

home. Her beloved Thomas was off on the frontier of Lake Ontario. When they had married in 1812, Thomas was purser on *Constitution*, and one of the first men ashore to report the great victory over *HMS Guerriere*. Then, a year later, on the day Abigail posted a letter saying she looked forward to his safe return, Thomas's ship *USS Chesapeake* was defeated and captured by *HMS Shannon*. Captain James Lawrence, their good friend, lost his life, and Thomas was taken prisoner. But by the grace of God, Thomas was released within a month!

Now Abigail's only comfort was her infant son, James, whom they had named after the late Captain Lawrence. Abigail searched her mind for answers until she settled on a good plan. She would take the child inland to safety. By selling the wool from the sheep, she could supplement Thomas's earnings. With the support of her family close by, and the friendship of the other officer's wives, like her close friend Ann Hart Hull, wife of Thomas's former commanding officer Isaac Hull, she would pull through.

Full Circle

When Isaac Hull was a boy growing up on the coast of Connecticut, his father was taken prisoner by the British. A small, chubby boy, young Isaac must have been wide eyed as his father, upon being released two years later, supported his family for the duration of the American Revolution capturing British ships in Long Island Sound.

Sailing with his father on trading voyages to the West Indies and later as captain of his own merchant ships, Hull became a top notch seaman. When he joined the Navy, he rose quickly through the ranks, becoming first lieutenant on *Constitution* under Captain Silas Talbot.

Even before he sailed *Constitution* to victory over *Guerriere*, Hull had proven himself. In the Mediterranean, he had captured a Tripolitan warship several times the size of his schooner. More

than 200 men jumped overboard, rather than face this spitfire of a captain.

Near the end of his career, Hull returned to *Constitution*. Thanks in part to a poem written by a young medical student, Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Constitution* was to be restored. So it was that on a rainy June morning in 1833, Isaac Hull once again commanded the quarterdeck as *Constitution* was moved into the new John Quincy Adams dry dock in the Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston.

In more peaceful times, Hull also returned to the Mediterranean and stayed in Rome, where he struck up a friendship with an old acquaintance: former foe and captain of *Guerriere*, the Englishman James Dacres. In more ways than one, they made an unusual pair, the pencil thin Dacres and the bulky Hull, walking arm in arm.

A Child Lost at Sea

As the tide swept the six-year-old boy out to sea, his gaze fixed on the steadily receding figure of his mother. As he watched, the woman who moments before had thrust him into the wooden dinghy and shoved it from shore was set upon and slain.

George Sirian was among the few to escape the massacre of Psara, a tiny Greek island in the Aegean Sea. In 1824, the island was stormed by Turks and their allies, who spared no one. The Greeks and Turks were at war, as Greece struggled to free itself from the Ottoman Empire. American ships were in the waters nearby, but they were under strict orders from President Monroe not to interfere unless American interests were threatened. But someone rescued the lad, and a few years later he became a member of *Constitution's*

crew, serving as boy under Captain Daniel Todd Patterson. Patterson understood the plight of a boy caught in the crossfire of war. He had been but a lad himself, serving as a midshipman on board *Philadelphia* when she ran aground in the bay of Tripoli, and the entire crew was captured by corsairs. For almost two years, he had suffered as a prisoner of the Bashaw.

Young George must have received good care, because he made the Navy his life. By the time he retired, he had served in every squadron and may boast the longest stint of active duty in naval history — over 42 years. George Sirian also holds a record on *Constitution*, having served on her three different times.