

**ANOTHER NAVY RODGERS**



**CDR. R. W. MINDTE, U. S. NAVY**

AMONG THEIR  
NAVY FROM GIBBS  
GOODRICH

GOODRICH. W. W. MANNING.  
U. S. NAVY





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## Another Navy Rodgers

BY COMMANDER R. W. MINDTE, U. S. N. (RET.)

ON 25 November 1813 a young man entered the gates of the navy yard at New York and proceeded to the wharf where lay his future home in a new life that he had chosen. He had just entered the United States Navy as a midshipman a week before this day. Doubtless the week had been spent in bidding brave farewells to his family and friends and in gathering together the few practical personal belongings that would be required in the midshipmen's quarters of a United States man-of-war.

This new home was the United States sloop of war *Peacock* commanded by Lewis Warrington, Esq. She was a spanking new vessel having been launched there in New York less than two months before the green midshipman reported. Now she was fitting for sea and a long cruise.

William Tennant Rodgers, United States Navy, Midshipman—for that was his name and perhaps was the signature of his choice, as it appears last in a series of signatures written on the front flyleaf of his first journal<sup>1</sup> in a steady, smooth hand, variously as W.T.R. (with flourishes), W.T. Rodgers, U.S.N., and finally William Tennant Rodgers, United States Navy, Midshipman—was now in the brash young American Navy which was making all preparations to oppose the mighty sea dogs of Britain.

Perhaps it was on that first evening, after a preliminary tour of the sloop that Rodgers made this entry, also on the front flyleaf of his journal: 'Memo: Not to forget that I have a home & a few friends.' It could be that these were the ones who saw him down to the yard or who gave him some farewell memento. And he might have been a little homesick that evening.

*Peacock* must have presented a scene of bustle and apparent confusion as

<sup>1</sup> This transcription has been made from the original journal of William T. Rodgers, Midshipman, USN. The journal was presented to the Naval Historical Foundation by Mrs. Clement Y. Randle of Washington, D. C., and Mrs. Morgan Ashley of Crescent City, Florida, in 1955. An exhaustive search has failed to uncover any relationship between Midshipman Rodgers and the well-known Commodore John Rodgers.

she, a new ship, fitted out for a long cruise. Rodgers could not help but wonder about this new life he had chosen. Could it be possible that this was the normal life aboard a man-of-war? The deck cluttered with lines, boxes, bales, barrels, and other gear, and clattering with the chattering and thumping noises made by the carpenters and riggers, the shrilling pipes of the boatswain, the rattling whirl of wooden sheaves as stores were whipped aboard; all this must have presented an exciting, thrilling scene to Rodgers those first few days.

Undoubtedly he found out early that everything that went on was new and foreign to him in spite of the fact that he held a midshipman's commission, for again on a front flyleaf he made an entry:

'Tis the curse of noble minds oppressed  
 To compare what they *are* with what they *ought to be!*  
 REEFERS !!!'

How many of us have had that thought, expressed differently perhaps, pass through our minds after having made a poor turn in column formation or after having handed in that well-known day's work with the ship's position in twelve fathoms in Great Salt Lake?

Eventually order was created from apparent chaos for on 29 December 1813 *Peacock* hauled into the stream off the navy yard and the midshipmen took their own berths, having lived on board U.S.S. *Alert* during the fitting-out period. At last this was the Navy! A permanently assigned berth, a sea chest for stowing one's own gear and the ship getting more and more to look like a naval vessel instead of like the back room of a ship chandler's shop.

The entire crew was eventually gathered aboard and signed on the articles and in January 1814 Rodgers made another entry on a flyleaf of his journal:

The United States Sloop of War *Peacock*  
 Commanded by Lewis Warrington Esquire was  
*Launched* Monday 27 Sept 1813 at New York  
 Mounting twenty thirty-two pound carronades & two  
 Long Eighteens—carrying officers included, one  
 Hundred & 60 odd men — — Jany 1814 — New York

The lad must have had some leisure time for reading and cogitating or, more likely, Lewis Warrington, Esq., had had a little talk with the midshipmen for just below the last entry is inscribed:

*RICHES* have wings, *GRANDEUR* is a dream, the only



\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>2</sup> thus flower on earth is *VIRTUE*, the only  
lasting treasure, *TRUTH* ! - - - - -

VIRTUE  
INTEGRITY  
PERSEVERANCE

Sure guides to

WEALTH &  
HAPPINESS - - - - - W.T.R. - - - - -

Then on the evening of 12 March 1814 having previously received orders, *Peacock* weighed anchor and stood out to sea. The very next morning she was chased by three sail, apparently the ships of the enemy. But, being a new and clean-bottomed vessel and commanded by a very capable seaman, she soon ran them out of sight. Three days later in a storm she 'shipt a sea over the stern which stove the jolly boat to pieces.' Not a word in the journal about being seasick out in the Atlantic during these blustery March days!

There followed weeks of cruising down the coast of Florida and through the Bahama Keys stopping once at Amelia Island to discharge some powder, canvas & copper on board the United States gunboat *No. 165*, commanded by Samuel Dow.

*Peacock* frequently ran down and boarded vessels encountered at sea but they all proved to be friendly American or neutral vessels. Among them was the Russian ship *Joaquim* from Peppenbergh to St. Marys. One might wonder what sort of men commanded and manned a Russian ship of those days.

On 28 April at 6:00 A.M., *Peacock* sighted a sail on the weather beam standing to N.W. and gave chase to her. Now let Rodgers tell us the rest:

at 8 made chase out to be a Brig she bearing down for us - - at 25 minutes before 11 the Brig bearing down for us, hoisted *English Colors* and shortened sail—beat to quarters, cleared ship for action, made her out a Man of War - - at 5 minutes before 11 commenced the action with starboard guns within pistol shot—at 40 past 11 after a heavy and almost incessant cannonade our opponent struck her colors. She proved to be His Britannic Majesty's Sloop of War *Epervier*, Richard W. Wales Commander, of 16 32 pounders & 2 eighteens—& one hundred & 53 men, the damage we received was our Fore Yard severely wounded, nearly cut in two, some few back stays cut away & many & hot grape twined through our sails—& but *two men slightly wounded*. The enemy lost his Main Top Mast, his Fore Mast very badly wounded, his Larboard Fore rigging cut all away but one shroud - - many shot hole between wind & water - - three guns dismantled 12 killed & 13 wounded - - Not a shot struck our

<sup>2</sup> Illegible.

hull - -! One Hundred & Eighteen Thousand Dollars were found on board the prize which was removed to the *Peacock* - - W. Nicolion 1st Lieut Wm Greeves Midshipman—Wm Baldwin Masters Mate & myself & 12 men were put on board to carry our prize into a port in the United States after having rigged a spare Main Top mast & bent some new sails—We continued in company standing toward St Marys until Saturday April 30th when in sight of Amelia Island we parted co - - the *Peacock* being chased by a *Frigate* & we [*Epervier*] by another she being to leeward of us—about 7 same day in the evening the vessel in chase of us being dist about 4 miles sent her boats to reconnoiter us, but they on hearing that we were prepared to meet them pushed off & left us to make a port. Sunday May 1st boarded a Spanish schooner from Savannah bound to St Augustine who informed us of the U.S.S. *Adams* Capt Morris being at 'TYBEE LIGHT'—Next morning we came to anchor off TYBEE LIGHT near the U.S.S. *Adams*, in the afternoon of the next day arrived at Five Fathom Hole near Savannah—May 9th got the prize in safety up to the town—May 14th the citizens of Savannah gave a public dinner to Capt Warrington & his officers in celebration of the 'Glorious affair of the capture of His Britannic Majesty's Sloop of War *Epervier*'. The entertainment was conducted in an elegant style. Harmony & patriotism prevailed throughout.

Here in a few short terse sentences is related a firsthand account of the famous engagement between U.S.S. *Peacock* and H.M.S. *Epervier*. The ships were fairly evenly matched, man for man, and gun for gun, but the wide range in damage inflicted must be credited to the superior marksmanship of the American gunners resulting from the training insisted upon by Warrington.

The one-hundred-and-thirty-word entry in Rodgers' journal covered forty-five minutes of as furious and terrible a sea conflict as has been recorded in the annals of the War of 1812. What an opportunity for glorious phrases and countless words had James Fenimore Cooper, Richard Harding Davis, or Floyd Gibbons been aboard the little *Peacock* that day!

One would think that after having captured such a valuable and honorable prize that the prize crew would have been well satisfied to get her quickly and safely into a United States port. But no; those five officers and twelve men bared their teeth and snarled convincingly enough to deter an attack of an English frigate and then on the next day, off a well-blockaded coast, had the temerity to stop and board a strange vessel!

On the fourth of June *Peacock* put to sea from New York on her second cruise. The reader can now follow the adventures of Lewis Warrington, Esq., and his now full-fledged crew of veterans by skipping through Rodgers' journal. Routine and repetitive entries have been omitted.

1814

26 June Saw two sail to windward—gave chase—at night lost sight of the chase

- 3 July Boarded a Spanish Brig from Havannah to St Andora Spain. Same day at 1/2 past 10 AM made the Island of Flores one of the Azores
- 4 July Celebrated the Independence of our country between the Islands of Flores & Corvo
- 6 July While taking water at Santa Cruz saw a sail to the windward dismissed the shore boats made sail in chase—at 1/2 before 10 PM beat to quarters cleared ship for action—at 10 close aboard of the chase—hove to & boarded her—she proved to be the English Brig *Stranger* from Buenos Ayres to Greenock cargo hides & tallow—mounting 4 guns having thrown overboard 6 in a storm sometime previous—crew including officers 18 in no
- 7 July Burnt the prize
- 29 July At 1 PM captured Sloop *Fortitude* Capt Waters, Wife & infant child from Liverpool to London Cay, salt, crew 6 excluding Capt—took out prisoners & sank her

*USS PEACOCK in smelling distance of coal fires*

At 1/2 past 9 PM captured Brig *Venus*, Capt Kennedy from Bordeaux to Glasgow cargo wines, brandy & some few silks mounting 2 guns, crew including some officers in Lord Wellington's Army on their return home little expecting in such a place to receive their parole of honor from the 'Rebel Yankees'! One man an American entered on board the *Peacock*

One can sense the feeling of braggadocio within Rodgers as he penned his proof that this little American sloop was so close to the home fires of the enemy.

How many times did the Waters child start the evening off with the story of that time when the family was captured by Yankee pirates? And of course many a young English subaltern or sublieutenant must have been bored by the barrack-room tales of those Wellington officers!

- 30 July Captured Brig *Idiona*, Maxwell from Liverpool to Lisbon with salt—crew 13—Sent her to Liverpool as a cartel
- 31 July At 1/2 past 9 PM made 'Nigger Head' the southermost part of 'Erin where the Paddies grow'
- 1 Aug Off the River Shannon captured Sloop *Leith Packet* Capt Watson from Tenerife to Dublin cargo wine, crew 8 in no, took out some wine & sank her. At 1/2 past 8 captured Sloop *William & Ann* Capt McTess from Glasgow to Limerick with coal—crew 5—sank her
- 4 Aug Captured Sloop *Peggy & Jane*, Capt Duncan from Liverpool to Limerick with coal & crockery—crew 6 in no—took out some crockery for ships use & destroyed her
- 7 Aug Farther North than ever before 61 32
- 14 Aug Captured the Barque *William* Capt Whitway from St Andrews to Greenock cargo lumber—crew 19 in no—Threw her guns overboard & sent her in as a cartel

Excitement surely ran rife when *Idiona* and *William* arrived in port with seventy-eight crew members and the officers from Wellington's army. Lloyd's probably heard about the American 'Pirate' before the Admiralty. Both took appropriate action. Insurance rates soared and dispatch vessels scurried with orders to concentrate patrols in the northern waters. Without a doubt this concentration of vessels in home waters had an important effect on the ultimate progress of the war. Pressure was eased on the American coast. The concentration in Irish waters was futile.

- 21 Aug In Bay of Biscay. At  $\frac{1}{2}$  before 5 saw a sail on weather beam at 5 saw another sail ahead—as good luck would have it we gave chase to the one ahead—at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 9 neared the chase & shortened sail, she looking rather wicked—at 10 beat to quarters & cleared away for action— $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10 boarded—chase proved to be the English Brig *Bellona*, Langlois from Getti in the Mediterranean to Hamburg of 6 guns—crew 15 in no—cargo wine, brandy, olives & verdigrease—took out some articles verdigrease & etc. Three men entered on board of us one American one Dutchman (Forester!) & one Italian—same day made Cape 'Furianna'

Apparently the recruiting standards of our Navy in those days were somewhat simplified compared to those of the present day. *Peacock* had picked up four more hands. She had also picked up some 'verdigrease & etc.'!

- 24 Aug At  $\frac{1}{2}$  before 11 saw a sail to leeward gave chase—at  $\frac{1}{2}$  before 12 beat to quarters—at midnight boarded—chase proved to be another prize the Brig *Triton* Capt Harvey from St Johns to Lisbon—cargo of fish—crew 7 in no—sank her.

After the long voyage from St. Johns the unfortunate Captain Harvey was captured within a few hours of his destination!

- 29 Aug At  $\frac{1}{2}$  before meridian made *Land* coast of Africa in Lat  $31^{\circ} 3' N$   
 1 Sept Ran in towards the Port of Naos of Canary Islands. In the Port lay three English Merchantmen who looked rather Blue on seeing the 'Yankee' Gridiron flying so near them—but they were protected from capture by the neutrality of the port  
 3 Sept While running for Puerta Ventura captured Brig *Duck* of 2 guns Capt Stevenson from Porto Babras (the Port we intend to make) to Teneriffe cargo Barilla—crew 13 in no including the English Consul Resident at Porto Cabras—sank her  
 6 Oct This day made *Land* coast of Surinam (South America) Lat  $6^{\circ} 11'$  Long  $53^{\circ} 36'$  of the River Moroin (?) dividing Cayeunal from Surinam  
 10 Oct In AM Denizen Baldwin (Masters Mate) departed this life after a short but sever illness. He died of a Bilious fever  
 11 Oct At  $\frac{1}{2}$  past Meridian committed his remains to the deep!

- 23 Feb Lowered stern boat to ascertain the current but found none—Lat 1 32 N Long 20 9—rigged out a lower studding sail alongside and permitted all hands to bathe—a few minutes after the crew & officers had left the water a *Shark* about eight feet long was discovered alongside, he was immediately baited & caught, in the opening of this voracious creature a live *sucker fish* was found in his maw together with pieces of paper, rags etc which had been thrown overboard a few hours previous
- 27 Feb Monday—This day crossed the equinoctial line and as 'Dad Neptune' did not think proper to favor us with a visit a double allowance of liquor was served out to all hands that the already initiated Sons of Neptune might drink his health and those not initiated might invoke his special protection—Neptune heard us—was satisfied and ordered Old Borias to give us a breeze as a token of his acknowledgement of us—12 o'clock 00 31.5
- 13 Mar At 5.30 AM saw a sail bearing SSW gave chase—made her out a Brig—2 PM it being calm the chase distant about 4 miles sent two boats to board her—at 3 boats boarded her—proved to be the Portuguese Brig *Aurora* from Pernambuco coast of Brazil bound to Anquilla Mozambique & thence on a slaving voyage
- 24 Mar Standing off the Island of Tristan De Acunha—7.20 in the morning sent a boat ashore to see about watering & get necessities for ship—9 the boat returned & brought a report of an action having been fought yesterday off the Island between a Ship & a Brig probably the *Hornet* & also reported that the Brig *Macedonian* Capt Blakeley had been at the Island & given an account that the U.S. Frigate *President* Com Decatur had been captured by three Frigates when three days out—this *ship* we expect to find here.
- 25 Mar 9.30 *Tom Bowline* made a signal for a strange sail & in a few minutes she was seen bearing NNW—10.30 beat to quarters & cleared ship for action—from her signals soon made her out to be the U.S.S. *Hornet*, Capt Biddle which ship parted from us in chase on 27 Jany.
- 26 March At 5 PM the *Hornet* came under our stern and gave us three cheers which was returned by three from our ship & was answered by another—sent a boat on board of her which was returned with the news that she had on 23rd in sight of Tristan D'Acunha captured after an action of 25 minutes H.B.M. Brig *Penguin* Capt Dickenson of 19 guns—1st Lt Conner & with but one man killed—Capt Dickenson of the *Penguin* was killed with the Boatswain & about 15 men & 2 Midshipmen & 30 men wounded
- 13 April At 10 PM took our departure from Tristan D'Acunha the Island bearing SW by W 12 miles dist—having cruised here for 23 days—hopes of the arrival of the U.S. Frigate *President* Com Decatur but from her not joining us I fear the story related by Capt Blakeley of the Store Ship *Macedonian* will prove true.

Rodgers won't give up on the possibility of *President* with Commodore Decatur coming into port. This in spite of the fact that a United States naval officer had left an account of *President's* capture at Tristan

D' Acunha. It was hard for any young naval officer to believe that Decatur had been taken, even by three frigates!

23 April Eastward of the *Cape of Good Hope* Lat 34 29 at noon—At 5.10 PM it blowing fresh, under snug sail, while in the act of wearing ship, Alexander Gott a Marine was knocked overboard by the gaff, immediately lowered the boat & being a good swimmer after being 15 minutes overboard he was picked up by the boat quite exhausted

The officer of the watch surely had the utmost confidence in the boat crew. Just a month before this incident they had manned two boats and had rowed approximately four miles in one hour. Now, after man overboard they had lowered away and rescued the marine in about fifteen minutes.

27 April At 7.10 AM saw a sail bearing SE by S—made all sail in chase—about 4 PM made the strange sail to be a very large ship—probably a *fat* East India Man—a good recompense for all of our lost time (*if taken*)—at 5.20 PM being dark lost sight of her bearing SSE—cleared ship for action that we might be ready for her in case a breeze should spring up during the night

28 April 1.45 PM being distant from her 6½ miles she hauled her wind to N&E and showed *two tiers of guns*—still our anxiety to finger English *dollars* & English *goods* under the supposition of her being an East India Man, induced us to run over to her—2.30 being about 4 miles from the chase, made her out to all intents and purposes an *English Line of Battle Ship*, not being so solicitious of further acquaintance we hauled our wind to the NW—having chased her for 32 hours & she in her turn gave us chase—4 PM leaving the chase—she having hoisted St George's Ensign, an Admiral's flag & various other signals which were equally disregarded

30 April Sunday—Stiff breezes, cloudy & some little rain—No muster—Nobody on *Drs list*—Ninety seven days out—No prizes—short allowance—*poor fare*—but still have strong hopes and good spirits—natural & artificial—Wind SW—Lat 38 27 S Long 37 48 E

16 May At 7 AM made the Island of Amsterdam bearing SE by E Dist 20 miles—out cutter & sent her ashore—at 1.15 PM the boat returned with a letter found enclosed in a bottle from Capt Blakeley of the Store Brig *Macedonian* which had been at this Island about 20 days ago—This letter confirms the account heard at Tristan D' Acunha of the *President* having had an action shortly after leaving New York—no more than probable that she is captured. The *Penguin* chased the *Macedonian* 190 miles from Tristan D' Acunha

Rodgers still won't give in completely on the idea of *President* being taken. The letter left in a bottle by Captain Blakeley gave a full account of the action.

Blakeley must have been a good sailor to escape from an English naval brig with a store ship.

- 9 June At 3 PM made the Island of *Java* bearing North dist 15 miles—Sultry throughout the day with heavy dews at night—thunder lightening & rain—great number of natives on shore—Lat 8 S Long 108 55 E
- 11 June Sunday—5 men on Drs list—excessively sultry throughout the day—during the night thunder lightening & rain—caught a shark today on which we dined & tho the flesh was *rank* being *fresh meat* we esteemed it a great luxury
- 13 June 8.15 saw a sail bearing NNW thus are our hopes again raised—10 lost sight of *Java Head* bearing SEbyE—at Meridian *Sumatra* bore NbyE—nearing the chase which proves to be a large ship
- 13 June At 2 PM the chase tacked & stood for us & hoisted English Colors—beat to quarters & shortened sail & cleared ship for action—at 2.30 fired Long Tom at her—at which she down her colors & hove to—sent a boat on board—she proved to be the English East India Company Ship *Union* 6 guns, formerly the *Telegraph* of New York now of *Calcutta* & from there having touched at *Pulo Penang* & other places on the coast of *Sumatra* bound for *Batavia* for convoy for England—cargo peppers, opium, gum Benjamin or Benzoin, raw silk, saffron, piece goods, wines etc—the most valuable we have yet taken—She had some gold worth about \$5000.00 !!!—sent boats on board to remove the valuable goods etc etc on board—Kept prize in co during the night & the next day stood in for land—Capt Hall crew of *Lascars* & *Malays*
- 16 June At anchor receiving goods etc etc from the Prize—3.30 received the prisoners on board—4.30 set fire to the *Union*—she burned upwards of 12 hours

What a strange sight this must have been to the natives! And what a feeling of exultation must have beaten in the hearts of this intrepid crew as they watched this flaming defiance to the might of England. This lone, tiny, American vessel flaunting the flag of the former English colony and destroying a ship of the powerful East India Company in waters that for years had been known as the East India Company Lake!

Just one hundred years later another tiny vessel was to flaunt a defiance against the might of Britain in these same waters, Captain Felix Von Luckner in *Sea Eagle*.

- 21 June Beat up to the channel between *Java* & *Princess Island* & at 10 o'clock came to anchor in *New Bay* in 8 fathoms sandy bottom
- 22 June Employed watering & overhauling rigging—at 3.30 saw a sail working up the Straits—up anchor & gave chase—5 fired & brought to the chase—she proved to be the English Ship *Venus* Capt Boone from *Isle of France* to *Batavia* in ballast—having a few articles which proved to be of great use, such as, shoes, stockings, handkerchiefs, razors, combs & about 5000 \$ in

- 'Hard Dollars' stowed away in barrels of pork—crew 56 Lascars—9 anchored in 25 faths off 'First Point' [Java Shore] the prize in co
- 24 June Sent crew of *Union* on board *Venus* intending to give her up as a cartel to go to Batavia
- 25 June Gave crew liberty to go ashore & wash clothes etc etc—shared the money found in the prizes reserving the half for the Government—by the *Venus* we hear that a Treaty of Peace has been made but do not know the terms—tis rather doubtful
- 28 June Anchored at 6.15 PM in 15 faths muddy bottom near Anjer Point—6.15 AM saw a sail bearing West, weighed & made sail in chase—at 7 AM a great number of Malay Proas came alongside bringing fowls, turtle, cocoanuts, yams, birds etc for trade which they sell very cheap—fowls 30 for a dollar & other things in proportion—Came up with a strange sail & brought her to & proved to be English Ship *Brio de Mais* Capt Grover from Isle de France & Batavia in ballast— crew 37 Lascars—She informed us a Treaty of Peace had been signed by the Prince Regent but hostilities were not to cease till ratified by our President which from the terms will or never ought to be the case, terms—no fishing off Grand Banks, no trade East of Cape of Good Hope—! ! if such is the case, we are the last ship East of the Cape & so we will make the most of our time—took prisoners out & destroyed the prize—5.30 PM saw a sail to which we gave chase—she proved to be the cartel *Venus*—put the crew of the *Brio de Mais* on board of her & permitted her to proceed—from the last ship we took about 9500 \$
- 1 July 1.45 PM saw a sail a ship/while beating through the Straits/at anchor in Anjer Roads—2.15 saw another Ship & a Brig both at anchor—2.30 the Brig weighed & stood out of the Road towards us—the ships showed Portuguese & Dutch colors the Brig showed none—5.15 on nearing the Brig & our showing English colors she sent a boat with 2 officers/ her master & a Lieut of Marines/ the Master Intendent also came off at the same time from the Fort under the idea of our being an English Sloop of War—on being informed of *their mistake* they were ordered below—5.30 came up with the Brig & on discovering his error the Capt of the Brig sung out 'There is peace with America' but on being ordered to haul down his flag/as a token/ he refused, on which we fired a broadside into him which he returned & struck his colors—she proved to be the Honorable East Indies Company's Cruiser *Nautilus* of 16 guns, bound from Batavia to Calcutta with dispatches & 30,000 dollars in specie & copper to the value of 100,000 \$ ! !—Her Commander *Boyce*, first Lieut, Lieut of Sepoys/Marines/ & 5 men wounded & 6 men killed—her rigging a good deal cut—we received no damage a few shot holes only in our sails—took possession of the prize—the Master Intendent informed us that a Peace had actually taken place & that he could produce proof. 7 took out part of the prisoners—9.50 anchored in 12 faths muddy bottom Anjer Point bearing NE. [Marginal note in journal—'Into & over this Brig we fired a salute of 17 guns'] 7 AM sent the Master Intendent ashore to bring off proof sufficient to cause us to liberate the Brig—9 we sent



- the prisoners back to the Brig—10.30 the M.I. returned bringing off sufficient evidence of a Peace having been ratified on 18th Feby 1815 in consequence of which we will give up the Brig—thus are our bright prospects blighted. In this Brig an American called John Dean alias John Crow was found & fighting against his country—he was brought on board to be taken to America for trial
- 2 July Sunday—at anchor—3 gave the *Nautilus* up to the Master in consequence of yesterday's news with orders to run into Anjer Roads—4 the *Nautilus* weighed & stood into Anjer Roads—Mustered ships company—4 men on Drs list—our Capt informed us of Peace having been made—in consequence of which we shall run for the Isle of France or Bourbon to get Bread etc etc—in the meantime to be on half allowance—sultry day—the thermometer on deck at 1 PM stood at 92—at 8 AM the Portuguese Ship in the Roads got underway & stood down the Straits bound to Rio Janeiro—9 weighed & made sail to SWd *HOMEWARD BOUND* !!
- 4 July Fine breeze—& cloudy—Lat 7 49 S Long 100 36 E—Since taking the *Union* & on our passage up the Straits we fared 'sumptuous by every day'—every variety man could desire—mutton—turtle soup—fowl—fresh pork—coconuts—yams, potatoes, pumpkins, ducks, coffee, sugar & many other luxuries—From the Commanding Officer at Anjer Point we hear that General Jackson has beaten the English at New Orleans—their loss great & that the *President* Frigate has been captured & had arrived at Halifax.
- 13 July Commenced squally & a heavy swell—soon after Meridian it coming a blow—& shortened sail—5.40 it blowing fresh going at a rate of nine knots *Edward Rodgers* seaman, while in the act of getting in the royal steersail booms of the Foretop Gallant Yard, was precipitated headlong overboard & tho every exertion was made to save him he was unfortunately drowned—'In the midst of Life we are in Death'—During the night it blew a Gale from SE accompanied with very violent squalls & a very heavy swell—got the ship snug
- 16 July Sunday—Mustered ships company—4 men on Drs list—light trade—this day paid the crew—the short allowance money for this cruise amounting to 11 dollars
- 27 July Thursday—at anchor St Denis Bourbon Island—Spent the day ashore—Dined at the Hotel—well pleased with French dinners & Vin Du Bordeaux—with two or three words of French in mouth & Spanish L'Argent in fist we meet with every attention we could wish. We read accounts of Bonaparte having again resumed the reins of government and driven poor Louis from the Kingdom—Viva L Empereur if his aim is annoy the British
- 4 Aug At anchor St Paul Bourbon Island—gave half the crew liberty to go on shore—after paying their *vows to Bacchus* they returned in *good trim—vim—vivemus—vivamus* !!!
- 6 Aug Sunday—pleasant—part of the crew on liberty—Sent daily about a dozen men on liberty till all had had their turn ashore
- 25 Sept! At 7 PM John Scott seaman fell from the foretop on the forecastle & providentially only with the fracture of the left knee pan

- 28 Sept This day at noon the suns lower limb was vertical, the declination 1 48 corrected—What is the Lat? What is done with the semi-diameter & dip? there being no refraction—the Long per acct 25 51 W & per lunar at 9 AM 25 44 W—Can the suns centre be higher than 90 degrees?

Well, young Rodgers did have a problem here! The navigation text books of those days gave full explanations of how to solve this 'under the sun' sight but of course not having much actual practice Rodgers probably had some difficulty in applying the proper signs to the factors involved. He probably even followed the sun over the meridian and recorded an altitude of more than ninety degrees as has many a modern navigator.

- 15 Oct Sunday—Spoke the English Brig *Speculation* from Quebec to Jamaica out 29 days—gave us papers containing accounts of Decatur's having been successful up the Straits—of Peace with Algiers & *miserable dicta*—of Bonapartes having given himself up a prisoner to the English—*tempora militant?*—5 men on Drs list—cloudy weather with frequent squalls & rain—this day crossed the Tropic of Cancer 4th time—Lat 24 10 N Long 61 5 W
- 19 Oct Saw two schooners & 1 Brig standing to SEd—brought to & boarded the Brig—she proved to be the *Mary* of & from Philadelphia bound to St Croix out 14 days all well—got some papers—Lat 29 1 N Long 65 12— from her they inform us of the particulars of Bonapartes fall & of being sent to *St Helena*
- 30 Oct At 7 AM made the *LAND*—bearing West—10 got pilot on board & beat up to the town & at 5 PM anchored off the Battery— in 6 faths—went ashore & FOUND ALL FRIENDS WELL!
- 8 Nov Took the ship to the Navy Yard—unbent sails & dismantled her—at the Yard lay the *Java* & *Hornet*—discharged those of our men whose times were expired
- 18 Nov Applied for a furlough intending to enter the Merchant service—
- 27 Nov Recd from the Navy Department a furlough for one year dated Nov 24th 1815 -- With a heavy heart took leave of my shipmates with whom for two years I had lived on terms of sincere friendship & with whom I had 'braved the battles storms & tempests fury' -- we part perhaps ne'er more to meet on this sublinary service ! ---
- 30 Nov Left New York on a visit to my relatives & friends in New Jersey & pennsylvania -- While in Pennsylvania visiting the scenes where first I knew happiness where my first impressions were received & my first knowledge of myself obtained -- the pleasant shades & verdant fields where breathing the pure air of innocence I felt I was not born for myself alone ----

William Tennant Rodgers, United States Navy, Midshipman, returned from his year of service in the merchant service in 1816 and served intermittently in our then decadent Navy between long periods of leave of

absence until April 1827 when he resigned as a lieutenant to which rank he had been promoted in January 1825.

*Peacock* served faithfully for many more years in the Navy. Under Commodore James Biddle and later Commodore David Porter she operated in the pirate-infested waters of the West Indies. Later, from Peruvian waters she sailed under command of Captain Thomas ap Catesby Jones to the Galapagos and Marquesas Islands and on to Tahiti being the first American man-of-war to visit that island. Captain Jones assisted in quelling disturbances between the natives of Tahiti and Honolulu and the crews of the whalers before he returned to Callao via the Gulf of California. In 1832 *Peacock* was on the China coast and at Batavia in the East Indies, the scene of her victorious cruise during the late war. In 1835 she was stranded on an island near the Arabian coast but managed to free herself by throwing overboard some of her guns and stores. In 1838 as a unit of the Wilkes exploring expedition en route to the Antarctic she again visited some of the familiar ports in the Azores and South America. The following year she identified land in latitude 67° south and barely escaped disaster in the ice. Late that year she began the journey home by way of Sydney, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and the Hawaiian Islands. 'In 1841 while making a survey of the American North West Coast she was lost off Cape Disappointment.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Dudley W. Knox, *A History of the United States Navy* (New York, 1936).

*Commander R. W. Mindte's introduction to salt water was in U.S.S. Seattle, last of our Navy's large coal-burning vessels. Various types of unbroken sea duty followed for nearly twenty-five years, including duty as skipper of tuna clippers running from San Diego to the Galapagos Islands fishing grounds. He has been a keen student of Naval history for many years and has written many articles and stories on that subject for leading periodicals. Subsequent to writing this article Commander Mindte was retired from the Naval service for physical reasons. He resides in Rockville, Maryland.*



The Steamship Historical Society of America announces the publication of *Advertisements of Lower Mississippi River Steamboats, 1812-1920*. This basic reference work in American steamboating reproduces newspaper advertisements mentioning over 1,000 steamboats. Leonard V. Huber, the compiler, has also supplied a useful and comprehensive index. Orders will be accepted at \$4.50 per copy until 1 September 1959 and \$5.00 after publication.



BIOGRAPHICAL BRIEF

Willaim Tennant RODGERS, Midshipman.

United States Navy

Born in New York state. Date of birth not found.

- 9 Nov 1813 Midshipman
- 13 Jan 1825 Lieutenant. Examination for promotion successfully passed in June 1821.
- 21 April, 1827 Resigned from Navy.

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The following material relating to RODGERS is in the files of National Archives, Washington, D.C.:

- 20 Nov 1813 Letter from Sec. Navy to William T. Rodgers, New York, forwarding warrant as Midshipman dated the 9th inst. and directing him to report to Captain Lewis Warrington for service in the U.S.S. PEACOCK
- 26 Nov 1813 Letter from Midshipman Rodgers acknowledging receipt of warrant and orders
- For the capture of the EPERVIER, Congress on 21 Oct, 1814, approved a resolution to present each officer of the PEACOCK with a silver medal and each Midshipman with a sword.
- 18 Nov 1815 Letter from Midshipman Rodgers to Sec. Navy requesting a furlough for one year in order to make a few voyages in the Merchant Service
- 24 Nov 1815 Furlough granted by the Navy Department for 12 months
- 13 Dec 1816 Letter from Midshipman Rodgers, New York, to Sec. Navy reporting his return from sea in the Merchant Service and his availability for Naval service
- 20 Jan 1817 Letter from Midshipman Rodgers, New York, stating that having heard nothing from the Navy Department and fearing that his letter might have miscarried, is reporting himself again
- 3 Apr 1817 Letter from Sec. Navy to Midshipman Rodgers directing him to proceed to New York and report himself to Captain Evans, Commandant, Navy Yard, N.Y. for duty on board the Brig Boxer, Lieut. Comdr. John Porter

1817

In the summer of ~~1817~~, the BOXER, Commanded by Cdr. Porter, sailed for the Mediterranean carrying out Thomas D. Anderson, U.S. Consul to Tunis. She returned to the United States with the American Squadron in November 1817.

- 28 Jan 1818 Ltr from Sec. Navy to Midshipman Rodgers directing him to proceed to New York and report to Captain Samuel Evans for duty at the Navy Yard under his command.
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- 23 May 1818 Letter from Midshipman Rodgers, New York, to Benjamin Homans, Navy Department stating that 10 days ago he had written to the Sec. of the Navy for orders to the GUERRIERE and not having received them, is taking the liberty of requesting Homans to use his influence to obtain them for him
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- 7 May, 1818 Letter from Midshipman Rodgers to Sec. Navy stating that understanding the U.S.S. GUERRIERE is fitting for a cruise, he is taking the liberty to request orders
- 20 June 1818 Midshipman Rodgers, New York, from the Sec. Navy directing him to proceed to Boston and report to Commodore William Bainbridge for duty on board U.S.S. MACEDONIAN, Captain John Downes
- 25 July 1821 Ltr from Sec. Navy to Midshipman Rodgers, New York, granting permission to remain in New York until after the examinations in October next.
- 26 Dec 1821 Letter from Sec. Navy to Midshipman Rodgers, New York, directing him to report to Captain Samuel Evans for duty on the New York station
- 6 Mar 1822 Letter from Sec. Navy to Midshipman Rodgers directing him to proceed to Boston and report to Captain Hull for duty on board the U.S.S. MACEDONIAN
- 20 Mar 1822 Letter from Sec. Navy to Midshipman Rodgers notifying him that the above orders were revoked and to report for duty to Captain Samuel Evans at New York
- 20 Dec 1822 Letter from Sec. Navy to Midshipman Rodgers, New York, directing him to proceed to Norfolk and report to Captain D. Porter for duty in the squadron under his command.
- 31 Oct 1823 Furlough granted for 12 months
- 13 Oct 1824 Leave of absence for 12 months extended

13 Jan 1825 Promoted to Lieutenant                   Lieutenant

26 Oct 1825 Letter from Sec. Navy to ~~WILLIAM~~ Rodgers, Mill-  
stone, New Jersey, granting 2 months furlough -  
services cannot be longer dispensed with

7 Jul 1826 Letter from Sec. Navy to Lieutenant Rodgers, Mill-  
stone, New Jersey, leave of absence for 3 months

17 Oct 1826 Leave of absence extended for 6 months

31 Dec 1826 Leave of absence extended for 6 months

17 Apr 1827 Letter from Lieutenant Rodgers to Sec. Navy  
submitting resignation

21 Apr 1827 Letter from Sec. Navy to William T. Rodgers, Esq.,  
Millstone, New Jersey, stating resignation as a  
Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy is accepted.

Note: The above data furnished by National Archives







