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# Heightened Training & Logistic Support in Anticipation of War: Journal of USS *Vixen*

Transcribed and edited by  
Vice Admiral George W. Emery, U.S. Navy (Retired)

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## HEIGHTENED TRAINING & LOGISTIC SUPPORT IN ANTICIPATION OF WAR

### *(Vixen, U.S. Brig.)* **Manuscript Journal. OCCURRENCES AND REMARKS ON BOARD U.S. BRIG VIXEN OF 14 GUNS, CHARLES LUDLOW ESQ. COMMANDING. JULY 10<sup>TH</sup> 1809 – MAY 10<sup>TH</sup> 1810.**

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The mood of the country's Navy in the years immediately prior to the outbreak of war between the United States and Great Britain in the summer of 1812 was one of nervous anxiety, a mood that had prevailed since the surprise attack of the 50-gun two-decker H.M.S. *Leopard* on the U.S. frigate *Chesapeake* off Hampton roads on 22 June 1807, an attack inspired by the Royal Navy's knowledge of British deserters among the *Chesapeake's* crew. Surprised and entirely unprepared to counter *Leopard's* broadsides, *Chesapeake* surrendered after firing but a single gun. President Jefferson and the country were stunned. America's national honor had been violated, and the Navy was unprepared to respond. Further insult from the British Royal would not be tolerated. The threat of war was grave. Hence one can sense in naval correspondence of this period the tense atmosphere of a Navy that had been embarrassed by lethargy...and "READINESS" was now the watchword. Of this period in the Navy's early history, Charles Oscar Paullin wrote the following in his biography *Commodore John Rodgers, Captain, Commodore, and Senior Officer of the American Navy 1773-1838* (Cleveland, Ohio, The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1910.), pp 200-201.

"In the midsummer of 1809...the navy department decided to follow the policy of keeping its ships in commission and of sending them on practice cruises. For this decision credit must be given to Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton and Chief Clerk Charles W. Goldsborough. From 1809 until 1812 the larger part of the seagoing navy was engaged in cruising off the Atlantic coast and in carrying dispatches abroad. The valuable training that our officers and seamen thus obtained was one of the principal causes of their signal success in the War of 1812. During these years not a few of the young commanders who won great distinction in the war served under Commodores Rodgers and Decatur and received from these two veterans in the service an invaluable professional training."

The nation's National Archives confirm Paullin's assertion. In a letter dated 13 October 1809 at the Navy Department, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton issued the following directive to "Com're Rodgers or Cap't Bainbridge, New York:"

"All our vessels that are prepared for service ought to be kept in motion. You are apprised of the importance of affording to our young officers opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of our coast & of its numerous inlets. For the first time an opportunity is afforded them of acquiring this valuable information.

I presume that the *Siren*, the *Argus*, the *Hornet*, and the *Vixen* can now all proceed to sea. If so, you will order them to weigh anchor without delay, and stretch along the coast touching at the different ports to afford the young officers opportunities of information. The *Siren* & *Argus* must at short intervals make the Chesapeake Bay: the *Hornet* and *Vixen* must return at short intervals for New York: until their destinations shall be ultimately order[ed] their commanding officers [are] to report themselves frequently to this Dept..."

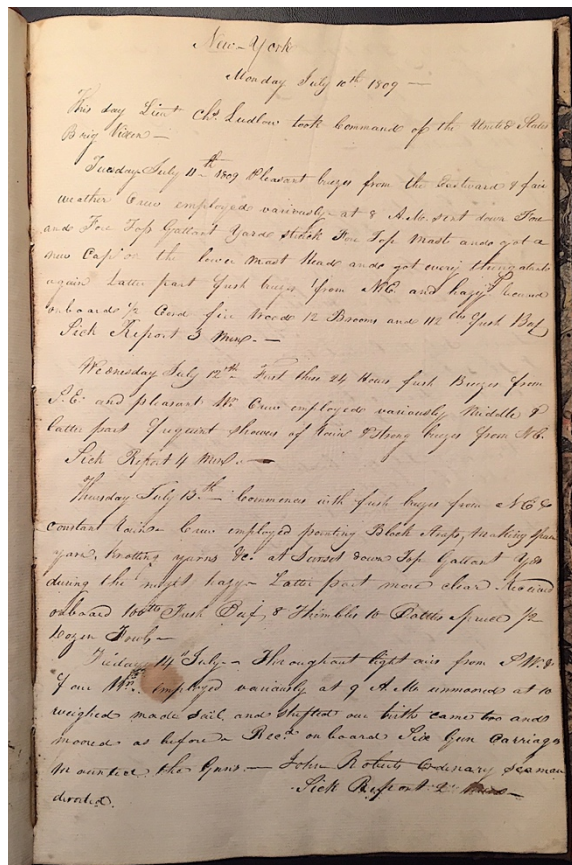
The young commanding officers of the ships stationed in New York in the early summer of 1809 under the command of Commodore Rodgers also reinforce Paullin's observations. Many would indeed conduct themselves with great distinction during the war of 1812. In New York, in addition to Commodore Rodgers and his flagship, the frigate *Constitution*, were the brigs *Argus*, Lieutenant Jacob Jones, *Vixen*, Lieutenant James Lawrence, soon to be relieved by Lieutenant Charles Ludlow, the sloop of war *Wasp* which Lawrence would next command, the brig *Syren*, Master Commandant Charles Gordon and the schooner *Revenge*, Lieutenant Oliver Hazard Perry.

This journal, kept aboard the *Vixen*, Charles Ludlow commanding, covers a ten month period of 1809-1810, recording ship's events from the day Ludlow relieved James Lawrence until he is himself relieved of command by Lieutenant John Trippe. Upon assuming command Ludlow will immediately address refurbishment and replacement of the ship's guns and her rigging, heighten recruiting to fill her crew, replenish her meager stores and train, train, train...including firing her guns double-round shotted and with grape. Operationally, *Vixen* will join the *President* and *Hornet* familiarizing their crews with the coast of Long Island Sound and her numerous inlets, and visiting New London and Newport; just the training envisioned by Secretary Hamilton. She will then sail south along the Atlantic coast, survive a storm, investigate the Bahamas, and stop briefly at Havana before joining David Porter at New Orleans to challenge French buccaneers operating about the Mississippi Delta. In the course of *Vixen's* travels the reader will find the frigates *Constitution*, *President*, *John Adams* and *Essex*, the brigs *Argus* and *Syren*, the sloops of war *Wasp* and *Hornet*, the bomb ketch *Vesuvius* and a few Gunboats; and along the way meet Commodore Rodgers, Captain Bainbridge, Master Commandant David Porter and Lieutenants John Orde Creighton, Beekman V. Hoffman, Theodore Hunt, James Lawrence, John Trippe and Samuel Woodhouse.

*N.B. Interspersed in italics throughout this transcript is correspondence exchanged between Secretary Hamilton and his commanding officers that provides insight into the events and activities recorded in the journal. The transcriber is greatly indebted to noted Naval Historian Charles E. Brodine, Jr. for locating these letters in the National Archives.*

[Physical description of the journal: Folio (15 x 10 inches); 110 pages, unpaginated, plus seven terminal pages recording a Muster List of *Vixen's* crew. Bound in contemporary quarter calf and marbled boards with vellum tips; protected in a custom clam-shell box. Pages, presumably blank, following Ludlow's relief by Trippe and prior to Muster List have been removed. Watermarks of both "A Blackwell 1799," the trademark of Ann Blackwell of Nash Mill, Hemel Hempstead, Herfordshire, England and "R Glover 1797" are visible on the journal's sheets of laid paper.]

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## Charles Ludlow Assumes Command of *Vixen*

The journal opens on the day Lieutenant Charles Ludlow relieves Lieutenant James Lawrence as commanding officer of *Vixen*.

"New-York, Monday July 10<sup>th</sup> 1809 – This day Lieut. Ch's Ludlow took Command of the United States Brig *Vixen*."

Eighteen days earlier, on 23 June 1809, a discouraged Ludlow had penned the following letter to Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton from the frigate *Constitution* where he served as First Lieutenant.

*"Sir, I hope you will excuse the liberty I have taken this moment; when it is induced by the duty I owe myself, in calling your attention to the current disposition of officers made by the department; in which I conceive myself much neglected, - particularly in the instance of the *Enterprise & Nautilus*, which are both commanded by officers junior to myself – having waited some time with the pleasing expectations that a suitable provision would be made for my rank, either on board this, or some other vessel, I have to ask the painful question: whether demerit in the opinion of the department [is] the cause of this apparent neglect; if so, in duty to the service, & my own feelings, I had better retire. Your immediate attention to this will oblige, Sir, your obt H<sup>ble</sup> Sot. Ch's Ludlow."*

...The Secretary did indeed pay "immediate attention;" less than 3 weeks after Ludlow composed this letter, he was in command of a 14-gun brig!

One day later, 11 July, Ludlow again wrote to the Secretary, only this time from *Vixen*.

*"Sir, I had the pleasure of receiving your orders of the 5<sup>th</sup> inst. honoring me with the command of the U.S. Brig *Vixen*, and have this day\* assumed command of her. I am unable to give any information what time she will be ready for Service, but shall expedite the [gun] carriages as much as possible, and am in [hopes] will be able to report her in a few days. Respectfully, I have the honor to be Sir your obt. Sot"*

...\* In this era the official day aboard a Navy vessel started at noon, or the Meridian as noon was referred to on deck, hence the exchange of command between James Lawrence and Charles Ludlow had occurred before noon, on Monday 10 July, as recorded in the ship's journal, and Ludlow's letter was written after noon, or on the 11<sup>th</sup>, but writing to his boss, the Secretary of the Navy in Washington where the new day starts at midnight, Ludlow writes, appropriately, that the exchange of command occurred "this day."

The journal entry on the same day reads:

"Tuesday July 11<sup>th</sup> 1809 Pleasant breezes from the Eastward & fair weather. Crew employed variously. At 8 A.M. sent down Fore and Fore Top Gallant Yards, struck Fore Top Mast and got a new Cap on the lower mast Head and got every thing atanto\* again. Latter part fresh breezes from NE and hazy. Received on board ½ cord of fire Wood, 12 Brooms and 112 lbs Fresh Beef. Sick Report 3 men."

\*...i.e., squared-away!

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of July the journal reflects Ludlow's promise to "expedite" pursuit of gun carriages.

"...at 9 A.M. unmoored, at 10 weighed made Sail and shifted our berth, came too and moored as before. Rec'd on board Six Gun Carriages, Mounted the Guns. John Roberts Ordinary Seaman deserted."

Commodore Rodgers makes an appearance the next day.

"Saturday July 15<sup>th</sup> "...at 10 A.M. was visited by Commodore John Rodgers. Crew employed variously. Exchanged John Hempson for Francis Williams of the *Constitution*."

...Ludlow was well known to Rodgers having served the previous three years as first lieutenant of the Commodore's flagship, *Constitution*.

Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> was no holiday for those working the gun carriages: "...Employed pointing Gun Breechings, making spun yarn." Two days later more gun carriages arrive. "Tuesday July 18...7 P.M. sent down Top Gallant Yds, scrubbed Hammocks, Bags & cloathes. Rec'd on board 10 Gun Carriages & Slides & 9 Thimbles also 112 lbs Fresh Beef."

### Ludlow reports *Vixen* Ready for Service

Writing to the Secretary on the 17<sup>th</sup> Ludlow reported:

*"Sir, I have the pleasure of reporting [the] Gun Carriages for the Vixen finished, also of her now ready for immediate service, and awaiting your further orders."*

...But work on the Gun carriages continues:

Wednesday July 19<sup>th</sup> "...Crew employed mounting Guns &c. Mr. Henry 1<sup>st</sup> Lt & Mr. Kelly Boatswain returned (their furlough having expired). Rec'd on board a Coil of 6 inch stuff for Gun Breechings. Rob't C. Ludlow (purser) returned his furlough having expired."

...Robert C. Ludlow was Charles Ludlow's younger brother.

Friday July 21<sup>st</sup> "...Crew employed pointing the Gun Breechings, Getting the Guns in order &c. Sail maker on shore repairing mainsail. Midship'n Conkling and Eight Seamen on board the *Constitution* Frigate...Mustered the Crew at their quarters"

On Monday the 24<sup>th</sup> Ludlow "Transferred on board the U.S. Frigate *Constitution* the following men viz. Ben'jn Boyer, Michael Fisher, James Postle, John McDonald & James Hudson."

### A Brief Underway

Tuesday, 25 July, witnessed *Vixen's* first, albeit brief, underway with Ludlow in command. The brig sailed 8 miles up the North River returning the next morning to their anchorage at Hoboken. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, Ludlow brought a lighter alongside and discharged all the provisions, shingle ballast and dunnage to clear the hold. The shingle ballast was returned the next afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup> and all the water casks were sent ashore for repair and cleaning under the Cooper's direction. On the same day, "Discharged 4 men, viz. Louis Fiancon, Samuel Dudden, Joseph Winch & William Thompson." On the 28<sup>th</sup> the crew was still working on the gun carriages: "Received from the Navy Yard 4 Bolts for the Gun Slides."

Ludlow wrote to Secretary Hamilton on the 28<sup>th</sup> as well, in which he asked that his brother, Robert, the *Vixen's* Purser, be removed to another ship to avoid any difficulty in their relationship. He also enclosed the ship's Muster List.

*"Sir, I herewith enclose the Muster Roll of the Brig Vixen's Crew agreeable to your order of the 24<sup>th</sup> Inst. Previous to receiving your Orders to suspend paying Ordinary Seamen, Boy's &c, I had discharged one Quarter Gunner and 8 ordinary seamen, tho 5 of them Commodore Rodgers took on board of the Constitution, very much better men, than some of his crew which he intended to discharge."*

I have to apply for some instructions respecting rating of the **Vixen's** crew; you will find by the Master Roll that some of the ordinary seamen are getting the same pay as some of the best seamen in the Brig. But the most of the ordinary seamen that get 10 dollars a month, I have discharged; and yet a difficulty exists with the two rates of seamen, which originated in consequence of the crew being ship'd conforming to the first orders to the recruiting parties – allowing [?] dollars per month.

Master List and Rank Roll of the U.S. Brig <b>Vixen's</b> Crew							
No.	Names	Rank as shown on board	Rank as shown on board	Rank as shown on board	Rank as shown on board	Rank as shown on board	Rank as shown on board
1	Charles Ludlow	Commander	Feb 5 1814	Jan 5 1814			
2	Bernard Henry	1st Lieut.	Aug 11 1814				
3	Samuel Woodhouse	2nd Lieut.	Aug 11 1814				
4	John Brown	Surgeon	Aug 21 1814				
5	Robert C. Ludlow	Surgeon	Aug 16 1814				
6	James Bell	Quartermaster	Jan 5 1814				
7	James Broome	Midship	Aug 21 1814				
8	Nath. Smith	Midship	Aug 5 1814				
9	Emmanuel Wilbur	Midship	Aug 8 1814				
10	Thos. Maynard	Midship	Aug 12 1814				
11	Peter Faypoux	Midship	Aug 2 1814				
12	Peter Gamble	Midship	Jan 23 1814				
13	Joseph Kelly	Midship	Jan 10 1814				
14	John Hughes	Midship	Jan 21 1814				
15	John Thompson	Midship	Jan 6 1814				
16	Samuel Scott	Midship	Jan 13 1814				

I hope you will excuse the liberty I take in soliciting the removal of the Purser of the **Vixen**, to some other Vessel, if it can be done without injuring the service or himself. It is extremely unpleasant to the Commander and the Purser on the same Vessel, to be Brothers. And to prevent unpleasant reflections, I hope to have my request granted, - which is my only reason for wishing him removed, as I think him a very excellent Purser. With the highest respect..."

The Secretary responded three days later.

"I have rec'd your letter of the 28<sup>th</sup> inst. Allow all your able seamen \$12 per month.

Mr. Ludlow must continue on board the **Vixen**. Your delicacy is commendable, but it would not justify my doing your brother an injury by outing him out of service because he happens to be placed under your immediate command.

...Robert Ludlow would remain **Vixen's** purser throughout his brother's command.

Over the next few days as **Vixen** prepared for sea she received from shore: 1 Side leather, 1 Bundle Hoops, 25 Staves, 1 Bunch Quills\*, 4 Files, 4 Iron Staples, ½ doz. lbs whipping twine, ½ dozen sewing twine, one 80 Gallon Cask, 200 Pump tacks, 2 Copper punches, 1 Cord Wood, six 8-inch Blocks, ½ dozen 5-inch double blocks, ½ dozen single blocks, ½ dozen 4-inch double blocks and a half dozen 4



inch single blocks. Seaman Peter Garner deserted on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Ephraim Taylor, Gunner, who was given liberty on 30<sup>th</sup> failed to return and "was brought on board by the Sergeant of Marines" on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

...\* Quills were tubes filled or to-be-filled with grained powder and used as primers for the guns.

2 August found the "Crew employed knotting yarns, making gaskets & stowing the Hold." On the same day, Lieutenant Bernard Henry "left the Brig on furlough." On Friday, 4 August, the brig "returned the lighter to the Navy Yard which had been employed to hold our stores. Carpenters employed in laying a new Birth Deck." The Carpenters were still at it the next day when 30 barrels of Bread came aboard.

On 5 August Gunner Ephraim Taylor who had earlier "broke his liberty" was demoted to Quarter Gunner and John Ashburner was promoted from Quarter Gunner to Gunner.

Work on Monday, 7 August, was hampered by "Heavy squalls of Wind and rain from the SE" while the "Crew was employed making Gaskets, fitting new Main Spring Stays, &c." On Wednesday the 9<sup>th</sup> the crew "Got the Lighter from the Navy Yard ready to receive the Powder."

Friday, August 11<sup>th</sup> "Crew employed making part of a Seine...Sent the powder on board the Lighter for the purpose of altering the magazine to give it air."

Saturday, August 12<sup>th</sup> "...incessant rain. USS *Wasp* arrived in this port from Philadelphia."

Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup> "...Carpenter from the Shore employed about the Bulk Head in the Ward Room & Magazine...Rec'd on board 104 lbs of Fresh Beef, 10 lbs Whipping Twine, 10 lbs Sewing Ditto, 2 lbs Rotten Stone, 1 Roll Blue Bunten, 1 Ditto White ditto."

Writing to the Secretary that same day, Ludlow reported *Vixen's* readiness for sea while at the same time asking for locks for the Guns.

*"Sir, Conformable to an order from Commodore Rodgers of the 13<sup>th</sup> Inst. to report to the department without delay, the state of the condition of the Brig Vixen; and number of Men required to complete her complement, I have to report her wanting five men to complete the number I deem sufficient for her, making 90 her complement; with that exception; have the satisfaction of reporting her ready for immediate Service. But should it meet your approbation, I wish to have Locks for the Guns; being well convinced of their utility, & particularly in small vessels. It would be attended to some considerable expense to have them made in this place, but I have been informed that they are made at the Navy Yard in Washington. I hope you will excuse me troubling you on this subject. With the highest respect..."*

Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> "...exercised the men at small arms firing at Targets, employed scraping and hogging the Barnacles off the Bottom." Friday the 18<sup>th</sup>, "Party on shore watering."

Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup>..."Gunner & Crew employed filling Musket Ball, Pistol D° & Blank Cartridges, party on shore watering, Employed on board knitting Seine." Sunday, August 20, Daniel Rotch ordinary Seaman deserted & was apprehended 2 hours after by Mr. Fayssoux, Mid'n."

Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup> "...Rec'd from the Shore the following articles 12 Iron Bolts, 20 four Locks\*, 12 Iron keys, 3 Dozen Screws, 2 pair Hinges."

...\* Assuming these were locks for the guns, the Secretary had certainly responded promptly to Ludlow's previous letter!

Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> "...John Berrien this day as Carpenter joined the Brig."

Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> "...Crew employed making Sinnett [Sennit] &c. Carpenters making half ports.\* Mr. John Orde Creighton joined the Brig this day as First Lieut."

... \* Half ports are heavy shutters built to cover the upper and lower half of a gun port with a hole cut in the center to allow a gun to be run out. They keep the ship drier during heavy weather and are removed or lowered when in action.

Thursday, August 24<sup>a</sup> "Benton Green ordinary Seaman supposed deserted." Sunday, August 27<sup>a</sup> "Rec'd onboard 7 Barrels pork 3 Kegs Butter & 7 Cheeses...100lbs Fresh Beef."

Monday, August 28<sup>a</sup> "...Mustered the Crew at their quarters and exercised the Great Guns & small arms."

Tuesday, August 29<sup>a</sup> "...exercised the Great Guns and small arms..."

### Underway with *Argus* for a brief Sea Trial

Wednesday, August 30<sup>a</sup> "...At 7 A.M. unmoored & hoisted the Launch in at 9 Ditto Weighed and made sail in company with *Argus*."

Thursday, August 31<sup>a</sup> "...At 4 P.M. clewed up and furled the Sails & came too at Sandy Hook. At 7 A.M. weighed and made sail, at 8 Falling Calm came too again. At Meridian weighed in Company with the *Argus* Brig & made Sail up to the Harbour & Moored Ship as before."

Friday, September 1<sup>a</sup> "...Mustered the crew at their quarters and exercised Great Guns and Small Arms. Crew employed cleaning the Small Arms."

Saturday, September 2<sup>a</sup> "...Run in the Guns scraped and cleaned the slides. Carpenters making Channels for Main Top Mast Backstays. Clapped Tackles on Main Top Mast Backstays & got the Mast aft. Rec'd onboard 300 galls Rum.

Monday, September 4<sup>a</sup> "...Launched the Fore Top Gall't Mast, sent the rigging on deck overhauled and sent it aloft again. Carpenters employed making Channels for Backstays & half ports."

Tuesday, Sept 5<sup>a</sup> "...Mid'n Conkling and six men away on duty in the tender."

Wednesday Sept 6<sup>a</sup> "...Carpenter making half shutters for ports, Rec'd from the Navy Yard six bolts for the Channels...exercised Great Guns & small arms, Rec'd from the Navy Yard 500 lbs Junk.\*"

... \* Junk is a composition of remnants or pieces of old cable or condemned rope.

Friday, Sept 8<sup>a</sup> "...Crew Employed preparing Ship for sea. Rec'd onboard a roll of Red Buntins, One Hundred Fish hooks, 2 hundred quills, one Doz'n Sail Needles, Gunter's Scale & 2 lbs. thread...Exercised the Great guns."

Saturday, Sept. 9<sup>a</sup> "...Rec'd onboard three Boxes Soap, Two D° Candles & 49 Bbls bread. *Syren's* launch employed watering. Received all the spare spars from the Navy Yard...Answered the signal for a Court Marshall held on board U.S. Brig *Syren*."

Sunday, Sept. 10<sup>a</sup> "...Employed stowing the Hold, Spars, &c. party watering. Midshipman Conkling & crew returned from the *Constitution* with the Tender. At 9 unmoored Ship at 10 Weighed and made Sail, got the launch and cutter in and stowed the spars. Discharged... *Syren's* Launch."

### Underway on her own Cruising Sandy Hook

Monday, September 11<sup>a</sup> "...underweigh standing down the Bay all requisite Sail, at ½ past 6 Came too abreast the Light house with Small Bower, furled the Sails...At 8 A.M. weighed & made Sail. At ½ past 8 passed Sandy Hook, Crossed the Bar in 5 fathoms. Latter part light airs from South. Came too with the small Bower in 9 fathoms abreast Shrewsbury Creek, Sandy Hook light at Meridian NNW. Dist. 9 miles.'



Tuesday, Sept 12<sup>a</sup> "...at half past 1 weighed and made Sail. Spoke a Schooner from Santa Cruz and Ship *Argo* from Barbadoes, both bound for New-York, exercised the Great Guns & small arms... Latter part pleasant breezes set Royals and Steering Sails below and aloft. At 11 A.M. in all Steering sails Royals &c. at Meridian clewed up the Top Sails and came too with the Small Bower in 9 fathoms, Sandy Hook light House NNW. Dist 9 miles."

### Fires the Great Guns with Grape and Double Round Shot

Wednesday September 13<sup>th</sup> 1809. Light breeze from N.W. and fair W. Caught a number of Fish. Fired 9 rounds of grape and round shot (3 rounds double shot) at a Target. Capsized the gun in consequence of the too great length of the breeching at sunset the light House bore NNW. Weighed and made sail with the wind N.W. by N. and stood to the Eastw'd ...at 9 breeze freshening took in Top Gallant Sails & Jib at 10 double reefed the Top Sails & furl'd Main sail. Wind N.N.E. Single reefed the Fore & aft Mainsail. Strong breezes from N & Eastw'd, sent down Top Gallant Yds & reefed the Fore Sail working to windward sounding from 10 to 22 fathoms. Latter part stiff breeze from N.W. set canvas and Jib & turned the reef out of Fore & aft Mainsails. Employed working to windward. Lat<sup>d</sup> 40<sup>th</sup> 40.25 N. Sick Report 2 men

Thursday Sept 14<sup>th</sup> Fresh breeze from N.W. and fair W. sunned sail in sight shortened the Gun breechings. During the day working to windward - at sunset sounded in 12 fathoms light House bearing N by N. Dist 8 miles. At 8 P.M. gave away word ship. Sandy Hook light bearing N.W. fresh breeze & clear. During the night standing off & on under double reefed Top Sails sounded from 12 to 18 fathoms spoke a Pilot boat lying too. At daylight the light House bore N.W. Dist 5 miles at 8 turned the reef out of the Top Sails at 9 sent up Top Gallant Yds set the Jib, & Flying Jib. Moderate breeze & fine till set Royals and Top Gallant & furling sails at 11 A.M. in sight spoke a Schooner from Malta out 65 days bound to New York. Latter part moderate breeze from N.W. set Stay Sails at sundown light breeze - Sick Report 2 men

Wednesday September 13<sup>a</sup> "...Caught a number of fish. Fired 9 rounds of Grape and Round Shot (3 rounds double shot) at the Target. Capsized the gun in consequence of the too great length of the breeching. At sunset the light House bore NNW. Weighed and made Sail with the wind N.W. by N. and stood to the Eastw'd ...at 9 breeze freshening took in Top Gallant Sails & Jib, at 10 double reefed the Top Sails & furl'd Main sail. Wind N.N.E. Single reefed the Fore & aft Mainsail. Strong breezes from the N & Eastw'd, Sent down Top Gallant Yds & reefed the Fore Sail working to windward. During the night sounded from 10 to 22 fathoms..."

Thursday, Sept. 14<sup>a</sup> "...Several sail in sight, shortened the Gun breechings... At 8 P.M. filled away wore ship Sandy Hook light bearing W.N.W... During the night standing off & on under double reefed Top Sails... spoke a Pilot boat lying too... At 9 sent up Top Gallant yds set the Sails, & Flying Jib. Moderate breezes... Set Royals and topgallant and Steering sails, at 11 A. M. spoke a Schooner from Malta out 65 days and bound to New York..."

Friday, Sept 15<sup>a</sup> "...lowered the Boat down and picked up a spar, exercised small arms at Target... At daylight saw the U.S. Ship *Constitution* & Brig *Argus* standing in for the Land, made the signal which was answered, joined Company & stood for the Light House.

At 10 came too with the small Bower, Light House bearing West, the Body of the Highlands S.S.W.... Crew employed blacking Hammock, cloths, cleaning Ship &c."

Saturday, Sept 16<sup>a</sup> "...Crew employed cleaning ship... made Sail and beat up under the light House and came too... Latter part... *Constitution* frigate standing in."

Sunday, Sept 17<sup>a</sup> "...At 5 P.M. weighed and made Sail, beat up & came too at ½ past 7 P.M. one mile below the upper white Buoy. Point of Staten Island NW... At 9 A.M. got under weigh with a light Southerly breeze, made all sail low and aloft, stood up through the Narrows. At Meridian pleasant, under weigh abreast the quarantine ground.

### Back in New York

Monday Sept. 18<sup>a</sup> "...underweigh standing up for Hoboken... At ½ past 1 came too with the small Bower abreast Hoboken Ferry, furl'd the Sails... At 9 A.M hoisted the Launch and stowed the spars &c. Crew employed making mats\*, shortening Fore Lifts &c &c..."

... \* Mats are made of old rope and spun yarn and are wrapped around rigging as necessary to prevent chaffing.

Tuesday, Sept 19<sup>th</sup> "...Crew employed at various Jobs about the rigging set up, Main Top Mast Shrouds ...Rec'd onboard 110 lbs of Fresh Beef &Vegetables."

Wednesday, Sept 20<sup>th</sup> "...Exercised the great Guns...U.S. Ship *President* & Brig *Hornet* arrived from Hampton Roads."

Friday, Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> "...Crew making mats, fleeting Backstays &c. &c. Carpenter on shore repairing Jolly Boat."

### Mustered the Crew and read the Articles of War

Sunday, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> "...Mustered the Crew and Read the Articles of War...Rec'd onboard Tierce [a cask of 42 gallons] Rice, Tierce Beans, 20 lbs Twine, Doz'n Thimbles, ½ doz'n 5 in. Blocks, Keg white lead, 2 galls paint, oil & 1 Coil 6 th'd stuff."

Monday, Sept 25<sup>th</sup> "...fine W(eathe)'r, loosed the Sails to dry..." Wednesday, Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> "...painting ship, Cleaning, &c. five men onshore on liberty..." Thursday, Sept. 28<sup>th</sup> "...Sail maker on shore repairing and enlarging the Sail..."

Friday, Sept.29<sup>th</sup> "...The Seamen viz. Joseph Ward, Samuel Carter & John Anderson on shore since 27<sup>th</sup> Inst. Serg't Marines & Boatswain onshore in search of them. Answered the Signal made for a Court Martial onboard the U.S. Brig *Syren*..."

Saturday, Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> "...Received onboard 34 ft oak planks, 13 D° Ash, ½ doz'n lbs 10'd nails, ½ doz'n 6'd D° & ½ Doz'n 4'd D°. Sail Maker onshore repairing Fore Sail, the three Seamen mentioned in yesterday's log deserted.'

Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup> "...exercised Great Guns, cleaned and small arms. At 9 A.M. got underweigh, beat down to Powleys Hook returned to Hoboken and came too, parted the Small Bower cable 4 fathoms from the Clinch. Cut it and clinched it again..."

Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> "...bent the Fore Sail. At 8 A.M. weighed and made Sail, beat down to the Battery & came too with the Small Bower, furled Sails..."

Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> "...at 4 P.M. weighed and made Sail, ran up East River to the Navy Yard & came too with the small Bower, sent the Casks on shore to Water..."

Wednesday, October 4<sup>th</sup> "...at 2 P.M. dragged our anchor and swang foul of the U.S. Ship *President*, carried away our Main Top Mast Shrouds, at slack water carried out a hawser, hove off and moored Ship with the best Bower ..."

Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup> "...at 10 A.M. weighed and made Sail, beat down the East River, made all sail & stood up towards Hoboken..."

Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup> "... underway standing up toward Hoboken, at 3 in all Sail and came too with the Small Bower in 5 fathoms...Lieut. Samuel Woodhouse left the Brig for Philadelphia having secured a Sick ticket."

On 9 October, Ludlow sent the following request to Commodore Rodgers:

*"Sir, I am induced to intercede for your influence in having Mr Baggot (formerly Sailing Master in the Navy) restored to his former position, being fully convinced that he has left those injurious practices that has caused his [demise?]"*

*I have sailed a long time with Mr. B., and consider him an acquisition to the Service (if as he once was) which I have every reason to believe he will be, if so fortunate as to be reinstated. Trusting he will give no further cause for complaint, I am led to solicit your promoting yourself in his behalf, with the Hon'ble Secretary of the Navy. With the highest respect..."*

...Rodgers did "promote" Sailing Master Baggot for the log entry of 25 October reports his arrival on board *Vixen*. Apparently Rodgers was also pleased with Baggot's performance on *Vixen* as the log entry of 28 November reports Baggot's departure for service on *Constitution*.

Tuesday, October 10<sup>a</sup> "...Mustered the Crew at their quarters. Received onboard seven Bbls Pork, one of molasses & 200 lbs Cheese."

Wednesday, October 11<sup>a</sup> "...Carpenter onshore repairing the Cutter...struck Top Gallant Masts and Yds." Friday, October 13<sup>a</sup> "...Swayed up Top Gallant Masts, Yds & loosed the Sails...Rec'd onboard 40 lbs Cork. John Quinn Seaman & John Dawson ordinary Seaman deserted..."

Saturday, October 14<sup>a</sup> "...Rec'd onboard, (Entered) for the *Constitution* Frigate George Simmons Seaman & Sam'l Sprowl ordinary Seaman."

Thursday, October 19<sup>a</sup> "...Employed preparing Ship for sea. Rec'd onboard seven Casks Pork, ½ Tierce Rice, Hogshead Beans, 3 bbls Flour, one Vinegar, one Molasses, Two Hhds Rum, 8 Cheese, 2 Boxes Soap, one Bbl. Sugar, 1 Keg Butter & 111 lbs of Fresh Beef."

Friday, October 20<sup>a</sup> "...At 11 A.M. weighed & stood down to the Battery, came too with the Best Bower. Rec'd onboard the following articles, One Doz'n Clamp brushes, one Ball Houseline, ½ dozen 5 inch blocks, ½ dozen Chissels, 100 quills, two thousand pump tacks, 1 Doz'n Rasing Needles, 40 fath'm 5 in. Rope, large Nails, Small ditto, one pound letherage, one Dozen small files, 2 large Ditto, 100 brads, 50 lbs Lead, one Keg white paint, one jug Spirits Turpentine, Keg green paint, one Ditto black, two rough spars. Benton Green ordinary seaman deserted, was this day brought back & put in confinement. Sick Report 4 Men."

Saturday, October 21<sup>a</sup> "...party onshore watering, received onboard 43 Casks bread, 4 sides leather, 2 reflectors, Globe Lamp...1 Cord Wood."

### A Brief sail to Sandy Hook to deliver Sailors to *Constitution*

Sunday, October 22<sup>a</sup> "...Employed watering & preparing Ship for sea...got under weigh and run down under all Sail to Sandy Hook. Came too with the small Bower in four fathoms, furled the sails, the *Constitution* Frigate lying here, Sent onboard Hugh G. Ross, Samuel Sprowl & George Simmons entered for the Ship."

Monday, October 23<sup>a</sup> "...Received from U.S. Ship *Constitution* a length of Junk...at daylight weighed and stood up for New York..."

Tuesday, October 24<sup>a</sup> "...underweigh standing up for New York, all Sail Set. At Sunset came too with the small Bower, furled all the sails. Midshipmen Wilmer & Mayrant left the Brig to join the U.S. Sloop *Syren* by orders from Commodore Jno. Rodgers...Charles Armit entered onboard."

Wednesday, October 25<sup>a</sup> "...Crew employed variously preparing Ship for sea. William F. Bagot Sailing Master joined the Brig..."

...Clearly Commodore Rodgers took Ludlow's request of 9 October to heart and convinced Secretary Hamilton to give Sailing Master Baggot another chance!

Thursday, October 26<sup>a</sup> "...hoisted the cutter in , Stowed the Spars..."

Friday, October 27<sup>a</sup> "...at daylight weighed in company with U.S. Ship *President* and stood down...came abreast the quarantine ground..."

A day earlier the **President's** captain, William Bainbridge, had sent the following Secretary Hamilton.

*"U. States Frigate **President**, NYork, 26<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1809. Sir, ...the Ship is now underway leaving this port. I intend to cruize and examine the different ports and Harbours, along the Coast of Nantucket and Rhode Island – and in Long Island Sound, (a knowledge of which I consider of great importance to our young officers, in case we should have war with an active Enemy) – from thence I shall cruise along the coast as far as Savannah, from whence I expect to return to Hampton Roads about the first of December where I shall be happy in receiving your orders for any service, in any part of the world.*

*P.S. The Brig **Vixen** Lt. Ludlow is in company with me. He was ready for sea a day or two since but I detained him to try the sailing of the **President**."*

### Underway with the frigate **President**

Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup> "...at ½ past 7 A.M. weighed in company with the **President**. Falling Calm, came too again..."

Tuesday, October 31<sup>st</sup> "...At 6 received a Pilot onboard, at 7 sent up Top Gall't Yds. At ½ past 7 weighed in company with the U.S. Frigate **President**. Stood down under Top Sails to the white buoy & made Sail, at ½ past 11 passed the Bar, at Meridian discharged the Pilot..."

On the same day, 31 October, while **Vixen** was off Sandy Hook Light, Ludlow wrote the following letter to Secretary Hamilton.

*"Sir, The **Vixen** is now discharging her Pilot from New York in company with the frigate **President** bound on a cruise to the East'd. I should of comply'd with your Orders of the 13th Inst the day after receiving it, had I not been detained by Capt'n Bainbridge (Senior officer at that time, in New York) to accompany the **President** on her present cruise, which he informed me he had reported to the department.*

*I have to report Lieut. Samuel Woodhouse leaving the **Vixen** the 7<sup>th</sup> Inst. in very ill health, & the Surgeon is of an opinion that he will not be able to return to duty for several Months. He is at Philadelphia and will report to the office when sufficiently recovered for service, should the **Vixen** be absent. Respectfully I remain, Sir..."*

### At Sea Training Cruise on Long Island Sound

Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup> "...at ½ past 12 Sandy Hook bore by Compass NW by W dist. 5 Miles, going about 6 knots. Body of Highlands West. Spoke U.S. Sloop of War **Wasp**, Lieut. Lawrence, from France bound to New York out 33 days. At 3 P.M. shortened Sail, exercised the great Guns & small arms...AT 9 P.M. took in Fore & Aft Main sail single reefed the Top Sl's. At midnight **President** within Hail abeam, sounded in 21 fathoms. From 12 to 4 A.M. strong breezes & clear, made and shortened Sail occasionally to keep company with the **President**. At 4 A.M. **President** within Hail, at 5 A.M. passed a Brig, reefed Fore & Aft Main Sail ...At 10 saw the Land N.W., Tacked Ship at Meridian, the Northern extreme of Lands NW by N. Dist 15 miles. **President** ½ mile to leeward...Lat'de Obs'd 40.50 N."

Thursday, Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> "Fresh breezes the Commencement of these 24 Hours. At 2 P.M. light breezes and variable to North'd & Eastw'd 3 Knot breeze, clear W'r. made the Signals No 915 & 276 being answered by the Senior Officer, made sail. People employed variously at Ships duty. At 2 P.M. saw Montuck Lt. House bearing E. by S. Tacked occasionally to get to Windward. At 4 Light House bore NE. **President** in Company. At Sunset Western extreme of land WNW, East'n NE ½ E., light House NE ½ N. At 7 P.M. Tacked, **President** on the weather quarter. During the night moderate and fine W'r. At 11 P.M. spoke the **President**, Tacked, Montock light 5 leagues NE. At 1 A.M. set all light Sails. At Daylight bore up, saw Gull Light, bearing W.N.W., New London light bearing North. Set Top Gallant Steering S'l's. At 7 answered Signal No. 1, made the Signal No. 1072. At 8 parted company & bore up for New London. At 9 passed the light House, at 10 came too abreast the Town with the small Bower in 3 fathoms. At Meridian sighted the anchor & shifted our birth & moored ship, best

Bower to S.S.W, small D° to N.N.E. Ends with fresh breezes and cloudy. Hoisted the Jolly boat out...Sick Report 5 Men."

### New London

Friday, November 3<sup>d</sup> 1809. "...loosed the Sails and furled them again...At 6 P.M. picked up & bro't onboard Zachariah Smith ordinary Seaman endeavoring to desert by swimming from the Brig..."

Monday, Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> "...loosed all the Sails to dry, a party onshore watering. Serg't Cobb onshore since yesterday."

Tuesday, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> "...at 7 P.M. hoisted the Launch in & stowed the spars. At 8 A.M. U.S. Sloop **Hornet**, Lieut. Hunt, came in & anchored...Serg't Cobb brought onboard and confined as a deserter. Mid'n Broom on shore recruiting for the Brig. Saw U.S. Frigate **President** pass the Harbour mouth standing Eastward."

Later, on the same day, Captain Bainbridge wrote the Secretary from the **President**, now at Newport:

*"Sir, I have the honor to inform you that I have this moment Anchored here after a very disagreeable Cruise in Long Island Sound – Where we experienced severe Gales, and my Coasting Pilot not being so thoroughly acquainted as I expected to have found him, made our Situation rather dangerous. In fact the Ship got a ground, but was got off without the least damage whatever.*

*From my observations in the Sound, I am decidedly of opinion, that it is an unfavorable Sea, in this Season of the Year for our large Frigates. And it is to be regretted that the Charts of our Coast are generally very limited & incorrect. And the Coasting Pilots that offers, are so much accustomed to small vessels, that they forget the danger which large vessels run in shoal water.*

*In the proper Seasons of the Year, if our Smaller Vessels were employed in Cruising on all parts of our Coast with as many Officers as could be put on board of them, and occasionally changing that number – it would be of the greatest importance to our Young Officers when they get a command, and particularly in a War brought home to our Shores – whereas at present there is scarcely one of them knows anything of our own Coast..."*

Wednesday, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> "...Crew employed variously, exercised Great Guns & small arms...At 8 A.M. unmoored and sent Top Glt Yds up. Mr. Harris came onboard as Coasting Pilot..."

### Back at Sea Investigating the Long Island Shoreline

Thursday, Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> "...hoisted the Jolly Boat in & stowed the spars, at 6 A.M. weighed and made Sail, stood over towards Long Island working to Windward under all Sail. Punished Zachariah Smith with three doz'n lashes for desertion, disobedience of orders & drunkenness."

Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup> "Underway from New London to Gardner Bay...at Sunset Montock Light bore S.E. dist 4 leagues. Gull light N.W. ½ W dist 2 miles...at half past 7 Came too on the North side of Gardner Island with the small Bower in 12 ½ fathoms, fine grey sand and ooze...at Daylight weighed and made sail, beat up under double reefed Top Sails to Shelter Island and came too in 3 fathoms with the best bower, parted the Cable 28 fathoms from the clinch, let go the small bower and hoisted the Boats out. Swept for the Cable, got it & brought it onboard and weighed the anchor."

Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> "...During the night strong gales from N.W and clear at Daylight, weighed and stood over to Oyster pond point & came too with the small Bower in 7 fathoms..."

Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup> "...Exercised the Great Guns and small arms..."

Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> "...At daylight more moderate, hove up the best bower and sent up Top Glt Yds. At ½ 6 A.M. weighed and stood over to Gardners Island and came too with the small Bower..."

Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> "Calm and cloudy first part these 24 Hours. During the Dog Watches thick fog...At 8 A.M. loosed the Top Sail and double reefed them. At ½ past 8 weighed and stood out of the Bay. At 10 A.M. passed Gardner's Point, bore up before the wind, sent up Top Glt Yds and set the Sails. At 11 A.M. Set Fore Top Mast Steering Sail. Montuck light bore SE by S. Dist. 5 leagues, Gull Island N.W. by N., took in Fore Top Mast Steering Sail and Fore & Aft Main Sail. Strong breezes from NNW and clear. Standing along shore ENE. At Meredian Point Judith bore NE by E ¼ E dist 3 leagues. Body of Block Island S by E ½ E dist 4 leagues. Latt'de Obs'd 41°- 15" N."

Thursday, Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> "Strong breezes...Standing along shore E. by N. under double reefed Top S'ls. At 3 P.M. passed New Port Light House. Stood in the Harbor, made the Brigs number which was answered by the *Hornet*. At ½ past 3 came too in New Port Harbor with best bower...At 9 A.M. hoisted the launch out...Crew employed at Ships duty. Lieut. Creighton left the Brig this morning on leave of absence."

### Newport...and Snow!

Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup> "...party onshore watering. Employed onboard making Mats, knotting yards...loosed the Sails to dry..."

Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup> "...At 11 A.M. Strong gales from SSW and clear, let go the best bower and veered away upon the small Bower to the long service...Hoisted the Launch in..."

Monday, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> "...latter parts Wind NE with constant snow...Crew employed making Mats, swats, &c, Lieut. Creighton returned onboard."

Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup> "...Fresh breezes from the N.E. with incessant snow...Received onboard 105 lbs of Fresh Beef, one peck Lime & 2 Gall's Spermaciti Oil. Filled up the Empty water Casks with Salt Water."

Wednesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> "First [part] this 24 hours strong gales from NE and constant snow. At 5 P.M. sent down Top Gall't Yds. and Masts. At 9 P.M. let go the best Bower and veered away upon the small, at Midnight heavy gales, got the Sheet anchor on the Gunwale and bent the sheet Cable. At Daylight more moderate, winds NNW. Unbent the Sheet Cable and Stow'd the Anchor Hove up the best Bower and stowed it. At 8 A.M. hove in the small bower to the short service. At 9 A.M. sent up the Top Masts and yards. At 10 hoisted the Cutter in. At 11 weighed, made Sail and stood out of the Harbor in company with the *Hornet*....At Meredian winds NNW and clear. New Port light House NNE Dist 4 miles, light house on Point Judith WSW, Dist ½ mile.

### Continued the Training Cruise with *Hornet* on Long Island Sound

Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> "Commences with moderate breezes & fine W'r, all requisite sail set by the wind...At Sunset fresh breezes from the NW. Watch Hill light House NW dist 6 miles, New-London light House W by N, Dist 10 miles...Spoke the *Hornet* requested we would share a light and he would follow us. At Midnight Gull Light bore E by S and Seabrook W.N.W., Beating to the Westward down the Sound, *Hornet* in company. At ½ past 12 set middle and Top Galt Staysails. Saw Falkland light bearing W by S, *Hornet* in company to leeward. At 5 A.M. saw New Haven light W by W ½ W Dist 5 miles...At Meredian cloudy, Standing down the Sound, *Hornet* in company ½ mile ahead.

Friday, November 24<sup>th</sup> "Light baffling winds and cloudy W'r. took in the Staysails. At 1 P.M. Sands light bore S.S.E, *Hornet* in company. At 2 P.M. a breeze sprung up from the N.N.E, set steeringsails on both sides, lower and aloft. At ½ past three took in all steeringsails, Stays'ls & Top Glt S'ls. hauled up around Frogs Point,\* Fired a gun & hoisted a Signal for a Pilot. At 4 P.M. came to in seven fathoms between Frogs Point & Whitestone...At 10 P.M. veered away from the small bower to the long service. At 11 P.M. strong gales from the NE, housed Top Glt Masts. At Midnight discovered her drifting, let go the best bower and veered away to the short service, got the sheet anchor over then bows and bent the sheet Cable. From 1 P.M. heavy snow storm from the N.E., at 10 A.M. hove up both bowers, set the Fore and Main Sail Fore Top Mast Staysail & M'n. Top M't Staysail, stood over

toward the weather shore and came to with the small bower. At Meridian heavy gales from N.N.W. and cloudy..."

...\* Now Throgs Point , but Frogs Point on 1810 charts.

Saturday, November 25<sup>th</sup> "...Brig driving fast, brought up with the best bower. Fired a Gun and hoisted a Signal for a Pilot. At Daylight fired a Gun and hoisted a Signal for a Pilot...unbent the Sheet Cable and stowed the anchor. Ship employed cleaning Ship Guns, &s, &c."

Sunday, Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> "...At 8 A.M. fired a gun and hoisted a signal for a Pilot, read the Articles of War to the Ships Company..."

Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup> "...at 1 P.M. weighed and made sail *Hornet* in Company, sent the boats on ahead to tow, fired 3 Guns for a Pilot. At 4 P.M. came abreast Rackers [Rikers] Island, received a Pilot onboard to carry the Brig through Hell Gate. At 5 P.M. weighed again, got the sweeps out and swept the Brig to the North Brother and came too with the small Bower..."

Tuesday, Nov'r 28<sup>th</sup> "...At 9 P.M. a light breeze from the N.N.E, at Daylight weighed and made sail. At 8 A.M. passed Hell Gate, set Steering Sails on both sides. At 9 A.M. hauled up round the Battery into the North River in all light Sails. At ½ past 9 A.M. came too abreast the North Battery with the small bower, furled the sails...hoisted the boats out, stowed the spars...Mr. Wm. F. Bagot left the Brig to join the *Constitution*.

Later that same day, Ludlow sent the following letter to Secretary Hamilton:

*Sir, I have the pleasure of reporting the arrival of the UStates Brig Vixen in the Harbour of New York, where we anchored this morning. Since my last report of the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, I have visited the Harbours of New London, Newport & Gardners Bay, sailed through Long Island sound & looked into Huntington & Heampstead [Hempstead] Bays, but was prevented getting my officers and self as well acquainted with Edgar[?] & Long Island Sounds, as intended when we left this place, by the very bad weather we have encountered within this last month. Very respectfully I remain..."*

## New York

Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>. "At 1 P.M. moored Shop with the best bower to NW and small D° to the SW...Discharged John Bousquett, & Peter Mitchell, seamen, their times being up, sent the Top Glt yds down..."

Thursday, Nov.30<sup>th</sup> "...turned the hands to rattling the rigging down... Rec'd on board 95 lbs fresh beef & vegetables, &."

## The Recruiting Officer enlists Three Indians

Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> "...Crew employed overhauling lower yards...Entered on board the following Indians viz. Lowry, Rodgers & Johnson."

Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> "...Transferred the following Seamen to the U.S. Ship *John Adams* viz. Samuel Rhodes, William Pritchard, Robert Hannah, Francis Cummings, Geo. Brown, William Caldicut & John Plummer..."

Tuesday, Dec'r 5<sup>th</sup> "...At 2 P.M. swayed up Lower Yards Set up lower and top mast riging fore & Aft, Sent down top Gall't Masts & Riging..."

Wednesday, Dec'r 6<sup>th</sup> "...At 1 P.M. unmoored, lifted the Best Bower and laid it out farther to the Northward. Crew employed overhauling the top Gall't Rigging, Block Strops, &c..."

For the next several days the crew is employed overhauling various yards, masts and rigging.



## Hamilton orders Ludlow to prepare to Sail to New Orleans

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, Hamilton sent the following orders to Ludlow:

*It is intended to send the **Vixen** to New Orleans, you will therefore have her immediately fitted for that voyage & will be in readiness to receive your Sailing Orders about the 10th Inst.*

Ludlow responded on 14 December 1809:

*Sir, Your orders of the 8<sup>th</sup> Inst, I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of. Shall make every exertion to be prepared for sea by the 20<sup>th</sup>. Nothing but want of men (which deficiency originated by a transfer I was obliged to make to the **John Adams**, agreeable to Commodore Rodgers order) can possibly detain me.*

*My number on board at present, including officers and all, amount to 70, being short of the number allowed her. To proceed to sea with 70 men (& meet with any difficulty) would prevent her doing justice to her rate as a Government vessel. I have a recruiting party on shore & have every reason to believe they will be successful, owing to the number of arrivals in this Port within a few days.*

*I hope you will excuse the liberty I have taken in making known the above obstacles to my being ready at a short warning, to execute any orders you might please to give, under the impression of its being my duty. With Respect, I have the honor to be...*

Five days later, on 19 December, the Secretary's penned an extraordinary response to Ludlow's concerns. They were words that would have given pleasure and assurance to any Commanding Officer!

*Your communication of the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. is perfectly proper & entirely approved. The anxiety you express to have your vessel in perfect readiness to do justice to her rate as a Government Vessel is a property which distinguishes the correct officer, and which it is my duty and my inclination to cherish.*

*Go on Sir with your recruiting & prepare to receive you orders.*

...The Recruiting Officer's success will be observed in the many future journal entrees before **Vixen** departs for sea on 14 January 1810.

Returning to the journal and backing up to the 13<sup>th</sup> of December...

On December 13<sup>th</sup> Ludlow sent the following to Commodore John Rodgers:

*"Sir, The enclosed warrant and letter from Midshipman Robert Conkling of the UStates Brig **Vixen** particularly ask your attention to; and solicit your influence with the Hon'ble the Secretary of the Navy in permitting him to resign.*

*The charges I should be obliged to bring against him if he remained in the service, would be Drunkenness, & unofficer like conduct, which is of so serious a nature, (and particularly as this is not the first time) induces me for his family's sake to make the above application. I have the honor to be, Sir..."*

...The Commodore apparently sent this same letter on to the Secretary since in a comment over his initials in the upper left corner of the letter, Secretary Hamilton has written what appears to be his acceptance of Conkling's resignation while urging Commodore Rodgers to "investigate and report." Navy records disclose that Midshipman Robert Conckling resigned on 27 December 1809.

Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup> "...Sent on board by the recruiting Officer, John Leonard, O.S..."

Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> "...Unmoored Ship and drop'd down toward East River. At half past 3 P.M. anchor'd in 9 fathoms water. Sent on board by the recruiting Officer, John Hairington, Seaman & Rob't Berbank O.S. People employed preparing Ship for Sea..."

On the same day Ludlow asked the Secretary to approve the procurement of a cable before departing for New Orleans.

*Sir, On my arrival at this place I apply'd to the agent for a cable for the **Vixen**, who informed me he would write immediately to the department for permission to furnish me one. Since which, I have been waiting for his answer to make out my requisition, but cannot wait any longer, and have the vessel ready for the service she is ordered on, by the 20<sup>th</sup>.*

*I have reported to him, the **Vixen** being under sailing orders, & the necessity of her having a cable, which he has been good enough to have furnished, without having my requisition approved by the department, trusting it will meet with your approbation, as she has but one good cable on board, and the want of one might retain the Vessel some time after being order'd to sea. I have the honor to be very respectfully, Sir..."*

...The Secretary approved this request and Ludlow finally got his cable on Christmas day.

Efforts to fill the crew continue.

Monday, Dec'r 18<sup>th</sup> "...employed watering Ship. Sent onboard by the recruiting Officer, Samuel Thomas, Seaman, Henry Shearwood, OS, Thomas Wilson, Boy and Ichabod Afton, O.S..."

Tuesday, Dec'r 19<sup>th</sup> "...employed preparing Ship for Sea. Sent on board by the recruiting Officer James Mathews, seaman, at 11 AM punished Pat'k Smith, a Marine, with one hundred and twenty four lashes in past punishment. Reduced Serg't Cobb to a Private. Benton Green being Discharged for want of Witness's all in pursuance of a court Martial..."

Wednesday, Dec'r 20<sup>th</sup> "...Rec'd on board sundry stores for the Ship, viz,

12 pounds 6'd Nails	½ doz'n palm plates	11 Cheeses
12 pounds 8'd Nails	1 Quoil 3 1/2 In. Tape	3 Bbls flour
16 pounds chalk	12 pounds Houseline	10 Bbls Pork
1 hand saw	12 Pounds Marlin	1 Tierce Beans
½ Bbl Rosin	13 Pounds Hambroline	2 Puncheons Rum
2 flasks sweet oil	1 Bbl Tar	1 firkin Butter
1 pound Thread	18 Pounds Tallow	1 dozen Thimbles
1 pound rotten stone	1 Quoil 12 Thread Ratline	1 Quoil 6 thread Ratline
2 Bolts English canvas No. 6	2 dozen Sail Needles	
1 D°. No.4		

Thursday, Dec'r 21<sup>st</sup> "...At 10 P.M. sent down Top Gall't Yds, and hous'd Top Gall't Masts. People preparing ship for sea. Sent on Board By the recruiting Officer William Hoy, Cook..."

Friday, Dec'r 22<sup>nd</sup> "...At 8 A.M. swayed up the top Gall't Masts & Yards. Rec'd on board 53 Bbls Bread..."

Saturday, Dec'r 23<sup>rd</sup> "...Sent down top Gall't & Yards. Rec'd on board 8 Bbls Beef. Sent on board by the recruiting Officer John Colwell, Seaman. Thomas Livermond, a Marine was sent to the Navy Yard...Rec'd on Board 2 Casks Sewit..."

On 23 December Ludlow wrote Secretary Hamilton seeking a lieutenant to replace the ill Samuel Woodhouse.

*"Sir, I am under the necessity of troubling you with an application for a Lieut. in place of Mr. Sam'l Woodhouse...whose ill health prevents his proceeding on the present cruise. By a request from Commodore Rodgers, I have granted him a furlough, with orders to report himself to the department when sufficiently recovered be of service again. Philadelphia is his place of residence.*

*I have apply'd to Commodore Rodgers for a Lieut. in his place, which he will furnish me with provided I receive my orders for Sailing before one can be ordered by the department. If it will not interrupt with any arrangements, I should like to have Mr. B. V. Huffman (presently Sailing Master of the Brig **Hornet**) order'd as my second Lieut. The commander of the **Hornet**, as well as every officer acquainted with Mr. H, appears anxious to see him promoted, which I hope will meet your approbation. Respectfully I remain, Sir..."*

...In the upper left corner of the letter the Secretary was written "Appoint in the room of [Sam'l?] Woodhouse, P.H." and a week later Hoffman reported for duty.

Sunday, Dec'r 24<sup>th</sup> "...rec'd on board 82 Ponds fresh beef, 1 H'd Molasses..."

Monday, Dec'r 25<sup>th</sup> "...Rec'd on board one 12 inch Cable, 90 fathoms..."

Tuesday, Dec'r 26<sup>th</sup> "...loosed sails to dry. Arrived U.S. Brig **Argus** from a Cruise. Sent on Board by the Recruiting Officer Nicholas Philips, O.S...."

Wednesday, Dec'r 27<sup>th</sup> "...At 4 P.M. Must'd at Quarters and Stationed the Crew...at 8 A.M. Blowing strong with rain and snow..."

Thursday, December 28<sup>th</sup> "Strong Gales snowing hard, wind from the North'd...Rec'd on Board 2 Boxes of Candles and 20 Oars for the Boats..."

Gun Powder comes on board...

Saturday, December 30<sup>th</sup> "...Rec'd on board one launch load of water, one box of Marine cloathing & six Boxes Candles, Sent on board by the Recruiting Officer, John Coulson, Seaman. At 4 PM Must'd @ Q'rs, came on board from the Navy Yard William Coles, Serg't Marines. Rec'd on board 1 Bbl Gun Powder and a Launch Load of Water...ends light winds with fine Snow..."

And round shot for the Great guns...

Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> "All these 24 hours fresh breezes with rain and snow, rec'd on board sundry Stores for the Cabbin & Ward room, rec'd on board 1000 W't Junk & 38 nine pound Shote and 326 lbs fresh beef. Came on board Lieu't Beckman V. Hoffman..."

Monday January 1<sup>st</sup> 1810 "...At 4 P.M. Must'd at Q'rs exercised Great Guns, rec'd onboard a launch load of water."

The first week of January was restful, yet the Great Guns were exercised daily; the ship slowly "preparing for sea."

### ***Vixen*** to carry Army Stores to New Orleans

On 3 January, Secretary Hamilton posted the following letter to Ludlow shedding light on ***Vixen's*** orders...she will carry Army stores to New Orleans.

*By a letter from the Military Agent addressed to the Secretary of War, it appears that you had suggested difficulties in receiving the Stores, which the Agent was directed to carry with him to New Orleans. This, I presume, has proceeded from your not having received my letter to you of the 22<sup>nd</sup> ulto, in which particular directions were given to you upon that Subject.*

*However the **Vixen** is sent to New Orleans at this time for the express purpose of accommodating the War Department, and the Stores of the military agent must go at all events in her. You will therefore receive them.*

*Your Sailing Orders dated 22d ulto will be delivered to you in a day or two by Mr. J.K. Smith.\**

\*J. K. (John Kilby) Smith was an agent of the War Department. Letters to President Madison from J. K. Smith in March and May of 1810 show that in addition to escorting Army stores to New Orleans in *Vixen* he had an additional duty of scouting for land for the Marquis de Lafayette. (Wikipedia: John Kilby Smith)

Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup> "At 4 P.M. Must'd at Quarters, exercised Guns and Sails...Employed preparing Ship for sea..."

Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> "...11 a.m. Mustered all hands and read the Articles of War, Deserted two marines, Vis Sam'l Bradford & James Clements. Sent on board by the Recruiting Officer Dan'l Thomas O.S...."

### A Fifer is Recruited

Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> "...at 7 P.M. Came out to blow strong from the N.W....at 9 A.M. Weigh'd our anchor and shifted our birth higher up North River....at 10 A.M Anchor'd in 9 fms water with Best Bower Anchor, North Battery dist half mile...Sent on board by the Recruiting Officer, Frederick Bagley, fifer..."

Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> "...Must'd at Q'rs and exercised Great Guns..."

Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup> "...At 9 A.M. the Launch and Jolly Boat went to sweep for the Small Bower, at 11 A.M. Boats return'd leaving the small Bower, Buoy & Buoy rope, the buoy rope being foul of the cable & sunk the Buoy....Rec'd on board sundry articles Viz.

8 Casks Wine	56 lbs Flor Sulphur
24 Bottles castor Oil	25 lbs Red Barks
49 lbs Sal Glauber	87 lbs Glauber Salts [a general purpose laxative]
2 Keggs Brimstone	1 Box Medicines"

On the same day, Ludlow responds to the Secretary's orders of 3 January.

*Sir, I have the honor of receiving your orders of the 3rd Inst. yesterday. The difficulties I suggested to the Military Agent, respecting the stores he intended to take with him to New Orleans, was, the want of room for the quantity and not receiving any Orders upon that subject, but agreeable to the above mention'd orders, having receiv'd, and do not find them so bulky as I expected.*

*I trust, that in accommodating the War Department, it is not your intention to have the Vixen lumber'd, so as to disqualify her from doing duty as a Vessel of War, which very few stores will do (exclusive of what she takes for her service) owing to her size.\**

*I have not received the orders you make mention of, nor any thing of Mr. J. K. Smith since the 25<sup>th</sup> ult. Very Respectfully I remain sir..."*

...\*The concerns Ludlow expresses in this paragraph were likely written reflective of the 1807 *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair which itself was the immediate cause of the Navy's anxious desire to resist further insult from the Royal Navy. *Chesapeake* had been so "lumber'd" with topside stores when she left Norfolk that she was unable to respond as a warship to the *Leopard's* broadsides and surrendered without a fight, thus dooming her commanding officer's reputation.

*Vixen's* Gunners prepare ammunition...

Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup> "...Rec'd on board a Launch of water...Came on board two Marines, Viz, John Horaly and Patrick Devan. Fill'd in the Magazine, 16 powder horns with 18 pounds powder. Reduced 18 cartridges from 1 ¼ pounds to one pound, filled 22 of D°." That evening the Secretary's orders of 22 December 1809 are finally delivered to Ludlow.

*This letter will be delivered to you by Mr. John K. Smith, who will take passage in the **Vixen** for New Orleans.*

*I have now only to direct that you will receive Capt. Swan & Lieut. Small on board the **Vixen**, with such Stores, lumber & other articles as Capt. Swan may chose to take with him on the public account, and as soon as you are prepared for Sea, you will weigh anchor and proceed to New Orleans, at which place you will receive such military Stores as Capt. Swan may deliver to you, & having received them you will return to Norfolk, giving me information without delay of your arrival.*

*The articles that you will take to New Orleans will be dispersed of at that place under the direction of Capt. Swan.*

Early the next morning, 14 January 1810, as **Vixen** prepares for sea, Ludlow acknowledges receipt of the much anticipated orders and forwards an updated Muster list.

*"Sir, I had the honor of receiving your orders of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Ult. Last evening, which was handed to me by Mr. J. K. Smith. We are now under way but have very light air, which will prevent me getting out before the evening.*

*I herewith enclose the **Vixen's** muster roll up to this date, agreeable to the regulations of the Navy. I have the honor to be Very Respectfully, Sir..."*

...The enclosed Muster roll reveals:

- That 89 men were on board when **Vixen** sailed, 85 as ship's company including 15 Marines and 7 Boys plus the four supernumeraries.
- That supernumeraries bound to New Orleans were: J. K. Smith, Capt Wm. Swan and Lt. Fre'd W. Small of the Army, and Doctor J. R. Shumate.\*

\*Hamilton had earlier written Ludlow that Dr. Shumate would be sailing in **Vixen** en route to his new assignment at the New Orleans Naval Station.

Back to the Journal where the "very light air" Ludlow reported to Hamilton meant a slow trip down the North River to the Upper Bay.

Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup> "...employ'd preparing ship for sea...fired five guns as Signal for a Pilot and for Sailing, hoisted in the launch and Cutter, at 10 A.M. Calm Clear W'r, hove up and Sweep'd down the river, at Mer'n meeting the flood tide, let go the best bower anchor in 10 fath'ns water abreast of Jibbet Island [Gibbet Island, later renamed Ellis Island]."

Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup> "Commences with light winds from the South'd, at 2 P.M. Got under way and beat low as the Quarantine Ground, at 4 P.M. Came too with Best bower anchor in 10 fath'ns water... Mustered at Qtrs and exercised great Guns. At 7 A.M. Got under way and beat down as low as the west Buoy...Gunner employed in filling Powder in the Magazine..."

### Underway Bound for New Orleans

Great Guns are fired, and reloaded...

Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup> "...at 1 P.M. weighed and made all Sail that would draw. At 2 P.M. falling calm, came too with small bower anchor in 11 ½ fathoms water, at 3 P.M. Got under way and must'd at Q'rs, exercised Great Guns, fired 8 Guns that were previously loaded. Loaded and shoted the Guns, fore & aft...at 8 P.M. discharged the Pilot, at 9 set Studding Sails. Sandy Hook light house bore NW dist 8 or 9 miles, Middle of the High Land of Never Sink West by N1/2 N. at 11 Thomas Burns, O.S. was punished with one dozen lashes for drunkenness...all Sail set that would draw by the wind. Sergeant Coles rec'd Orders to act as Master at Arms...Lat'd Obs. 40° 20' North."

Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> "...at 5 P.M. the Highlands of Neversink bore W by N  $\frac{1}{2}$  N dist 6 Leagues...at 2 A.M. Squally, dark W'r, Blowing fresh, call'd all hands, Clued up the Top Sails & Courses, took two reefs in each topsail, set the foresail & furled the fore & aft Main Sail....Latt'd Obs'd 39°- 9' North."

### A Severe Storm off Cape Hatteras interrupts their progress

Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup> "...Strong breeze and cloudy...Zachariah Smith – one of the fore top men – fell from the fore top sail yard, whilst reefing the sail. Lowered down the Jolly boat, and saved him. At 3 P.M. Blowing heavy with a Cross high sea...furled the Main Sail & Try Sail, reefed the fore sail and sent down the Top Gall't Masts on deck. Bore away under a reefed fore Sail. At 4 P.M. Braced up, Set Main Stay Sail and fore top mast stay sails, and Try Sail close reefed...at 1/2 past [10] hawl'd up the fore sail and hove to Under Close reef'd Try Sail, Main Stay Sail & fore top Mast Stay Sail...at 3 [A.M.] Gale increasing, hawled down the fore top mast and main stay Sail & Try Sail, and Bore away under reef'd fore Top sail. At 4 A.M. Strong Gale and heavy Sea. Ship laboring much. Hove the jolly Boat over board with a quantity of Grape, Canister & round shot, 1 Dry stove, 1 Water Cask full sand to lighten Ship. Latt'd Obs'd 35° 4' N."

...On the same page of the journal is a further description of the impact of the storm on the ship and the ammunition lost:

"at 11 Shipped a heavy sea Which Filled the Waist with Water. Cut all the half ports adrift. Shott, hove over board:

79 18pd-Round Shot

54 18pd Cannister

20 18pd Grape

2 9pd Shot

14 9pd Cannister

3 Gun Handspikes wash'd over board"

Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup> "Commences with Strong Gales and a Tremendous Sea...at 8 P.M. still lying too, the Gale still Blowing hard with a high cross sea...at 4 A.M. More Moderate and less Sea. Set Jibb and let out 2<sup>nd</sup> reef of Try sail...At 9 A.M. Let out 2<sup>nd</sup> reef of the fore top Sail & Main one, furled the Mn Stay Sail, unbent the Main top sail for the Sail Maker to repair. Ends fresh Gales and squally W'r and some rain. Latt'd Obs'd 33° 22' North."

Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup> "...at 7 A.M. more moderate, set the reef'd fore sail and close reefed top sails, carried away the main trusses, squally with heavy rain. Ends light airs and variable with a heavy swell. At 11 A.M. wore ship to the West, out all reefs of fore sail top sails and Try sail, Set the Jibb, fitted a pair of Main trusses. Latt'd Obs'd 33° 28' N."

The ship continues southward...

Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> "Commences with fresh breezes and clear weather, at 3 P.M. rigged out the Flying Jibb boom, bent flying Jibb...At 5 P.M. Must'd at Quarters, exercis'd and discharged the Guns...Latt'd Obs'd 27° 48' North."

Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup> "Commenced with fresh breezes and Clear Weather. At 8 [P.M.] Hawled down Main Top Mast Stay sail & Jibb, hawl'd up the Courses, and Brail'd up the Try Sail. Cloudy W'r. At 10 P.M. Saw the Appearance of Breakers, Tack'd to the South'd & East'd. Set Jibb and Courses, let one reef out of the topsails. Bent the Best Bower Cable...[the Log shows them changing course from S.S.E. to roughly N.E. for about 7 hours following the apparent sighting of breakers, returning to a southerly course at 6 A.M.]... At 8 [A.M.] Saw the land ahead. Latt'd Obs'd 26° 58' N."

Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup> "Moderate breezes and fine clear weather... at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 11 Called all hands to Qtrs, at  $\frac{1}{4}$  past 12 Tack'd Ship to the South'd & East'd. Spoke the ship *Rambler*, Capt'n Smith, 18 days from New York, Bound to the Havannah...At half past 8 [A.M.] Set the Gaff Top sail. Punished Wm. Johnston a Marine with 1 Dozen lashes for Drunkenness...Latt'd Obs'd 26° 21' N."

## Ludlow Investigates the Bahamas

*Vixen* continued on a more or less SE track on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of January with land occasionally in sight, the first identification of which was "*the hole in the wall*"\* sighted at quarter past 6 A.M. on the 28<sup>th</sup> bearing "N.N.E  $\frac{3}{4}$  E, distance 2 leagues."

\*This is likely the Hole in the Wall on Bahama's Abaco Island.

Observed latitude on the 27<sup>th</sup> was 25° 51' North... Their track becomes a westerly on the 29<sup>th</sup>, fired a gun at an unidentified ship at 5 P.M. to bring her too and talking to the ship *Bourdeaux Packet* from Philadelphia bound to New Orleans, out 18 days. At 8 A.M. *Stirrups Key*, a small island in the Bahamas, bore S. by E  $\frac{1}{2}$  E., distance 3 miles. The latitude observed was 25° 38' N.

Tuesday January 30<sup>th</sup> "At 5 P.M. Muster'd at Q'rs. And exercis'd the Guns, Fired two Guns at Q'rs with Shots. At  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 6 Took in all Sail and Came too an anchor in 3  $\frac{1}{4}$  fathoms water with the Best Bower. At 9 A.M. Got under way, fired a Gun to a Strange Sail, at  $\frac{3}{4}$  past 9 Spoke the American Brig *Perseverance*, Capt'n Meeds 21 days from New York at an anchor on the bank... at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 11 Tack'd and took in Royals. Spoke the Ship *Rambler* from New York bound for Havannah... Lat'd Obs 25° 8' North."

Wednesday, January 31<sup>st</sup> "...at 4 P.M. Tack'd to the N'd & West'd, at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past Must'd 1<sup>st</sup> Division at Q'rs and exercised the Guns... at  $\frac{1}{4}$  before 7 took in all sail and came too an Anchor in 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms water, at Mid-N't ship *Rambler* passed us and anchor'd on our Larboard Q'tr, at 7 A.M. Weigh'd anchor and made sail... Lat'd Obs 24° 37' N"

Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup> "Commences with fine clear W'r., Course SW... at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7 [AM] made the dog keys ahead... at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 9 the dog keys\* bore S.S.W  $\frac{1}{2}$  W, dist 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  Leagues. Tack'd to the West'd, at Mer'n the double headed Shote Keys\* bore SW  $\frac{1}{2}$  W dist 3 Leagues. Ends Moderate Breezes and Clear W'r... Water remaining on board 2840 Gals... Lat'd Obs 24° 3' N"

\*Both the "Dog Rocks" and the "Double Headed Shot Cays" are north of Cay Sal Bank in the Bahamas.

*Vixen* continuous on a more southerly course. The observed Latitude observed on 2 February was 23° 25' N.

Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> "Commenced with light airs and fine clear W'r, 5 Sail in sight... Spoke a Spanish Schooner from Havannah bound for Matanzas, at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 5 Tack'd Ship, the Easternmost Land bore S.E. by E  $\frac{1}{2}$  E distance 4 Leagues, the westernmost land bore S.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S dist. 2 Leagues... at 6 [AM] Spoke a Ship from Verda Cruz bound to the Havannah... at 12 Moro Castle Bore N.E. by E dist 3 miles. At  $\frac{1}{4}$  past 2 came too an anchor in the Havanna with small bower anchor in 7 fathoms water. At  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 2 fired a Salute of 13 Guns which was answered by the port Admiral, at  $\frac{1}{4}$  past 3 fired a Second Salute which was returned by one of the Batteries, at 4 moored Ship."

## And Havannah

*Vixen* spent but three days in Havannah and the journal reflects only that Martin Darle and William Johnston, O.S., joined the ship before sailing at 11 AM on Tuesday, the 6<sup>th</sup> of February. For more about visiting Havannah, and the reaction of the Secretary of the Navy to that visit, see Ludlow's letter to the Secretary dated 15 April 1810 and the Secretary's response quoted later in this transcription.

## At Sea again... Still bound for New Orleans

During the next week, *Vixen* sailed a generally W.N.W. course without incident. On 13 February the latitude observed was 29° 16' N.



## Arrives in the Mississippi Delta

Wednesday, February 14<sup>a</sup> "Moderate breezes and Clear Weather. At 2 P.M. sounded in 40 fms water, muddy bottom, at ½ past 3 Called the first & 2<sup>d</sup> divisions to Quarters exercised the Guns...at ¼ past 5 saw the land on the lee bow...at ½ past 6 in all Sail and came too with the Kedge in 14 fathoms water, fired five Guns as Sig'l for a pilot...at ½ past 8 Lieutenant Creighton went on board the U.S. Bomb Ketch *Vessuvius* [*Vesuvius*]. Continued to make Sig'ls to the cutter which were answered by *Vessuvius*, at 10 P.M. a Boat from the Ketch came on board with her Sailing Master & a pilot. At 9 A.M. fired a Gun as a Sig'l to the boat, at 12 hove short, loosed Sails & furled them again, the weather so thick we could not see the land."

With *Vesuvius* in company, *Vixen* made her way up the Mississippi toward New Orleans for the first few days in "thick fog." On 17 February, Lieutenant Creighton returned from the *Vesuvius* accompanied by a pilot boat and "Captain Swan of the army left us, in Co[mpany] with the pilot for the Block house [Ft St. Philip?]."

Sunday, February 18<sup>a</sup> "Commenced with fine clear weather and fresh breezes from the North'd & East'd...at 1 p.m. Pass'd the Bar, & U.S. Bomb Ketch *Vessuvius*. Spoke the Brig *Mary* from New Orleans bound to Philadelphia...at 4 P.M. Came too with the best Bower anchor in 4 fathoms water...Remaining water 1630 Gals."

Monday, February 19<sup>a</sup> "...people employed Setting the rigging to rights. At 9 A.M. got underway, at ½ past 10 came too with the best Bower anchor in 3 fathoms water, furled the Sails. Call'd all hands to quarters exercised Great Guns and Small Arms. Discharged the Guns at a Target..."

Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup> "...at 4 P.M. sent a boat to assist *Gun Boat No. 65* in Getting off the Ground. At 10 A.M. the wind Chop'd round to the North'd & East'd. Got under way made all Sail up the river, at 8 A.M. fired a Gun as a Signal for a Pilot, at ½ past 8 got a Pilot for New Orleans...all sail set that would draw."

Wednesday, February 21<sup>a</sup> "...4 P.M. Capt'n Swan went on Shore at Pluckamene\*, at 5 Cutter return'd, at 6 the Cutter went on board the Brig *Elizabeth* from N Orleans of and for New York..."

...\*In 1810 the Louisiana area known as the Plaquemines was one of twenty early parishes of Orleans Territory. Positioned to the south of the New Orleans parish and east of the Mississippi River the Plaquemines parish extended southeast into the Gulf of Mexico above the Mississippi Delta like a big jutting toe. (See Louisiana Historical Timeline, 1673-1865 by Bill Dollarhide at [GenealogyBlog.com](http://GenealogyBlog.com))

Thursday, February 22<sup>a</sup> "...fine clear weather. All Sail set that would draw, at ½ past 4 P.M. the wind died away, sent a hawser and a party of men on shore to Track the Vessel up the river, at ½ past 7 made the hawser fast to a Tree and furl'd the Sails...at 7 A.M. sent a party of men on shore to track up, at 8 A.M. Spun up a breeze of wind from S.W, the Boat returned with the men. Made all Sail up the river. At 11 A.M. Came too with the Best Bower in 11 fathoms water abreast of the City of New Orleans."

## New Orleans

For the next two days, besides "exercising the Sails," the crew enjoyed a rest...then back to work.

Sunday, February 25<sup>a</sup> "Commences with fresh breezes from the S.W. and fine clear W'r. at 4 P.M. Sent down the Top Gall't Yards, hous'd top Gall't Masts and rigged in the flying Jibb Boom, unbent the Stay Sails, unrove halliards and down hawls, Got in the Ring tail boom, unbent the Top Gall't Sails, royals & other light Sails. At 10 A.M. Sent 2 Topsails and two courses, and the Small Bower anchor to the Navy Yard...Mr. John Brown, a deserter from the U.S. Brig Cyren [*Syren*], taken up by Mr. Budd, Sailing Master."

Monday, February 26<sup>a</sup> "...dark misty weather with fine rain. All hands employed in Striping Ship and Transporting the rigging on board *Gun boat No.14* to prepare for overhawling. Sent the remaining Sails on Shore to the Navy Yard to repair, Deliver'd - 87 lbs Sal Glauber, 25 lbs Red Bark, 56 lbs Flor Sulphur, 24 Bottles Castor Oil, 49 lbs Sal Glauber, 2 Keggs Brimstone, 1 Box Medicines."

Tuesday, February 27<sup>a</sup> "...misty dark weather, with frequent Showers of rain. Ships company employed overhalling the riging, a Party of them on board *Gun Boat No. 14*, remainder on Board. Rec'd on Board fresh beef for Ships use, expended 3 ½ Inch rope for Gun Block Strops, 3 fathoms."

Wednesday February 28<sup>a</sup> "...Misty rain...Rec'd on board from Mr. Smith Navy Agent in the Boatswains department 2 Raw hides, 4 half tann'd hides, 1 Quoil 2 inch rope, 1 Quoil 1 ½ inch, 65 lbs spun yarn and two Small Quoils Spun yarn, 15 pounds houseline, ½ dozen 8 inch blocks, ½ dozen 6 inch blocks, 50 yards of Old canvas, 1 Quoil 15 thread Ratline. Rec'd on board in Sail makers department 1 Bolt of English canvas, 3 Bolts Russia Canvas and 1 Piece of White Buntin. Ships company employed overhawling the rigging, a Part of them on board the *Gun Boat No.14*, Expended 2 fathoms 3 ½ inch rope for Gun Block Strops"

The work on rigging on *Vixen* and refitting the rigging on *Gun Boat 14* continued through March 4<sup>a</sup>. At 4 P.M. on the 5<sup>a</sup> *Vixen's* crew "Got up the Lower Rigging Stays and tops." More progress was made on the 6<sup>a</sup> "...Pointed the Top masts through the Caps, got the top mast riging over the mast heads and Set up the Lower rigging for Ratline. Sent the Hammock Stantions to the Navy Yard to be repaired...Sent 7 Muskets to the Navy Yard to be repaired." On March 7<sup>a</sup>, "got out the Jibb Boom and Sent on Shore 8 casks of Sherry Wine for Capt'n Swan." On the 8<sup>a</sup> the repaired small Bower anchor was returned from the Navy Yard, and on the 9<sup>a</sup> and 10<sup>a</sup> of March provisions literally poured on board.

Friday, March 9<sup>a</sup> "...people at Work on the rigging, Got the flying Jibb boom out, and Sway'd up the top Gall't Masts, rec'd on board for the Carpenters department 12 lbs 8d nails, 20 pounds 6 inch Spikes, 1000 pump tacks, 2 pair Brass hinges, 50 feet pine Board, 30 pounds of white lead, 14 lbs of Black Paint, 5 Galls Black Varnish, 3 Gallons Paint Oil, 2 Bear Skins, 2 Patent Illuminators ...in the Gunners department 2 dozen pistol flints, 2 pounds whiting, 250 Quills, 1 hand Vise, 1 Quart Spirits wine, 50 pounds lead, 50 fathoms Match rope, 1 Small turn Screw, and 7 Muskets that were sent to be repaired...People employed painting Ship."

Saturday, March 10<sup>a</sup> "...Employed painting the Ship and Setting the rigging in Order, rec'd on board in the Masters department 5 Gall's Lamp Oil, 5 hand lead lines, 2 Log Slates, 4 Quires Paper, 2 papers Ink Powder, 50 Quills, 2 pounds of Assorted Thread, 25 Slate Pencils, 100 Fishing hooks. Rec'd 32 Barrells of Bread, 7 D° Beef, 6 Bbbs Pork, 4 Casks of Rum, one of 50 Gall's, one of 54, one of 57 and one of 52 Gallons and 13 Barrells Bread. Got the Hammock Clothes from the Sail Loft."

Sunday, March 11<sup>a</sup> "Commences with moderate Breezes from the S'd and fine clear W'r. People employ'd Preparing Ship for Sea. At 8 A.M. rec'd the Sails from the Navy Yard. Sent up Top Gall't yards and bent Sails. Expended 22 fathoms 3 ½ Inch rope for the top Sail Tyes."

### *Vixen* Loads Army Stores bound for Norfolk

Monday, March 12<sup>a</sup> "...rec'd on board for the Gunners department one ball screw, for the Carpenter 2 Gallons Paint oil, 1 Gallon Spirits Turpentine. Rec'd on board 31 Boxes of damaged Muskets, 1 Howitzer and Carriage, 1 Brass 6 and one Brass 12 Pounder and carriage, 4 dozen Small Screws for the Carpenter...Exercised Sails."

### ...Departs New Orleans for the Mississippi Delta

Tuesday, March 13<sup>a</sup> "...Sent on Shore the Carriage of the 12 Pounder having no Place to Stow it, rec'd on board a new Binnacle, 40 false fires and 20 Sky rockets. Made a Sig'l for all Officers to repair on board, at 12 Got under way and made sail down the river..."

Wednesday, March 14<sup>a</sup> "...at 7 P.M. Came too with Small Bower, veered out 30 fathoms Cable, at 6 A.M. Got under way and made Sail..."

### ...And Runs Aground twice while Sailing down the River

Thursday, March 15<sup>a</sup> "...Ran on shore four miles below Pluckamene, hove the head Sails aback and back'd off, made Sail down the river, at 7 P.M. came too with the small Bower in 13 fathoms water, at 6 A.M. Got under way with a fresh Breeze from the South'd, at ½ past 10 ran on Shore on the Middle Ground near the Block House. Got the Kedge out astern and hove all aback, hove the Kedge home, Got out the small Bower Anchor astern. At 12 the *Vessuvius's* Boat came alongside, put into her all the round Shote and Gun carriage Wheels, Started a quantity of water and trim'd every thing over to larboard side...Expendd 40 fms 2 ½ Inch rope for Main Braces..."

Friday, March 16<sup>a</sup> "....Sent the Launch on shore with 5 Boxes Arms and a number of Shot Boxes of Grape, at 9 PM Hove off, came to in 7 fathoms water with the small Bower & Kedge anchors. Furl'd the Sails. At 9 AM Got under way made Sail and Beat down the river, at 11 A.M. came too in 5 fathoms water with the small bower anchor abreast of the Block house. Cut 2 fathoms off the small Bower cable, condemn'd for Junk."

Saturday, March 17<sup>a</sup> "...Set up the lower and top Mast rigging fore & aft, Laced on the Mats and Got all in readiness for sea. Rec'd on board the Shott, Gun carriages and arms sent on shore to lighten ship, filled up the water in the hold."

*Occurrences and remarks on board U.S. Frigate Vixen  
of 14 guns Charles Ludlow Esq. Commanding*

*Tuesday Commences with light breezes from E.S.E. and Cloudy*  
March 20<sup>th</sup> at 6 P.M. sent a Boat with 3 Officers and 20 Men and 6 Marines well armed in company with the *Vessuvius's* boats, took Possession of the French Privateer *Duke of Montebello* rec'd 5 Officers and 10 of her crew on board at 11 P.M. Sent for 8 of our men and 6 Marines leaving the rest in charge of the Privateer. At 11 A.M. sent for the remainder of our men. At 11 A.M. sent the 5 Officers on board the *Vessuvius*. Ende moderate breezes and clear W. Cut 1 fathom of the sheet cable for Junk - Surgeons report 8 men sick

*Wednesday Moderate breezes from the South and clear W*  
March 21<sup>st</sup> exercise sailed at 8 P.M. sent a Boat with the whole of the French men belonging to the Privateer on board of her - at 9 the boat returned with the following black men John Baptist Peter Mitchell John Labo Anthony Papale Demas Leoda John Murray and light breezes and clear W. Minde from St East Sick report 6 men

*Thursday Commences with light breezes from the S*  
March 22<sup>nd</sup> and clear weather People variously employed at 4 P.M. exercise sails ends moderate and clear W

Sunday, March 18<sup>a</sup> "...Sent the Launch on Shore for wood. People variously employed. Cut 1 fa[tho]m Small cable for Junk..."

### Ludlow meets with Commodore David Porter

Monday, March 19<sup>a</sup> "Ship's draft forward 8 feet-3 inches, abaft 11 feet 6 inches...At 10 AM Commodore Porter came along side with his Felucca..."

... \*A Felucca is a small wooden sailing boat by lateen sails and/or oars

### ...And Assists in Capturing the French Privateer *Duke of Montebello*

Tuesday, March 20<sup>a</sup> "Commences with light breezes from E.S.E. and Cloudy. At 6 P.M. Sent a Boat with 3 Officers and 20 Men and 6 Marines, well armed in company with the *Vessuvius's* boats, took possession of the french Privateer *Duke of Montebello*, rec'd 5 Officers and 10 of her crew on board. At 11 P.M. Sent for 8 of our men and 6 Marines leaving the rest in charge of the Privateer, at 8 A.M. Sent for the remainder of our men, at 11 A.M. Sent the 5 Officers on board the *Vessuvius*..."

Ludlow's letter to Secretary Hamilton of the next day, 21 March, explains this journal entry:

"U. States Brig Vixen  
Balize, March 21, 1810

Hon'ble Paul Hamilton.

*Sir: I have the honor of informing you of my arrival at this place on the 16 Inst. where I found two French Schooners (with about 120 men) that had been detained by the Ketch **Vesuvius**. The French Men very turbulent & dissatisfied at their detention, and showing every disposition to use force for their release, inducing me (deeming it for the good of the service) to remain until I could hear from Cap't Porter. Yesterday he arrived and handed me a letter which I here send:*

Copy

Balize, March 20, 1810.

*Sir: I feel gratified that you remained at this place until my arrival, in consequence of the detention of the two French Corsairs the **Duke de Montebillo** & the **Intrepid**, as the presence of your vessel was materially necessary to promote order in our waters. It is my intention to send them to either N. Orleans or to some Atlantic Port, perhaps Norfolk, and the Public service requires that you should remain here until I can proceed to N. Orleans & give you further advice.*

*I have the honor to be with much respect, Your obt. Servt.*

(Signed) D. Porter

Lt. Comdt. Charles Ludlow  
Comdg. U.S. Brig Vixen.

*I have the honor to be very respectfully, sir your obt. hble. Svt.*

Chs. Ludlow."

... The French privateers were among those "which 'took, plundered or burnt every American, Spanish or English vessel' they met." (David Long's *Nothing too Daring, A Biography of David Porter, 1783-1843* (Annapolis, U.S. Naval Institute, 1970), pp52.)

...Porter, who was in command of the Naval Station at New Orleans had learned of the privateers' presence in the Mississippi Delta. The timely action by Ludlow and his crew to secure their capture earned them Porter's thanks.

...Ludlow's letter to Hamilton of the 21<sup>st</sup> of March was not found among those microfilmed in the National Archives, but fortunately for the transcriber RADM Caspar Goodrich, USN, included it in his documentary history, *Our Navy and the West Indian Pirates*. The Naval Institute published the Admiral's work in several issues of its *Proceedings* in 1916. Ludlow's letter may be found in Vol. 42, No. 5, Sept.-Oct. 1916, pages 1466 and 1467, of the *Proceedings*.

Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> "...exercised Sails at 8 P.M. Sent a Boat with the whole of our French men belonging to the Privateer on board of her. At 9 the boat return'd with the following black men John Baptist, Peter Mitchell, John Labo, Anthony Pasale, Demas Leoda, John Murray..."

**Vixen** remained at anchor off the Block House for the next few days awaiting Commodore Porter's return from New Orleans while occasionally exercising sails and provisioning. Mustered the crew and read the Articles of War on Saturday March 24<sup>th</sup>.

Tuesday, March 27<sup>th</sup> "...at 1 P.M. Commodore Porter arrived from New Orleans, Took full possession of the 2 french privateers...at 8 A.M. Sent on board the **Vessuvius** the following Black french men – Peter Mitchell, John Baptist, John Labo, Anthony Pasale, Demas Leoda, John Murray. Sent the 2 Brass howet's [howitzers] to Com'm Porter for the Felucca."

Wednesday, March 28<sup>a</sup> "...foggy weather, employed preparing for sea...at 1 P.M. sent the Carpenter ashore to look at the Commodore's Felucca, at 2 P.M. Sent 10 men on board **Gun Boat No.25** to assist getting her in the Bayou, 7 P.M., the Carpenter returned, at 8 the men returned."

Thursday, March 29<sup>a</sup> "...Thick and Foggy. At 7 A.M. a Pilot come on board, at 9 Got under way in C'o with the **Vessuvius** and the Commo's Felucca, at ½ 10 came on thick Fog, came too with small Bower anchor in 3 fathoms water, furl'd all Sail. At 11 W'r Cleared and a strong Breeze from N'd & West'd. Got under way, at 11 passed the Bar, at 20 minutes before 12 the Pilot left us, the wreck at the mouth of the river bore N.W. ½ W, Dist. 5 miles..."

### At Sea bound for Norfolk

Friday, March 30<sup>a</sup> "Commences with Strong Breeze and thick foggy weather. At 1 P.M. Set Top Gall't Sails, 2 ½ past 1 Set Flying Jibb and main top Gall't Staysail. John Brown deserter from the U.S. Brig Cyren [**Syren**] releas'd from confinement By order of the Capt'n...Water on hand 3690 Gall's...Latt'd Obs 27° 57' North."

For the next two weeks **Vixen** and her crew sailed ESE around Florida and up the East Coast to Norfolk without significant delays or ports of call. On 5 April they sighted Matanzas, Cuba bearing S.W. ½ S. On the 7<sup>a</sup> "...at 10 Tack'd and made sail, in chase, fired a Gun which Bro't too the Chase, Sent the Cutter on board of her. She prov'd to be a Swedish Schooner from Havannah bound to St Bartholomew, called the **Lookout**, permitted her to proceed, made Sail." Divisions were routinely exercised at the Great Guns or small arms. All hands were called to Quarters on April 12 to clear the Gun Slides. On the 13<sup>a</sup> she chased and "Spoke the Schooner **Polly** of Marblehead from Boston bound to Charleston."

Sunday, April 15<sup>a</sup> 1810 "Moderate Breezes and fine Clear W'r. At 1 PM Got a Pilot on Board for Norfolk...at ½ past 2 saw the land on the lee bow...the light house on Cape Henry S.W. by W, distance 2 miles, Cape Charles N. ¼ E. Call'd all hands to Q'rs and Must'd the men...at ½ past 8 Took in the Studding Sails, at 10 furl'd Sails and Came too with small Bower anchor in 4 ½ fathoms water off Sowell's [Sewell's] Point. At 6 A.M. Fresh Gales & Clear W'r. hove up and made sail up as high as Lamberts Point. Came too at 7 A.M. with small Bower anchor..."

### Norfolk

Upon **Vixen's** arrival in Norfolk on 15 April, Ludlow wrote Secretary Hamilton to let him know of his arrival and that while en route to New Orleans he had stopped in Havannah.

*"Sir, I have the honor of reporting my arrival at this place in 16 days from the Balize [the Mississippi Delta], and 30 from the city of Orleans, with the stores that the Military Agent deliver'd me, consisting of 31 boxes of Arms, two Field Pieces, and one Howitzer.*

*On my passage to the Mississippi, when off the Havannah with light head wind, and strong current against me, run in and anchored to wait for a wind, at the same time make myself and Officers acquainted with the Harbour, (none of us having been there before). I remain'd there three days, Saluted the Morro, and Admiral which they return'd Gun for Gun. Nothing should have induced me to put into that Harbour, but the above circumstances, coupled with knowing it to be your wish, for the officers to gain every information in their power of Harbours, Coasts &c. I took this good opportunity and hope it will meet your approbation.*

*After landing the Military Stores I have on board; shall conceive it a very particular favour (should it not interfere with any arrangements) to have the **Vixen** ordered to New York. I have some very particular business at that place, of a private nature, that calls loudly for my presence, and am fearful will oblige me (if the Brig is not permitted to go) to apply for a furlough. I have done without one, twelve years, and should be very sorry to be put to the necessity of applying for one at this time. I have the honor to be very respectfully, Sir..."*

...On the verso of this letter, Secretary Hamilton has penned:

*"As soon as the Stores are landed Mr Ludlow will proceed to Philadelphia and prepare the **Vixen** for immediate return to N. Orleans. This completed if it is his wish to be furloughed for a time it will be agreed to but not without regret. His touching at the Havannah is not disapproved. P.H."*

Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup> "...1 P.M. Hoisted out the launch & Scrubbed Ship Inside and out."

Tuesday, April 17<sup>th</sup> "...at 11 A.M. the U.S. Frigate **Essex** passed us and Proceeded up to Norfolk..."

Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup> "...at 10AM a Pilot came on board, hove up and made Sail for Norfolk, at 11 Came too with the Small bower anchor in 5 fathoms Water in the harbor of Norfolk nearly abreast the Fort [Fort Norfolk]. Wm Rhea, James Beans and Levi McCabe, Seamen went on Shore on liberty."

Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup> "...at 10 AM Levi McCabe & Wm Rhea returned, at 1 P.M. Ed Nevin, Quarter Master & Sam'l Scott Boatswains Mate went on Shore on liberty. Discharged Dan'l Roach O.S. for Sickness...James Mathews sent to the hospital sick."

Over the next several days the journal records two or three members of **Vixen's** crew going ashore on liberty...and returning. The crew exercises great guns and small arms occasionally as well. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April "Sent on Shore to the fort 31 boxes damaged arms, one Brass 6 P'er and one Brass howitzer" previously taken on board as directed by Captain Swan while **Vixen** was in New Orleans.

Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup> "...Rec'd from the Navy Agent 4 Barrels beef, 4 D° Pork, 1 D° Molasses, 1 D° Whiskey ...Sent to the Fort 1 Brass 12 pounder..." [The Brass 12 pounder was the third gun loaded aboard on 12 March in New Orleans.]

### Lieutenant John Trippe ordered to relieve Ludlow

Having received the letter that Ludlow posted upon his arrival in Norfolk, Secretary Hamilton responded on 26 April:

*...From some expressions used in your letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> I presume that it would be inconvenient to you to proceed immediately back to N. Orleans: & as the Brig is destined to return immediately to N. Orleans & as your Service can be spared without inconvenience to the Service I have ordered Lieutenant John Trippe to relieve you in the command of the Vixen... & consider yourself at liberty to proceed, agreeably to your wish to NYork, where, after having performed your private business you will report yourself to the Commanding Naval Officer.*

Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup> "...Rec'd from the Navy Agent, 25 Bbls Bread, 1 hogshead Whiskey, 2 Cords Wood..."

Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> "...employed preparing Ship for sea, at 2 P.M. hoisted in the Launch and secured her, Rec'd from the Navy Agent 1 Tierce of Rice, 2 Barrels Beans, 1 D° Flour, 1 D° Vineagar & 1 Bushell Lime, exercis'd Sails, at 3 P.M. Call'd all hands to Q'rs and cleaned the Gun Slides..."

Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup> "...people employ'd preparing Ship for Sea, at 9 A.M. fired a Gun a Sig'l to the Cutter. Pilot came on board at 10 A.M, Got under way, made all Sail down the river, at ½ past 2 came too with Small Bower Anchor in 8 fathoms water off Sowell's Point..."

Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup> "Strong Breezes from the South'd & West'd and Clear W'r. at 6 A.M. Got under way, Made Sail Toward Cape Henry, at ½ past Took in Top Gall't Sails, at ¾ past 6 Took a reef in the Top Sails, Back'd the head Sails until the US Frigate **Essex** came up. At 7 Took in 2<sup>nd</sup> reef of the Top Sails, at ¼ past 9 discharged the Pilot, at 10 the Light house on Cape Henry Bore W. by S., Dist. 6 or 7 Miles, Cape Charles bore N. by W., Dist 5 or 6 Miles, out all reefs, set top Gall't Sails, Royals and Stay Sails...Latt'd Obs'd 37° 9' N. Surgeons report 9 Men Sick."

### **Vixen** sails Chesapeake Bay To Philadelphia

Tuesday, May 1<sup>a</sup> "...at 5 Saw the Land, Several Sail in sight, at ½ past 5 out all reefs, at ¾ past Tack'd Ship and stood for a Pilot Boat, in sight of us, at 6 Back'd M'n Top Sail, Got the Pilot on board and made all Sail By the Wind. At ½ past 7 Cape Henlopen light house W by S ½ S...Latt'd Obs. 38° 46'."

Wednesday, May 2<sup>a</sup> "...at 8 P.M. light winds inclinable to Calm, came too with Small bower anchor in 8 fathoms water...at 4 A.M. Got under way with a fresh breeze...Made and shortened Sail as required...Pass'd US Frigate **President**, at Mer'n fired a Green as a Sig'l to the Revenue Cutter, at 3 PM pass'd the US brig **Siren**, at ½ past 5 Came too in 4 fathoms Water with small Bower anchor, abreast the Navy Yard in Philadelphia."

## Philadelphia

On May 4<sup>a</sup> **Vixen** arrived in Philadelphia and Ludlow wrote the following to Secretary Hamilton:

*Sir, I arrived here yesterday and had the pleasure of receiving your honor'd favour of the 26th Ult. granting me a leave of absence, which I am very thankful for.*

*I cannot leave the **Vixen** without recommending the officers of her, in the highest terms for your notice. Lt. Creighton is an officer deserving the first Lieutenantcy of one of the Frigates, and none do I know in the Service than I would sooner have as first, if I should again be honor'd with Command. The Surgeon [John Brown] I am induced to intercede for, owing to the length of time he has been in the Service, his abilities as a surgeon, and his Deportment as an Officer and Gentleman, he has a wish to be transferred to a larger Vessel which I hope may meet with your approbation. Lt. Trippe informs me Doctor Blare of the **Enterprise**, has a wish to join the **Vixen**. I hope you will excuse the liberty I have taken in interceding for these officers. The attachment I have form'd for them has urged me to step this far.*

*The Brig will require caulking before she can proceed to New Orleans, which will retain her 6 or 8 days longer than she would otherwise have to remain. I have the honor to be Very respectfully, Sir..."*

And caulking the Brig got!

Saturday, May 5<sup>a</sup> "...people variously employed, Rec'd from the Shore a Stage and 3 Caulkers, employed caulking the water ways."

Sunday, May 6<sup>a</sup> "...at 10 AM Call'd all hands to Quarters and mustered the Crew..."

Monday, May 7<sup>a</sup> "...Ships Carpenter, mate and 3 Caulkers from the shore employ'd caulking Ship..."

The Navy Secretary responded to Ludlow's letter of 5 May on the 7<sup>a</sup>:

*I have received your letter of the 4<sup>a</sup> Instant. I am very happy to hear, that the gentlemen who served with you on board the **Vixen** are so meritorious.*

*Lieutenant Creighton I have removed to the **Constitution** & I have written to Lieut. Trippe particularly with respect to Doct'r Broom.*

Tuesday, May 8<sup>a</sup> "...3 caulkers for the Shore, Carpenter & Mate employed caulking ship. Shifted the Shott and lumber over to Starboard to heel the Vessel for the Caulkers."

Wednesday, May 7<sup>a</sup> [9<sup>a</sup>] "...3 Caulkers from Shore, the Carpenter and Mate employ'd Caulking..."

## John Trippe relieves Ludlow of Command of **Vixen**

Thursday, May 8<sup>a</sup> [10<sup>a</sup>] "...moderate Breezes from the N'd and Clear W'r, on this day Lieut't Charles Ludlow resign'd his command and was Succeeded By Lieut't John Trippe."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



## About Charles Ludlow

Charles Ludlow was appointed Midshipman in November 1798 and promoted to Lieutenant in April 1802. He served on the frigate *United States* during the Quasi-War with France, and *Adams*, *President*, *Essex* and *Constitution* in the Mediterranean between 1802 and 1807. He twice served as First Lieutenant in *Constitution*: 1806-1807, and again in 1809 prior to assuming command of *Vixen*. Promoted to Master-Commandant in December 1811, Ludlow next served as "Captain" of Commodore John Rodgers' flagship, the *President*, which position he held on the day of her action with HMS *Little Belt*, 16 May 1811. For reasons unknown to the transcriber Ludlow resigned that August. He was reappointed a month later briefly holding the rank of Lieutenant until restored to Master-Commandant in December. The victory of Isaac Hull, commanding *Constitution*, in her action with HMS *Guerriere* on 19 August 1812 resulted in the double-step promotion of Lieutenant Charles Morris, Hull's 1st lieutenant, to the rank of Captain for his heroic action during that engagement. This promotion skipped over officers who were already Master-Commandants, angering Ludlow, then commandant of the New York Navy Yard, to the point that he resigned again, this time permanently.

"...(Charles) Ludlow was one of the navy's abler officers, but he resigned from the service in March 1813 because he felt humiliated by the sudden promotion of Lieutenant Charles Morris over the heads of officers who, like Ludlow, were Masters Commandant. Ludlow had two brothers in the navy: Augustus, who was first lieutenant on board *Chesapeake* when he died in the battle with H.M.S. *Shannon* on 1 June 1813; and Robert, who was purser on board *Constitution* at the time of her engagement with H.M.S. *Java* on 29 December 1812." – William S. Dudley, Editor, *The Naval War of 1812, A Documentary History, Vol. I* (Washington, Naval Historical Center, 1985), p.589.

Christopher McKee, in *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession*, (Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 1991), comments that of all the officers who threatened to retire if Charles Morris was promoted to Captain over them, only Charles Ludlow carried out that threat. "Charles Ludlow, whose career commitment to the Navy had of late years been an ambiguous one, seized the occasion to retire to the life of a country gentleman." - McKee, p.301.

In a letter dated 1 May 1815 at Windsor Hill, (New York) and addressed on the integral address leaf to "Robert C. Ludlow Esq. Purser in the U. S. Navy, Boston," Charles writes wistfully to his brother who is about to sail to the Mediterranean with Bainbridge in the *Independence*, perhaps reflecting that he misses the career he had earlier abandoned. In part:

"...the height of my wishes at present would be to spend a few days with you in Boston, I would very much like to be an invisible spectator to hear what you are all at, suppose the Commodore [Bainbridge] is driving away with great force, (as he always is, with whatever he undertakes) & you helping with all your might, your ship must astonish the old-world that you are about visiting, as much as the new world is astonished at ...Bonaparte. I should like very much to talk a little with your Commodore, and indeed would write to him, was I in the way of writing any one but my own family; tho know no one that is not related that I consider so near one of the family as I do him. We heard here a few days since that Decatur was to be the Senior Officer up the Mediterranean, which I hope & pray is not the case, for your sake, as well as others..." (From the transcriber's collection.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Transcriber's Comments

Uncommon are the contemporary journals of the newly founded Federal Navy that emerge, perhaps unrecorded, from the dusty past. Of the several dozen journals and logs kept on board ships of the United States Navy that the transcriber has viewed over the past half century, this is the first and only warship journal revealing activities of the nascent Navy during the five year period between the USS *Chesapeake*-HMS *Leopard* affair (22 June 1807) and the declaration of War against England (18 June 1812). (Surely there are more such journals in the National Archives or elsewhere.) Further, rarely in

warship logs or journals of the period are the details of daily activities recorded with the remarkable discipline found in *Vixen's* journal.

Different hands are visible in the remarks recorded in this journal. One may be that of Charles Ludlow himself as on occasion the penmanship appears to match that in Ludlow's letters to the Secretary of the Navy that appear in the National Archives. Another may be that of his brother Robert, *Vixen's* Purser.

In general the journal's words have been recorded as spelled. Inevitably, when there is more than one keeper of the journal, the same words are often spelled differently from writer to writer. Therefore on occasion a word has been respelled in today's manner for the purpose of ensuring that meanings were not lost in the transcription.

The many, many descriptions of the weather and sail changes to suit the wind have been recorded only when the whim of the transcriber believes they may add to the understanding or emotion of the journal.

Punctuation beyond that found in the journal has been added in this transcription, but only by adding commas or periods to separate phrases or remarks which, if left run-together, may cloud a reader's understanding.

*FINIS*