

## COPYRIGHT / USAGE

Material on this site may be quoted or reproduced for **personal and educational purposes** without prior permission, provided appropriate credit is given. Any commercial use of this material is prohibited without prior permission from The Special Collections Department - Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore. Commercial requests for use of the transcript or related documentation must be submitted in writing to the address below.

When crediting the use of portions from this site or materials within that are copyrighted by us please use the citation: *Used with permission of the University of Baltimore.*

If you have any requests or questions regarding the use of the transcript or supporting documents, please contact us:

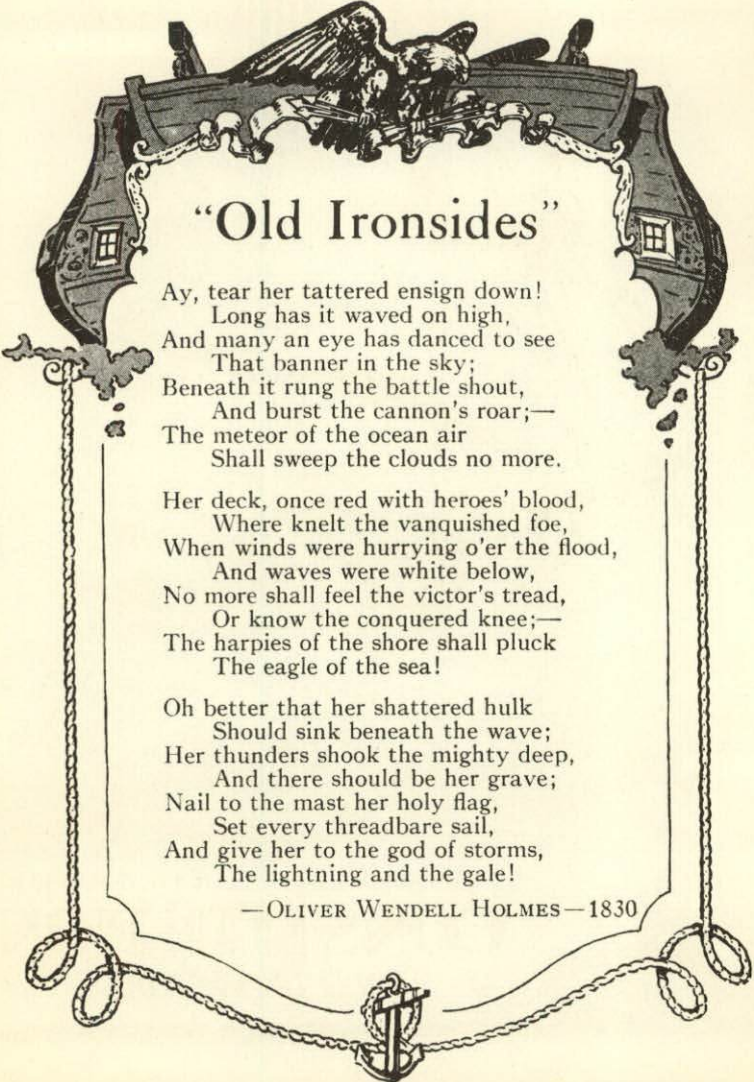
Langsdale Library  
Special Collections Department  
1420 Maryland Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21201-5779  
<http://archives.ubalt.edu>



See Page 4

THE STORY OF THE U.S. FRIGATE  
**CONSTITUTION**  
(OLD IRONSIDES)





## “Old Ironsides”

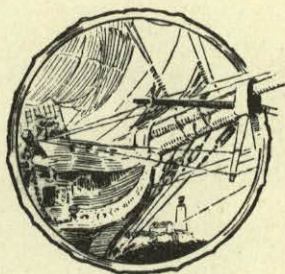
Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!  
Long has it waved on high,  
And many an eye has danced to see  
That banner in the sky;  
Beneath it rung the battle shout,  
And burst the cannon's roar;—  
The meteor of the ocean air  
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,  
Where knelt the vanquished foe,  
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,  
And waves were white below,  
No more shall feel the victor's tread,  
Or know the conquered knee;—  
The harpies of the shore shall pluck  
The eagle of the sea!

Oh better that her shattered hulk  
Should sink beneath the wave;  
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,  
And there should be her grave;  
Nail to the mast her holy flag,  
Set every threadbare sail,  
And give her to the god of storms,  
The lightning and the gale!

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES—1830

*The Story*  
*of the*  
U·S·Frigate Constitution  
(Old Ironsides)

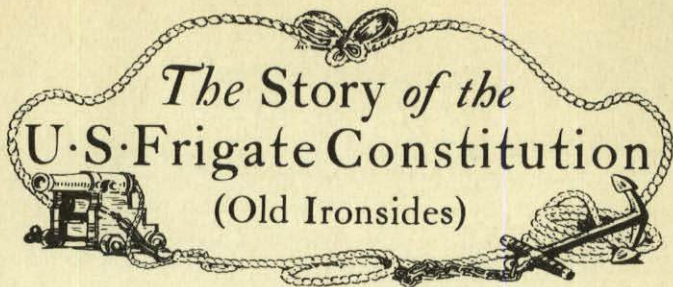


Published by

*John Hancock*  
MUTUAL  
**LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY**  
OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



The Constitution  
"kedged" away from the  
British Fleet

The title is enclosed in a decorative frame made of rope. At the top center is a knot. On the left side, there is a small illustration of a cannon. On the right side, there is an anchor. The rope forms a heart-like shape around the text.

# *The Story of the* **U·S·Frigate Constitution** (Old Ironsides)

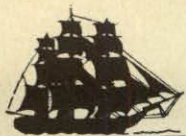
## “The Eagle of the Sea”

**O**NCE again “Old Ironsides” has won a victory, and rebuilt and restored at the Boston Navy Yard, Charlestown, she carries on her proud traditions. No ship more justly deserves a place in the affections of a country than does the noble old frigate **CONSTITUTION**, whose “iron sides” shielded and protected our young and struggling nation at one of the most critical periods in our history.

She has never known defeat, although she bears the scars of many battles. In 1798, the **CONSTITUTION** helped to clear the West Indies and our coast line of French privateers. In 1803–1805, she bombarded the forts at Tripoli and dictated peace without tribute to the Barbary States. In the War of 1812, “Old Ironsides” won a succession of famous victories over the British fleet, increasing our prestige abroad and inspiring at home a greater faith in the new Republic.

Launched in 1797, the **CONSTITUTION** sailed victoriously through eighty-four years of active service, and since 1881 has been preserved most fittingly, not only as a monument to her glorious past, but as a symbol of the heroism and spirit which established our nation.

While “Old Ironsides” always stood unconquerable against hostile shot and shell and the fury of storm and



## The CONSTITUTION



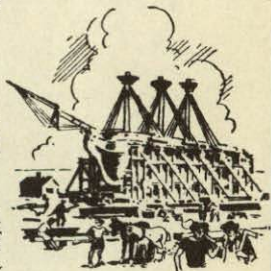
sea, she fought a losing battle against the ravages of time. Dry rot and decay in the passing years accomplished what the enemy had never been able to do, so that in March, 1925, it was necessary to undertake major repairs if the old frigate was to be preserved. The people of the country rallied to the cause generously to finance the work and, in 1930, Congress, by appropriating \$300,000 to complete the task, assured her preservation as a fitting memorial to the glory of the Navy and the seamen of long ago.

### Establishment of our Navy

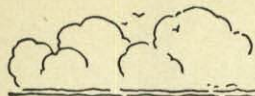
"To secure respect to a neutral flag requires a naval force organized and ready to vindicate it from insult and aggression."

—GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Because of the unsettled condition of the Union and the deplorable state of our finances following the Revolutionary War, it was impossible then to consider the problem of National defense. The old Continental Navy was sold or disposed of. At the outbreak of war between France and Great Britain in 1793, the United States faced a grave situation; for both countries persisted in interfering with our neutral merchant ships, while each sought our alliance against the other. To maintain our neutrality without an armed naval force was an impossibility. The situation with the Barbary pirates was likewise menacing, as they were demanding yearly tribute from us for non-interference with our commerce.



Decidedly were we in need of a naval armament. In



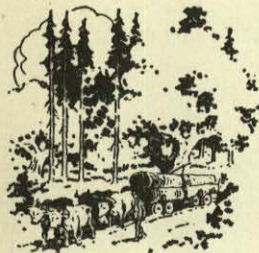
## “Old Ironsides”



1794, five years after the adoption of the Constitution and the beginning of our government, Congress passed an act authorizing the building or purchase of six war vessels.

### Building the Constitution

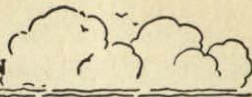
One of the first three ships built under this act was the CONSTITUTION, named for the great bulwark of our government. Mr. Joshua Humphreys, a talented ship-builder of Philadelphia, was the designer. He reasoned that the number of ships the United States could support would be far less than the number owned by European countries and therefore our ships would need to be just so much faster and better. He combined the best features of the French and English ships, and the excellence of his design is proved by the beauty, strength and intrepidity of the CONSTITUTION.



The CONSTITUTION was built longer and broader than the existing type of frigate, and higher out of water. Her length over all was 204 feet and her breadth of beam, 45 feet 2 inches. Her displacement was 2250 tons. She was heavily ballasted, and designed to carry a large supply of powder and solid shot; her wooden tanks and casks held 48,600 gallons of fresh water and there was storage room for six months' provisions for a crew of 475 officers and men. Her length and stability allowed for a vast spread of canvas and great speed, so that she could always lead ahead and was never forced to go into action but on her own terms, except in a calm. Her log book of 1809 shows a speed of 12½ knots an hour.



## The CONSTITUTION

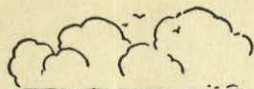


The live oak, red cedar, white oak, pitch pine, and locust, of which she was constructed, came from states ranging from Maine to South Carolina and Georgia. The heavier part of her original battery came from Maryland and Connecticut. Truly she was a National ship, reared from the strongest and best of our virgin forests. No other nation used live oak in shipbuilding. Today only about fifteen per cent of the original ship exists; all the rest has been restored at various times, but it is the live oak, forming the backbone of the ship, which has virtually kept it together and made it possible to restore and rebuild it.

The copper bolts and spikes were supplied by Paul Revere, who wrote to the Secretary of War that he could furnish them "as cheap as anyone."

The heavier guns of the CONSTITUTION were a new departure in frigate battery. Other frigates carried 18-pounders, while the CONSTITUTION was equipped with 24-pound guns. Originally designed as a 44-gun frigate, she actually carried 54 guns, and in the battle with the GUERRIÈRE had thirty long 24-pounders on the gun-deck, sixteen 32-pound carronades on the quarter-deck, and on the forecastle, six 32-pound carronades, and two 12-pounders as bow chasers.

The keel was laid in Boston, at Hartt's Shipyard, near what is now Constitution Wharf. Colonel George Claghorn was in charge of the building. It was three years from the laying of the keel to the launching. The total cost was \$302,917, a small sum in comparison with the thirty or forty millions which are now spent upon our modern battleships. The launching took place October



## "Old Ironsides"



21, 1797, at the third attempt to launch her, due to the settling of the ways under the moving load.

### **The Constitution Sails Against French Cruisers and Privateers**

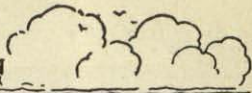
In 1798, French cruisers were interfering with our commerce to such an extent that while we did not actually declare war on France, all treaties between the two governments were abrogated and American cruisers were commissioned to patrol the coast and West Indies and capture French vessels. In August, the CONSTITUTION, under Captain Samuel Nicholson, sailed in search of French armed vessels but accomplished little except to test the ship and train the crew, as smaller boats were more effective in running down French privateers.

### **War with Tripoli**

For centuries, the four Barbary States, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, had levied tribute on even the most powerful European nations and, if payment was refused, had captured the ships of the offender and dragged off the crews to slavery. Since 1785, when Algerian corsairs had seized American merchant ships, holding their crews for ransom, the United States had suffered outrageous indignity and insult at the hands of the Barbary pirates. More than a million dollars in presents and money had been paid to the Dey of Algiers, in addition to an annual tribute of \$22,000. The Pasha of Tripoli, enraged because the Dey of Algiers was receiving more tribute and attention than he, cut down the flagstaff at the American consulate, May 14, 1801, thus declaring war.



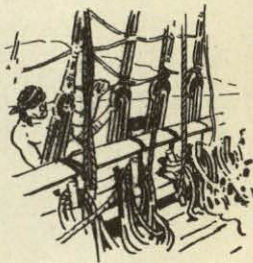
## The CONSTITUTION



**“Millions for Defense, but not one cent  
for Tribute”**

Two squadrons had been sent to the Mediterranean before the CONSTITUTION, as Commodore Edward Preble's flagship, arrived there in 1803, with a fleet of war vessels to blockade the port of Tripoli. At the outset misfortune overtook the Americans. The PHILADELPHIA, a 36-gun frigate, while chasing a Tripolitan cruiser, struck a reef, and, helplessly aground, was captured by the enemy gunboats. The officers and men were taken prisoners, and several days later the pirates managed to float the PHILADELPHIA so that they now had against us a more formidable vessel than they had ever possessed.

In the cabin of the CONSTITUTION, plans were laid for one of the most daring expeditions in our history. Using a captured Tripolitan ketch, Lieutenant Stephen Decatur and approximately seventy-four officers and men, in the dead of night, crept into the harbor of Tripoli and alongside the PHILADELPHIA, fully armed and manned, moored within range of all the batteries of the fort and surrounded by Tripolitan cruisers, galleys, and gunboats. A false move and they would have been blown to atoms. Except for six or eight of the crew disguised as Maltese sailors, the men were concealed as the little ketch boldly drifted toward the great hulk of the PHILADELPHIA and the pilot informed the sentinel that they had lost their anchors and wished to make fast to the cables of the PHILADELPHIA





## “Old Ironsides”

---



for the night. The ruse succeeded until one of the pirates, peering from the PHILADELPHIA'S rail, caught sight of the men lying on the ketch's deck. Instantly the cry, “Americanos! Americanos!” resounded through the ship, but before the pirates could gather themselves together, the Americans, with cutlasses in hand, swarmed over the PHILADELPHIA in a hand-to-hand struggle with the pirates. In ten minutes the ship was captured and the firing of it had started; for there was not a chance of escaping with it. The work of destruction was quickly done and the men regained their boat. Their escape seems a miracle, for the whole harbor was awake and the burning ship illuminated the bay, but not one American was killed.

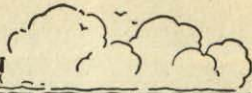


Equally thrilling and dramatic are other tales of heroism and daring, when for a month (August 4–September 4) Preble's squadron again and again bombarded the Tripolitan fortifications and gunboats, the CONSTITUTION firing upon the batteries and the town, while the smaller boats attacked the corsairs, and the men fought hand to hand with the pirates. Enemy fire caused some damage to the CONSTITUTION'S rigging and sails and her mainmast was struck down once. The wounded were carried aboard the CONSTITUTION and the prisoners were also confined there.

On September 10, Commodore Barron superseded Preble in command; later he was succeeded by Captain John Rodgers. The blockade continued, although the CONSTITUTION, in November, was sent to Lisbon to



## The CONSTITUTION



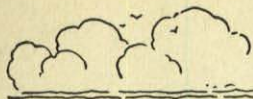
recruit and repair. But she returned to the blockade the following March as Captain Rodgers's flagship. In her cabin, the peace treaty was drawn up — signed June 3, 1805 — by which tribute to Tripoli ceased and the American captives were surrendered. Meanwhile the Dey of Tunis had been threatening trouble and Captain Rodgers anchored there and dictated a treaty with Tunis, ending tribute with that country.

### The War of 1812

The CONSTITUTION, tested in the wars against the French privateers and Barbary pirates, was now to achieve her greatest renown when, in the War of 1812, she stood invincible against the English Navy and fought for our independence on the sea as, two generations before, the colonists had fought for it on land.

Great Britain's hostile attitude toward our neutral commerce had reached the point that our National honor was at stake. Her persistent impressment of American sailors into her navy was an outrage; over six thousand American citizens had been impressed into the British service. On June 18, 1812, war was declared.

Great Britain reigned supreme on the sea, and our small array of seventeen war vessels against a thousand and more of the English Navy seemed almost ludicrous. English naval officers had been most contemptuous of our ships, criticizing their heavy batteries and implying that their designs were clumsy and too heavy for rapid manœuvring. The American "fir-built frigates," as they were called, were the subject of much ridicule.



## “Old Ironsides”



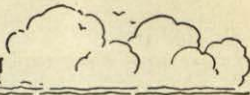
Soon they were to have greater respect for the iron-built CONSTITUTION and her sister ships, as one after another of their own ships went down before them.

### The Constitution Escapes from a British Squadron

Three days after war was declared, the CONSTITUTION, commanded by Captain Isaac Hull, left Washington for New York to join Captain Rodgers's squadron. On July 17, off the New Jersey coast, five sails to the northward were sighted and Captain Hull, supposing them to be the American squadron, headed for them. Early the next morning, Hull discovered that he had given chase to an English squadron; to make matters worse, there was little or no breeze. The British, now joined by two more vessels, hoisted their colors and gave chase; as they ran into some breeze, they gained at first. Some of the frigates started firing and the Americans returned the fire. The situation was desperate until Captain Hull made use of a kedge anchor. The kedge, fastened to a long line of hawsers and ropes, was dropped ahead and, by hauling on the ropes, the men gradually drew the ship ahead to the anchor, which was taken up, carried one-half mile or more and dropped again. Whenever the wind failed, they “kedged,” until gradually they got beyond range of the British guns. The British were quick to imitate, but not before the CONSTITUTION was in the lead. With marvelous manœuvring, Captain Hull, after two days during which all hands remained constantly on deck, outdistanced the enemy, and the CONSTITUTION headed for Boston.



## The CONSTITUTION



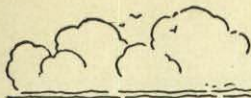
### Battle with the Guerrière

"Her sides are made of iron!"

From Boston the CONSTITUTION put to sea on August 2, and sailed along the coast of Nova Scotia to Cape Race, where she captured and destroyed two British merchant ships. On August 19, off the Gulf of St. Lawrence, a sail was sighted which later proved to be the GUERRIÈRE, a British 44-gun frigate (mounting 49 guns). The CONSTITUTION made for her with all sail set, and when still far astern, the GUERRIÈRE began firing. Only a few shots were fired in return, and the CONSTITUTION bore down upon the enemy in silence. Impatiently the men stood at their quarters, the gunners awaiting the order to fire. Not until the ships were fairly abreast did Captain Hull give the word, "Now, boys, pour it into them!" A whole broadside struck the GUERRIÈRE and then another. In ten minutes her mizzenmast went over. The CONSTITUTION passed ahead and crossed the enemy's bow and sent a raking broadside crashing down the entire length of the enemy's decks, which cut away the foremast and most of the rigging.



The story is that shots from the GUERRIÈRE made no impression upon the outside planking of the CONSTITUTION, but fell into the sea, whereupon one of the sailors shouted, "Huzza! her sides are made of iron!" and thus gave her the renowned title, "Old Ironsides." The flag on the topgallant masthead of the CONSTITUTION was



## "Old Ironsides"



shot away and an Irish lad, John Hogan, climbed up amid a shower of bullets and lashed it to the mast.

The GUERRIÈRE's bowsprit fouled the lee mizzen rigging of the CONSTITUTION and both sides tried to board, but the sea was rolling too heavily. The GUERRIÈRE fired point blank into the cabin of the CONSTITUTION and set it on fire, but the flames were quickly extinguished. As the ships separated, the GUERRIÈRE's foremast and mainmast went by the board and she was left a helpless

hulk. Captain Dacres struck his flag in surrender and when the Americans boarded the ship they found her in such a crippled condition that they had to transfer the prisoners and burn her. The British lost 79 in killed and wounded while the Americans lost 14.

It was a dramatic victory for America and for the CONSTITUTION. In half an hour (the entire battle lasted only thirty minutes) the United States "rose to the rank of a first-class power," and the

country was fired with fresh confidence and courage; and union among the States was greatly strengthened.

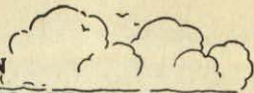
### Destruction of the Java

On December 29, less than five months after the GUERRIÈRE was destroyed, the CONSTITUTION, commanded by Commodore William Bainbridge, won a similar victory over the JAVA, a British 38-gun frigate, about thirty miles off the coast of Brazil. Firing started with broadsides from both ships. The CONSTITUTION—her wheel shot away at the beginning of the fighting—had to





## The CONSTITUTION



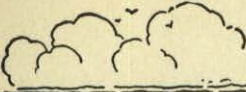
do some clever manœuvring to avoid being raked. The American gunnery proved superior; in two hours the JAVA was completely dismasted and helpless. Captain Lambert was mortally wounded and his successor surrendered. Hopelessly wrecked, the JAVA met the same fate as the GUERRIÈRE and was burned. The triumphant CONSTITUTION reached Boston the end of February, where there was great rejoicing over her victory and her gallant crew. Except for a short cruise under Captain Charles Stewart, "Old Ironsides" was shut in the Boston harbor for eight and a half months by the strenuous British blockade.

The CONSTITUTION now never lacked for a picked crew as she was considered a "lucky ship" and there was great competition to get aboard her.


### Capture of the Cyane and the Levant

The last great fight of the CONSTITUTION was thrilling and spectacular, for she engaged two ships, the frigate-built CYANE and the sloop LEVANT (February 20, 1815) and exhibited very skillful manœuvring: running and backing from one ship to the other, and fighting each separately, while avoiding being raked. The British ships were smaller and lighter and their batteries less effective, and both surrendered after a hard-fought battle. Homeward bound with her two prizes, "Old Ironsides" made one of her famous escapes. Chased by a British squadron, she narrowly escaped ending her days as an English ship, but her good luck and good seamanship saved her, although the LEVANT was retaken by the British.

Captain Stewart, having ascertained that the war was over (actually the treaty of peace with England had been ratified February 17, three days before his engagement



## “Old Ironsides”



---

with the CYANE and LEVANT) sailed for home and anchored the CONSTITUTION at New York, May 15, 1815. Her war service had ended and she had played a truly glorious part in establishing our freedom on the seas.

### The End of Her Active Service

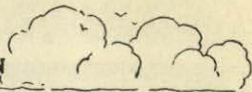
The battle-scarred ship was laid up about six years for extensive repairs, whereupon she went on two cruises to the Mediterranean. In 1830, she was reported unseaworthy and condemned to be broken up, but a poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes, called “Old Ironsides,” aroused such popular feeling that money was appropriated for rebuilding her in 1833. At this time the dispute over the Andrew Jackson figurehead was waged. The first figurehead, a statue of Hercules, had been shot away at Tripoli. The story of the decapitation of the much opposed Andrew Jackson figurehead on the heavily guarded ship, by a daring young fellow, under cover of a thunderstorm, is well known.

From 1835 to 1855, the CONSTITUTION made numerous voyages, the most important being her cruise around the world in 1844-45, under Captain John Percival, when she covered 52,279 miles in 495 days at sea.

With the progress of shipbuilding during the Civil War, when the old type of sailing frigate gave way to the steam-propelled MONITOR, the crude beginning of the modern battleship, the oak-ribbed, white-winged CONSTITUTION rapidly became a relic of the past. For several years, she was used by the Naval Academy as a training and practice ship. In 1871, she was rebuilt at Philadelphia, and in



## The CONSTITUTION



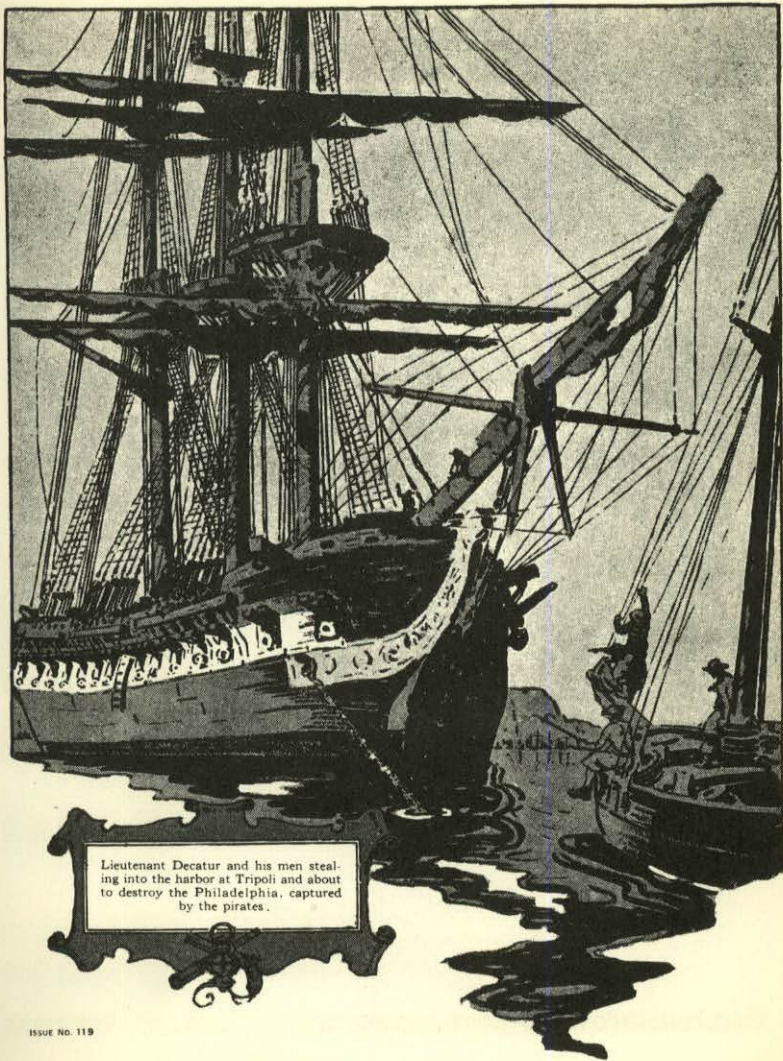
1878 went on her last trip abroad, carrying goods sent by citizens of the United States to the Universal Exposition at Paris. Her long active career at sea closed in 1881.

### **“May the spirit of ‘Old Ironsides’ go sailing on!”**

From Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where she was used as a receiving ship, the CONSTITUTION was brought to Boston, her birthplace, for the celebration of her centennial in 1897. Again threatened with destruction in 1905, because her timbers were gradually rotting away, public sentiment came to her rescue and she was partially restored. But the ravages of time continued and in 1925 plans were made for a complete renovation of the proud old warrior.

At the Boston Navy Yard, Charlestown, “Old Ironsides” was completely rebuilt from truck to keel. After such an eventful and renowned career as the champion of American liberty, small wonder it is that Americans have been anxious to preserve this venerable ship. Funds for the restoration were generously subscribed by the people of America, a large part of which was raised by school children, and the balance necessary was appropriated by Congress, so that we may now feel a closer ownership and interest in this gallant old ship on whose decks are enshrined the proud traditions of the American Navy and of the American people.

After a tour of the important seaports of the United States that started at Boston, July 2, 1931, covering over twenty-two thousand miles, “Old Ironsides” returned to the Boston Navy Yard on May 7, 1934, to remain indefinitely. In honoring “Old Ironsides,” we honor not only the ship itself but the men who by their bravery and skill brought her to such renown and made such glorious history for America.



Lieutenant Decatur and his men stealing into the harbor at Tripoli and about to destroy the Philadelphia, captured by the pirates.



Presented by

*John Hancock*  
MUTUAL  
LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY  
OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



# Massachusetts State Society

United States Daughters of 1812.

INCORPORATED DEC. 28, 1899.

MRS. NELSON V. TITUS, President.

Boston, Mass.

MRS. E. S. BURTON, Rec.-Sec'y,  
3 Clinton St., Cambridge, Mass.

MRS. E. E. TILDEN, Cor.-Sec'y,  
80 Porter St., Somerville, Mass.

MRS. H. F. GLEASON, Historian,  
44 Wyoming Ave., Malden, Mass.

MRS. W. H. ALLINE, Treasurer,  
45 Westland Ave., Boston.

MRS. G. K. CLARKE, Registrar,  
26 Lancaster St., Cambridge, Mass.

Boston, July 9 1901.

Dr. J. D. Iglehart,  
Dear Sir -

I have the honor  
to acknowledge with thanks  
the receipt of your letter  
inclosing check for \$11.00  
and I send you under  
another cover the 11  
certificates. The large

photographs of the ship  
I will send in a few  
days -

It retails in the stores  
for \$1.00 but by an  
arrangement with the  
publishers we send it  
free to 10 subscribers.

If you can send me  
9 other subscriptions, I  
can send you the  
second copy -

Thanking you for

Your kind interest, I am  
Very truly yours -

W. B. Pillsbury

Mrs W. B. Pillsbury

Portland 3574

Boston

# Massachusetts State Society

United States Daughters of 1812.

INCORPORATED DEC. 28, 1899.

MRS. NELSON V. TITUS, President,  
Boston, Mass.

MRS. E. S. BURTON, Rec.-Sec'y,  
3 Clinton St., Cambridge, Mass.

MRS. E. E. TILDEN, Cor.-Sec'y,  
80 Porter St., Somerville, Mass.

MRS. H. F. GLEASON, Historian,  
44 Wyoming Ave., Malden, Mass.

MRS. W. H. ALLINE, Treasurer,  
45 Westland Ave., Boston.

MRS. G. K. CLARKE, Registrar,  
26 Lancaster St., Cambridge, Mass.

Boston, April 15 1901

J. D. Inglehart, M. D.  
Sesq, Society War of 1812,  
in Maryland.

Dear Sir,

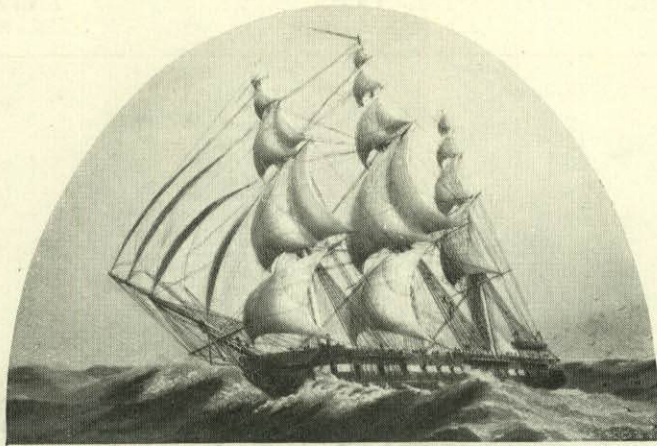
I have the honor to acknowledge  
the receipt of your favor of Apr. 13<sup>th</sup>  
and am pleased to hear that  
you are to consider the work,  
which this Society has undertaken,  
to rebuild "Old Ironsides", at a

meeting of your Society on May 7<sup>th</sup>.  
Before that date. I shall be  
able to send you some of the copies  
of certificates that will be  
issued to subscribers, as I think  
in that way your members  
will feel they will come  
closer in touch with our work  
than in any other way - as  
each certificate will bear the  
name of the subscriber to the  
Fund. Still, I should like  
to have your State Society, as a  
Society, be suitably intimated  
and recognized, and shall  
be very glad to hear what

action is taken at the meeting. I may say that  
I started this work in 1897. I had what may  
be called a conclusion. In short, as you are well  
acquainted by Congress. There is no opposition,  
which means much. It is only the question  
of the time it will take to reach the  
African people. I enclose some old  
Newspaper clippings, which may interest  
you, showing the progress of the work in  
months gone by. Sincerely yours -  
Willie B. Pillsbury

(Mrs W. B. Pillsbury)

# SAVE THE CONSTITUTION!



## The Frigate "Constitution"

LAUNCHED AT BOSTON OCTOBER 1797

### "OLD IRONSIDES"

*Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!  
Long has it waved on high,  
And many an eye has danced to see  
That banner in the sky;  
Beneath it rung the battle shout,  
And burst the cannon's roar;-  
The meteor of the ocean air  
Shall sweep the clouds no more.*

*Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,  
Where knelt the vanquished foe,  
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,  
And waves were white below,  
No more shall feel the victor's tread,  
Or know the conquered knee;-  
The harpies of the shore shall pluck  
The eagle of the sea!*

*Oh, better that her shattered hulk  
Should sink beneath the wave;  
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,  
And there should be her grave;  
Nail to the mast her holy flag,  
Set every threadbare sail,  
And give her to the god of storms,  
The lightning and the gale!*

Oliver Wendell Holmes - 1830.



*Cyane*

1815

*Levant*



*Guerriere*

1812

*Java*



# Campaign for the Restoration of the Frigate Constitution

In the closing days of the last session of Congress, the bill for the restoration of the historic old frigate CONSTITUTION, which is now lying in a much decayed state at the Boston Navy Yard, was added to the Omnibus Bill, passed by the Senate and the House and signed by the President.

The Massachusetts State Society of the Daughters of 1812 together with other patriotic societies and citizens had long been urging some action in hopes of getting the old ship restored before increasing decay made it necessary to dismantle her and break her up.

Early in 1924, the Secretary of the Navy had ordered a survey of the ship as she appeared to be deteriorating rapidly. The Board of Inspection and Survey after a careful examination estimated that she could be restored for \$473,725.00. In July 1924, the Secretary of the Navy visited her and made a personal examination. He has shown the greatest interest in the preservation of the CONSTITUTION, recognizing her to be an emblem of all that is finest in Naval tradition and a veritable sea-shrine of the American people.

The Secretary of the Navy has put the restoration of the CONSTITUTION in charge of the Commandant of the Navy Yard, Boston, Rear Admiral Louis R. deSteiguer, U. S. N., who will furnish any information desired by those who wish to assist.

## HISTORY

The CONSTITUTION was launched at Boston in 1797, one of the first frigates authorized under the CONSTITUTION of the United States. She is one of the three ships which marked the beginning of the Navy as it exists today. Inability to make satisfactory terms with the Barbary Corsairs, owing to our defenceless state at sea, was the direct reason for the authorization of a Naval force. The depredations of these Corsairs and privateers justified not only this small beginning but also the establishment of a permanent Navy, which has maintained the security of American rights at sea ever since.

The CONSTITUTION went into commission in 1798 and immediately saw service in the French War, gaining many victories over the French Republican Cruisers. A few years later she was bombarding the forts at Tripoli and was one of the vessels of the little American Navy that threw off the yoke of the Barbary States after we had been paying annual tribute to those powers, and gave our commerce such protection that its rapid growth brought much wealth to the nation. Still later, in the War of 1812, the CONSTITUTION won a succession of victories over British vessels and inspired such confidence in the Union that threatened secession was averted and the war brought to a close with

**SAVE OLD IRONSIDES!** Washington was mainly responsible for her building and she has served under every President since his administration.

all ideas of European interference in American affairs definitely ended. The importance to our national life of the victories of the CONSTITUTION cannot be overestimated.

## CAMPAIGN FOR RESTORATION

Congress has authorized her reconstruction, but has appropriated no money. However, the Secretary of the Navy has been authorized to receive contributions from private sources for this purpose. A campaign and collection organization is now being set up at the Charlestown Navy Yard, near the CONSTITUTION herself. The fund will be known as the SAVE THE CONSTITUTION FUND. It is planned to give the first opportunity in the campaign to the school children as an educational and patriotic lesson - one that will teach the school children the traditions and ideals of the forefathers and better prepare them for their duties as citizens later on. The help of all patriotic societies and individuals in this effort of the school children is desired. The U. S. Daughters of 1812 will sponsor the campaigns in their respective States, assisted by other patriotic societies.

It is hoped that school authorities in each State will support the movement and arrange for holding CONSTITUTION DAYS in the schools. Patriotic citizens will, it is believed, take pride in helping the children to complete their quota where necessary.

England carefully preserves her famous VICTORY, Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar, and reverently calls her the Sea-Cathedral of England. We should do no less for a ship named the CONSTITUTION with such a wonderful record in peace and war.

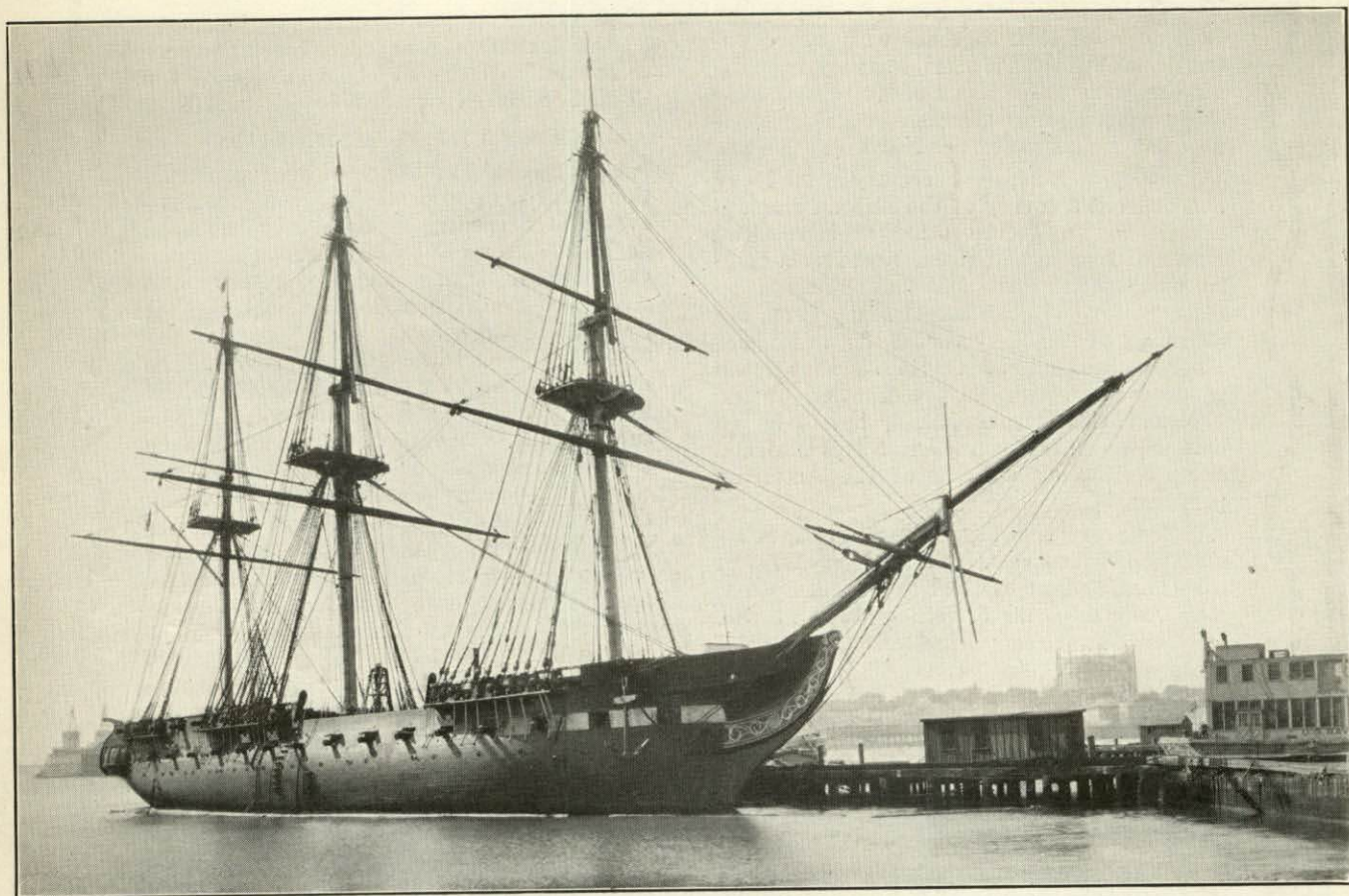
Governor Alvan T. Fuller has accepted the chairmanship of the State Committee for Massachusetts. It is planned to ask the Governors of other states to serve in a similar capacity.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. A. C. Ratschesky, President of the U. S. Trust Company, Boston, has consented to act as Treasurer.

Contributions should be sent to:

Comdr. G. S. Burrell, USN.,  
District Treasurer,  
"SAVE OLD IRONSIDES FUND"  
Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pa.



1925

*“The Frigate Constitution”*

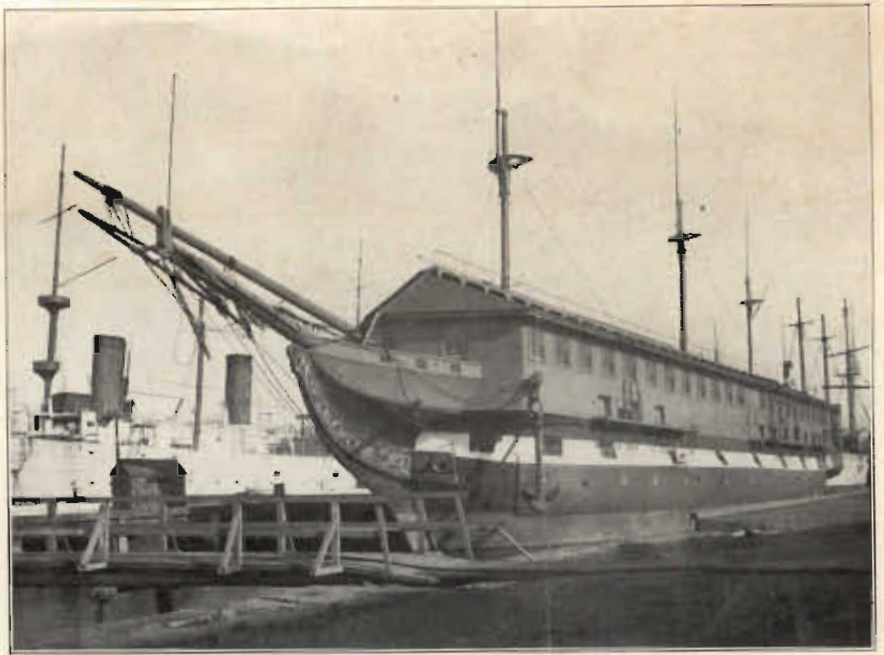
Sung Before the Corporation of the City of New York,  
The Fourth of July, 1815

*Then raise amain, the joyful strain,  
For well she has deserv'd it,  
Who brought the foe so often low,  
Cheer'd freedom's heart and nerv'd it;  
Long may she ride, our navy's pride,  
And spur to resolution;  
And seamen boast, and landsmen toast,  
The FRIGATE CONSTITUTION.*

by Francis Arden

## PRESERVE THE SHIP.

“Yes, save the good ship, tear the  
old housing down,  
Let the masts again tower her beauty  
to crown,  
Let the wide spreading sails fill again  
to the breeze  
As they did when the Frigate was  
Queen of the seas.  
Let her look as she looked as to sail,  
spar and gun  
As she did in the days when her  
glory was won”



The Constitution as she lies waiting at the Charlestown Navy Yard.

# THE U. S. FRIGATE CONSTITUTION.

## A LAST APPEAL FOR “OLD IRONSIDES.”

This famous old man-of-war so dear to the hearts of the American people, for many years had been at the Navy Yard, Portsmouth, fast going to decay.

On February 22, 1897, a resolution was offered at a patriotic meeting in Faneuil Hall, Boston, by the president of the Massachusetts State Society, U. S. D., 1812, that the frigate Constitution be brought to Boston to end her days near the spot where she was built and launched. Immediately afterward a petition was drawn up by the Society, which was indorsed by His Excellency, Governor Wolcott, the Speaker of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and about one hundred representative business men of Boston, urging that the Constitution be brought to Boston. In October of the following year the gallant old ship was brought here for the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of her birth.

The Massachusetts State Society, U. S. D., 1812, is largely composed of the descendants of the men who fought in the war of 1812, some members, also, being descended from the men who built the old Frigate, who fought upon her decks and commanded her during her famous victories. The Society has had for its object since it was organized in Massachusetts in April, 1897, the restoration of the old ship and at the annual meeting in January, 1898, it was unanimously resolved to raise by a popular subscription fund from all over the country the amount necessary to restore the ship in order that she may be placed in commission once more, all the work to be completed to the satisfaction of the Secretary of the Navy. The plan proposed is to restore the Frigate as she was in the days of the war of 1812, to have her stationed permanently at Boston to be used as a training ship for naval apprentices. It is thought that the work proposed for her may be similar to that of the Constellation at Newport.

This grand old ship in the waters of Boston harbor, restored in every detail as she was in the days of the War of 1812, will be valuable and interesting as an object lesson to the boys and girls of the coming generations. The restoration of the ship must appeal to every patriotic American, and all are earnestly asked to assist the Society in this great patriotic work which has been endorsed as follows:—

Navy Department, Washington, Dec. 4, 1899.

Mrs. Nelson V. Titus, President Massachusetts State Society, United States Daughters of 1812:

Madam—Complying with the request of the Massachusetts State Society, United States Daughters of 1812, of which you are President, I have to inform you that the Department has today recommended to the Congress the early passage of an act authorizing your society to undertake the restoration of the old frigate “Constitution” by popular subscriptions, the work to be done under the supervision of and as directed by the Department.

Enclosed for your further information is a copy of the letter upon this subject, addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, House of Representatives.

Very respectfully,

JOHN D. LONG, Secretary.

Sir—The Massachusetts State Society, United States Daughters of 1812, has informed the Department that it desires to restore the old frigate "Constitution" to a serviceable condition, in order that she may be again placed in commission and used as a training-ship, or in such other manner as may be deemed best by the Secretary of the Navy, the cost of such restoration to be defrayed by popular subscriptions and the work to be done at the Navy Yard, Boston, Mass., and carried on and completed to the satisfaction of the Department. The Society has also, in pursuance of this object, requested the department to recommend the passage of an act by the Congress granting the necessary authority in the premises. The "Constitution" as she exists today is a relic of the glory of the navy in its early days, and the fact that the memory of her prowess is still cherished among the people is a gratifying evidence of patriotism that should be encouraged. The restoration of this old man-of-war for the Government by voluntary contributions from the people under the auspices of this Society would be an object lesson of great value to the nation.

I have the honor, therefore, considering also the serviceability to the navy of the ship should she be restored, to recommend the early passage of an act authorizing her rehabilitation in the manner proposed, providing, however, that the work shall be done under the supervision of and as directed by the Department.

Very respectfully, JOHN D. LONG, Secretary.

The Chairman, Committee on Naval Affairs, House of Representatives.

### An Act for the Preservation of the Frigate Constitution.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the Secretary of the Navy is hereby authorized to place the Frigate Constitution, now lying at the Boston Navy Yard, as near as may be consistent with her preservation, in the same condition as regards her hull and rigging, as she was when in active service, *Provided*, that before beginning on such work, a sufficient sum of money to complete such work shall be raised through the agency of the Massachusetts State Society, United States Daughters of 1812, and placed at his disposal for the purpose.

*Passed and approved by President McKinley, February, 14, 1900.*

Having now received the necessary permission from Congress, the Massachusetts State Society, U. S. D., 1812, has begun the work in every state in the Union, to raise the amount needed to re-build the ship. In order that everyone may have an opportunity to contribute, a handsome certificate has been issued by the Society and will be presented to everyone giving one dollar to the fund.

Each certificate will bear the name of the subscriber.

Anyone sending in the names of 10 subscribers will receive free in addition to the certificates, a large photogravure of Marshall Johnson's painting of the "Constitution" under full sail, which is a large and spirited picture, particularly desirable for schools.



Application for certificates must be accompanied by cash and give the name of subscriber exactly as it is desired to have it written on the certificate. Letters of inquiry should contain stamps for reply.

You are earnestly requested to lend us your valuable assistance in this patriotic work. The rebuilding of the grand old Frigate "Constitution" is a matter of national interest and must appeal to all patriotic Americans.

In making applications for certificates send money by P. O. order, check, stamps, ~~or if possible by coin card~~ to

MRS. NELSON V. TITUS,

PRESIDENT, MASSACHUSETTS STATE SOCIETY, U. S. D., 1812,

P. O. Box 3514, Boston, Mass.

Boston, Mass., March 1, 1901.