



# THE DECK LOG *of* USS *CONSTELLATION*

Volume IX, Issue Number 2

Spring, 2007

The Official Newsletter of the USS *Constellation* Museum

## TELLING THE *CONSTELLATION* STORY: NEW AND RETURNING ARTIFACTS

Over the last few months, many exciting developments have taken place in the collections department. Artifacts and documents have come to the USS *Constellation* Museum in the form of new donations to the permanent collection, loans, purchases, and through the return of a treasured part of the ship's history.



**USS *Constellation* at Anchor in Naples, 1856  
by Tommaso De Simone**

The USS *Constellation* Museum is thrilled to announce the return of the famous painting of *Constellation* by, Tommaso De Simone. One of seven paintings of the sloop-of-war attributed to the renowned Neapolitan maritime artist, this work of art is one of the jewels of the Museum collection. In 1995, the U.S.F. *Constellation* Foundation, Inc. placed the painting on loan to the Maryland Historical Society (MDHS). While not on exhibit in their gallery, MDHS held the framed oil on canvas at their state-

of-the-art storage facility. Now that the USS *Constellation* Museum has a metal storage cabinet, the painting will be housed on-site while a decision is made on its future exhibition. We will display the painting in the exhibit gallery at the 8th Annual Blast! on May 18th. We hope all of you will make sure to see it before you come on board for the event. The Museum offers its sincere thanks to Maryland Historical Society for taking such wonderful care of the painting.



**Detail from Linseed Oil Tank: brass plaque on the front reads "CONSTELLATION 45 GALLONS"**

Just two months ago, the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston agreed to loan a vital part of USS *Constellation's* history to the Museum. This copper tank was used to store up to 45 gallons of linseed oil for the maintenance and operation of the ship. According to the 1854 Table of Allowances for United States Naval Vessels, the carpenter's department on board a ship of this size was allocated 80-100 gallons of linseed oil and enough copper canisters "to contain the allowance of oils and turpentine." This tank is fitted with a large circular opening (where dried linseed oil is still abundant) and a bronze spigot. The oddly shaped vessel was custom built for storage on the orlop deck or in the hold itself. Though ordinary in appearance, a tank such as this one is integral to *Constellation's* story. Linseed oil was an ingredient in many concoctions vital to the maintenance of a wooden sailing ship. The oil was used as a paint binder, a caulking compound, and a wood finish for cosmetic purposes but also a water-

**SAVE THE DATE: MAY 18TH -THE USS CONSTELLATION BLAST!**

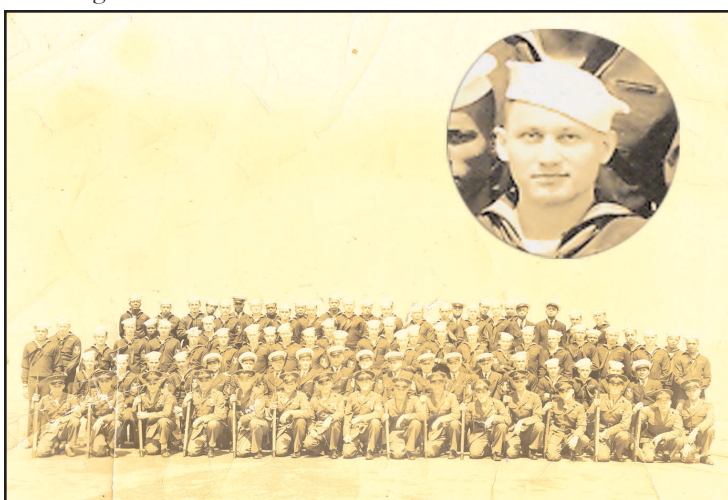


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proofing and preservative agent.

Last December, Andre Jasse of Estero, Florida, agreed to donate the M1860 Naval Cutlass owned by his great grandfather William Ambrose Leonard. Leonard served aboard *Constellation* during the Africa cruise and aboard USS *Cornubia* after he reenlisted in the Navy during the Civil War. Andre's brother Richard L. Jasse loaned this treasured artifact in August of 2000 before he passed away. The cutlass, which has been on exhibit in the gallery for six years provides a physical connection to the man who left an astounding historical record of life on board the sloop-of-war. We offer our profound thanks to the Jasse family for this gift.



Eli "Bill" Sockey 3rd Row, 3rd from Left c. 1944

Former Crewmember Eli "Bill" Sockey, who served on Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll's staff during the Second World War spent six months aboard *Constellation* while she was flagship of the Atlantic Fleet. After sitting down with the curator for an oral history interview last October, Bill, a Chief Yeoman on *Constellation*, donated a photograph featuring the enlisted staff of CINCLANT (Commander in Chief, Atlantic Command) while attached to USS *Vixen*. Admiral Ingersoll transferred his flag from *Constellation* to *Vixen* on July 20, 1942.



The Taylor Family with 37 star hand-made flag, circa 1870

Finally, the Museum recently received a visit from Theodore Herbert Taylor, his son Malcolm and daughter Susan. The Taylor family is currently caring for a 37-star United States flag made by Theodore's great grandfather, Theodore Cromwell Herbert. He was a sailmaker in the United States Navy with the distinction of serving on both USS *Congress* at Hampton Roads and USS *Hartford* at Mobile Bay before serving aboard *Constellation* in 1873. The flag, a remarkable testament to the skill of Navy sailmakers, may have been made while Herbert was stationed at Annapolis. The Museum is grateful the Taylor family visited to show us this priceless artifact.

The Museum thanks all of those who have donated and loaned artifacts to the Museum collection. If you have an artifact or photograph you would like to donate to the Museum please contact John Pentangelo at 410-539-1797, ext. 446 or [jpentangelo@constellation.org](mailto:jpentangelo@constellation.org).

## EDUCATION REPORT

Throughout the winter of 2006-2007 the Museum's Interpretation and Education Departments have remained fully engaged in 2007 programming.

The "Dr. Browne, USN" elementary school outreach program provided USS *Constellation* experiences to eleven Baltimore City and one Queen Anne County schools serving 2314 students. To date, three groups, totaling 72 visitors, from Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Alabama have enjoyed shipboard tours, while six groups, totaling 166 visitors, have participated in the overnight program so far this year. Twenty-four more groups have confirmed overnights between now and June 23.

USS *Constellation* Museum programming is moving into a number of new areas. In the growing field of educational outreach, the "African Squadron Reader" will soon be available for 6th - 8th grade classrooms on the net. Central to the program are grade-appropriate reading curricula that support Maryland Voluntary State reading curriculum. Using the program, teachers and their students will develop and reinforce reading and communications skills by focusing on a period of history that is both compelling and relevant to Baltimore youth. Historical letters, reports, and memoirs combine with quizzes, crossword puzzles, and classroom discussions in introducing students with the war waged against the trans-Atlantic transportation of slaves by the U.S. Navy before the American Civil War. Students develop their reading skills and vocabulary while acquainting themselves with a little-known, but important, aspect of their own cultural heritage. Students participating in the program and their families will be entitled to free admission aboard USS *Constellation*.

Even further beyond the gangway, Ship's Company, which boasts a crew that resides from Maine to California, held their annual business meeting in February and committed to appear on board eight days between now and October in addition to providing a definite and positive presence at three off-site venues.

Hails and Farewells: Our heartiest hail to Linda Meakes who  
(continued on page 6)





# THE DECK LOG f USS CONSTELLATION

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The following companies, foundations, and individuals have made cash and in-kind contributions to the USS *Constellation* Museum December 2006 to March of 2007

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Weiguo Ye



*Stephanie C. Hill, Director, Lockheed Martin Maritime Systems and Sensors, present a contribution to Executive Director Chris Rowsom*



## THE DECK LOG of USS CONSTELLATION

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### CURATOR'S CORNER

*In the previous edition of the Deck Log, readers were introduced to the journal of William Ambrose Leonard, a daily account of life on board during Constellation's cruise to Africa from 1859 to 1861. The individual crewmembers made quite an impression on the author and he left unique character sketches of some of these men. Understandably, most historians and naval enthusiasts are intrigued by the construction of a warship or by a typical day in the life of an average sailor. But what of the men themselves? Leonard reminds us that each man was an individual and many had a long and storied past that brought them to these decks. Their distinct personalities and idiosyncrasies distinguish the experience aboard Constellation from service aboard other vessels such as USS Portsmouth. They are the among the many "transients" who, during the ship's century of service, may have spent as little as three days, or as much as three years, on board. These men all demonstrate Leonard's declaration that a man-of-war "is one of the best places in the world to study human nature" and of them is as much a part of USS Constellation as the keel, helm, or bowsprit. The passages that follow have been edited to correct spelling, punctuation and narrative flow. I have indicated places where large sections of text were removed by inserting [text deleted].*

#### **Alexander Wilson "Krooboy", Captain of the Mizzen Top**

Another of our noticeable characters is Alexander Wilson, Captain of the Mizzen Top. He is a man that stands about 5 feet 6 inches and of a very dark complexion, which the men keeps a twitting him all the time about calling him such names as Moke (a vulgar phrase in a man of war for a negro), Krooboy, and in fact every name they can think of that applies to the dark specimens of humanity, which he listens to with a very good grace. He is got one of the very best tempers for a man that I ever heard off, he is all the time spinning yarns, that are as incredulous as the stories in the Arabian Knights, and to make the story more laughable, he is always the hero of his own yarn. [text deleted] He has been quarter master, captains of the fore and mizzen Top, which he is now acting. He is a native of Baltimore Maryland, U.S.A.

#### **William Ball, "Old Ball", Captain of the Main Top**

Another of our Characters is William Ball, captain of the Main Top, Port watch. He is a Welshman by birth, but has been in this service since he was a boy. Consequently, he is now pretty thoroughly Americanized, that is as far as matters, and doings, in the Navy is concerned. He is of small stature, not over five feet high, of a very dark complexion and very thin in the face. His shipmates address him with the titles of Ole Ball, Black Ball, and Old Rat. The latter appellation being given to him by the Boatswain on account of his natural propensity of appropriating all spun yarn, marline, rattling, and seizing stuff to himself that comes within his reach, which he uses for his own part of the ship. He is a thorough bred sailor, and knows his duty to perfection....

When we are in port and the sails are loosed for drying, old Ball can



*Navy Sailors, c. 1862*

be seen aloft with shoes and cap off stealing sail or in other words gathering his sails up on the yards and stopping them with rope yarns. When all hands are called to furl sail his part of the ship are first done. They have only to pass the gaskets. This is contrary to the rules of the ship, but he being so small he can't be seen when he gets between the mast and sail. On one of these occasions he was caught however, and put in irons in the brig but was released at the expiration of a couple of hours, and now he is at it again. The only fault he has got is his growling propensity and O, Moses he can growl. But that is a privilege (the Lord keep such privileges away from me) which all old sailors are allowed. It is the only comfort they have I believe. Old Ball has a double allowance of this privilege, for he turns out of his hammock growling; growls at his meals, growls at his work, turns in growling, and has growling dreams. [text deleted]

#### **James Thomson, "An American man-of-wars man", Quartermaster**

Old Jimmy...was promoted to a Quarter Master to fill up a vacancy. In height he is almost 6 feet 2 inches and very stoutly built. He is 60 odd years of age but on account of using himself in his younger days in a style that did not break down his constitution; he is as sprightly as most men are at 40. Old Jimmy...is also great on an argument especially if the said argument has anything to do with the rights of man. He is also as he styles himself a genuine Navy man. Out, and out to prove his assertion he never alters anything he gets from the purser in the shape of clothing. His shoes he cuts down, to use his work expression, from a line of battle ships to a sloop of war. Everybody in the ship knows old Jimmy's shoes by their size, their numbering somewhere in the vicinity of 13. They are styled by the waggish portion of the ships company as Canoes. Old Jimmy is not afraid to express his opinion upon any question fearlessly either to an officer or man before the mast. He is a warm upholder of the Northern States upon the disunion question. Although he is not an abolitionist, he is strongly opposed to the slave trade. Old Jimmy has been all through the War of 1812 and relates some of his adventures, which if they are true (and I have no reason to doubt them) are very thrilling and wonderful. [text





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deleted] May he live to serve his country a hundred years more.

### Matthew Whelan, "Blue", Captain of the Fore Top

Another of our original characters is a Matthew Whelan, captain of our Starboard watch, fore top. He is a small man not over five feet 3 inches in height, of a Sandy complexion. He is known throughout the ship by the singular cognomen of "Blue." [text deleted] He is a very good humored man always laughing or poking fun at somebody in telling a yarn. He generally gets about half through when he gets a laughing fit, which breaks up the yarn, and almost busts his own windpipe (that is to judge from his appearance while he is laughing). First as sure as he commences to laugh it turns into a violent cough, which interesting ceremony occupies almost 15 minutes of his time. By the time he gets through his listeners are off. He is (so his Topmates say) the very best petty officer in the ship, and they are right in believing so, he does not show the smallest particle of partiality. Every man in his part of the ship is treated alike and [text deleted] what's more he don't consider himself any more than a common man because he has got a Buzzard on his arm.[text deleted]

### James Brown, "Budget of Fun", Seaman

Another of our Characters, is James Brown, a seaman in the Fore Top. Although he is but 4 months in the ship, he is a universal favorite. We shipped him in St. Helena from a Barque. The captain of the Barque, refusing to comply with the articles. Brown, and another by the name of William Baker, knocked off, or in other words they refused to work, and they applied to our Flag Officer for protection. He took them on board of our ship and two others were sent in their places. Brown has an account of his eccentricities, earned himself three nick names. The first is the Budget of Fun, which title was given to him on account of his inexhaustible quantity of Fun, and good humor. The 2nd is the Phunny Phellow, which was also given to him, for the same reason, as was the 1st, and also because his wit and comicalities very much resemble the fun a person derives from reading the papers with the above headings. The 3d title is the curious and singular one of "Possom Watomie Brown." [text deleted]...our Brown, is an Englishman by birth, about 5 foot 5 inches in height, and very stoutly built, ... [and] has but very little to say about the different political questions of the days, he considers them all a humbug. His policy (as he says himself) lies in having a full stomach, which I think myself is a very good theory. [text deleted] As soon as he is done at his mess he starts up complaining of being starved, but I believe he does this from his love for fun. He of course [has] got a great appetite, and when he complains of being starved, it creates a general laugh. He has been a cruise in the U.S. Navy before, and to use a man of war expression, he knows every move on the board. [text deleted]

### William P. Upham, Coxswain of the Launch

Another of our Characters is Wm P. Upham, Coxswain of the Launch, and 2nd Captain of the Forecastle. He is an American by birth. He is one of those shrewd, calculating, Yankees, such a one that can't be found anywhere else but in the New England States. He has been (as report says and I have no reason to doubt it) Chief

Mate of one of the fast clipper ships that sailed out of New York. But, during the commercial Panic of 1857, he among the rest lost his all, and then taking to drinking, he shipped in the U.S. Navy where we now find him. In height he is about 5 feet 6 inches. [Upham is] of a light brown complexion, with a large bushy beard. He is a very intelligent man and a very good scholar. He is considered a good authority to settle all difficult questions that are brought up amongst the men, no matter what topic it is except it is religion, which topic he strictly declines to have anything to do with. [text deleted] When our ship first went into commission, a temperance society was formed by the Gunner and members of the Religious society [text deleted]. Among the number was the hero of the present sketch, who was, and is still one of its warmest supporters. They held their meetings on the Starboard side of the berth deck, two evenings in the week. His speeches exhibited a good sound mind. He would (to make his speeches interesting) relate anecdotes of the follies of intemperance, but I am sorry to say during our 48 hours liberty in the Island of St Helena, the Temperance Cause, suffered a great shock, which caused it to break up. [text deleted] Upham is a great yarn spinner; he takes the lead in that line. But of all the Marvelous or Fabulous stories, that could be thought off Wm P. Upham's is the most singular that ever I heard or read of.

### Thomas Gaynor, "the 6 cent dinner man," Ship's Corporal

Another of our noticeable Characters is a Thomas Gaynor. Born in Ireland in 1826, consequently he is 35 years old, but coming to the United States at a very early age, he is now pretty thoroughly Americanized. Few men of his age, has been through the fatigue, and privations that he has. In 1846 he commenced his public life by entering the Navy in the store ship *Senator*, but very soon after left her. At the breaking out of the Mexican War, he joined the New York Volunteer Regiment, and under General Scott he fought in almost every battle, throughout the campaign. [text deleted] In height he is about 5 feet 4 inches, of a dark complexion, which by hard usage is inclining to an Iron grey. His front teeth are all gone, which defect he consoles himself with the idea of getting a false set put in when he gets home. He wears a goatee, and an enormous moustache, which on bean soup days, it looks like a white wash brush. He is a great politician, but his arguments are on the western stump orators style. He is a great blower, on the New York system. He runs away with an idea that nothing can be done unless it is done there, by a New Yorker, his particular aversion being against Boston, and everything that is Bostonian. Knowing that there is two or three Boston boys in the mess, he takes advantage of every opportunity of poking fun at them about their peculiarities, but in every instance he is floored by the ever ready wit, and cutting remarks of the aforesaid Bostonians [text deleted]. [Gaynor bragged] that in New York they could get a dinner in any restaurant for the sum of 6 cents, which remark we take advantage of by calling him the 6 cent dinner man. [text deleted]

*William Leonard was, of course, from  
Charlestown, Massachusetts*





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### *(Education Report - continued from page 2)*

has taken on the mantle of Interpretation & Education Coordinator. Linda earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology and went to work aboard various fishing boats in the Bering Sea from 1983 to 1989. She worked off the Oregon-Washington coast for 2 more years, then headed east where she worked aboard *Lady Maryland* from 1990-1994 with a young skipper named Cap'n Christopher Rowsom. Linda has earned her 200 ton auxiliary sail license and has worked as captain and mate on various schooners, skipjacks, and buy boats on the East coast. She owns the 41' schooner *Farewell*, and won the Class C competition in the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race in 2000. Clearly, Linda brings some first-hand savvy to the Museum's interpretive fund of knowledge. Her experience with the National Aquarium as a water quality technician (since 1990) and educator (since 1992) round out her extensive background, and guarantee that Linda will add a great deal to the Museum's program and interpretive staff. As for farewells - happily, there are none!



*Linda Meakes*

## QUARTERBOAT CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

The first of *Constellation's* quarterboats is taking shape at the Frederick Douglass Isaac Myers Maritime Park and Museum. Under the supervision of *Constellation* Senior Shipwright Bruce MacKenzie and with the help of students from the Living Classrooms Foundation, two of these vessels will be built over the next 18 months. An April, '08 launch is anticipated. This project is funded in part by the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, a program of the National Park Service.

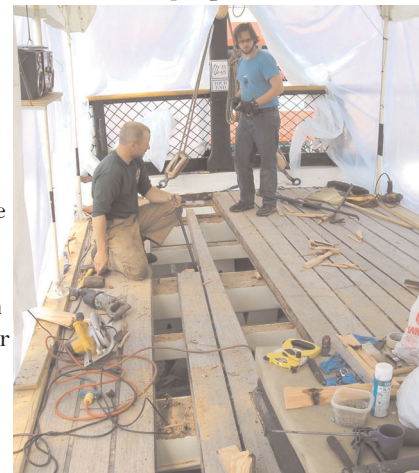


*The First of Constellation's Quarter Boats Under Construction*  
photo by Marc Pettingil

## SHIPYARD SCUTTLEBUTT

Thanks, in part to our mild early winter weather and also to the crew's ingenuity, we have made substantial progress with the deck repairs.

Using the frames for the small tents that we set up for our pierside events, Tim and the crew were able to assemble a movable shelter to cover the work area. This enabled them to continue working on the project even through the stretch of frigid weather that we had back in February. The old caulking is reefed out and the plank seams thoroughly cleaned. The crew then uses a specially modified circular saw



*Shipwrights Dave Mower and Joe Lengieza repair decking in Constellation's stern*

and router to remove all traces of the old pitch from the edges of the planking before horsing in new synthetic caulking. After masking the seams and applying a primer to the clean wood, the new sealant is injected into the seams and smoothed to an even profile. We are using a modern industrial silicone sealant, which we had great results with in our experiments to find an alternate to the very traditional, but leak-prone pitch. So far the results look great and we think that we have finally found a long-term solution to our leaky spar deck!

On those rare days that the crew has not been able to work on the deck, they have been finishing up some details and varnishing in the Wardroom cabins, organizing the tool storage room and shop on the berth deck, and doing some rig inspection aloft. Looking forward to warmer weather, we will be finishing up the deck project, making new mast boots and doing a lot of maintenance and adjusting up in the rig.

Our Saturday "Ship-Shape Saturdays" will be starting up on May 5th, but the rigging gang is still at work on the shrouds. If you are interested in learning some traditional rigging skills, or want any information regarding "Ship Shape Saturdays" 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.





YOU'RE INVITED  
TO THE 8TH ANNUAL  
USS *CONSTELLATION*  
**BLAST!**

FRIDAY, MAY 18TH

Join the Staff, Volunteers, and Members of the  
USS *Constellation* Museum for an evening of great  
food, music, and fun including

**FIREWORKS**

Musical Support Provided By

**THE BILLY PRICE BAND**

Officers' Dinner: 6:30pm  
Shipmates' BLAST! Under The Big Tent: 8:00pm  
Tables and Tickets are available  
by calling 410-539-1797 X 422

For the latest updates visit our website  
**www.constellation.org**

Proceeds benefit the museum's education  
programming, ongoing restoration projects  
and future exhibits.

**SHIP'S COMPANY DATES**

APRIL 21, MAY 26, JUNE 16,  
JULY 28, AND AUGUST 25  
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

USS *Constellation*'s own living history interpretive  
unit of sailors and marines come aboard to liven  
the ship's schedule and to provide a unique  
glimpse into the life and times of the men who  
served aboard the ship in the mid-19th century.

**SPRING CALENDAR  
OF EVENTS**

SECOND SATURDAY LECTURE SERIES ON  
BOARD USS *CONSTELLATION*

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 addresses how the Union Navy's Potomac  
Flotilla, in the absence of a significant Union military  
presence along the lower Potomac and Rappahannock rivers,  
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.

SATURDAY, MAY 12TH – 2PM

"HANGING CAPTAIN GORDON"

FEATURED SPEAKER – RON SOODALTER

Through this country's 21-year participation in fighting  
the trans-Atlantic slave trade, only one slave ship captain  
paid the full price authorized by the law – hanging. Author  
Ron Soodalter describes the factors that had to come  
together first in this country before any slave ship captain  
could be successfully prosecuted for piracy.

Book signing to follow program.

SATURDAY, JUNE 9TH – 2PM

"BLACK SAILORS IN NAVY BLUE"

FEATURED SPEAKER – JOSEPH P. REIDY, PH.D.

Black Americans had served in the United States Navy  
since the Revolution. During the American Civil War,  
blacks came into the navy in unprecedented numbers  
and were vital in meeting the needs of the fleet. The  
typical "experience" of a black sailor differed remarkably  
from state-to-state and ship-to-ship. Dr. Reidy brings  
together Civil War statistical data to illuminate and explain  
the previously-untold story of the African-American sailors'  
Civil War experience.

SATURDAY, JUNE 22ND 10AM TO 3PM

"HOLIDAYS, FESTIVITIES, & DIPLOMACY –  
*CONSTELLATION* ON FOREIGN STATIONS"

USS *Constellation* continued to carry out her mission while  
anchored in foreign ports. There, the ship focused on the  
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improved relations with foreign powers. Join Mary Eastman  
and Wendy Taparanskas, Ph.D., as they provide a unique,  
first-hand opportunity to view this little-known aspect of  
*Constellation's* Civil War history. "



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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:

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☐ \$50 Ship's Crew (family)  
☐ \$100 Sailing Master  
☐ \$250 Captain and Crew  
☐ \$500 Commodore  
☐ \$1000 Admiral  
☐ \$1000+ Corporate

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State \_\_\_\_\_

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**You may also become a museum member when you visit the ship or our website.**

**MEMBERSHIP HELPS TO KEEP THE SHIP AFLOAT!**

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