

CAPTAIN DAVID GEISINGER, U. S. NAVY, DECEASED

David Geisinger was appointed a Midshipman from his home state of Maryland on April 11, 1810, to date from November 15, 1809. (He was born in Frederick, Maryland, date unknown.) On May 21, 1810 he was ordered to duty on board the U. S. brig SIREN cruising along the Atlantic coast and in the Gulf of Mexico. He was detached from her in April 1812, at New Orleans and returned home. On May 19, following, he received orders to the U. S. frigate CONSTELLATION, on which he served until September 20, 1813. War was declared against England, June 18, 1812, but before the CONSTELLATION could get to sea she was blockaded at Norfolk by a superior enemy force.

He served on board the U.S.S. WASP during the remainder of the War of 1812. She sailed from Portsmouth, N. H., May 1, 1814, and arrived at L'Orient, France, July 8th, following. Between June 2 and 26, five British vessels with valuable cargoes were captured. On June 28, 1814, the WASP fell in with H.B.M.S. REINDEER and after an action of 19 minutes captured her. Loss on both sides was severe and the REINDEER was so badly cut up Captain Blakely, commanding the WASP, was obliged to burn his prize, after removing her officers and men.

After repairs the WASP sailed again on August 27, 1814, and from that date until September 1, captured five more vessels in the English Channel, one of them H.B.M.S. AVON, which was sunk with part of her crew on board. Three more prizes were taken by the WASP, the last being the 8-gun brig ATLANTA, which was sent to the United States under command of Midshipman Geisinger. Blakely wrote to the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., as follows:

"22d September, 1814, Midshipman Geisinger having served some time under my command, I beg leave to recommend him to the notice of the Department. I have given him charge of the ATLANTA. When the boarders were ordered to board the REINDEER, Mr. Geisinger was the first person on board of her." He arrived at Savannah with the ATLANTA on November 4th and was detached a few days later. This detached duty accounts for his absence when the WASP was lost with all on board.

He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on December 9, 1814.

During the year 1815 he served on the U. S. brig FIRE FLY, which was one of the vessels of a large force sent to the Mediterranean to chastise Algiers for violating her treaty with the United States. From December 1815 to November 1816 he served on the Ship-of-the-Line INDEPENDENCE, which was being used as a guard ship at the Boston Navy Yard. Subsequently he served in the Mediterranean until April 1818; on the U.S.S. JOHN ADAMS in the West Indies and the Gulf of Mexico, November 1818 to June 1819; at the Boston Navy Yard, June 1819 to June 1820; on the frigate CONSTITUTION in the Mediterranean, June 1820 to May 1824; at the Boston Navy Yard, August 1824 to October 1825; and at Philadelphia, in various capacities, October 1825 to January 1832.

He was promoted to Master Commandant (Commander) on March 11, 1829. His first command at sea was a cruise to South American, India, and China, in command of the U.S.S. PEACOCK, leaving Boston on March 8, 1832 and returning to New York on May 28, 1834. At this time American trade was expanding into Cochin China and Siam as well as into Muscat, which then comprised the region from the Persian Gulf to Zanzibar. Desiring to further our interests in those obscure places, the Government dispatched the sloop-of-war PEACOCK, Commander Geisinger carrying Mr. Edmund Roberts as a diplomatic agent to negotiate commercial treaties.

The BOXER, with Lieutenant W. F. Shields in command, was to join the expedition, and their first mission was to chastise Quallah Battoo, in case by some chance the POTOMAC, sent earlier, had failed to do so. Sailing from Boston in March 1832, the PEACOCK reached the Sumatran coast five months later, and learning of Downes' successful enterprise (Downes commanding the POTOMAC), Commander Geisinger went on to Manila and Lintin. In January 1833, at Vunglam, Cochin China, numerous parleys were held with a view to arranging a treaty, but the reception was poor and the PEACOCK left for the Gulf of Siam to open negotiations with the king of that country.

Here the Americans found the utmost cordiality. At Bangkok, the capital, the king provided the mission with a palatial residence and received and entertained them with the greatest splendor. On March 20th was signed the first treaty between the United States and an oriental power. The PEACOCK then proceeded to Batavia, where she was joined by the BOXER, and the two ships arrived at Mocha, Arabia, late in August. The next day Mr. Roberts, Commander Geisinger and Lieutenant Shields had an audience with the Sultan, who willingly granted larger concessions than were asked, and a most satisfactory treaty was signed on September 21, 1833.

This cruise was followed by a period of inactivity which lasted to March 1836. Geisinger was then placed in command of the Naval Rendezvous at Boston, and while in that command was promoted to Captain, to date from May 24, 1838. He was again carried on "waiting orders," from June 1838 until June 1841, when he began a period of sea duty commanding the frigate BRANDYWINE on a cruise to the Mediterranean (June 1841 to July 1842.) He returned home to again await orders, and from May 1844 to January 1845 again cruised to the Mediterranean, this time in command of the USS COLUMBIA.

In 1847 he was designated to command the East India Squadron, with the frigate CONGRESS his flagship. He returned to the United States in June 1850 in the ST. MARYS. His final assignment was that of Governor of the Naval Asylum, or Naval Home, at Philadelphia, 1851-1855. He was placed on the Reserved List in September 1855, after forty-five years of active naval service, including nineteen at sea. He died March 5, 1860 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.