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NAVAL LITERATURE

By CAPTAIN JOHN S. BARNES



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U. S. NAVAL INSTITUTE, ANNAPOLIS, MD.

NAVAL LITERATURE.*

By CAPTAIN JOHN S. BARNES.

I hope that it is fully understood that I am not here in the rôle of instructor. The modern ship of war and its instruments of destruction, with which you are familiar are unknown to me, and were unknown in the school in which I passed my early life. Captain Chadwick is mainly if not wholly responsible for my appearance, and you must put the blame of perhaps wasted minutes upon him. You have all heard how my old friend and classmate, George H. Perkins, shifted the responsibility of an overstayed leave of absence for which he was being overhauled by Captain Godon, his commanding officer—Perkins was his executive—Commodore Stringham the Commandant of the Navy Yard. Something went wrong—the Navy Department complained to Stringham, who sent for Godon; he was absent. He sent for Perkins; he was absent. The Commodore complained to Godon, and naturally Godon fell upon Perkins, absent without leave, and Perkins suggested to Godon, “suppose we put all the responsibility off on old Stringham.” This brings me to say that if any of you have not read Captain Geo. H. Perkins’ Autobiography, edited by his sister, you have a treat before you, and it also leads me to anticipate Captain Chadwick’s apology for my presence here. A year or two ago he did me the honor of a personal visit, and I had great pleasure in showing him that while out of the navy for many years, I had not lost my interest in it, and as proof, I placed before him a few of the results of upwards of thirty-five years’ work in industriously

* Lecture delivered at the Naval War College, 1902.

collecting books, manuscripts and prints, relating to the navy of the United States.

You all know what a "collector" is—or at least you have heard of him—perhaps some of you are collectors, and know the joys, hopes and fears which animate him in the pursuit of his peculiar fad. It runs to all sorts and kinds of things—from the costliest to the most insignificant. Perhaps the collection of books, autographs, manuscripts and prints relating to special subjects has a larger number of votaries and victims than any other form of this disease. There are certain branches of it which are costly and beyond the reach of the collector of moderate means. But any indulgence, when it is carried on persistently is sure to lead to what people without sympathy call extravagance. The first attack of the fever is generally of a mild form—it is usually caught by exposure to or by contact with some fully developed case. It is both contagious and infectious, and is primarily allayed by the occasional purchase of old out-of-print books picked up at second-hand book stores. The mind grows by what it feeds upon, and from old books one runs readily to old prints and thence to autographs and manuscripts relating to the special pursuit. The fever gradually becomes intense, fixed and incurable and takes on the last and fatal stage of illustration and binding.

Soon after leaving the navy in 1868, I came into personal contact with Dr. Emmett of New York, through the introduction of Mr. T. Bailey Myers, whom some of you will remember and all of you will recognize as the father of the late Commander Theodore Mason. Dr. Emmett was a famous collector of "Americana" and possessed at the time of my introduction to him the largest and most complete library relating to the history of America then in existence. It numbered many thousand volumes, nearly all rebound by famous binders in this country and in London and Paris. His extra-illustrated books, enriched by autograph letters and original documents, and rare and curious prints were there by the hundreds. In this particular branch his library had no equal in this country, all devoted to the subject—America. His collections of manuscripts and prints relating to the discovery of the continent, its early settlement, voyages and travels, the Indian wars and Colonial period, the Revolution, were wonderfully complete. He had devoted

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forty years of his life to this one object. With a great and lucrative practice, living a modest, retiring life and with an ample inheritance, his income for years and patrimony, beyond his living expenses, were stored upon shelves in the form of paper and ink. His private hospital, famous in its time, was gradually being encroached upon to make place for his treasures. Room after room, piled from floor to ceiling in a building that an hour's conflagration would reduce to ashes. It was in this library that I caught the disease mildly, without the remotest kind of desire to emulate or attempt such a stupendous work. Mr. Myers also was a collector of no small degree, and had at his death a small but unique collection of books and prints, which came to his son, Commander Theodore Mason, and upon his death, his mother and sister presented it to the New Tilden Astor and Lenox Library Association, where they will form a most charming and delightful alcove in what will be the greatest public library in this country. Dr. Emmett has sold only a part of his collection for \$150,000 and it now reposes securely in the Lenox Library.

Well, I made many visits and spent hours in Dr. Emmett's library, my temperature rising higher and higher with every visit. I noted that the Doctor had here and there a book, a few prints, and some manuscripts relating to the Colonial and Revolutionary navy, but the navy of the United States seemed to me to play but a very unimportant and unsignalized part of the great collection, and I said to myself, and later to the Doctor and to Myers, "I must make some sort of a collection. I shall go for the navy, it is grossly neglected by the American people now-a-days." Early education and training stand for something; old associations stand with me for a great deal. The good Doctor altho' professionally a curer of disease, in this instance, propagated it, and from that time on injected into my port-folios numerous exclusively naval items that he had found no special place for.

I rummaged the old second-hand book stores, then concentrated for the most part in Nassau street. I spent hours of every available day out of business, searching for old naval histories, biographies, books written by naval officers, voyages of naval ships—I found, at first, that no one had ever undertaken such a collection and at comparatively small expense I got together

in a few years several hundreds of volumes, of which I dare say, very few of you are aware of the existence, all relating to our dear old navy. I also accumulated prints, portraits of naval officers and in the natural gradation of the fever that was in me, autographs. In a few years I became known amongst dealers in this sort of merchandise. Catalogues of libraries for sale, of autographs and manuscripts and auction sales poured in upon me—wherever there was a single item relating to naval affairs. Then I went abroad and resided in Holland, at Amsterdam and Antwerp, off and on for several years on business matters. I found in Holland—particularly in Amsterdam, a perfect gold mine of our old Revolutionary navy; books, prints and manuscripts. Frederich Mueller, then an old man over eighty-five years, an antiquarian, was at the head of the firm which for more than a century had for its business old books and manuscripts. He had made a specialty of Americana, so far as Holland was concerned or interested in the war of our Independence. He was very jealous of them, did not expose them for sale, and had not at that time included them in his yearly catalogues, which are marvels of information and much sought after to-day. I finally succeeded in inducing him to part with some of his most valuable items of the Revolutionary period—letters, prints and old books—several, I may say, a number, of most curious publications in Dutch, French and English, relating to the naval operations of the so-called Colonial ships in English waters, together with a unique lot of copper plate engravings—portraits and scenes of action of the *Ranger* and *Bon Homme Richard*, the *Surprise* and *Revenge*, some of them unique.

You may reasonably imagine that by this time my recovery from the fever was hopeless—I have it still and shall have it until the end.

On my return from Holland I went into what is considered the last stages—this was twenty-five years ago,—and commenced the illustration feature. I looked around for the best—that is to say—the handsomest edition of Cooper's *History of the American Navy*, and where do you think I found it?—in London, published by Richard Bently, in two volumes octavo—a large paper copy with wide margins printed on fine paper and in clear type. The American editions were poorly printed on cheap flimsy paper—sometimes in one volume and again in two.

There is also a French edition published in Paris—curiously enough printed in English. Having selected the book, I had it torn into sheets or pages, and enlarged by Trent on Whatman's drawing paper to folio size—between these pages thus enlarged I commenced the insertion of prints and manuscripts—portraits of every person mentioned, autographs and letters of every one, prints of all battles—of all ships, of all places, sea-ports and maps—newspaper reports of the period. There are very few men whose names are mentioned by Cooper of whom I have not in some way secured either the portrait or the autograph letter—all letters, prints, maps, inlaid, laid down and mounted to folio. The modest pile of enlarged sheets grew to large volume. By handling in such a detached condition there resulted some deterioration and ten years ago I made up my mind to bind them, although I felt that there remained much to be added. I sent the sheets with their additions to Bradstreet and the result is eight volumes folio, with separate illuminated title pages out of the two volumes octavo, and since then I have the material for at least four more folio volumes. They are bound in pigskin in the highest art of American binding, with cases for each volume lined with sheepskin, and while to talk of the cost of anything which one possesses is admittedly vulgar, it may be instructive to know that the binding cost upwards of \$400, and the cost of this series has been in the neighborhood of \$15,000. I have always regretted that I bound these books, for since the time when the collection was, as I thought, reasonably complete, there has come to me in various ways such a wonderful lot of papers that should be inserted in their appropriate places in the text, that I am compelled to put them in appendices—I suppose it will never end. Unfortunately these late acquisitions are the most interesting and valuable. For years I was on the lookout for a good autograph letter of Commodore Barry and of Captain Conyngham and was obliged to content myself with several unimportant and uninteresting autographs of the former, while of the latter there was not a scrap of his writing anywhere to be found, although I had from Mueller in Amsterdam a splendid folio portrait of him, a copper plate absolutely unique, no other impression of the plate being known. The lettering of the plate designating him as "Le Terrior des Anglais." I also procured from Mueller several other portrait

prints of Conyngham, which will be found in the collection, and several scenes of his exploits in the English Channel. A portrait drawn by some Dutch artist and struck up in the English coffee house in Dunkirk and another showing the English fleet sailing off before the wind, with Conyngham pursuing in a small vessel with a rooster crowing on his shoulder under a flag, supposed to be the flag of the revolted colonies, which was adopted by Paul Jones and by this almost unknown hero of our early navy. These prints created in my mind a great desire to know more of him than appeared in the histories of our navy, but it seemed impossible to find any trace of him beyond what appeared in Cooper, and of course an autograph was apparently as impossible an acquisition as that of Rameses the First. I dwell somewhat upon Conyngham, this unknown Captain, for the reason that one of my greatest joys as a collector of naval MSS. is connected with him.

Cooper relates his exploits in the English Channel in a small vessel which he purchased in England, called *The Surprise*. He captured several English vessels and brought them or sent them into Dunkirk. The English government complained. The prizes were released and Conyngham imprisoned as a pirate for cruising without a commission from any recognized government or authority. Conyngham claimed that he was regularly commissioned by the Continental Congress as a captain in the navy, that he had sent his commission to Paris to be viséed by the then representatives of the revolted colonies—Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, but it had never been restored to him. To make a long story short, Conyngham narrowly escaped being delivered over to the English and hanged as a pirate. He was undoubtedly an Irishman, and had never been naturalized, and like Paul Jones, fought with a halter around his neck. Cooper states that, as a result of his researches regarding Conyngham, he thought that he was commissioned as a captain by one of the commissions sent out to Benjamin Franklin in blank, both as to ship and name—leaving Franklin to fill out the blank spaces; but the document being lost and no others having been found, there was no proof of the fact, beyond Conyngham's statements, which if true, made of him the earliest commissioned naval officer of the Continental navy. Conyngham's history is a romance; I cannot

take time to give it to you now but will refer you to his biography, which will soon appear in print, written by a gentleman with whom I am connected by marriage—founded upon papers which have curiously come into my possession. For your present interest, however, I am dealing with this lost commission of Conyngham. A few years ago I received a printed French catalogue of autographs offered for sale by Charavay, a dealer in such wares in Paris. I have received hundreds of such catalogues from all parts of the world—I always study them, or look them over for Americana, and occasionally order sent to me such items which seem attractive if they relate to early American history. Amongst hundreds of items, I came across in this catalogue—one which translated from the French reads:

“Hancock, (John)—Document signed celebrated American statesman, Gov^r of Mass^{ts}. Signer of the declaration of Independence: Puce signed as President of Congress—Baltimore 1. March, 1777. 1 p. in fol. obl. 90 f.” Suffice it to say that I ordered it sent to me, without any other interest or idea regarding it than that created by the description in the catalogued list. It came duly to hand through a dealer in New York and what was my astonishment to find that it was the lost commission of Conyngham. For 125 years it had been buried somewhere in Paris. Its existence doubted; its loss nearly cost Conyngham his life, and ultimately his loss of compensation for his prizes, for which he demanded year after year relief from Congress. Because he could not produce the evidence of his, it must be admitted, irregular commission by the Continental Congress. Still it was a genuine commission as full and as complete as under the extraordinary circumstances of the period could have been executed or issued. If your curiosity is at all aroused, I beg that you will look at this old document, read its heading, and then possibly you can understand why it excited me. But I am not wholly done with Conyngham. After I got this collector’s treasure, the fact become known amongst collectors, and to my intense surprise, there arose from an obscure town in Pennsylvania a person distantly related to Conyngham who possessed a great lot of his papers, letters, journals, documents, accounts of prizes, applications for relief to Congress, reports of Committees, letters of Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, correspondence and no end of

autograph letters of Conyngham, including his daily journal during his imprisonment, in Dartmouth and Mill prisons, in his own handwriting. You may be sure that I did not hesitate to take the lot at the price named by its owner. A few years before I would have given the same price for a single authenticated signature. Now any man possessed of the fever and earnestly engaged in the pursuit I shall be happy to supply with the autograph signature of "Gustavus Conyngham," I have a hundred of them, more or less, but I have the complacent reflection that no one else has a scrap of that old Revolutionary hero's handwriting in his possession. His early education had been neglected and his orthography was unique, but expressive—unlike Paul Jones, who got his education God knows where, or how—he had not the gift of elegant phraseology and was a poor penman, but he was honest, truthful and brave—faced many dangers beyond that of battle, and died poor and unrequited, mainly from the loss of this commission and his inability to produce it. I think all his relatives or descendants, except of the remotest degree, have passed into oblivion.

I now come to Commodore John Barry of the early Continental navy. I have some hesitation in talking about him, because I am in some degree related to him by marriage only—so that when the new torpedo-boat destroyer Barry was ready to take her dip into the water, from the shipyard in which she was built, my daughter was discovered by the Naval Intelligence Bureau as the oldest unmarried female descendant of this old Revolutionary commander, for whom this modern example of naval construction was named and was invited and became her sponsor in baptism. For many years, notwithstanding the fact of this remote relationship, while I had found here, and in Holland, a number of very beautiful print portraits of Commodore Barry and had in my possession his original commission from Congress and President Washington and President Adams, also a commission to him signed by John Hancock, I had never been able to find any really interesting autograph letter written by and signed by him referring to his career or exploits during the war of the Revolution. There were none in the market, so to speak,—no collector, not even Dr. Emmett had any. He gave me a bill of lading signed by him, which I eagerly accepted. It is bound in my Illustrated Naval History with several doubt-

ful scraps bearing his doubtful signature. I was mortified and perplexed that in connection with the one man of the Revolutionary navy in regard to whom I might naturally be supposed to have a personal interest, or upon whom my children could base a claim of Revolutionary descendancy, I could not find a word of his handwriting, beyond a doubtful signature to a printed document, and an unimportant letter supposed to be written by him upon some personal business and for which I paid a high price and regarded as unique. You may perhaps figure to yourselves, if you have any interest in such matters, my great astonishment to receive from a Philadelphia firm about two years ago, a catalogue of autograph letters, which included in its numbers several hundreds of Commodore Barry's letters to and from him to be offered for sale at auction on a day or days fixed by the announcement. There were letters to and from him to General Washington and Lafayette, from Paul Jones and to Paul Jones, to and from Nicholson and from a great number of officers of the Revolutionary navy and of the immediate period following the recognition of our Independence. I read over the catalogue with its brief descriptions of the contents of the more important letters—great lots were undescribed and numbered by lot—50 pieces—20 pieces—10 pieces. They comprised a trunk full of the old Commodore's papers—bills and receipts—his letters from his wife—copies of his answers, curious old documents—letters from and to his relatives in Ireland, for he like Conyngham was an Irishman by birth. The reading of the catalogue raised my collector's temperature to the hurricane pitch. I had paid large sums for the most insignificant scraps of his handwriting, and here was his epistolary life laid out for sale to any one who without any particular interest, could obtain probably any number of his letters for a song.

There were only two days before the auction sale commenced. I was in Lenox—I could not discriminate or select—the mail was too slow—I had resort to the telegraph and I sent Sabin, who acts for such diseased persons as myself. "Buy all the Barry correspondence for my account without limit." He of course attended the sale which lasted for three days. There were a great lot of autographs besides the "Barry correspondence." My principal competitors were the agents of the Congressional Library, the Lenox—and other historical collectors—

and prices and bids mounted to high figures for the choice autographs, but Sabin, with a perfectly unwarranted belief in my solvency or accountability, and in the pride and obstinacy which prevails at auction sales, carried off the lot—was the hero of the sale at my expense—I can only add that I don't regret it, altho' I have hardly yet gone through the great mass of old Commodore Barry's papers, which have come to me. It is full of surprises covering the period of the old Commodore's private life and family connections in Ireland; his private family life in this his adopted country, his services in the Continental and Revolutionary navy—his service in the quasi French war, the building of the frigate *United States* under his supervision—letters from General Washington, Lafayette, Paul Jones, prize lists, accounts of the various actions in which he was engaged. a singularly curious correspondence, letters and answers to and from Commodore Samuel Nicholson, in regard to the pretensions of the chevalier Paul Jones; in his petition to Congress to be made the ranking commodore of the new navy of the United States, and the means taken to defeat his pretensions and the success of them which finally resulted in Barry being the first commissioned captain of the United States navy, Paul Jones' retirement in disgust and his going to Europe and taking service with the Russians.

I may say here in passing, that I agree with the historians that Paul Jones was the romantic character of our Revolutionary navy, and his battles with the *Ranger* and *Bon Homme Richard* are almost without parallel in single combats of ships of that or any other period. Buell has made of him one of the most interesting characters of the Revolution, and there is no one who figured in that memorable contest who to-day is so generally known and made a hero of. He had the gift of expressing himself in writing, and he wrote the English language correctly: of all prominent men on our side he was the most voluminous writer, except perhaps George Washington—unlike him, however, he did not hide his light—he had the "fever of writing" and wrote to every one in authority wherever he found himself, and generally upon the subject of himself. He made many private relations of his own exploits and claims for the recognition of his own merits and for reward. Naturally enough I have made great effort to collect Paul Jones—his writings—

his portrait—the scenes of his actions and the numerous memoirs and biographies—they are in great number. The lives are in English, French and Dutch. He is denominated smuggler, pirate, corsair, as well as naval hero. The descriptions of his character vary, all attribute to him at sea great courage and determination arising from different causes, some say that he was not so courageous on land—the French author, who of all his biographers seems alone to have known him personally and intimately, says that he repeatedly refused duels, was shy of his creditors, and otherwise draws an unfavorable picture of his personal characteristics and morals. Later biographers have given much of his voluminous correspondence, and based their estimates of him upon it, and upon his great combats in the *Ranger* and *Bon Homme Richard*. Of all the Revolutionary naval commanders his name stands pre-eminent and is best known. He is the only one of that period who wrote letters, and had the gift of expressing himself correctly in good English, whose letters are preserved and have become part of the archives of the government, while a great many are included in the private collections of collectors. For many years however, the letters of Paul Jones have from time to time come upon the market and always fetch the highest prices of Revolutionary autographs at auction sales, or at private sales.

I have a number of them; some bound in my *Illustrated Naval History*—I intended to have had the pleasure of showing you here one of special interest, which does not appear in any of his biographies or memoirs, which at a competitive sale I secured at a cost of \$250.

At the same time, I purposed showing you the original log book of the *Serapis* commenced on that prize to the *Bon Homme Richard*, when Paul Jones and his officers and crew left their sinking ship, took possession of their enemy and brought her safely to port. The only instance I believe in all naval annals of such a feat. You may have some curiosity to know how this record has been preserved and is handed down from generation to generation. It is useless to go into the story of that most memorable fight—you all have read about it—and those of you who have been in sea fights, or are familiar with their recitals can appreciate the confusion of that yard-arm to yard-arm battle, between the *Bon Homme Richard* and the *Serapis*.

In the abandonment of their sinking ship, some one, possibly Richard Dale or his clerk Fanning carried, with other effects, the blank book of Lieutenant Lunt on board the *Serapis*. The log book of the *Bon Homme Richard* went down with her—but with a care which does credit to Dale or his clerk, the official record of the action and the official record of the prize, the list of the officers and men who survived, and the record of her repair and safe bringing into port under jury masts and her final disposition and the disposition of the English prisoners of war are in this log book carefully preserved. The same book contains the log of the *Alliance* and the *Ariel* both kept by Richard Dale, in all of these ships Paul Jones' 1st lieutenant or executive officer. In the *Ariel* Paul Jones finally reached the United States—Commodore Dale retained the log books. Both Paul Jones and Dale left the government service for reasons which seemed good to them, generally speaking because they thought their services were not appreciated by promotion and emolument. Jones went to Europe—Dale took out a letter of marque for a privateer called the *Queen of France*, named for Marie Antoinette, who had given Paul Jones and Dale interviews, and to whom both had at her request described their battles with the English ships. The log of the *Queen of France* will also be found included in the log book of the *Serapis*, the *Alliance* and the *Ariel*. It ends abruptly with the end of the war. The entries in the log are all in Commodore Dale's own handwriting—Commodore Dale, as you all know, was restored to the regular navy after its reorganization and figures largely in the early history of the United States navy. His descendants, as happens in the ordinary usual course of our life here, became more or less necessitous or unappreciative of family records, and finding that this old historical document had a commercial value, sold it to a collector of Americana, Mr. S. L. M. Barlow, of New York, who held it for many years. Upon his death his library was catalogued and upon due notice and advertisement, offered for sale. I attended the sale, of course, which lasted for several days, and secured many books which bore upon our naval history—and there were many of them, as well as many MSS.

There was a most decided competition for the Paul Jones Log Book, so named and catalogued—the Congressional Library—

the Lenox Library, several private collectors—all made bids for it—I was startled at the first bid of \$500, but it ran up quickly to over \$1000, before I could collect myself—there was a contest after that with Mr. Ogden Goelette, but I finally secured it at \$1575, tucked it under my arm and with Goelette drove home together in his carriage, each mutually condemning ourselves for our rivalry. I may say here that if it ever becomes known, in Mr. Ogden Goelette's library will be found many rare books relating to early American history. He was, in a way, a collector and had the means to indulge his fancy. But as to that there are many all over the country. This log book, in form and even in expression, is kept in the same manner that all sea log books were and, so far as I know, are still kept: Hours—Kts.—fthms—courses—remarks—commences, and until 4 A. M.—Lat. obsd.—Lat. D. R.,—Long. obsd. and Long. D. R., etc., etc. The remarks cover the evolutions of the ship during the watches, the making and taking in sail, soundings and all the daily routine of a ship of war at sea hour by hour like all logs before and since. The remarks are occasionally enlivened by statements which give some insight as to manners and customs—notably one, when Midshipman Fanning on taking the barometer on the Alliance, during a heavy gale, the ship rolling heavily, lurched up against it and smashed it, whereupon Captain Jones jumped out of his berth, kicked Mr. Fanning out of the cabin, and followed him in his night dress, belaboring him about the decks! I doubt if such an occurrence is possible now-a-days, but its entry in the log, probably with the knowledge of the Captain, shows that in the Continental navy at that period it was a routine transaction, and officially accounted for the loss of the barometer, and at the same time recorded the punishment of the offender. I fancy barometers were scarce in those days. There are other evidences through the logs of these three ships commanded by Paul Jones, that his temper was not of the sweetest.

The crew of the *Bon Homme Richard*, its numbers and nationalities has always been more or less a matter of discussion in the various lives of Paul Jones. Of course a great number of the killed and wounded in the battle with the *Serapis* went down in her—besides those killed who were cast into the deep during the fight. But Lieut. Dale in this book has entered the

name and rating of every officer and man who formed the crew of the *Serapis* when the *Bon Homme Richard* sank and the place where each was recruited. This list was evidently kept as correctly as possible in view of claims for prize money—but as the *Serapis* was restored to the English, and the prisoners released, the prize money claims were never adjusted, a fact which in connection with his failure to establish his claims for other prize money and for preferment, constituted the principal causes of Paul Jones' dissatisfaction, retirement from the United States service, and his seeking service with the Russians like the soldier of fortune that he was.

Whatever may be said about him, he was the one romantic character of the war. He and his exploits are known to every schoolboy in the land. In the collection are two of his commissions by the Continental Congress, and notwithstanding the fact that the great mass of his voluminous correspondence is amongst the archives of the Government in Washington, there are a number of his letters of a most interesting character in this and other collections which have never been published.

The portraits of Paul Jones are very numerous. I do not refer to the modern ones, which have made every schoolboy familiar with his features, but to those engraved and printed during his lifetime in England, Scotland, France and Holland: from some one or two of these have the modern engravers taken their inspiration as to features, and added such embellishments as their fancy suggested. Some of the contemporaneous portraits are exceedingly beautiful specimens of engraving and etching art and are rare and costly when found—indeed they do not exist outside of collectors' hands. I believe I have every known portrait of Paul Jones, and one if not two, of which I have never seen a duplicate. No officer of the Revolution was so frequently portrayed during the struggle for independence, not even George Washington.

For the truth of history as served by illustration, I might mention that one of the commonest of the contemporaneous pictures of this hero, represents him in the act of shooting Lieut. Grubb, for attempting to haul down the American colors on the *Bon Homme Richard*. It exists in large folio—one of Carrington & Bowles mezzotint engravings, colored, and in plain black and white, published as the act directs in 1778—it exists

in a dozen different forms, all of course fanciful. Grubb is called Lieutenant, Midshipman, and Gunner in the lettering—it is safe to say that no such occurrence took place. There was a Midshipman Grubb on the *Bon Homme Richard*; his name appears in Lieut. Dale's list of officers on the *Serapis*. He accompanied Commodore Jones to the Alliance and home in the *Ariel*. From that time he is lost in history, but he certainly never had the honor of being shot by Paul Jones—but illustration has forever connected his name with our Revolutionary struggle.

As to the engravings which purport to represent the famous combat—and you will bear in mind that I am not referring to modern reproductions of illustrating artists and engravers—but the contemporaneous pictures which alone have value to a collector. There are three, mainly in support of Captain Pierson's bravery in fighting with an inferior force the fleet under Paul Jones—representing the *Bon Homme Richard* and *Serapis* locked in deadly embrace, while the Alliance under the Frenchman Landais is pouring her broadsides into the *Serapis* and *Bon Homme Richard* alike and the English fleet of merchant ships convoyed by the *Serapis* are finding safety in Carrickfergus. The lettering of this fine plate is in English and French to remind Frenchmen that while the *Serapis* was captured with her officers and crew, including Captain Pierson, his devotion to duty, against overwhelming odds, was recognized and the Baltic fleet of merchant ships saved. England made a hero of Captain Pierson, and he was as you all know knighted and became Sir Richard Pierson. After his release as prisoner of war, Jones sent him word that the next time he met him he would make a "Lord" of him. This print was published in 1778.

But I must not forget that I am not here to talk about this wonderful and attractive character. You will find it all so charmingly told in Buell's late publication that I apologize for any reference to him, outside of a collector's standpoint.

The other great picture of the battle is a large engraving, almost of the same size, but with the Russian Coat of Arms introduced into the lettering, in English only. It is dedicated to the merchants trading with Russia and published in 1780. Both of these engravings are rare and form the basis of all the subsequent and multitudinous pictures of the contest. The latter

is of extreme rarity. I have never seen or heard of a duplicate—somewhere in England will be found the oil paintings from which these engravings were made.

I must close the Revolutionary naval talk with the remark that besides Barry, Jones and Conyngham, there is hardly one of the men who are mentioned in Cooper's *Naval History* as of this period, of whom I have not either a portrait, or an autograph letter or both,—officer or civilian—at home or abroad. Naturally enough throughout I have made no special objective of the Continental navy—altho' that would have been, had I known it, enough work and more than I contemplated at the outset.

Passing through the period of idleness and really disorganization of the navy immediately succeeding the cessation of hostilities, we come to the quasi war with France, in which figured conspicuously Commodore Barry, Commodore Truxtun, Commodore Barney, Commodore Bainbridge and others.

The books, manuscripts, prints, portraits and memorabilia are scarce, but all the more interesting on that account. There are many private letters of Truxtun, who wrote easily in good English, and was a voluminous correspondent. His handwriting was in the expression of the day "elegant." I have dozens of his letters all having more or less reference to his exploits during the quasi war with France, also a number of the letters of Joshua Barney and Bainbridge, Barry and others, who figured at that period, with of course portraits and prints of the battles in which The Hyder Ally, General Monk, the *L'Insurgente*, Boston and Berceau figured. There is also a lot of MSS. concerning the capture of Bainbridge in the Retaliation by the French squadron, his temporary imprisonment at Guadeloupe, all described in private letters of Bainbridge and in his correspondence with the governor of that island.

The Tripolitan war follows, and forms one of the most interesting periods of our naval history, in which figured as young officers nearly all the men who subsequently, in the War of 1812, gained great renown for our service, and lasting honor for themselves. Preble, Decatur, Hull, Bainbridge, Barron, Lawrence, Perry, Dent, Trippe, Somers, Biddle, Henley and numberless others—I cannot enumerate them. The war with Tripoli is filled with incidents which have formed subjects of much writing,

both by the actors in the scenes themselves and by public officials. In the collection will be found a great many autograph letters, original documents relating to them, as well as every obtainable print illustrating the capture and the recapture of the Philadelphia—the bombardments of Tripoli, the adventures of the *Intrepid*—scenes with the Bey of Algiers and the Sultan of Turkey, etc. The portraits are also complete or nearly so. The correspondence, including that of Bainbridge and the Danish Consul, Nissen, and the representative of the French Republic, under the dictatorship of Napoleon, who befriended him and his fellow prisoners during Bainbridge's confinement in the Barbary state prisons, some of the secret correspondence with Commodore Preble—all are found in the collection—and would I am sure, could I dwell upon them, interest you.

Indeed a complete history of this period has never been written more fully than in Cooper's *History*, where its features are sketched most hastily. I may say here that there is now held by Messrs. Dodd, Meade & Co. of New York, a collection of letters and documents relating more particularly to the war with Tripoli, comprising the private and public correspondence of Commodore Edward Preble. There are fifteen or twenty volumes of it, roughly but consecutively arranged, by being pasted into large blank books. They would be indispensable to any one undertaking to write the story of this period of our navy. It may give you some idea of the commercial value of such relics when you know that the owners, some descendants of the Commodore, ask \$10,000 for the papers. But it has been intimated to me that they could possibly be purchased for \$7000. There are a great many individual letters and documents for which I would pay large sums, but the collection cannot be separated and is held as a whole—it should go into the public archives at Washington.

Coming to the period embracing the War of 1812, the field for the naval collector is at once enlarged and expanded. Following that war and during it, writers in England and America were busily engaged in writing histories of the War of 1812, naval biographies, accounts of participants, discussions of causes, pamphlets, personal experiences, cruises of particular ships of war or squadrons, charges and counter-charges, relations of the

several conspicuous battles which occurred, written by numberless actors who viewed them from different standpoints, all these publications appeared in print, here and in England and sometimes in France, while artists and engravers on both sides illustrated every prominent person and incident. It was not, thirty years ago, a difficult or costly work to collect the War of 1812. Every second-hand bookstore and print shop in London, New York, Boston, Philadelphia and elsewhere, had on its shelves old worn out, dilapidated, well thumbed and often badly printed books and prints relating to the subject.

With each succeeding year the items became more rare and more expensive. Other collectors sprung up, the old books disappeared and to-day I dare say that amongst the rarest of this past century's Americana will be books relating to the American navy and its exploits up to and including the War of 1812 and perhaps the Mexican War.

I have referred to old, out of print books and their generally dilapidated condition—the bindings originally of the cheapest character—leaves dirty and stained, all have been handsomely rebound in crushed Levant, the texts cleaned and restored. There is not, I believe, a single officer or civilian, mentioned by Cooper connected with the War of 1812, of whom I have not portraits or letters, or both, not a single illustrated scene described by him of which I have not an impression. Searching through the shops in England I have often secured portraits of English commanders of the various ships with which our ships came into contact, and often their biographies, which has resulted in some most interesting discoveries of books, letters and prints. I wish I had time to particularize some of them. Of the more prominent naval commanders of the century, Hull, Decatur, Jacob Jones, Bainbridge, Lawrence, Rodgers, Chauncey, McDonough, Biddle, Burrows, Perry, Morris, Stewart, Porter of Essex fame, Warrington, Percival, Read, Smith, Truxtun, Dale and many others, I have many portraits and many most interesting autograph letters, the latter all relating to their profession and exploits. Besides the portraits of the Naval War Committees of the Continental Congress and their autographs, the collection includes the likeness and autograph of every Secretary of the Navy—not merely autographs, but letters written and signed by them, generally private, but upon subjects connected

with the administration of naval affairs—but few that may be classed as public documents, or that have been printed in the public archives.

I do not wish it to be understood that I have in any way exhausted the supply of such things—they are yet to be found by diligent and persistent search and watchfulness, and surprises come when least expected and they crop up in the most unexpected way and from most unexpected quarters. The demand and willingness of persons to pay for historical memorabilia increases every year. There are hundreds of collectors all over the country where there was one, thirty years ago—of every relic of our nation's history—while the great libraries are the repositories forever of individual efforts and are constantly absorbing the rarest and most valuable.

I may, however, congratulate myself that I have perhaps the largest and most interesting collection of books, manuscripts, autographs and prints relating to the old navy, for I believe I was the first one to devote himself specially to this special branch of Americana.

To illustrate the eagerness of this general fever, and at the risk of wearying you with the subject, and of a charge of egoism, I will relate a circumstance of my personal experience. After graduating at the Naval Academy in 1854, I made cruises in the steam frigate *San Jacinto*, Captain Stribling, the sloop-of-war *Saratoga*, Captain Tilden, and the surveying steamer *Arctic*, Captain Berryman—in the last named, making the first line of deep sea soundings across the Atlantic from Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, to Valencia Bay, Ireland, in the interest of the contemplated first Atlantic cable. During all of these cruises, I kept, as required by the regulations, copies of the logs of the several ships, to present to the board of examiners, for my promotion to passed midshipman. On the return of the *Arctic* to New York, amidst the confusion arising from the sudden putting out of commission of the ship, during my temporary absence on shore, my log books were stolen, or lost. I was at once detached from the *Arctic* with orders to proceed to Annapolis and report to the board for my examination—all the surviving members of what was known as the advanced class of 1851. Selfridge, Miller and Stribling were there. The first question propounded to me was a request to present my journals and letters from

my commanding officers. I explained the reason of my inability as to the journals or log books. Their disappearance was unaccountable and my excuse was not well received, particularly as Captain Stribling in his letter to the board while commending my general conduct on the *San Jacinto*, called the attention of the board to the fact that I had failed to keep the log of the ship as required by the naval regulations. This I explained by the statement that I had not presented it to him, as he left the ship in charge of Lieut. Overton Carr, his executive, a week or more before the ship was put out of commission, and I had therefore presented my log book to Lieut. Carr, who had signed it "Examined and approved." Well, the board refused to examine me and I had to go to Washington, see the Secretary of the Navy, make a formal statement in writing, use all the influence I could bring to bear and after some days of doubt and unhappiness, I secured an order from the Department directing my examination. I had, however, fortified my statements by a letter from Lieut. Carr, stating that he had seen, examined and approved of my log of the *San Jacinto*. My examination came off successfully and I received my warrant as passed midshipman in due course. Now you will naturally wonder why I should go into this trivial story, taking up your time and my own. Last March of this year I received a letter from a fellow collector, member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, calling my attention to the fact that in Professor Osgood's Catalogue of the archives of the State of New York, just published by the Government Printing Bureau at Washington, appeared this item—"Journals of John Sanford Barnes, Midshipman in the Navy of the United States, of voyages made in the U. S. S. ships-of-war, *San Jacinto*, *Saratoga*, and *Arctic*, 1854, 1855-1856." So here in great dignity were my long lost log books, reposing amid the archives of my own State.

The State archives are in charge of the Regents of the University of the State of New York. To them I applied stating the circumstances, asking that the journals be restored to me; after much correspondence, and upon my offering in exchange some other material, these journals came back to me after forty-six years of disappearance. Upon investigation it was found that my journals were purchased from Henry Stevens in London over eight years ago, together with a lot of Americana, for

which the State had paid the sum of \$2500. Mr. Stevens was a noted collector and dealer in matters relating to American history and had resided for many years in London. He has joined the ranks of the great majority and I shall never know how he became possessed of these journals, dignified as "archives" during the lifetime of the writer of them!

You may possibly imagine that the reading of Professor Osgood's archives, a copy of which, with some difficulty, I obtained, was somewhat like reading one's epitaph on one's own tombstone. Their interest to Mr. Stevens probably arose because they covered interesting items of American history—the Crimean War, the Ostend Conference and the laying of the first Atlantic cable.

I must beg your pardon for this long, disjointed talk, but as I have said before Captain Chadwick is responsible for it. I put all the blame upon him and I beg for him your most indulgent consideration.

You may well ask what does all this fumbling with old papers amount to anyway? How are we to be instructed by it? What has the Naval War College to do with such past and gone matters? We are interested in the present and future development of the new navy—monster guns, monstrous steelclad ships, swift protected cruisers, steam power, electric power, smokeless powder, rapid fire artillery, torpedoes, torpedo-boats and destroyers, naval problems and naval strategy; those old ships and old sailors are extinct as the ark with its navigators, they can teach us nothing. I can only say that they may be inspiring. I remember well that upon visiting the museum of the United Service institution in London, and again the army and navy exhibition at Earl's Court, I was overwhelmed by the grand collection of evidences of English prowess upon the sea, in the form of portraits, paintings, prints and manuscripts, captured flags, relics of famous men and famous battles of the British navy, among them the spoils of the Chesapeake and the President, which gave me a pang of regret and envy.

Such an institute and such exhibitions may be impossible to us now, but we have made some histories creditable to the country and to our service, we are adding to it yearly, in the course of human events we are likely enough to add more to it. Scattered about the navy yards, and the Naval Academy and in

the Department at Washington and in private hands, in public museums and libraries, are the relics, monuments and trophies connected with the naval and military history of the past. They have no collective force and exercise no inspiring influence upon the people. Can they be brought together, classified and arranged, somewhat in the form of the United Service Institution of England, or the Naval Record Society of Great Britain? Those of us who have visited the great international exhibitions of recent years, know how the people flock about governmental exhibits, illustrating the progress in armaments and their manufacture. In London, in Paris, in Berlin, and in Vienna, and in St. Petersburg, exist great historical collections of arms, and in their libraries classified collections of military and naval literature. Here we have no such purpose anywhere evident or anywhere suggested. It is impossible without governmental interest and expenditure to approach within long gunshot of these foreign collections, but something might be done in this direction and that is a problem for the Naval College to think over, discuss and suggest, or to abandon as a matter beyond its scope. I can only say that were such a commencement made of a Naval or United Service Institution, or Naval Record Society, I would see that ultimately the results of my work as a collector of naval memorabilia should find a final resting place there.

Of course the war records now being published by the Government furnish every kind of *official* report of the war between the North and the South, but all such official reports are but dull reading compared with the private descriptions and personal experiences of prominent individuals, who were active participants in the scenes of the war. Biographies and autobiographies of naval officers are needed, and it should be the object of a record society to stimulate, or induce such personal reminiscences, particularly of those officers now on the retired list, who are passing away with all the treasures of their memories.

The records of services of officers can always be found at the Department by any one having special interest and the industry to dig them out of the departmental files. They are seldom of use except perhaps to be referred to in a general way by officers in trouble. There have been several attempts to collate the records of officers, like Hammersley's record of the graduates of the Naval Academy; it is a cold, rigid formal memorandum of

dates, commissions and orders of officers named. Hammersley probably found that as to living graduates his easiest and surest method was to apply to the officers themselves for information regarding their services and it shows the interest which officers probably take in the service that in response to his inquiries he received hundreds of letters from those he addressed giving briefly their autobiographies. He kept all these letters, filed them in some order in scrap books, and it may interest some here to know that I finally purchased these books and have of some, if not of many of you here present, your own estimates of your personal services in your own handwriting. Hammersley condensed these autobiographies and printed them in his book. It is imperfect. Indeed you may suppose that I do not estimate the publication highly, valuable as it is, as my own name does not appear in it! The scrap books however, are extremely valuable, and will become more so as years roll by.

When I threw upon your president, Captain Chadwick, the responsibility of appearing before you, it was with the intention of sitting amongst you and having a quiet and informal chat about the old navy, but when I came to think of it, I found that I might ramble on interminably on my hobby-horse, until your patience gone, you would politely cough me down and shut me up. So I thought it best to condense my remarks by writing out and reading them to you. I fear that learned as you are in processes of condensation, you'll find these hastily brought together and tedious recitals rather of the triple expansion order.

In conclusion I may be permitted to say that I have written this ill prepared talk entirely from memory, separated from my library and collections, with very grave doubts as to its interest, except perhaps to those curious in such matters.



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