

Note: The Charleston was financed by private subscriptions pledged by the citizens of Charleston and South Carolina. Her first commanding officer was Captain George Cross. Her purser Peter Trezevant and other crew members were citizens of the town and state. Of interest the ship served in the 1812, Mexican and Civil Wars. In 1865 the ship entered the defeated city of Charleston as part of the federal occupying force no longer crewed by South Carolinians.

Description & History of USN Frigate John Adams. George Cross was captain [brother-in-law to Peter] during quasi war with France. Peter Farquhar Trezevant was purser at same time

More about Peter Trezevant Purser and his troubles with the Navy Department can be found in the book: **AGentlemanly and honorable profession: the creation of the U. S. Naval ...by Christopher Mckee**

http://books.google.com/books?id=btvx0_jkAnMC&pg=PA387&lpg=PA387&dq=%22Peter+Trezevant%22+%22John+Adams%22&source=bl&ots=Q2hsmfuGqh&sig=zEOvjBd3OPVD3ojW2WrnYyW_QTE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=Kh4vT4WvMYjaiQLdsMnKCG&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Peter%20Trezevant%22%20%22John%20Adams%22&f=false

Sailing Warships of the US Navy
By Donald L. Canney
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http://books.google.com/books?id=JEkV5RyAIKMC&pg=PA57&lpg=PA57&dq=USN+Frigate+John+Adams&source=bl&ots=Hv9oGr-kAl&sig=6tFH_C_IK5Ublvlvcl2DutpDHG0&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=5&ct=result#PPA56,M1

Trezevant, Peter.
Purser, 10 March, 1799. Discharged 18 November, 1801, under *Peace Establishment Act*

Cross, George.

Appointed Captain, 10 September, 1798. Discharged under *Peace Establishment Act*, date not known.
Naval Historical Center, 805 Kidder Breeze St SE, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060

<http://www.history.navy.mil/books/callahan/>

From [Dictionary of American Fighting Ships, Volume 3](#), pages 521-523,

http://www.hazegray.org/danfs/frigates/j_adams.htm

Story of the Frigate Charleston

Frigate

tons. 544;
length. 139' (b.p.);
beam. 32';
depth 16' 4";
complement 220;
armament. 24 12-pdrs., 6 24-pdrs.

The first *John Adams* was built for the United States by the people of Charleston, S.C., under contract to Paul Prichard and launched in the latter's shipyard some 3 miles from Charleston 5 June 1799. The new frigate, Captain George Cross in command, sailed on or about 1 October for Cayenne, French Guiana, to operate against French privateers based at that port. Before she arrived Cayenne, the British had captured Surinam making the French base in Guiana unsafe for privateers and prompting Captain Cross to sail on to Guadeloupe to join her squadron.

Early in January 1800, she began her effective operations against the French taking an unidentified lugger of San Juan, P.R. and recapturing brig *Dolphin*. She retook brigs *Hannibal* 22 March and *Atlantic* the next day, both prizes of French privateer *Le President Tout*. French privateer schooner *La Jason* surrendered to her 3 April and in May she retook schooners

Dispatch and William. Sometime in the late spring or summer she recaptured American brig Olive, and on 13 June she took French schooner Decade.

These victories punctuated and highlighted the invaluable, but less glamorous, day-to-day duty of patrolling the West Indies and protecting American shipping continued through the late summer and fall.

John Adams was dispatched to the United States 5 December escorting a convoy. She was placed in ordinary in Charleston in mid-January 1801, and in late June she sailed to Washington where she was laid up. The remarkable success of the frigate was representative of the new Navy which her namesake, President John Adams, had called into being to protect the growing and vital commerce of the young nation.

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As the "quasi-war" with France drew to a close, President Adams could report on the Navy to Congress with pride: "The present Navy of the United States, called suddenly into existence by a great national emergency, has raised us in our own esteem; and by the protection afforded to our commerce has effected to the extent of our expectations the objects for which it was created."

Peace with France freed the Navy for operations against Barbary corsairs who had been preying on American shipping in the Mediterranean. A small squadron under Commodore Dale sent out in 1801 for operations against Tripoli, was followed in 1802 by a much stronger force under Commodore Richard V. Morris. John Adams commanded by Captain John Rodgers, sailed from Hampton Roads 22 October to join Commodore Morris. After escort duty from Gibraltar to Malaga and Minorca, she finally caught up with Commodore Morris at Malta 5 January 1803. She operated with the squadron until 3 May when she received orders to cruise independently off Tripoli. Upon arriving off Tripoli, John Adams boldly attacked the forts and the gunboats anchored under their protection. Several days later she captured 20-gun Tripolitan cruiser Meshouda. Reinforced by NEW YORK, and Enterprise, she engaged a flotilla of enemy gunboats off Tripoli 22 May sending them scurrying back into the harbor to safety. Five days later with the added support of Adams, a sister frigate also named for President John Adams-the squadron again bested a group of pirate gunboats.

One of the most important victories of the war came 21 June when John Adams and Enterprise captured a 22-gun vessel belonging to Tripoli thus weakening that state sufficiently to allow the squadron to turn its attention to Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco, which were threatening U.S. commerce in the Western Mediterranean. Throughout the summer and early fall John Adams operated in that quarter before returning home with New York.

Meanwhile, Commodore Edward Preble, who had led a powerful fleet to the Mediterranean, vigorously pressed the fight. In August and September 1804 he made a series of major attacks on Tripoli. As the second of these blows was being delivered 7 August, John Adams, now under Captain Isaac Chauncey, arrived on the scene deeply laden with stores. Her boats participated in a reconnaissance patrol on the night of 18 August, and 6 days later she slipped in close to the city for an intensive 4-hour bombardment. Two nights later during a similar attack, an enemy

shot sank one of John Adams' boats, killing three men and wounding a fourth, as the American Squadron severely punished Tripoli with over 700 well- directed rounds which took effect within the city. After a fifth attack had been successfully completed 3 September, bad weather interrupted operations and John Adams sailed to Syracuse with other ships of the squadron.

Three months later she sailed for New York with Commodore Preble, arriving 26 February 1805. After a third Mediterranean cruise from May to November, she was laid up in ordinary.

The outbreak of the War of 1812 found her undergoing repairs at Boston whence she was hurried to New York to have the work completed. There the British blockade and a critical shortage of seamen kept her in a laid-up status until early 1814. She finally sailed under a flag of truce carrying peace commissioners Henry Clay and Jonathan Russell to Europe and arrived Wargo Island, Norway, 14 April. She returned to the United States 5 September bringing dispatches from the American commissioners at Ghent.

Meanwhile, the Barbary pirates, taking advantage of the American Navy's preoccupation with the British fleet during the War of 1812, had resumed operations against American merchantmen in the Mediterranean. Fortunately the treaty of peace signed on Christmas Eve 1814 freed United States men-of-war for renewed attention to this chronic trouble spot. In the autumn of 1815 John Adams arrived in the Mediterranean to assist frigates United States and Constellation and sloops Eric and Ontario in maintaining peace and order in the area after strong squadrons under Commodores Decatur and Bainbridge had induced the Barbary princes to honor their treaty commitments. Early in 1816 she returned home with dispatches.

Pirates were also active in the West Indies at this time. Taking advantage of the chaos attendant upon the dissolution of Spain's American empire, lawless vessels from many nations preyed on neutral as well as Spanish commerce in the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, and along the storied Spanish Main. For the next few years John Adams was busy fighting buccaneers. On 22 December 1817 she demanded and received the surrender of Amella Island, off the east coast of Florida, the base from which corsairs of Commodore Aury pounced upon merchantmen of all nations.

Diplomacy also had an important role in this struggle to make the sea safe for American shipping. In the spring of 1819 Secretary of the Navy Smith Thompson selected Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry for the delicate mission of establishing friendly relations with the government of newly independent Venezuela and negotiating to obtain restitution for United States vessels which had been illegally captured during the revolution under the guise of patriotism. Perry boarded his flagship John Adams at Anna polis and sailed in company with schooner Nonesuch 7 June. A month later he reached the mouth of the Orinoco, which he ascended to Angostura in Nonesuch while John Adams sailed on to Trinidad to await his return at Port-of-Spain. After protracted negotiation, the government of Venezuela granted all the demands of the United States 11 August; but, during the passage down the river, Perry was stricken with yellow fever and died before he returned to his flagship. Commodore Charles Morris succeeded Perry in command of the squadron, and John Adams accompanied his flagship Constellation on a voyage to the Plata River to continue the negotiations inaugurated by Perry to establish friendly relations with the new Latin American republics and to protect

American commerce from South American privateers. After visiting Montevideo and Buenos Aires, both ships returned to the United States, arriving Hampton Roads 24 April 1820.

In spite of these successes, piracy remained rampant in the West Indies, and John Adams was part of a strong West India Squadron created in 1822 to cope with the problem. Biddle's ships labored with indefatigable zeal; but the task, entailing careful searches by small-boat expeditions of innumerable bays, lagoons, and inlets, seemed endless. Yellow fever took a much heavier toll than the enemy necessitating reinforcements which arrived 3 March 1823 when Commodore Porter's "Mosquito Fleet" anchored off Saint Thomas. Porter, the squadron's new commander, selected John Adams as his flagship. When Porter was recalled, his successor, Commodore Lewis Warrington retained John Adams as his flagship until 1826. From time to time, thereafter, the proud frigate returned to the West Indies for operations against pirates until 1829 when she was laid up and almost entirely rebuilt at the Navy Yard, Gosport, Va.

*Completely rejuvenated, she joined the Mediterranean Squadron in 1831. One of her first duties was to take her former commander, ex-Commodore Porter, to Constantinople where he became the U.S.'s first charge d'Affaires. The ship was granted the rare *privi lege* of passing through the Dardanelles with guns mounted. Thereafter, John Adams convoyed ships in the Mediterranean and in 1833 visited Liberia, being colonized with American Negroes.*

After extensive repairs in the United States she sailed from Hampton Roads 6 May 1838 on a cruise around the world accompanied by COLUMBIA. Particular stress was placed upon showing the flag in the East Indies where the United States enjoyed a prosperous and growing trade. Both ships arrived Rio de Janeiro 10 July but departed separately, John Adams sailing 25 July. She stopped at Zanzibar en route to Bombay, where she rejoined Columbia before pushing on to Goa and Colombo, Ceylon.

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At the latter port the ships learned that natives at Soo-Soo, Sumatra, had attacked American ships Eclipse. The squadron immediately sailed to the scene of the incident, and bombarded the forts at Quallah Battoo to induce the Rajahs of Sumatra to agree to offer assistance and protection to American vessels. Before returning to Rio de Janeiro 23 April 1840, the squadron called at Singapore, Macao, Honolulu, Valparaiso, and Cape Horn.

John Adams finally arrived Boston about the middle of June where she was laid up until 1842. After duty on the Brazil station, she went into ordinary where she remained until recommissioned at the beginning of the Mexican War. She was anchored off the bar at Santiago 8 May 1846 during the Battle of Palo Alto and she maintained a blockading station off the east coast of Mexico for the remainder of the war.

John Adams returned to Boston in September 1848 and received extensive repairs before joining the Africa station for action with the British Navy against the slave trade. She returned from this difficult duty in July 1853. Thereafter, with the exception of periods at home for repairs, John Adams operated in the Pacific and the Far East until after the outbreak of the Civil War. She sailed for home from Siam 6 July 1861 and reached New York 11 January 1862, bringing a box

containing two royal letters from the King of Siam to the President along with a sword and a pair of elephant tusks.

John Adams was sent to Newport, R.I., the wartime location of the Naval Academy, to act as training ship for midshipmen. In the summer of 1863 she joined the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and took station off Morris Island inside Charleston Bar, where she served as flagship of the inner blockade until she sailed into the harbor after the evacuation of Charleston in February 1865.

Late that summer she sailed to Boston where she decommissioned in September and was sold 5 October 1867.
