

**RECORD GROUP 217, LETTERS SENT AND RECEIVED BY THE
ACCOUNTANT OF THE NAVY, 1795-1815, AND LETTERS RECEIVED BY
THE FOURTH AUDITOR, 1795-1809, NATIONAL ARCHIVES**

Accountant Of The Navy

From Carpenter Jacob Libby, Boston, MA, 3 Feb 1800:

"..I entered on board the Frigate Constitution, on the 10th June 1798, & my year expired on the 10th of June 1799.

"I engaged directly on daily pay, in superintending the carpenters, caulkers, & black smiths work, also finishing a new fore mast, collecting materials, stores &c for the Ships use for his cruise...

"...On board the Ship while at Sea, I built two cutters- In the West Indias [sic] I fished the foremast to secure her passage to Boston after it was condemned.

"I now Sir offer my further Services to the U States as a foreman in a Navy Yard."

From George Higginson, Boston, MA, to Navy Accountant Thomas Turner, 12 Sep 1800:

Mentions "Charles Leonard a lad who died on board the Ship Constitution..."

From Jesse Defield, New York, NY, to Navy Accountant Thomas Turner, 13 Oct 1800:

"On the 28th May 1799 I entered on board the Constitution frigate Capt. Talbot & remained on board untill I was sent to this port in her prize the Sandwich which arrived about the end of last may [sic]- I shipped as an ordinary seaman at 14 dollars per month- and have received for my services one months advance pay at Boston, Slops of the Purser to the amount of about 12 or 15 Dollars and on my arrival here of Mr. Watsons [sic] 42 Dolls. and my discharge." Wishes the rest of his pay. Signed with a "X."

From Captain Silas Talbot, USS CONSTITUTION, to SecNav, 17 Oct 1800:

"I have this moment received a letter from Mr. James S Deblois Purser of this Ship. he [sic] states as you will be pleased to observe by the enclosed extract from his letter to me, that difficulties are interposed to the Settlement of his accounts; owing to my having ordered the wages of John Handley [\$135.11] paid to his mother after he had run from the Ship at the Cape a few days before the Constitution sailed for the Continent--

"A few days after the ship arrived at Boston; The [sic] mother of John Handley waited on me in Company with some other persons her friends: The object of her visit was to persuade me to believe that she was the mother of John Handley, and to obtain his wages, which she before had been always in the Habit of receiving, & could not well sustain herself and children without-- The woman gave me unquestionable proof that she was the mother of Handley and her behaviour was such as to convince me, that she was a decent and Virtuous woman tho' poor; that she had to struggle hard in life to support six

younger Children than her son in question, and she enforced her application with a flood of tears, and shew'd much anxiety on the Occasion, as it appeared that Handley was not of Lawfull age when he entered, and as he had served about forty days above the twelve month's for which he had engaged to serve, and perhaps he conceived that he was arbitrarily held to serve any longer I could not forbear gratifying the poor widow in that of paying to her the wages of her Son-- I confess however that I thought I was authorized to decide in such cases..." If disallowed, Talbot will remit the amount he paid and not leave Deblois holding the bag.

To "the Purser of the Constitution," 8 Aug 1801:

"You are to Consider the 4th of August 1801 as the date of entry of Lieut [Jacob] Jones, on the books of the Constitution..."

Fourth Auditor

From Navy Agent Stephen Higginson, Boston, MA, to Thomas Turner, 8 Feb 1800:

"We are now momentarily [sic] applied to by the wives of Seamen on board the Ship Constitution for the half pay of their husbands - the powers state but one month to be due on the first inst, but these women all expected to receive one quarters payt [sic] at this time - having been told they should by their husbands & many of them as they say by Capt Talbot & the purser-- Our practice here has invariably been to pay quarterly only - as it does us much trouble & is full as well for them - accordingly we put them off to the 1st of April when by the powers one quarters half pay will be due-- But we are inclined to think that there is some mistake & that in fact one quarter expired the 1st inst - as the crew of that Ship have been on board five months.- You probably know Sir - whether we are right in this conjecture or not & we wish to enquire of you if the error may not be overlooked (should it be an error) & whether we may not now pay three months half pay on the powers issued from that vessel - the holders of them are all needy & at this inclement season particularly miss the money..."

From Purser James Deblois, Boston, MA, 26 Jan 1802:

Forwards a list of "all the Officers & men that belong to the Frigt Constitution," with the advances he provided them. The list: Lieutenant Isaac Hull, Sailing Master Nathaniel Hariden [sic], Surgeon Peter St. Medard, Purser J. S. Deblois, Chaplain Noahdiah Morris, Boatswain Thomas Smith, Midshipmen Louis Alexis, Sybrant Van Schaick, Charles Morris, John Goodwin, Henry Wadsworth, and John Davis, Acting Midshipman John Downs, and Cook John Lewis.

[NOTE: These notes/excerpts were taken from microfilm ordered by another researcher and do not reflect a complete review of the original documents.]

The Captain's Clerk
1989, TGM