



USS Constitution  
Museum

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TRANSCRIPTION OF

**A List and Description of the American Navy  
at the Ports of Boston, New York, and Norfolk, VA**

USS Constitution Museum Collection [1758.1]

[1]

At Boston

New Ship on the Stocks not Named ready to Launch she is 200 feet Keel 56 feet on the Beam and she is about 2050 Tons Burthen, built of Live Oak. Mounts 110 Guns – on the Lower Deck 42 <sup>prs</sup> on the Main Deck 32 <sup>prs</sup> Long Guns she struck me as a fine ship and much larger than the Howe or Nelson.

Independence appeared to me to be about the size of the Foudroyant or Malta she has 32 <sup>prs</sup> on all her Decks.

Java is a large Frigate I can

[2]

imagine about 1700 Tons, but wants a thorough repair she has lately returned from the Mediterranean.

Constitution is a large Frigate & the Ship that captured the Guerrier & Java she appears to be about 1600 Tons and is at present undergoing a thorough repair, her Upper Works are of Live Oak, and she goes by the name of Iron Sides I was told that only two Shots from the Guirrier came through her Sides during the Action

Schooner building nearly finished This vessel is about 170 Tons and is intended to protect the trade against the Pirates which have taken many of the American vessels on the Coast of Africa &

[3]

in the West Indies.

At New York

Ohio. This Ship has been some time launched and is a very fine Ship She is 200 feet Keel and 56 feet on the Beam & is about 2650 Tons Burthen Mounts 42 <sup>prs</sup> Long Guns on the Lower Deck 32 <sup>prs</sup> Long guns on the Main Deck and 32 <sup>prs</sup> Columbia or Congreves Guns on the Upper Deck she is to carry 110 Guns

Washington is the same kind of Ship as the Independence.

Franklin is a Ship of the same kind as the Washington & I should think about 2250 Tons. Both these Ships Mount 32 <sup>prs</sup> on their Main

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and Lower Decks & the same on their Quarter Deck and forecastle, but the Quarter Deck and Forecastle are 32 <sup>prs</sup> Cannonades

The Steam Frigate I did not see but understood she had Guns of a very large Caliber not less than 42 <sup>prs</sup>

Ontario is a 20 Gun Ship repairing and a Sloop of War lately returned from the Mediterranean

There is here a Frigate laid down the Keel of which is 162 feet long she will be 1800 Tons burthen when finished and is to carry 32 <sup>prs</sup> Long Guns.

[5]

At Norfolk

Delaware a Ship of the same rate as the Ohio and mounts the same number of Guns and the same weight of Metal but I understand she is a little larger being 2700 Tons Burthen I think her the finest of all the large Class of Ships I saw in the States

United States is a large Frigate and appeared to be about the size of the Constitution she took the English Frigate Macedonian

Remarks on the American Navy.

The United State have five sail of these Ships Launched and four more will be completed by

[6]

The end of 1823 Making nine sail of ships all superior to our first Rates. They have also three 80 gun ships & they are Building four or five large frigates the one I saw at New York will be 1800 Tons and will carry 32 <sup>prs</sup> these are independent of all their other Frigates. The Materials of which these Ships are Built are far superior to anything with which we Build; of the Live Oak one cubit foot is Equal to 80 lb The ships are all salted during the time they are Building I observed that all their Blocks were strapped with Iron & they gave as a reason that they were not so easily destroyed in Action; Their Guns are all disparted & their Locks have a Magazine which

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primes itself by the shutting of the Pans This I consider as a great advantage as there are no powder horns necessary all the powder is put up in lead & there is no occasion for sponging the Guns as the lead is melted & comes out with the following discharge by this method time is saved. From the management & equipment of their Guns I should think that four discharges to our three would not be saying too much

The Marines are dressed in Blue with a handsome Cap & red Feather in front with handsome Gold Tassels they are much drilled with the Rifle as well as made to fire Buck shot from the Tower Musket, & they are much practiced with the repeating Musket.

This Musket has two Locks & is loaded

[8]

with nine Balls, the lock which is placed at the swell of the Musket fires the first Ball & by the other balls being perforated the communication is kept up until all are fired off after which the Musket becomes the same as any other & is fired by the Lock at the Breach The American Navy have also the advantage of slugs [?] & Buck Shot which in the event of a new war will give them a decided advantage over the British Navy.

After 28 Years continued service I think I may be allowed to give an opinion, and that opinion is that the American ships are far superior to anything we have not only in the Materials they are Built of but that they are much larger & that their

[9]

Cannon and equipments will give then a decided superiority over our Navy let our officers and Men be ever so much superior to theirs.