

Privateer McClary

The Liberty Song

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A feature of the American Revolution that has never received nearly as much coverage in histories of that conflict as it warrants is the successful privateer war waged by the Americans against British merchant shipping. This conflict helped the Americans in many ways: got badly needed supplies to the colonies, drove up British maritime insurance rates, caused the Royal Navy to divert ships to chase privateers and increased anti-war sentiment among merchants in Britain. A typical privateer ship of the period is the *McClary*.

Commissioned by the state of New Hampshire on September 2, 1776 and named after New Hampshire hero Major Andrew McClary who fell at Bunker Hill, the *McClary* was an armed schooner equipped during her career with 6-8 cannon and up to six swivel guns.

Between September 1776 and February 1778 she would make five voyages.

In her first voyage she captured five prizes off the Newfoundland Banks:

the schooner *Neptune* , the schooner *Glasgow*, the British Army transport *Hero*, the ship *Live Oak* and the brigantine *Three Friends*.

In her second voyage she took the snow (merchant brig) *Resolution* and a transport, name unknown.

In her third voyage she took the brigantines *Jane*, *Two Sisters* and *Thetis*.

In her fourth voyage she captured the schooner *Lusanna*.

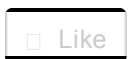
In her fifth voyage she made no captures and was captured herself by the frigate HMS *Unicorn* on February 6, 1778, bringing her privateering career to an end.

Although *McClary*, also called *McClarey*, a common variant of the *McClary* family name, enjoyed a brief privateering career, it was a successful one.

The British Army Transport ship *Hero* had a cargo of rum, with the cargo and ship having a value of 20,000 pounds. Two of the casks were fine rum with the intended recipients being the British generals Carleton and Burgoyne. One of these casks was presented to General Washington. The ship *Lusanna* and its cargo brought in 33, 957 pounds, a fortune for the time. The other captured vessels had cargos such as fish, salt, oil, sugar and coffee, all valuable commodities in wartime America.

During the Revolution American privateers swarmed the seas and destroyed or captured some 600 British ships. A formidable accomplishment for the infant United States in the teeth of the overwhelming Royal Navy and the occupation of many American ports by the British Army during the course of the War.

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2 Comments

On February 10, 2014 at 7:38 am dennis51 said:



**To have a ship named after thee,
One finely carried on the sea,
How much better can life be?
than,
To have a ship named after thee.**

**Chuckle – Wishing you were my high school history teacher. Memorizing
dates for the test is not learning.
Thank you for maintaining this blog.
In Christ,
Dennis McCutcheon**

On February 10, 2014 at 7:50 am Donald R. McClarey said:



**I got my undergrad degree in teaching social studies Dennis, before
I decided that I did not wish to work for a living and ran off to law**

school!

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