac Toucey of such a case, that of the bark *Clara B. Williams*. When the bark had been stopped by HMS *Alecto*, her master had refused a search by the Royal Navy vessel. *Alecto*'s captain had taken the bark in tow planning to deliver her to *Dale*. After ten hours the master of the *C. B. Williams* threw his flag and logbooks overboard. Faced with the choice of losing his ship or potentially losing his life, the American was happy to become a British capture under the category of "no flag, no papers."



Though the international slave trade had been made illegal by most nations and morally condemned by many leading national figures, the prospect of high profit voyages led many American merchant ship owners and captains to engage in the horrible practice. (1861 Harper's Weekly *engraving)*

McBlair conferred with the squadron's commander Flag Officer Thomas Conover onboard *Cumberland* when both ships visited Sao Paulo de Loando in November. McBlair suggested a joint expedition with a Royal Navy steamer to investigate American shipping up the Congo River. Upon *Dale*'s return to the mouth of that river, McBlair put his plan into effect, as he wrote to Secretary Toucey on November 13, 1857: "I thought it would be advisable to propose a joint expedition up the Congo, to the Commander of any HBM steamers that I might fall in with. On the 21st [of October] I sought the cruising ground of HBM Steamer *Myrmidon* off Snake's Point and succeeded in making the above mentioned arrangement with her commander. That night I dispatched an armed boat with two officers to join the 'Myrmidon'. The *Myrmidon* took her in tow and proceeded to the mouth of the Congo, and up the river. … On the morning of the 23rd, the expedition from the Congo returned. Two American vessels were examined there, the barque *Wm. G. Lewis* of New York and the brigantine *Windward* of New Orleans. However, Commander Robinson [of *Myrmidon*] was so anxious to return with the steamer that I was not satisfied with the examination. … Still dissatisfied with the hasty expedition up the Congo, on the 31st [after visiting Loango Bay] I dispatched the launch under command of Lieut. Walker. … He brought down under suspicion the barque *W. G. Lewis* which after careful reflection, I have determined to take possession of, and send to the United States as a vessel prepared to engage in the slave trade."

McBlair was suspicious of the bark on several counts:

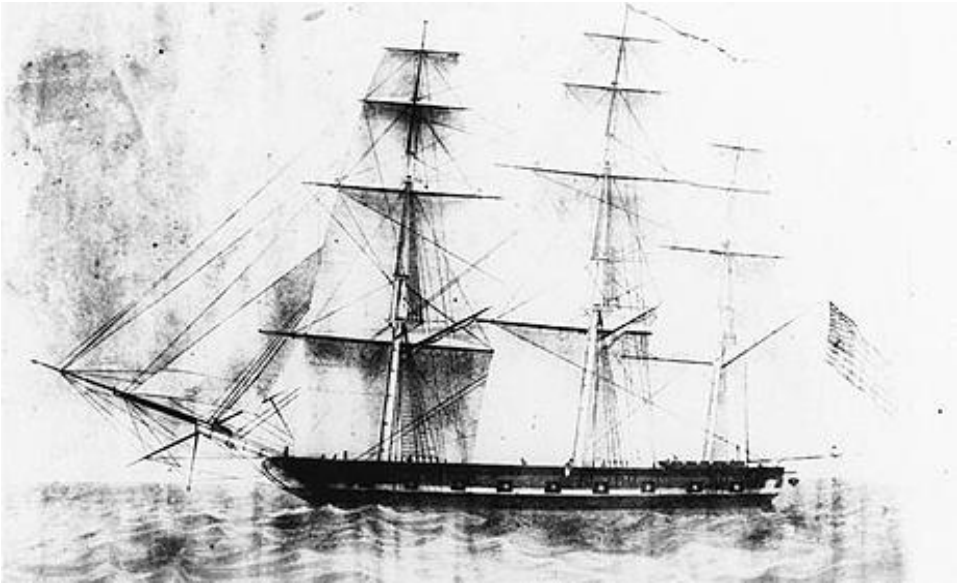
(1) The vessel had been chartered by L. Viana of New York with a stipulation she was not to proceed more than 10 miles up any river; yet she had been found 30 miles up the Congo at Punta de Linha

(2) The signatures on the charter party were not witnessed by any party.

(3) The letter of instruction to her master, John Fredell, ordered him to sail direct to Loando and there seek instructions from Costa Lima & Company to whom the cargo was addressed, but *Wm. G. Lewis* had never called at Loando.

(4) The crew list did not agree with the names of those actually on board.

William G. Lewis continued on page 7



In mid-1859, the sloop-of-war USS Dale *returned to her homeport of Norfolk after an extensive cruise off the African coast in search of slave traders. Her captain, Commander William McBlair, and his crew had earlier captured the bark* William G. Lewis *during a raid up the Congo River. McBlair dispatched a prize crew on board* William G. Lewis *and took her and her crew back to Norfolk to face Federal slave trading charges. (Naval Historical Center photo)*

William G. Lewis continued from page 6

(5) The manifest was irregular; it was improperly prepared and was signed but not sworn to. As McBlair wrote, "There is nothing to satisfy me that it has ever been seen by a custom house officer."

(6) The hold contained far more casks than the number actually on the manifest. This was significant in that the "slave deck" of slaver was frequently a false deck built on top of casks stored in the hold.

(7) Most importantly, "She had remaining on board, a passenger who left the United States in her, a Mr. [John] Miller who appears to be the moving spirit in the vessel. .. He has been living on board ever since her arrival but professes to be a mere passenger who has come out to establish an agency. His name is no where found on the vessel's papers or logbook. His presence on board is unaccountable except on the supposition that he is the real captain or owner of the cargo." McBlair found this particularly significant since Fredell, the "Captain (so-called)", was a former New York harbor pilot who had never before undertaken command of a foreign voyage.

McBlair expanded on his reasoning in a letter written on November 10, 1857 to his wife, Virginia Myers McBlair, granddaughter of Norfolk merchant Moses Myers: "I have been very busy, deep in law, deep in thought & earnest in prayer for aid through the Holy Spirit in coming to a decision upon the case of the barque *Wm G. Lewis* which my boat captured up the river & brought down to me upon suspicion. The evidence upon which she was taken was not sufficient in itself, although enough to justify suspicion. I had at one time decided to let her go when a new idea occurred to me, to call for his letter of instruction. This developed the case more fully & pondering over the custom house papers I found important signatures wanting. All is now very clear to me. I have taken charge of her & appointed Lt. Kennard to command and will dispatch her for Norfolk on the 13th. She will reach you about Christmas. I wish I could stow myself away in her, but, as such cannot be, it is not God's will."

McBlair's projected arrival time proved to be correct. Now commanded by Lieutenant Joel S. Kennard, *Dale*'s executive officer, the bark arrived in Norfolk about December 20, 1857. The next day, U. S. District Attorney John M. Gregory presented libel papers against *William G. Lewis* "her tackle, apparel and furniture and goods and effects found on board and against all persons intervening for their interest" to District Court Judge James D. Halyburton.

Appointed by President John Tyler, Halyburton was from one of the richest families in Virginia and was a grand-nephew of Martha Washington. Educated at Harvard and the University of Virginia law school, the New Kent County native had served on the Federal bench for several years before hearing the *William G. Lewis* case and owned slaves on his plantation. He had a reputation for being thorough, but he also had a reputation for being indecisive. One of his fellow judges remarked that Halyburton "was so afraid of doing wrong, that he frequently hesitated to decide at all, and thus, to some extent at least, impaired his efficiency as a judge."

In his papers to Halyburton, Gregory alleged the bark, property of a citizen of the U.S., was employed in the "transportation and conveying of slaves from one foreign country or place to the said attorney unknown, to some other foreign country or place" in violation of an act of Congress approved May 10, 1800. (It is important to note that, although importation of slaves into the United States had been illegal only since 1807, American involvement in the slave trade between other countries had been outlawed in 1794.)

The case was made only against the ship and her cargo so that Captain Fredell and his crew did not face possible imprisonment. In fact, as soon as the bark arrived in Norfolk, her crew was released and allowed to return to New York. Judge Halyburton assigned initial hearings in the case to the February meeting of the District Court. Norfolk lawyers Duncan Robertson and L. H. Chandler were hired to act for the owners of the bark and her cargo.

As *Dale* continued to cruise along the African coast, Commander McBlair was able

William G. Lewis continued on page 8

The only known image of Commander William McBlair is this group photograph taken with members of the 1860 Japanese Treaty Commission at the Washington Navy Yard. McBlair is the officer in the middle, standing behind the second Japanese official. (Naval Historical Center photo)

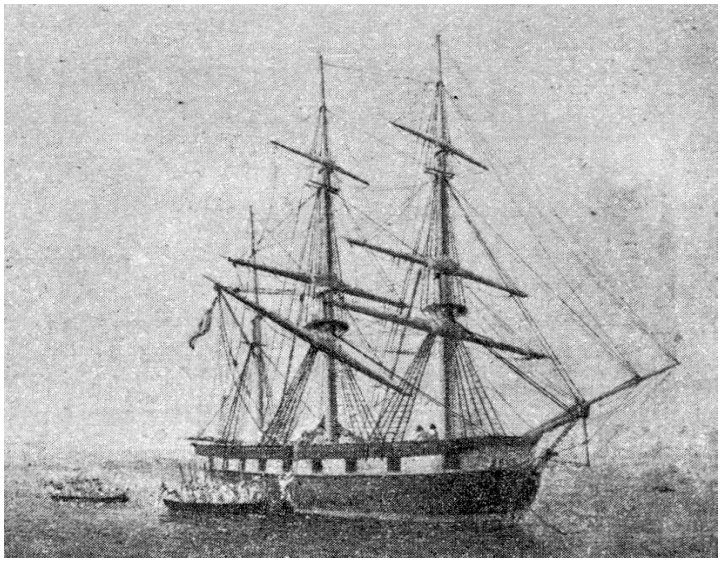
William G. Lewis continued from page 7

to pick up move information which he passed on to Secretary Toucey in a letter dated December 18, 1857: "Upon the arrival of the *Dale* at St Paul de Loando and at St Philip de Benguela, I learned that this person who called himself plain Mr. Miller and passenger on the barque *W. G. Lewis*, was well known as Captain Miller on this (African) coast, for several years past, and particularly as commander of the *Reindeer* when he ran a cargo of negroes safe to Cuba, sold them and burnt his ship." McBlair had discussed Miller with two people in particular, Simon Stodder, agent for the firm of Brookhouse & Co of Salem, and Captain Lord of the bark *Goldfinch* belonging to the same firm. Stodder had bristled at the suggestion that Miller had once been employed by Brookhouse & Co. He told McBlair, "If Miller insinuates or attempts to implicate our house, I can get testimony enough against him to hang him." Lord had met Miller while both were at Punta de Linha and identified him as the former master of the *Reindeer*. Lord believed him to be *W. G. Lewis*' supercargo "which means in the slave trade, captain as occasion may arise." Based on this information, McBlair suggested that the trial of the bark be delayed until Stodder and Lord returned to the U. S. the next spring.

When *Dale* visited St. Helena at Christmas time, McBlair received disturbing news of the other American vessel his boat crew had inspected in the Congo. As he wrote to his wife on December 28, 1857: "The *Windward* which I sent an expedition after and which, through want of judgment in my boarding officer, got clear of us and which I afterwards pursued with so much vigor amongst the keys of the Congo but without success managed to get two hundred miles from the coast with a cargo of six hundred slaves & was captured by an English steamer & brought here for condemnation. One hundred and fifty of her slaves died on the passage. They were actually packed in each other's laps when taken."

Whether at McBlair's request or not, the trial of the libel against the bark was put off at least twice, seemingly in order to obtain sworn depositions from those concerned, most of whom had returned to New York. The depositions offered a point-by-point refutation of McBlair's charges.

John Fredell, *Wm. G. Lewis*' master, said he had in fact acted according to his letter of instructions. On arriving on the coast of Africa, he had anchored off Black Point and



The slave ship William G. Lewis *was a sail barque similar to this Spanish slave barque shown above. By the mid-19th century, many of the merchant ships engaged in the African slave trade were American vessels, mainly from New England and New York ports.*

William G. Lewis continued on page 9

William G. Lewis continued from page 8

sent a message to the offices of Costa Lima & Co in Loango. They responded with orders that he proceed to Kabenda where he received further instructions to sail up the Congo River to their factory at Punta de Linha. When the bark left Kabenda, Fredell had no idea how far up the river the factory lay. He considered it his duty to go up the river until he reached the factory.

Henry C. Smith, New York custom house broker, had been hired by B. J. Wenberg to prepare the paperwork for *Wm. G. Lewis*' voyage. He stated, "She was cleared in the usual way. There was nothing unusual in the way she was cleared. I made every move & took every step that I would to any other vessel going to any other foreign port."

The crew list did not agree with the names of those actually on board because the man originally signed on as second mate had backed out of the voyage and his replacement had been put onboard just as the bark was departing. Also the steward had died while in Africa and been replaced.

Fredell had been unconcerned about the number of casks in the bark's hold. They were filled with salt water because they were meant to act as ballast on the outward voyage and to contain palm oil as the principal cargo on the return to New York. They were oversized for water casks, but not uncommonly so for palm oil. This was confirmed by Henry M. Beam the cooper who had produced the casks for Wenberg. He reported "It is the general custom now to have all vessels going out for oil to take the lower tier filled with casks put up ready to receive the oil."

The depositions from the members of *William G. Lewis*' crew also leveled some charges against the Navy. F. A. Seymour stated: "I saw Lt. Walker [*Dale*'s boarding officer] that night when he came on board. I should not judge he was sober. From all appearances I should say that he was intoxicated. I thought he staggered so much that he nearly fell over me. The boat's crew from the *Dale* were nearly all intoxicated. …

They behaved very gross, falling down on us and trying to force rum or whiskey down our throats, out of bottles. They seemed to have plenty of it." The veracity of this statement does not stand up to the author's experience. Navy men are not known for their liberality in sharing liquor with merchant seamen.

Captain Fredell seems to have bristled at McBlair's characterization of him as a "mere' New York Harbor pilot. The Hamburg-born master had been to sea for more than twenty years. Although he had never before had command of a vessel going to a foreign port, as a New York and Sandy Hook pilot he was not without experience. "I have before had command of many vessels larger than a pilot boat. They were vessels which I was piloting in from and to New York & out to sea. The New York pilots cruise 3 or 400 miles from Sandy Hook. There is so much [competition] 20 or more boats each for itself

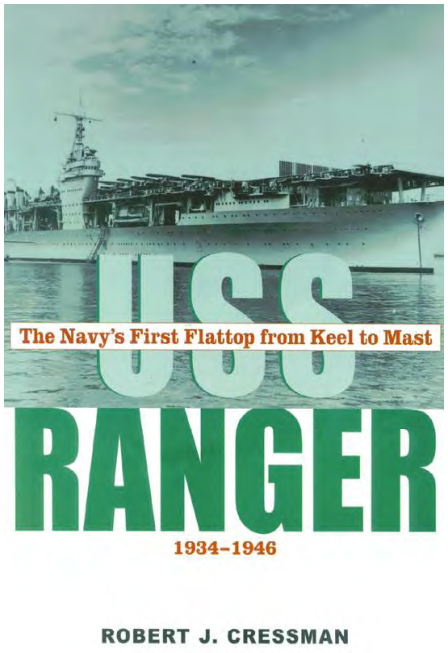
William G. Lewis continued on page 13

The brand new Norfolk City Hall served as the home for the regional Federal district court for several years and was the site of the trial of the William G. Lewis *and her crew. Christened in 1850 as the "worshipful court for the City of Norfolk," the building is now a memorial and museum to General Douglas MacArthur. (1853 engraving from William G. Forrest's* Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Norfolk and Vicinity)

Book Reviews

USS Ranger*: The Navy's First Flattop from Keel to Mast, 1934-46*

By Robert J. Cressman
Reviewed by Ira R. Hanna



In May 1935, barely a year after commissioning, the aircraft carrier USS *Ranger* (CV-4) participated in fleet exercises off San Diego, San Francisco, and Hawaii. Vice Admiral Henry V. Butler, Commander Air Battle Force, declared *Ranger* had stood "her first test in Fleet maneuvers very well, and I am satisfied that she will prove herself a very valuable ship to the Fleet."

Robert J. Cressman. *USS* Ranger*: The Navy's First Flattop From Keel to Mast, 1934-46.* Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005. ISBN 1-57488-720-3. $26.95.

Naval historian Robert J. Cressman's *USS* Ranger *1934-1946: The Navy's First Flattop from Keel to Mast* is a well researched book, replete with never before published photographs, the course of *Ranger* is traced from her use as an experimental ship, to an important part of the Navy's efforts in World War II, and finally as a training ship for young naval aviators.

Built by Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company and launched on February 25, 1933, she was the fifth ship named *Ranger*. She was the first carrier to be equipped with director-controlled anti-aircraft systems and her planes perfected anti-submarine tactics during Fleet exercises. Among other experiments, she was to be the first combatant ship to have cafeteria-style messing arrangements incorporated in her design.

The Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 greatly influenced the design of the carrier as it limited the tonnage of future ships to be in commission by the United States. This caused the United States to alter the construction of two battlecruisers, *Saratoga* (CV-2) and *Lexington* (CV-3), into aircraft carriers. Since those ships displaced 38,000 tons, considerable less tonnage was left of the United States' allotment for the first carrier that was to be designed and built from the keel to the mast. The resulting vessel was *Ranger*. She had a trial displacement of 15,575 tons, measured 769 feet in length, and 109 feet and 6 inches in width. She had three elevators that allowed easy movement of the seventy-six planes assigned to her. She had a designed speed of 29.25 knots and her complement was 1,788 officers and enlisted. Even though she was a relatively small ship for her purpose, she was one that proved very valuable indeed. The design laid the groundwork for future, and much larger, aircraft carriers.

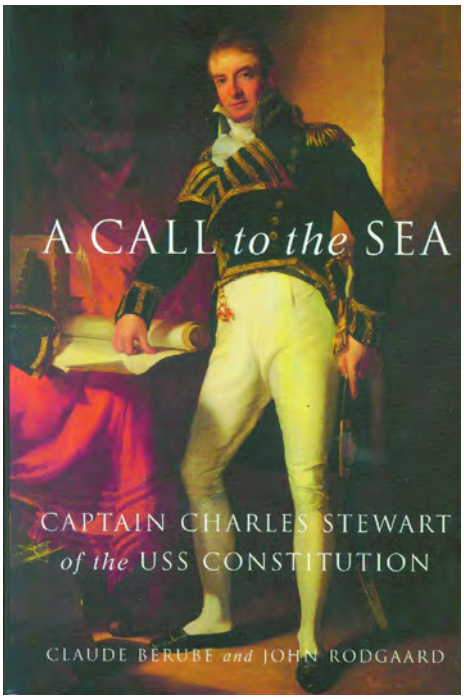
On her shakedown cruise to Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, she played a part in maintaining President Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy. Her design characteristics and limitations circumscribed the role she would play in World War II. She occupied center stage in carrier operations during Operation Torch in November 1942, and in air strikes on German shipping above the Arctic Circle and in the Norwegian Fjords during Operation Leader in 1943. All four of *Ranger*'s pre-war commanding officers went on to become admirals who directed task forces and fleets in World War II.

Robert Cressman's history of *Ranger* is two fold. One focuses on the ship and the other on the air groups for which she served as home. He described the personality of the ship through the men that served aboard her and the planes on her flight deck. His chapter headings verify this emphasis. Some of them were "The Officers and Men Knew Their Business," "Spreading the Butter a Little Thin," "We Could Take No Chances," and "She Didn't Need Headlines to Be a Great Ship." In reference to this last chapter heading, it is true that she did not make the newspapers or the radio like the carriers that participated in the celebrated battles in the Pacific. However, she did star in a movie. While operating out of San Diego, Hollywood director Henry Potter shot the film *Wings Over Honolulu*. Potter used *Ranger*'s commanding officer Captain P.N.L. Bellinger, his crew, the pilots, and the pilots' wives when the director forgot to bring enough actors from Hollywood.

Once in a while, a book exceeds your expectations. This is one of those books. You not only are informed by the extensive facts about the ship, but as you read, you begin to feel part of the ship's crew and the air groups assigned to her. The author's stories of the crew's activities and pilots' training exercises, some mundane, but always with a human touch, made life aboard the Navy's first real aircraft carrier interesting and different from other historical ships. The author's research is as impeccable as would be expected from the head of the Ship's History Branch of the Naval Historical Center. Cressman's first, *That Gallant Ship: USS Yorktown (CV-5),* is on the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy's recommended reading list for those enlisted men who aspire to leadership roles. There is no doubt that *Ranger* was a "very valuable ship to Fleet," and this is a very valuable book for any officer or enlisted person to read and heed its lessons.

A Call to the Sea: Captain Charles Stewart of the USS Constitution

By Claude Berube and John Rodgaard
Reviewed by Joe Judge



The American Navy at its birth had to forge an identity quickly. It did so thanks to the efforts of its early leaders, a group of remarkable individuals like Stephen Decatur, Edward Preble and Captain Charles Stewart of Philadelphia. Stewart is the subject of a new biography by Claude Berube and John Rodgaard, two naval officers. This is the first biography of Stewart, a strange circumstance since he was a man who was seemingly everywhere in the early Navy. This book is full of episodes famous in our history, which form a series of highlights illuminating Stewart's life.

Claude Berube and John Rodgaard. *A Call to the Sea: Captain Charles Stewart of the USS* Constitution. Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005. ISBN 1-57488-518-9. $35.00

Stewart was life-long friends with the great Decatur. He commanded one of the two vessels in the raid in which Decatur daringly burned the captured frigate *Philadelphia* in Tripoli. Stewart went on to manage the blockade against the North African states under Preble. By the age of 27, Charles Stewart was back in the United States and promoted to Captain – one of the few officers to advance in rank during the "gunboat navy" era of the Jefferson administration.

Sewart's adventures in the Mediterranean would be enough for a compelling book, but there was more to experience. Residents of Hampton Roads will want to make particular note of his command of the frigate *Constellation* in the War of 1812. Stewart guided the ship into Norfolk where it was blockaded by the British, but his effective organization of local naval defenses helped to save the frigate and the city. Stewart left the *Constellation* during the war to assume command of the ship with which he would be most closely associated, USS *Constitution*.

The authors note: "No captain of the *Constitution* commanded her for a longer period in war, nor through more naval engagements, than Charles Stewart. Ironically, during his lifetime Stewart, and his estate, came to be known by the *Constitution's* moniker – "Old Ironsides." Stewart led the famous warship to glory when he simultaneously fought, defeated and captured as prizes two British ships, the *Cyane* and the *Levant*. After the war Stewart went on to his most prestigious appointment of his career, as commander of the Mediterranean Squadron. In the 1840s he briefly pursued the Presidency of the United States.

Stewart proved himself in combat, and also in another arena that often interests the Navy, the courtroom. The authors point out that "during the Age of Sail Stewart served on more courts of inquiry and courts-martial than almost anyone else." Stewart served on the court martial board of James Barron after the *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair. Stewart was President of the Court of Inquiry that investigated the execution of suspected mutineers on USS *Somers*. Stewart, along with Decatur and David Porter, championed Lieutenant Uriah Levy when anti-Semitism threatened to ruin his career. The book provides numerous other examples, and examples of Stewart's diplomatic skills. He was closely involved in almost every major issue facing the sea service at the time.

Stewart, like his ship Old Ironsides, suffered from storms and shot. In Stewart's case it was his marriage that scarred the sailor, and the authors frankly state that "His marriage was a disaster, and the subsequent divorce raised many an eyebrow." Stewart later took up house with another woman to whom he was not married, causing more personal turmoil. Hollywood producers, take note.

Stewart lived to see the country fractured by the Civil War – the old sailor was in his 80s during the conflict. An ardent Union man, his influence was nonetheless felt in both blue and gray, as the authors explain: "Stewart's officers whom he had trained as midshipmen and lieutenants decades before had risen to prominence in both navies." This list of naval officers includes Franklin Buchanan, David Farragut, David Dixon Porter, Louis Goldsboro and Samuel DuPont.

This sturdy biography provides a straightforward account of Charles Stewart's amazing life in the nineteenth century Navy. Readers will enjoy the geographical and temporal sweep provided by the indefatigable efforts of the U.S. Navy in every corner of the world. Stewart himself is worthy of this overdue examination of his life as the authors summarize: "Stewart first and foremost knew how to command men at sea. … Stewart did not pursue personal glory. He firmly believed he could best contribute to the success of the United States and its Constitution by providing for its defense and its commerce at sea. His actions under fire personified courage … and demonstrated a devotion to the republic and its democratic ideals with which he matured."

A Naval and Marine Expo

Or What Made Our Expo Better Than Their Expos

In the coming issues of *The Daybook*, we will present a series of articles about the Jamestown Exposition. The year 2007 not only marks the 400th anniversary of the first permanent English settlement in the New World, it also marks the 100th anniversary of the Exposition. The museum is the holder of several hundred photos, artifacts, and documents related to the Exposition. Our documentation of the Exposition is important in several ways including, among other things, its architectural history, its symbolic representation of contemporary American values, and the groundwork it laid for a major American military facility.

The Jamestown Exposition was just one of many expos held across the United States, which were built to mark major

The Museum Sage

events in American history. All of them were exquisitely designed with large amounts of money being devoted to the best in American architecture and exhibits.

The Sage is very partial to the Jamestown Exposition. Why? Certainly not because it was the biggest, because it, wasn't or because it demonstrated social progress in America, as it was tainted by Jim Crow and many of the exhibits were racially charged. Financially, the *New York Times* declared it to be the worst managed fair in the history of world's fairs and expos.

However, the Jamestown Exposition had one thing the others did not: a major naval presence, particularly the U.S. Navy. The Federal Government offered up a sizable grant/loan package, two million dollars, to the Jamestown Exposition Company on the grounds that it would have a major Naval

No exhibit at any expo was better than the mass armada of ships that showed up in Hampton Roads in 1907 for the Jamestown Exposition.

presence and review as part of the fair.

This was not a new concept to the Hampton Roads area as it had already hosted the 1893 Naval Rendezvous, allegedly as an off shoot of the Colombian Exposition. Like the 1893 affair, many other major naval powers participated in 1907 along with the U.S. Navy. In all, sixty ships showed up, including the entire U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

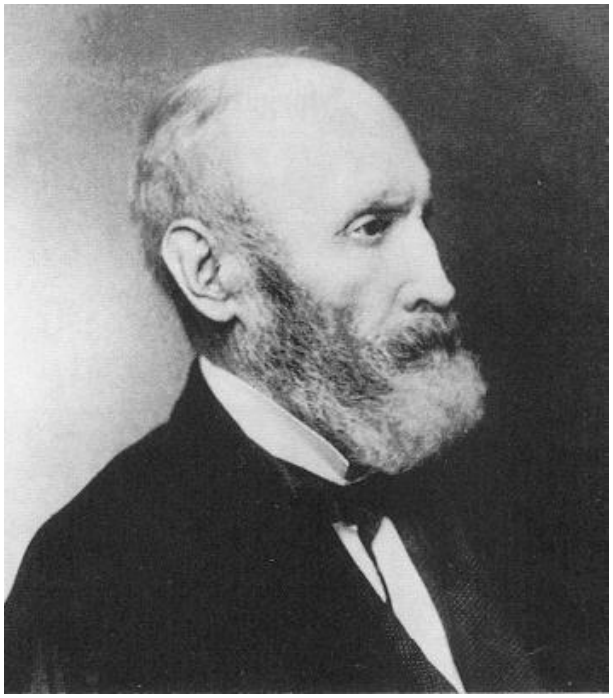
Now, not everyone was happy with such the awesome display of military might. Many pacifists publicly protested the showing as a danger to international peace. Others objected to the Exposition relying too much on military subjects for visitor content as expositions were supposed to show "progress," as they put it, and war machines were not progress in their view. The objectors, unfortunately, did not see what was really happening. We often forget that many of the navies were mortal enemies. For example, the Russians and Japanese had just wrapped up a major war. The British and the Germans saw everyone, including the United States, as potential or current rivals, but their ships still came.

Many writers defended the decision to have such a large military showing. They typically argued that everyone needed to relax, as there was not going to be a war in Hampton Roads, and navies could be a sign of technological progress and world peacekeeping.

The *Washington Post* wrote a third observation of the naval review. It commented, "There is not much danger that the American people will be swept off their feet by the procession of the fleets at Hampton Roads. A few lads may be seized with the martial spirit under the excitement of the hour, but this might not be a bad thing, since the navy is in need of clean young Americans who are willing to fight. They will be able to draw comparisons and reach conclusions which may work to the advantage of the country."

Along with the revolution in naval technology such as steel, rifled guns, and bigger warships, the Navy was taking its public relations image much more seriously. Never had the peacetime Navy been so large or cost so much to its taxpayers. A positive image to the public was crucial in getting money, as well as in getting young men to enlist.

The sailing of the U.S. Battle Fleet at the close of the Exposition reinforced one of the major goals of the fair: highlighting the growth of the U.S. Navy. St. Louis and Chicago may have had bigger and more successful fairs. But none had a display or exhibit to match the naval presence of our expo.



Overseeing the William G. Lewis *trial was Judge James Dandridge Halyburton. He served seventeen years as a Federal judge in Virginia before resigning and taking a similar position within the Confederate judicial system. He swore in Jefferson Davis as the President of the Confederate States of America. (Photo of painting from the Virginia State Archives)*

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that they go out a long way."

It was in regard to the presence of "Mr." Miller that the testimony most contradicted McBlair. According to Fredell, Miller had come aboard in response to a New York newspaper advertisement for passengers for Africa. He had learned virtually nothing about Miller in the four months they had shared a cabin. Fredell swore, "I think John Miller who went out in the *Lewis* was an American. I never heard him say that he had been following any particular business or any business at all. We had a berth in the cabin. I had conversation with him. We conversed very often & about a great many things which it would take me two months to tell. I believe Miller said he had been in Africa before." Each of the crew deposed said Miller had been no more than a passenger and had no input to the direction of the vessel.

McBlair's star witnesses proved particularly unhelpful. Captain Lord allowed as to how he had met Miller once in New York and Miller might possibly have been a sea captain, but Lord knew nothing about the incident of the *Reindeer*. Stodder went so far as to say he had never even met Commander William McBlair much less had a conversation with him in which he implied he could give evidence that would hang Miller.

The reticence of Lord and Stodder might find explanation in McBlair's letter to Secretary Toucey of December 18. He wrote, "One of the peculiarities of the south coast of Africa, is the care with which the affairs of the slave trade are concealed from the American cruiser. … This secrecy may be attributed to the fact that the immense capital and personal power interested in the slave trade, is so ramified in all the legitimate business transactions of the south coast that it is inevitably pecuniarily destructive to persons resident here to reveal or to pretend to know, what is passing daily before their eyes."

It was not until the summer of 1859 that Judge Halyburton rendered his decision. He found that the allegations in the libel had not been sustained. The libel was dismissed and the vessel and cargo delivered to their owners. However, Judge Halyburton added to his decision that it appeared to the court that there was a reasonable cause of seizure of the *William G. Lewis*. Although Judge Halyburton had

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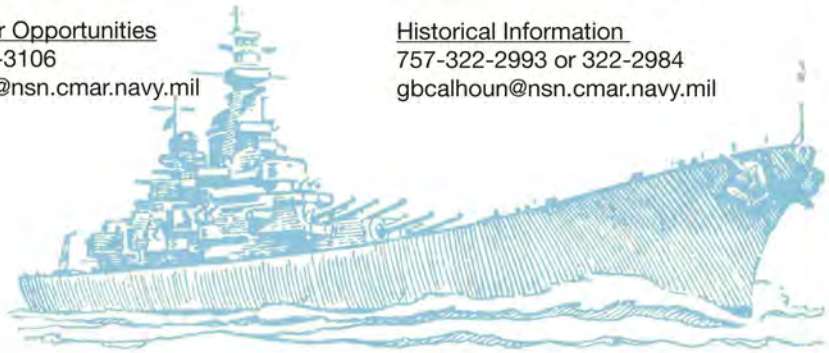
Wisconsin Visitor Information

General Information
757-322-2987
www.hrnm.navy.mil

Volunteer Opportunities
757-322-3106
tdandes@nsn.cmar.navy.mil

Honor and Ceremonies
757-322-2988
schoskins@nsn.cmar.navy.mil

Historical Information
757-322-2993 or 322-2984
gbcalhoun@nsn.cmar.navy.mil



Nauticus' *Wisconsin* Exhibits
757-664-1000
www.nauticus.org
shelia.harrison@norfolk.gov

Wisconsin Project Partners
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www.hrnhf.org

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www.usswisconsin.org

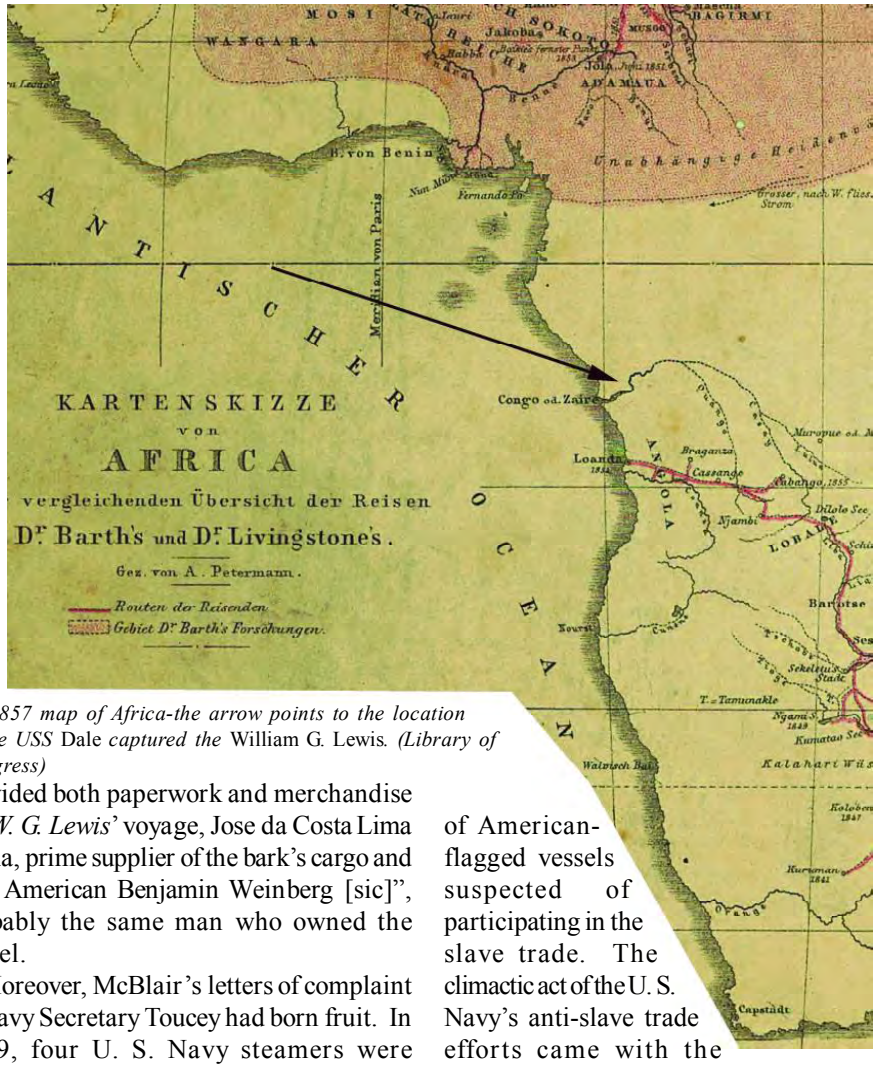
Battleship *Wisconsin* Foundation
www.battleshipwisconsin.org

William G. Lewis continued from page 14

not supported McBlair's seizure of *William G. Lewis*, his finding of probable must have been a relief to *Dale*'s commander. Without that finding, McBlair would have born personal responsibility for all court costs and would have been liable to be sued by the bark's owner.

While Judge Halyburton's decision may have been correct based on the evidence presented at the time, the court of history almost certainly shows it to be wrong. On March 5, 1858, McBlair again wrote to Secretary Toucey. He reported, "I have gained information which no doubt is reliable that [John] Miller, the nominal passenger in the *W. G. Lewis*, sailed from the Congo late in November in the brig *Telegraph* with a cargo of slaves. His arrival in the United States may consequently be shortly expected." McBlair's investigations into the working of the slave trade on the south coast of Africa had also generated a rule of thumb when it came to which American vessels should be considered suspicious. If a vessel wasn't consigned to the American houses of Brookhouse & Co or Silva & Sparehawk or to one of the British firms at Loando, it was probably suspect. Any vessel not consigned to an established house would find it impossible to obtain a cargo or compete with "the regularly organized agencies." More specifically, McBlair stated that "vessels clearing in the name of or having any connection with, Costa Lima or Fernandez, I do not hesitate to denounce as slavers."

McBlair is supported in this belief by English historian Hugh Thomas. His encyclopedic work *The Slave Trade* refers to the "Portuguese Company" founded in New York in 1852. Among its partners were the Brazilian Consul de la Figaniere who had provided both paperwork and merchandise for *W. G. Lewis*' voyage, Jose da Costa Lima Viana, prime supplier of the bark's cargo and "the American Benjamin Weinberg [sic]", probably the same man who owned the vessel.



An 1857 map of Africa-the arrow points to the location where USS Dale *captured the* William G. Lewis. *(Library of Congress)*

Moreover, McBlair's letters of complaint to Navy Secretary Toucey had born fruit. In 1859, four U. S. Navy steamers were assigned to the Africa Squadron and four more patrolled off the coast of Cuba, the principal destination for slavers. In Toucey's last annual report to Congress, he reported that 3,119 Africans had been rescued from slave ships in 1859. The problem McBlair had noted of limited American jurisdiction was solved by the Anglo-American Pact of 1862 which at last allowed British search and seizure of American-flagged vessels suspected of participating in the slave trade. The climactic act of the U. S. Navy's anti-slave trade efforts came with the public hanging of Nathaniel Gordon in New York on February 21, 1862. Gordon, master of the slave ship *Eire*, had been captured by the U. S. steamer *San Jacinto* to the west of Kabenda with 900 slaves on board.

The author expresses his thanks to Charles Brodine of the Naval Historical Center who located several documents central to this article.

The Career of the Bark *William G. Lewis*

Built in 1851 at Pembroke, Maine and named for the Boston merchant who first owned her, *William G. Lewis* was bark-rigged with a poop cabin that ran forward to her mainmast. Her burden was 264 tons and her draft 12 feet. Called by one former owner a "half clipper," she was designed for the East Coast - San Francisco run following the Gold Rush of 1849. In November 1853 the bark was bought by Charles W. Newton upon her return from a California voyage. Under his ownership and command she sailed from New York to Cadiz and back. Her next trip was to Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro, New Orleans and back to New York.

In 1856, Newton sold her to Jose Federico de la Figaniere, the Brazilian Vice-Consul in New York. She made a voyage to Africa for de la Figaniere carrying out a cargo of tobacco, rum and cloth. *W. G. Lewis* returned to New York in April 1857 with a cargo of bar wood, wax and palm oil. After this voyage the bark was sold to Benjamin J. Wenberg of New York who chartered her to L. Viana on the account of Costa Lima & Co. for a round trip to the African coast. Following release by the U.S. District Court, she was sold to the firm of Peeling & Paine of New York. Her last appearance on the American Lloyd's List was in 1861. Her ultimate fate is unknown.

In What Business Can Such a Profit be Hoped For?

The Economics of the Slave Trade

Why would otherwise reputable merchants involve themselves in slave trading? An indication of the enormous profits to be gained can be seen in the following letter. On January 6, 1818, George P. Stevenson, formerly a Baltimore ship owner and now a slave trader in Havana, Cuba, described the mechanics of the business to John Myers, son of Norfolk's Moses Myers and head of John Myers & Co. of Baltimore. It should be noted that there is no indication in the extensive Myers family papers that John ever followed up on Stevenson's suggestions. Also note in the letter that Stevenson never uses the words "slave," "Africans," "humans," or anything else that might lead authorities to suspect his true intentions.

Dear Sir,

In consequence of the conversation we had, I now communicate to you the necessary information for prosecuting the kind of voyages we spoke of; and I have no hesitation in saying to you that such expeditions prove now extremely lucrative. You will then do well to purchase a schooner or schooners of about 130 - 150 tons, and prepare her or them for such a voyage according to note which I left with Lyde Goodwin as my friend which notes belonged to Mr. Frias, and which I have requested Mr. G. to deliver to you to be handed to a friend in Norfolk. You will in these notes receive the fullest information as to the fitment of the vessel, the necessary cargoes, and the points to which to proceed. The cargoes from Lagos in the Bight of Benin are far preferable; they sell at great prices here & for cash mostly. At Gallines too, fine cargoes can be had which do well. Procure a pretty active, smart captain and agree to pay him such a sum from $10 - $15 each delivered here. Do not fit your vessels extravagantly, but remember that vessels which cost little will make two or three voyages, as well as the finest clippers, good sailers coppered are all that is requisite. Your vessels can proceed under American colors to Santa Cruz, Tenerife, where at an expense for such vessel as I mention of about $2500, which you will take in doubloons or dollars, you can procure the necessary papers, Spanish captain & a few Spanish sailors, then proceed to the coast & make all possible dispatch. Don Jose Maria Villa will do the needful at Santa Cruz, on the representation that A. de Frias owns the vessel.

'Tis needless for me to enlarge upon the gains in this business; by good management they are incalculable, and I would advise two or three vessels such as I mentioned to proceed at once. You can represent the operations as for any Spaniard and once entered into you may calculate on every facility here, and a confidence profound. The business cannot be overdone, as the demand is very constant and great. If you set such an expedition afloat also in Norfolk, I should be pleased. You need not be afraid of your captain's wanting experience for he will find instructors on most parts. Give him a copy of those notes and he cannot fail. Three voyages per year may be counted on for such vessels and I should certainly expect you would have a gain of more than 100 per cent each trip. I suppose for instance you vessel fitted out with 2 - 9 lb. guns, 15 men, 15 muskets, a captain, two mates, etc. will cost you $6000 - $7000. Her cargo will be $7000 more. Her expenses at Tenerife $2500. Altogether $16,500. Insured out & to this place perhaps $3500, to pay off her crew here $3000, Say total $23,000. She should bring at least 200 (and could bring 250) which at a $300 nett would leave you the vessel and $37,000; or even should they nett but $250 (sales now at $360 - $380) there would be a gain of $27,000. I assure you this is by no means a sanguine calculation. Experience daily continues to verify the same, and in what business can such a profit be hoped for? I write you thus confidentially. Business here is commission, and you know I would not lead you astray for double any amount named. The second voyage would be still more lucrative, and the third still more so.

I annex note of cargo for Lagos - calculated for 250 which a schooner of 150 tons would easily carry. Not an article in this cargo but that you could purchase upon such time as the returns would pay for. You should be accommodated here if you wished it. Let me hear from you in confidence.

For Lagos in the Bight of Benin

250 pieces silks India, white, red, green, yellows about 2 feet wide
1000 lb. gunpowder in half barrels of 50 lb. each
250 demijohns Rum, carefully sealed
250 pair blue salempores, very finest
250 pair white " , "
250 pair seersuckers, handsome colors
250 pair mock madras handkerchiefs, fine

The Royal Court of Neptunus Rex

King Neptune and his court prepare for a "crossing the line" ceremony on board the Norfolk-based aircraft carrier USS *Saratoga* (CV-3) sometime in the 1930s. The museum recently received a collection of pictures of a cruise by *Saratoga*, including several of this particular ceremony.

In Our Next Issue...

Rebuilding a Classic: The Conversion of USS *Cumberland* From A Frigate to A Sloop-of-War

Book Reviews: *Stephen Decatur: American Naval Hero, 1779-1820* and *Circle of Fire: The Story of USS* Susquehanna *in the War of the Rebellion*