Narrative of the Cruises of the U.S. Frigate Constitution
By Thomas C. Byron
Charlestown January 1st at a target with large and small guns.
Next morning we sailed for Boston and when crossing Nantucket shoals fell in with a British squadron seven in number, the African sixty-four, Guerriere, Shannon, order for Captain Hull, Bellerive, Eurus, Trinidad. I believe we fell in with them in the night, the next morning it was calm and foggy and they were not more than two-thirds gun shot off. Captain Hull, then said to his men, we are almost surrounded but before I will give up the ship, I will blow her up and go with her; we then gave three cheers and the captain ordered the pursers down to bring up bread, butter, and cheese on the quarter.
Dick, this was done and we all partook of it and then prepared for our escape. Charles Morris first Lieutenant sounded and found bottom at thirty-five fathoms. We cut boats and two Guernicre frigate one to cage anchor, lock to of the same ships that the captain carried out was in the squadron the cage and dropped it that chased us off we then manned the captain Nantucket she also have up to it at the same in a storm was support time carrying out the from the rest; this was a umbrela to refute the 4 o'clock A.M. on the 19th cage anchor; this is the day of August. We way we warped away from them, at the same grog when the man time we hoisted our flag at mast head cried "sail No the officer of the deck Say, wear away windward about three points on the weather van. What they then fired two-guns Frigate Byron beat which was our favor. They had 15 boats tripping the head ship but all to no use. About 12 o'clock the breeze sprung up and by sun down we run out of sight of them and arrived at Boston. We then took in provision for a six months cruise and put to sea. This was in the latter part of July cruising on the grand banks we fell in with the enemy hereon upon us smartly firing her Startford broadside.
drawing right taffed and brought her larboard guns to bear. By this time she had best to be done. We continued playing with us long enough bringing off the man and whatever was to fire and the first headside wanted until 40 clock was told so well that the foremost day when we put a slow mare fell and the second day the magazine and blue same and carried the mizzen up and then returned from the maine to Bost. We made the exclaimed: "We have made our in the afternoon a big of hue ut then got the tide running out afraid of each other and the next morning Rigan told cut the sea squadron here in sight, run so high but at the same time a gun was got out of the we played in anchor same time a gun was got out of the we played in anchor same cabin windownd and shot away slipped our cables and their main mast which fell up to Boston. This our ship splitting larboard finished the second side down to the water edge cruise of the Constitution and breaking off part of the in 1812. mizen topsail yard and stood our board and she drifted off to leeward. Captain Hull then hailed him and asked him if he had struck. He said "yes" we then sent a boat for him and his officers, when Dacres came on board he offered Hull his sword. You may keep it says brave Hull what makes you look so dull, step down.
The third cruise of the Constitution was under Commodore William Bainbridge who was ordered to the ship after Capt Hull left. We got ready for sea and stood for the Brazil coast where we cruised some time taking prize, with a few days' water and provisions, and then a prize, which we hauled and made him cut them down. We had some fresh meat whilst on that coast. He had asked him if he had some fresh meat whilst on that coast; he said, "yes, we sent our boat into the coast, and they brought some fresh meat to us." We had a few days' water and provisions, and then a prize, which we hauled and made him cut them down.

At length we fell in with the Java Frigate commanded by Capt Lambert bound for Bombay, with copper sails and rigging for a seventy-four and three hundred and fifty soldiers. She was to windward and taking us to be the prisoners. Here we received orders from the American Consul to proceed home and not to stop off, but she soon found out her mistake when her mainmast fell stripping her compleat, then Haslup hoisted the flag on a boom and lashed it to the stump of the mizen mast, we doubled hulled our guns and lowered down on her which now and then a prize, with us. We asked him if he had some fresh meat whilst on that coast; he said, "yes, we sent our boat into the coast, and they brought some fresh meat to us." We had a few days' water and provisions, and then a prize, which we hauled and made him cut them down.

Of the officers, Capt Lambert was mortally wounded, Genoways was governor of Bombay and had only on board to pay off the troops of that place. We continued to bring off the men and everything as was of value until 4 o'clock next day when we put a slow match to the magazine and blew her up, then went into St. Salvador and landed the wards and taking us to be the prisoners. Here we received orders to proceed home and not to stop off, but she soon found out her mistake when her mainmast fell and became almost a wreck drifting down to our stern and in
The fourth cruise of Old Ironsides was commanded by Charles Stewart, and a better man never stepped. He being well experienced, cruised among the West India islands, and while there we met vessels of all classes, some of which we shipped and burnt, some sent home, and some others we chased. We chased the crooked frigate through the moner passage and lost her in a thunder squall it being so dark it was thought she changed her course in the night—to deceive us; for we run all around but could not find anything of her. We still cruised around finding none, and then a vessel and in a short time had a number of prisoners on board, and not liking to be troubled with them any longer, he was determined the next small vessel he took, he would make a cartel of, and shortly after he fell in with an old bark, owned by the Captain of her. Captain Stewart agreed with him to take the prisoners to England and he Stewart would give his wife the bark, this was done. We cruised a little longer and came home in the spring but the British cruisers had come on the course. We made Portsmouth harbor about daylight on Sunday, and about sunset we saw two frigates standing in from sea. And having no pilot, we had to start for Boston, but our ship, having so much prize stuff on board, she could not sail, so that we had to throw overboard a great quantity of it such as soup, brandy, rum, and wine, and all other stores that would help the enemy. But as it happened we had a
Now on board she belonged in Marblehead and she carried Old Ironsides safe in this was on Sunday about ten o'clock, and by twelve o'clock the military had arrived and the two ships laying off about a virgin shot from the fort, we had the red hot shot ready for them for they layed off a while and then stood off and that night we was at six to Salem and lay there about a fortnight, when we get under way and came to Boston. This was the end of the fourth cruise of Old Ironsides in the war of 1812...
The fifth and last cruise of the Constitution in the war of 1812 was under the command of Charles Stuart Esq. Dec 19th. Ironsides went out with substantially the same officers and men, she and rig and man the chain pumps and man her. She first went off Bermuda, them well. This was thence via Madeira, done and in about an hour and a half. She was free, again braced escaped sinking one braced up and sailing night, being on anchor along as usual. She was carr'd and tacks a board also thrown down on her, driving at the rate of nine knots, the leeches. When cruising off Bermuda, the plug came out and she and a man lanchet in one half hour she would overboard going aloft to have sunk, the water had reef topsails at the same time, and being a good gunner ran on deck and reported the officer of the deck. Shubrick the state of things, saying the ship was sinking badly. Huffman his reply was, "Well if she does we will all go to the braces, haul in the weather braces and put her before it, stop the household, first went off Bermuda, them well. This was thence via Madeira, done and in about an hour and a half. She was free, again braced escaped sinking one braced up and sailing night, being on anchor along as usual. She was carr'd and tacks a board also thrown down on her, driving at the rate of nine knots, the leeches. When cruising off Bermuda, the plug came out and she and a man lanchet in one half hour she would overboard going aloft to have sunk, the water had reef topsails at the same time, and being a good gunner ran on deck and reported the officer of the deck. Shubrick the state of things, saying the ship was sinking badly. Huffman
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then officer of the deck charged him with trying to run away from the ship. He said I have a great mind to give you a dozen for attempting to run away, turning around laughing he said Pursers steward give smoke half a pint of whiskey.

After this we went off Lisbon where we fell in with a 74 and chased him almost up to the rock. Sunset both ships ran go and they immediately sent alongside of the Constitution out boats to catch the old craft but the bird had flew. Steward steps up on in the night a large ship the cannonade the came alongside and after side of the gang hailing her two or three times and said to his men I understand there was some dissatisfaction in not having fired two or three guns to compel her to answer which she did through a fight with something an interpreter and found before going home but now you will have her to be a Portuguese Frigate. Steward thinking fighting enough it not prudent to staying the vessels being right in one place stood off to commence orders.
them to fire and it was crew was the smartest.

That ship then from the other ship was the most
capable ever known
but the old craft had as

good a master as ever

Stepped a ship's deck

Samuel Hickson was

the man, great credit

was due Mr. Hickson in

maneuvering so as to prevent

their raking her as she

was backing and filling

the whole action. This was

the smartest action ever

fought it being in the

night and two ships on

one but that ship's crew

was not beat so easy. We

took them both. And could have taken two more in one hour afterwards.

There was not a ship we took that was half a

ship for old Ironsides

and she could take another. The ship and having

like her in one hour after she was back on the main yard

as she never lost any of

her spars and but about

12 or 15 men in any

fight she had, and her

Many of her men had been brought up on the

sea, some had been

masters of vessels both

as sailors and marines

and they were as united

as brothers. They were all

ways merry and lively

and the officers liked to

see them. So the officers

would give all hands to

mischief when we had a

leisure afternoon. This

was to encourage them.

At one time in Boston

harbor we were at this

spot when a good

looking countryman

came alongside this ship

in a small boat to look at

in a shore boat to look at

the ship and having

like her in one hour after she was back on the main yard

as she never lost any of

her spars and but about

12 or 15 men in any

fight she had, and her
while another stepped to the southward and the rope under his arms went into Musum no sooner done than up he went crying a Turkey, this was spot and then returned home on the balance of the prisoners a Turkey, this was sent for the officers. They loved. This was the last cruise of him down on deck and the old Constitution in showed him the ship he was a man over six fort high with broad trim hat, a long suit of and cane and cut a great figure in the air. After we captured the Cyane and Levant we started as how and as soon as they to the Isle of May to land the saw the ship under way prisoners but when we got they seize of the crew of the ship we could not land ship and made prisoners, them we went over to St. Jago's of them, but they was and commenced loading of them that had a little money and we old ships made their appear enough for them, so ance and we had to cut they bided them and and run out and the there got off back into the followed so close that we country where they sent the prizes back and remained until one of them was recaptured peace, knowing well as they were not America by them but they could not come up with the ics and they would not be exchanged although old craft. We stood off
naturalized citizens about sunrise and
one was a Swede, Peter at sundown they were
Miller and the other all out of sight and we
Francis Fox was a Swede arrived at Boston with
man, they always had out seeing them again
money and came home until we went on land
after the war and lived and fell in with the Guine
in Salem Mass and became rich. Peter
Miller got to be a great merchant and owned
a great many ships
and was a fine man
but the other seafellows away her last mast
who were made prisoners standing and she
off had to be sent to Eng drifled off to leeward.
and exchanged. The statement is also
by which they would take false of the Java's
three or four months after running her Joh
into the Constitution she
Peace.
I must now correct many things stated in mast standing and
the Naval story ccerning the proceedings and run down to leeward
of the chasing and muzz about 100 feet from the
craining of the British
squadron. We fell in all was still when
with them in the morning Bayon having his
gun loaded, jumped readers may lay down from the boats and run aft and find a man in this being a true state and shooting a man in station was on the quarter top. She had not ten deck to secure orders gone far before the mast and had a chance to see fell sails ships then white and hear all that was said or done on board during the flag on a boom when the whole war. The survivors were run down on him and he gave up without the Constitution are firing a gun. There has been a great deal added to make a large story of it and many things left out that should be in, having been chased 3 days and night and believing each other at quarter is false altogether. TheJava was to state the things as they occurred and had the truth of this. I shall give them credit for all they done, it is my view to give them credit for all they done, it is my view. However there was nothing in this situation not having got but what was successful done. Her sails secured during that war with England in 1672. I might of course make a great deal more of it but I have left out many small things that I thought not worth notice. But my
and she fired several putting them in destructive shots one of the guns on board of their man of war and keeping them on the forecastle another and keeping them shot took the wheel and for life unless they could cured the quarter another. Now I must master but this was the make some remarks most damage we went as to the act of Congress to the Guernsey we went this was declared again her so quick she did not Great Britain in 1815 know what to make of. Congress passed a act that every man should receive prize money the marines but the captain rated him as for every prize they took petty officer by which if they did not have a chance to get them in the drew three shares if they destroyed them a third prize money. There was a number from the enemy they men on board who had should be paid for been pressed on board of them all the same. British man of war. But this was never and knew what they would done we took the Guernsey fighting for and with and Java frigates have drunk an English mans blood at that time small prizes and I believe I will say to my destroyed them and readers this was to stop government gave for the British from passing that 1000 dollars. When our men out of our merchantmen and as she blew up there
Long may they be remembered by the lovers of this country. John Bull another prize we sent in with some prize goods amounting to about $1000 dollars of which government took their part, but what of all the rest of the prize? The Cyanecam home a good little brigate built ship and was kept in the service and worn out also the Sevans and this shot came in the port and struck the gun and turned it over completely. Kingman on looking at the disaster his gun had met with, clasped his hand on his back and exclaimed our fine at that; he and his men then righted the gun up again and said now I will pay you for it and commenced firing again, this was in the battle of the Java. Sunt Shubrick being stationed at one of the gun deck divisions got his coat caught under the buck.
of one of the guns when firing her and took a jackknife and cut it off and when he came on deck after the battle he looked like a pigeon with his tail plucked out but this was nothing he he was one of the best officers in the ship and as good a sailor as ever stepped a ships deck and was the man who so calmly replied to the Gunner when he reported to him that the ship was sinking, "If she goes we will go with her." He was one of the calmest men when in duty out of him by taking that could be found and out wood and water a good man every way. Every day, this we always. Now I will state in what dole when in chase and manner we contrived to never lift do the duty which we so bravely performed. A man was always kept aloft on the mainmast cross trees with a spyglass to look out and as soon as he would see anything he would cry out and then all hands was called to make for her, then it was make sail and turn ship; no man allowed to go below except on duty, every man busy carrying shot fore and aft to him ship, making sail, heaving the log and timing her by the hourglass to see what way she would sail best, this we had to do as she would get.
I will now give the name of the officers attached to the old craft through out the whole war of 1812. The first command was George Shubrick, fourth Capt Hull, two cruises, first lieutenant Charles Shubrick, second Huffman, third Capt Morgan, fifth Hunter, first lieutenant Charles Morris, second Wardsworth, third Reed, fourth Huffman, fifth Morgan, fourth Watson, gunner Davis, boatswain, Peter Adams, sailing master, Elvin.

John Day, master mate, Regan, sail maker, varnum, midshipman, Shubrick, his brother, and Morgan were the other two, Elvin was also promoted to lieutenant. The boatswain, Chas. Shubrick, his brother and Morgan were the other two, Elvin was also promoted to lieutenant. The boatswain was the same this was uniform, midshipmen, the time we took the Java, Gordon, Bios, Palmce, and Stearns, Winter, gunner, Anderson and
Darling in her last cruise, I will state our sufferings on the night we crossed the equinoctial line, that night all hands came near dying for want of water. A number were dippings up with tin pots the water that had fallen from a small shower into the boats on deck and mixed with the salt water that had flowed over the side into it also old tobacco chews which the men had thrown into the boats and they had to drink it. About daylight it began to rain as it generally does in crossing the line and we were very glad but was not allowed to catch it up. We had to put up with a drop for our messes until it was all over, but had to get up casks and spread sails over the deck and fill them and the cause of the great suffering was on board as the men could not eat the salt grub without water and this caused Captain Steward to search out a by place to...
Juan Fernandez, the place where Robinson Crusoe was cast away, inhabited only by the 
Pottuguese for crime and not 
convicts transported by the 
Crown. A boat with a seat 
to get away with. They built 
a sort of a net to hurl their bait 
from the boat to lure the fish in. 
They had cans and fish in 
their warehouses at night. 
They came in with fish and 
were glad to change them for 
every island that they 
visited. They exchanged 
the women for crime.