

Sailor's Story
John Lord

My Duties

I enlisted in the Navy on November 4, 1812. I fought in the War of 1812, and was severely wounded while serving in Commodore Joshua Barney's Chesapeake Flotilla. I received my gunner's warrant on June 17, 1817, increasing my pay to \$20.00 per month and two rations per day.

As a gunner, I was responsible for all of the ship's cannons and their equipment, small arms, gunpowder, shot, and magazine tools. Gunpowder is highly flammable, so great attention was paid to properly securing the powder magazine. The captain kept the keys, and only someone of my rank and responsibility was allowed to open the space. I also supervised the gun drills. During

battle, my station was the magazine, where I oversaw the filling and passing of gunpowder cartridges.

Constitution's Crew

I joined *Constitution's* crew several years after the War of 1812, on October 12, 1824, as a gunner. While serving aboard *Constitution* in the Mediterranean Sea, we protected American merchant ships and proved to European countries that America was a global power, and we were a force to be reckoned with.

One of my best friends was Midshipman James Harmon Ward. I gave Ward one of my favorite possessions: my trunk. Ward went on to become an instructor of gunnery at the

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United States Naval Academy. Sadly, he was the first naval officer killed in the Civil War. I married Caroline L. Reed on May 29, 1822 in New York. We were married by Reverend Seth Crowell at a Methodist Church there. Caroline and I were blessed by the birth of our daughter, who we named after her mother, Caroline Louisa, in June of 1825.

After my service aboard *Constitution*, my family and I moved to Charlestown, Massachusetts in July 1828. I assumed the post of Gunner at the Charlestown Navy Yard (where *Constitution* floats today).

Later Life

After a year in Charlestown, I died on July 8, 1829 of a lingering sickness, at a hospital in Boston.

My wife remarried in October of 1834 to another Navy gunner named John R. Covington. In May of 1837, the Navy granted my daughter Caroline a pension of \$10 per month, and the pension began at the date of my death. My daughter married musician Nathan Patrick Boies Curtis (from Granville, Massachusetts), and they moved to New York. Caroline and her husband had a son named John Lord Curtis, and sweetly named him after me. Caroline died in New York on April 25, 1853.

My wife, now Mrs. Covington, continued to reside in her home at No. 10 Mount Vernon Street in Charlestown, Massachusetts, until her death on December 2, 1868. She left the majority of her property to her grandson and my namesake, John Lord Curtis.

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Now, some of my prized possessions, such as my trunk, my powderhorn, and my seabags have found their way back to Massachusetts. These items, and a few more, are at the USS Constitution Museum at the Charlestown Navy Yard, where I served so long ago.