



# The Deck Log of USS *conSTeLLaTion*

Volume IX, Issue Number 1

Winter, 2007

The Official Newsletter of the USS *Constellation* Museum

## *conSTrUcTion of Ship'S BoaTS UnDer way*

Thanks to a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network two of *Constellation's* small boats will be constructed at the new Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park. *Constellation* Museum Senior Shipwright Bruce MacKenzie is leading the project assisted by students from the Living Classrooms Foundation's Fresh Start job training program. Bruce, a former boat building instructor at Cape Fear Technical College in Wilmington, North Carolina, for many years and he is very excited to get back to boat building and teaching. Working alongside Bruce and the students is Seth Scott, the boat building instructor for the Fresh Start Program. *Constellation* Ship's Manager Paul Powichroski has developed the construction plans and oversees the technical aspects of the project and Douglass-Myers Park's Marine Activities coordinator Marc Pettingil is also assisting.



*From left to right, Todd, Seth and Bruce lay out the molds on the lofting floor. Before making the molds the shipwrights drew the boats plans full size on the lofting floor to facilitate pattern making.*



*Fresh Start Student Robert drills holes in the molds prior to assembly. Once prepared, the molds will be the framework upon which the planking is laid.*

The boats being built are *Constellation's* quarter boats, which, when the ship was sailing, would have hung from davits on either side. The boats are approximately 26 feet long and will be built using red cedar for planking and white oak for frames. The keel, stem and sternpost will be made from iroko, an African hardwood. Bruce has developed a modern double planking method that should make the boats watertight even after being out of the water for an extended time. When complete, the two boats will be used for on-water education programming. Each will be able to hold 10 people with eight oars, rudder, and navigator. The boats will have sailing rigs as well and will grace the harbor with their classic lines for many years after their launch, scheduled for April of 2008.



The Deck Log  
of  
USS *conStellaTion*

eDUcAtion anD inTerpreTation report  
US naval academy  
cLASS on BoarD

On November 30th the US Naval Academy's "Age of Sail" class visited the ship for a tour and education program. The midshipmen not only learned about the ship and her history but also a bit of what life was like on board for their predecessors as they braced the yards, leaned into the capstan and drilled the guns.



*Able Seaman Paul O'Neil provides instruction to visiting Naval Academy midshipmen*

This fall, most of Ship's Crew stowed their uniforms, dawned their civilian attire, and stepped off to school or college. Eight crew resumed a full-time student status, and of those eight scholars, only five have been able to work part-time. Nevertheless, the few who have remained have continued to maintain the highest standards of professionalism. They are: Boatswain's Mates Juma Smith and Janina O'Brien, and Able Seaman Jason Huigbretse, Gerald Moody, Paul O'Neil, Ryan Szimanski, Aaron White, and Ordinary Seaman Michael Williamson. Their service was particularly noteworthy during the 26 days in which the Museum participated in the Free-Fall Baltimore program and saw visitation excel even July's volume. To Ship's Crew, a most sincere well done. Congratulations, too, to Ms. O'Brien who earned her promotion to Boatswain's Mate.

For October's Second Saturday Series, Mark Ragan came aboard and provided an outstanding presentation about Civil War submarines. In November, John Barnard's timely "And a Few Marines" coincided with the 231st birthday of the Marine Corps. *Constellation's* Ship's Manager, Paul Powichroski, will provide December's Second Saturday offering as he leads visitors through the ship on a personal tour focusing on the ship's preservation and restoration.

On November 11th, Dr. Wendy Taparanskas, Ms. Mary Eastman, and Mr. Brian Alexander provided their unique and delightful interpretation of *Constellation's* more sociable side with their interpretation "Holidays, Festivities, & Diplomacy - *Constellation* on Foreign Stations." This time, they added a new



*Midshipmen Bracing the Yards*

twist based on President Lincoln's invitation for all "fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving." Thanks, too, to Ship's Company for providing their strength to the monthly programs in September and October and for participating in the annual Remembrance Day Parade at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. We look forward to welcoming everyone back aboard in 2007.

To find out more about USS *Constellation* Museum Programs, including the USS *Constellation* Overnight Adventure, contact Stan Berry, Director of Interpretation and Education at 410.539.1797 ex. 466 or sberry@constellation.org.

fUnDraiser aT maryLand  
Theatre a great SUcCESS

Winter was in the air in Hagerstown on December 2nd when theater-goers, many dressed in period naval as well as civilian garb, entered the Historic Maryland Theatre for an evening of great entertainment. Over 225 people attended the event which featured the 28th Pennsylvania Regimental Band from Philadelphia, and a screening of the David O. Selznick classic 1939 picture "Gone With The Wind."

Before the band started Larry Bopp, *Constellation* Advisory Board member and President of Ship's Company, the official all-volunteer living history unit for the USS *Constellation* Museum, presented Executive Director Chris Rowsom with a check for \$5,000 to be used for the restoration of *Constellation's* spar deck armament. An additional \$6,000 was raised for the project at the event. Special thanks to Steve Bockmiller, *Constellation* Advisory Board member and Vice President of Ship's Company for organizing this event for the Museum. Also, thank you very much to everyone who supported the event including production sponsors Roger Haskins, John Barnard, Brian Sullivan, Executive Director of the Maryland Theatre and Tom Riford, Executive Director of the Hagerstown / Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

This project still needs significant financial support. If you are interested and would consider making a contribution please contact Chris Rowsom at 410-539-1797, ext. 402.



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The following companies, foundations, and individuals have made cash and in-kind contributions to the USS *Constellation* Museum October to December of 2006

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**Corporate, Family, and Individual memberships are a great way to support your museum and keep YOUR ship afloat.**

For information on how you can become a member and part of the USS *Constellation* Museum Crew, call Dayna Aldridge at 410-539-1797, ext. 422; [dminter@constellation.org](mailto:dminter@constellation.org).

**Memberships make terrific gifts too!**



## cUr aTor 'S corner

*"I was told to day that I am going aboard the Constellation she is going to the Coast of Africa"*

So wrote William Ambrose Leonard on June 15th, 1859, as he anxiously awaited his fate aboard the U.S. Receiving Ship Ohio laying at Charlestown Navy Yard near Boston. Over the next two years the twenty-one-year-old Massachusetts native kept a daily journal of his time aboard the flagship of the U.S. Africa Squadron. Last summer, Paul Leonard Sweeney, a descendant of William, contacted Executive Director Chris Rowsom and Curator John Pentangelo to alert them of the journal and to share the story of his ancestor with the Museum. The writings of this ordinary seaman will prove to be a central and indispensable resource in the Museum's mission to honor and perpetuate the legacy of dedicated service given by the Sloop-of-War *Constellation* and all who served aboard.

Leonard's account of *Constellation's* cruise off the coast of West Africa fills 400 handwritten pages. In addition to shipboard routines and sailing courses, he faithfully recounts the capture of the slave brigs *Delicia* and *Triton* and provides a gripping narrative of *Constellation's* successful chase of the barque *Cora* packed with 705 slaves. The voluminous diary also contains virtually every court martial, a complete crew list, personal descriptions of crewmembers, reports on deaths and funerals, price lists for small stores, transcribed programs from the performances of the "*Constellation* Dramatic Association" complete with cast listings, and a lively description of a 48-hour liberty on the island of St. Helena that included a visit to Napoleon's Tomb. Leonard offers an intimate portrayal of Captain John S. Nicholas who took a shine to him and the other seamen who served in the captain's gig. He also reports on the captures of slavers made by the other vessels of the Africa Squadron, discusses the roles of each crewmember and details the organization of the ship's mess and watch system.

Scholars of the Africa Squadron will take great interest in the interaction of ship's company with Kroomen, African natives, often from Liberia, hired to make runs from ship to shore. Those interested in the Civil War will experience the excitement among the crew as newspapers announcing the burning of Norfolk Navy Yard and "War to the death" were frantically passed among the seamen. According to Leonard, politics and patriotism was all that was discussed thereafter: "Fort Sumter could be retaken in no time, according to their plans. Fort Pickens could be held by them against the world." Much to the chagrin of the 1st lieutenant, all hands threw their white hats overboard when the crew hove up anchor for home.

USS *Constellation* Museum staff are proud to be a part in these exciting revelations and indebted to Paul Sweeney for sharing this journal with the public through our educational programming and restoration efforts. We invite you to read William's illuminating description of a typical evening on board



*"USS Constellation Fires On The Cora"*  
By Arthur Disney

*Constellation* after the hammocks were piped down. Refer back to it the next time you are below decks and gain a new appreciation for those who served aboard, for those who left their memories to posterity, and for the men and women who ten years ago embarked on the restoration that allows us all to see, with our own eyes, what William saw almost 150 years ago.

April 9th 1860.

*A sail in sight she appears to be a large square rigged vessel. we have got a head wind now and we tack ship twice in a watch. in the evening we had a rehearsal, (bye the bye) I had almost forgotten to mention what a variety of doings there are on board of this ship of an evening after hammocks are piped down nor do I believe I can describe it and do it justice however I will do the best I can. I will commence with the berth deck. 1st comes the religious Society who hold a prayer meeting on the starboard side, forward next to the sick bay. next in order is the Temperance Society, who are discussing, the advantages derived from taking the Pledge, they occupy the Port side of the deck, next comes the Dramatic Club who are spouting Shakespeare, in the main hold. then comes the negro Minstrel singers with their instruments making night hideous with their yelling. Now comes the gun deck. First there is a crowd of about 20 who have got a fiddler perched upon the breach [sic] of a gun dancing breakdowns another crowd singing Sailor songs and still another crowd skylarking while on the Spar Deck, the Quiet part of the ships company are promenading talking over last cruise, or listening to some old weather beaten tar, telling his miraculous adventures when he was a young man. While your humble servant is sitting on the combings of the fore hatch smoking a pipe, thinking of home.*



*A drawing from the journal of William Leonard*



## Seaman'S family pr eServes personal accoUnt of *conStellaTion*'S crUiSe To africa

While the Museum has been aware of this journal for several years, it was not until September when Paul Leonard Sweeney, William's great grandson, first sent the Museum copies of the diary. Remarkably, the journal has been well preserved by the family for over a century. Leonard's writings ultimately came into the possession of his youngest daughter, Katie, born just three years before her father's death in 1889. Katie passed the journal on to her daughter Louise.

Over the next few decades, the journal sat unceremoniously in a brown bag on a closet shelf at the family home in Watertown, Massachusetts. This commonplace container belied the nature of the treasure within. In addition to the 400-page account of *Constellation's* Africa cruise, Leonard left behind poetry, historical information, family records, letters written to his future wife while at sea, and heartrending reminiscences of the tragic deaths of two sons from scarlet fever. Also in the bag were pictures and another journal that in part described his subsequent service on *Cornubia* as part of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron during the Civil War.

Before she passed away a few years ago, Louise promised the journal to her nephew Paul Sweeney of North Hampton, New Hampshire. He had always been interested in his great grandfather's life and when he opened the journal he became mesmerized by what he read. Mr. Sweeney told the Museum, "He [William Ambrose Leonard] documented how life was on a sailing vessel, a ship of war, for history. He was a sailor, an actor, a writer and, from what I have read, a wonderful human being. He truly believed in the good work the *Constellation* was doing in preventing the enslavement of fellow human beings."

Paul's excitement grew exponentially when he discovered that the ship still survived. After contacting the Museum in June he was compelled to visit the ship. As Paul recalled, "My wife and I went to Baltimore to walk in the steps of my great grandfather. He may only have been an ordinary seaman, a modest profession, but he did great things. The trip to the ship made us both feel closer to him." He continued, "I feel strongly that William wrote the journal to share his experiences with others. I am honored to share the journal with the Museum so others who know and care for the ship so well can get a glimpse back to the day when he rowed the gig, walked the decks and documented the life of a seaman on the very special ship." USS *Constellation* Museum is equally honored by the commitment of the Sweeney family and all descendants and former crewmembers who have shared their stories for the benefit of all.

William Leonard died from a fall on December 19, 1889 in Boston. A life with much heartache owing to the deaths of several beloved children, William Leonard has given all of us a great gift. He has reminded us that *Constellation* is not just a vessel important for the guns it carried or the ports it visited but for the ordinary men who sailed her. His great grandson agreed; "While I never met him I feel like I know him. He was no different than most of us. He knew joy (the day the crew got the news they were going home), he knew despair (reading sad news from home in letters months old), [and] he knew hard work (his life on the ship and that of his mates was one of periods of toil offset by periods of boredom)." Now, thanks to Leonard's descendants, we all know.



*Paul and Kathy Sweeney toured USS Constellation with Executive Director Christopher Rowsom in October.*

Don't miss the new documentary produced by  
Indigo Films:  
**USS CONSTELLATION:  
BATTLING FOR FREEDOM.**  
February 10, 2007 at 8PM on the History Channel.



**CHECK YOUR LOCAL LISTINGS**  
This exciting new program, featuring the  
Museum's former curators, Glenn Williams and  
Ken Hickman, will highlight USS *Constellation's*  
capture of the slave barque *Cora* in 1860.



## Shipyard ScUTTLeBUTT

If you've been down to the Inner Harbor recently, you've probably wondered what's up with the blue tarps and the big hole on *Constellation's* starboard quarter.

First, a little lesson on wood and rot. Wood is a biodegradable material; just try to imagine what a forest would look like if it wasn't. The forest floor would soon be covered with limbs and fallen tree trunks to a depth that no new seedlings could ever take root. It is the decay of wood in fact, aided by various rot fungi that naturally occur in the wood, which replenishes the nutrients and feeds the soil, thereby allowing forests to flourish. So, in that respect, rot is a good thing. If, however, rot occurs in a piece of wood that is a part of our ship, or your house for that matter, the romantic notion of natural recycling and thriving woodlands flies right out the window!



*Shipwright Joan Murphy working on the hull repair.*

The recipe for rot growth needs a balance of four ingredients: a temperature between 40°F and 100°F (like in Baltimore), oxygen (in the air), fresh (not salty) water, and some food for the fungus to eat (the wood). The variable that most effects the decay process is water. While all wood has a small amount of water trapped in its cells, the wood needs to be pretty wet for the rot spores to spring into action. The wood in a piece of furniture in your house or a boat inside a museum building will, in most climates, have somewhere around 6% of its weight of water in its cells and should last forever. It is not until the water gets up to 20% that the problem starts.

Well, what about all of the wood on the ship that is under water - there's surely at least 20% of water in there? In this instance, the balance swings in the opposite direction, and there's too much water and not enough oxygen for the rot to survive. As an example, logs have been discovered in the Great Lakes that have been submerged for hundreds of years and the wood is in perfect condition. This ends our science lesson and should give

you enough information to understand our problem.

We have determined that fresh water has been getting into the hull through the planking, gun port sills, and the spar deck seams, and some areas of the hull around the top of the laminated structure have shown signs of deterioration. Some of the recycled timber that was used in the restoration is also deteriorating. The crew, under the direction of shipwright Tim Fowler, has started repairing the worst area, removing the rotten wood and tying the new wood back into the good hull structure. We will finish this area before winter really kicks in and then we will move up onto the deck where we can work on the caulking project under cover. We have our methods worked out but it will be a time consuming process progressing through most of next year. When completed, we will have sealed the spar deck and reconfigured the top edge of the laminated hull shell all of the way around the ship so that it sheds, instead of collects, fresh rain water. Also assisting Tim on the project is shipwright and master coating expert Joan Murphy as well as our two newest members of the shipwright team, Dave Mower and Joe Lengieza.

Our new shop at the Frederick Douglass - Isaac Myers Maritime Park is now up and running. All of our tools have been hooked up to the state-of-the-art dust collection system, and our new tool storage cabinets and workbenches have been installed.

Our Saturday "Ship-Shape Days" are finished for the winter, but we'll be back at it in the spring so stay tuned! The rigging gang are a hearty lot and their work continues year round, so if you are interested in learning some rigging skills, contact me at 410-539-1797 ext. 448 or via e-mail at [pgp@constellation.org](mailto:pgp@constellation.org) to sign on. We hope to see you on board soon!

### Leaving a Legacy BeqUeSTS and memorial fUnDS

Planned gifts are an important way of helping the USS *Constellation* Museum to meet its financial needs. These contributions provide donors with a easy and satisfying means to help us to preserve USS *Constellation* while providing you with the added benefit of a charitable income tax deduction. For more information, please contact Christopher Rowsom, Executive Director, at the USS *Constellation* Museum, (410)-539-1797.

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*conStellaTion*  
gear home for  
The hoLiDays

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USS *Constellation* Ship's Store,  
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[www.constellation.org](http://www.constellation.org).





## ring in The new year on BoarD

### USS *conSTeLLaTion*!

Join the Staff, Volunteers, and Members of the USS *Constellation* Museum for the 6th Annual New Year's Eve Deck Party from 10pm to 1am on December 31st.

Ring in the New Year aboard USS *Constellation*, sip Champagne and watch the

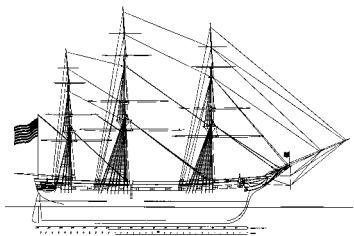
# FIREWORKS

high above the Inner Harbor crowds.

A special twilight menu provided by Charles Levine Caterers will be served with local ale, wine, mulled cider and other hot drinks.

There will be special tours, cannon firing demonstrations and giveaways all night! Proceeds benefit the museum's ongoing restoration projects and future exhibits.

Tickets are \$75 for adults (\$60 for Museum members) and \$25 for kids age 17 and under (\$20 for member kids) and may be purchased on-line at [www.constellation.org](http://www.constellation.org) or by calling 410-539-1797, ext. 422.



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## winTer caLenDar of evenTS

### SeconD SaTURDay LecTUr e SerieS on BoarD USS *conSTeLLaTion*

SaTURDay, JanUary 13Th - 2pm  
"cUr aTor 'S corner"  
feaTUR eD Speaker - John penTangeLo  
The USS *Constellation* Museum's curator and historian, John Pentangelo, provides unique insight into the museum's archival collections and a first-hand lesson in archives management.

SaTURDay, feBr Uary 1oTh - 2pm  
"Living hiSTory inTer preTaTio  
aBoarD a man-of-war"  
feaTUR eD Speaker - paUL O'neil  
Historical Interpreter and former manager of the Baltimore Civil War Museum, Paul O'Neil, focuses on the goals and techniques applied to those who go to the sea in ships.

SaTURDay, march 10Th  
"SerVing wiTh priDe - african americans  
in The UniTeD STaTeS navy"  
feaTUR eD Speaker - regina T. akerS, ph.D.  
Since 1775, black Americans enlisted into the ranks of the navy. Their numbers swelled as the nation faced crises-upon-crises, and they dwindled in the absence of national emergencies. Dr. Regina Akers, Archivist in the Operational Archives Branch of the Naval Historical Center, presents remarkable overview of that history and describes two centuries of progress and decline, ultimately culminating in today's modern navy.

SaTURDay, april 14Th - 2pm  
"yankee river, reBeL Shore: The Union navy and civil inSURrection along The poTomac and rappahannock riverS"  
roger DavidSon, Jr. ph.D.  
This presentation attempts to address a portion of that gap in Civil War historiography through an examination of the Union Navy's effect upon life in the area of the Chesapeake region. More specifically, it will focus on the navy's impact on communities in southern Maryland's Saint Mary's and Charles counties as well as Essex, Middlesex, Mathews, Richmond, Lancaster, King & Queen, Westmoreland, King George, and Northumberland counties in Virginia; a region commonly referred to as the Northern Neck of Virginia. This study details how, in the absence of a significant Union military presence along the lower Potomac and Rappahannock rivers, the Potomac Flotilla became the prominent symbol of federal authority in the rebellious portions of the tidewater region. As such, the flotilla served as the primary enforcing instrument of federal authority and wartime policies on the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers.



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*ring in The new year on Board*  
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## USS Constellation Museum MEMBERSHIP FORM

**Yes, I would like to become a member of the USS Constellation Museum.**

Please enroll me as a member so that I may help the cause and receive the Constellation Museum's newsletter, THE DECK LOG, and enjoy the many other benefits of membership. Enclosed is my check for:

- \$30 Petty Officer
- \$50 Ship's Crew (family)
- \$100 Sailing Master
- \$250 Captain and Crew
- \$500 Commodore
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- Mr. William B. Gilmore
- Mr. Charles F. Hughes
- Dr. Susan B.M. Langley, Ph.D.
- Mr. Michael Leber
- VADM Kenneth C. Malley, USN (ret.)
- Ms. Linda J. McCarty
- Ms. Brooke McDonald
- Mr. Seth McDonnell
- Mr. Louis Miller
- Mr. Paul Shea
- Mr. Edwin Tharp
- Mr. George Vanderheyden
- Mr. Grant Walker
- Mr. W. Daniel White

### USS CONSTELLATION MUSEUM STAFF

#### Administration

- Christopher Rowsom, Executive Director
- Dayna Aldridge, Membership Coordinator
- John Pentangelo, Curator / Development Coord.
- Laura Givens, Promotions and Special Events

#### Maintenance and Restoration Staff

- Paul Powichroski, Ships Manager
- Bruce MacKenzie, Senior Shipwright
- Joan Murphy, Shipwright
- Tim Fowler, Shipwright
- David Mower, Shipwright
- Joseph Lengieza, Shipwright

#### Interpretation and Education Department

- Stan Berry, Director of Interpretation and Education
- Juma Smith, Boatswain's Mate
- Janina O'Brien, Boatswain's Mate
- Jerry Flanary, Quarter Gunner
- Aaron White, Able Bodied Seaman
- Paul O'Neil, Able Bodied Seaman
- Gerald Moody, Ordinary Seaman
- Jason Huibregste, Ordinary Seaman
- Michael Williamson, Ordinary Seaman
- Ryan Szimanski, Ordinary Seaman
- Ivori Walden, Landsman
- Ariel Walden, Landsman
- Paul Hjelmervik, Outreach

Mike DeCarlo, Volunteer Educator

Tom Tyzack, Volunteer Educator

Bob Edwards, Volunteer Educator

#### Ship's Store Staff

- Audrey Morsberger, Merchandising Director
- Tavon Holmes, Asst. Store Manager
- Erin Morsberger, Sales Associate
- Tiffany Williams, Sales Associate
- Latoya Frank, Sales Associate
- Stephany Cole, Sales Associate