



Publisher
Richard J. Royer

Editor
Betty Rigoli

Art Director
Joseph S. Wadsworth

Asst. to the Publisher
Dixie Goertemiller

Advertising Sales
John Dozier
Craig Dozier
Robert Graham
Ellen Honey

Contributing Editors
Emily Chloe Burket
Richard C. Goertemiller
Anne M. Hays
John E. Schueler
William P. Turpin
Loring D. Wilson

Photography
Robert Grieser

Manuscripts submitted to CHESAPEAKE BAY MAGAZINE for publication should be typed, double-spaced, and in duplicate. A stamped, self-addressed envelope should be included if return of unaccepted material is desired.

CHESAPEAKE BAY MAGAZINE is published monthly by Chesapeake Bay Communications, Inc., 130 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, Maryland 21403. \$8.50 per year; \$1.00 per copy. Second-class postage paid at Annapolis, Maryland 21403, and additional office. Copyright © 1976 by Chesapeake Bay Communications, Inc.

THIS MONTH:

- Browse through Maryland's ghostly past and discover whole towns that have literally disappeared into thin air. Don't miss "A Ghosting We Will Go", by Dee Smith.
- What do you do when you lose your main halyard at sea? Romeda Milliken offers one solution in "Capture That Halyard."
- Did you know that our own Eastern Shore produced a Revolutionary War Naval hero who might have equalled John Paul Jones? Read "Chesapeake Echoes" and discover Lambert Wickes, detailed by Anne M. Hays.

THE BAY SCENE

- Our Bay Community/Letters 7
- June Around the Bay 10
- A Ghosting We Will Go by *Dee Smith* 12

BAY BOATING — Power and Sail

- This Year's Cruise — The Greatest Ever by *Jane and Douglas Montgomery* 22
- Capture That Halyard by *Romeda Milliken* 24
- Sailing With a Toddler by *J.B. Perkins, M.D.* .. 26
- Cruise of the Month by *Richard Goertemiller* ... 28
- Starting Line by *Anne M. Hays* 30

BAY HERITAGE

- Chesapeake Echoes — Part 6
- Lambert Wickes — An Authentic Hero by *Anne M. Hays* 17

BAY COUNTRY FISHING AND CAMPING

- Gittin' Away by *Bill Burton* 32

BAY ECOLOGY

- Danger in Miniature by *Loring D. Wilson*
- Part 6: People Pollution and Some Comments .. 19

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Captain's Log by *John E. Schueler* 11
- Browsing Thru by *William L. Rigoli* 15
- Galleys Ashore: Dock and Dine, Part I by *Emily Chloe Burket* 35
- Real Estate 41
- Keeping Up Your Boat by *Gordon Groene* 43
- Yacht Sales 43

NEXT MONTH: Chesapeake Bay Magazine's Yankee Doodle Dandy issue.

"What's In A Ship's Name," by J. William Joynes, tells us about what happened to all those famous history-book ships.
— In "A Woman Rarely Gifted," Carson Gibb gives an account of Anna Ella Carroll — one of Maryland's first liberated women.

P.S. We forgot to wish Emily Burket and Bob Grieser a "Happy Anniversary" last month. Breathlessly, we have run all the way to the printer to make peace with this deserving duo, who have brightened our pages during their first year with us.



From Wickliffe, Lambert Wickes could look out over Chesapeake Bay and the mouth of the Chester River.

Chesapeake Echoes

As our contribution to the celebration, *Bay Magazine* will feature "Chesapeake Echoes" each month, bringing readers interesting bits of Bay heritage from those vibrant days of our nation's birth.

LAMBERT WICKES — AN AUTHENTIC HERO

by Anne M. Hays

Captain Lambert Wickes! Everyone was talking about him in August of 1776, when news of his successful cruise to Martinique and his fight there with the British war ship, *Shark* reached the American colonies. The newspapers of those days carried accounts saying: "Captain Wickes has added much glory to the American flag," and "Captain Wickes and his ship's crew have acquired much applause by this affair."

A year later, six months before diplomats achieved the Treaty of Paris, Wickes nearly succeeded in causing

France to go to war with England. He made daring raids on British shipping, using French ports as a refuge, and bringing his prizes in to sell there. Benjamin Franklin, then one of our American Commissioners in France, called him "a gallant officer and a very worthy man."

An authentic hero, yet his name is remembered today by only a few. Who was this man?

The family home, Wickliffe, had stood on Eastern Neck Island (now a National Wildlife Refuge) for approximately 100 years when Lambert Wickes was born there around 1742. Close by in those days, but now totally gone, was New Yarmouth, a thriving colonial town with two shipyards. Within sight was the mouth of the Chester River, where ships frequently passed by on their way to the busy port of Chestertown.

Because Lambert had an older brother, Samuel, to whom the family estate would pass, he was free to indulge his interest in these passing ships, and he probably went to sea on one as a teenager. When still only a young man he was already captain of a commercial vessel, carrying cargos for Robert Morris and other Philadelphia and Chestertown merchants.

When the Marine Committee of the Continental Congress, of which Robert Morris was secretary, saw the need for commissioning ships to defend Philadelphia, Lambert Wickes was appointed captain of one of them. His ship was the merchantman *Molly*, refitted for war with guns and renamed the *Reprisal*. A total of 130 men, including 126 marines, were assigned to man her, though she was only about 100 feet long, with a 30-foot beam.

continued on next page

Between March 28 and April 27, 1776, Wickes assumed command of the *Reprisal*. His first assignment was in the Delaware River, but he wanted more action, and a chance to prove himself and thereby gain command of a frigate. Thus he was pleased to be selected to sail to Martinique in the French West Indies, carrying William Bingham to be a permanent Continental agent there.

His voyage was delayed by a British blockade of Delaware Bay which lifted after a skirmish over an American blockade runner involving the four Continental Navy ships *Reprisal*, *Lexington*, *Hornet*, and *Wasp* and the two British blockade ships *Orpheus* and *Kingfisher*.

After this engagement, the British ships left their positions and Wickes and the others, including 13 merchant ships, set sail July 3, 1776. Three of the merchant fleet were taken later as prizes, but Wickes did not see the British ships again.

On July 11, Wickes reported taking his own prize, the *Friendship*, a vessel of 240 tons, carrying 500 hogsheads of sugar. On July 13, he reported another prize, the schooner *Peter*, 80 tons, loaded with rum, sugar, coffee, cocoa and cotton.

Two or three days later he took the last prize of the cruise, the brigantine *Neptune*, 80 tons, carrying rum. Though he caught one more ship, the *Dutchess of Leinster*, Wickes let her go, possibly because she was Irish, but probably because he lacked enough spare men by now to put a prize crew aboard.

On the afternoon of July 27, 1776, the British sloop of war *Shark* was sighted lying at anchor in St. Pierre, principal seaport of Martinique. When the *Shark* spotted the *Reprisal* she left the harbor. After some maneuvering the two ships battled for about half an hour. Though accounts of the battle differ, several say the *Shark* broke off the engagement and then was fired on by the French shore battery twice before heading out to sea. The British Captain later returned to protest, but was instead reprimanded by the French for attacking another vessel in the waters of Martinique. By this time Wickes and Bingham had been received by the Governor and the mission of establishing Bingham there to conduct Continental business had been accomplished. After some maintenance chores, the *Reprisal* left for home August 26, 1776, arriving amidst acclaim for her exploits.

Now a hero, Wickes' next assignment was to take Benjamin Franklin to France. They sailed on October 26, 1776.

Wickes' orders were to proceed to France cautiously, not to go out of his way to take prizes, and not to take any undue risks. After delivering Dr. Franklin to Nantes he should leave promptly, giving the impression he would return straight home. He was, instead, to cruise in the English Channel, take as many prizes as possible, using French ports as a refuge or to send prizes in, taking a chance that the French would be friendly, as they were in Martinique, or at least tolerant, although they were then nominally at peace with England.

(Technically ships of war were not allowed in French

ports except to avoid bad weather or to replenish provisions, and then they could not stay more than 24 hours or sell prizes.)

Just before reaching France, with Franklin's permission, Wickes took two prizes, the *George* and the *La Vigne*. On November 28 all three ships anchored in Quiberon Bay, and the *Reprisal* became the first regularly commissioned American Naval vessel in European waters.

With the ships held there by the same unfavorable winds which carried them off course, Franklin went ashore and completed his journey to Nantes by carriage. Wickes made a clandestine sale of the two prizes and their cargos to purchasers who, in return for a bargain, assumed responsibilities for changing the names and altering the records of the ships, which legally could not be disposed of as prizes in France.

After many delays, on January 24, 1777, Wickes headed the *Reprisal* toward the English Channel, although to deceive others who might read it, a message was sent directing him to cruise in the Bay of Biscay. Around February 1, off Land's End, the *Reprisal* took her first prize from the unsuspecting British, the brig *Polly and Nancy*. Before February 5, Wickes had taken two more, the *Hibernia* and the *Generous Friends*. With prize crews aboard, these three ships were sent to L'Orient.

Wickes' next encounter was with a King's packet, the *Swallow*. After some cannon fire, the *Reprisal* moved in for boarding. Lambert Wickes, it is said, was the first man on *Swallow's* deck and the British surrendered after a short fight.

The fifth prize of the cruise was the *Betty*. By now Wickes had more than a comfortable number of prisoners, and too few of his own men on board, and ran back into L'Orient on February 13.

Controversy swarmed around Wickes and the five prizes. Wickes was given notice they must all leave within 24 hours, but he bargained for time by saying the *Reprisal* was in need of repairs. Four of the prizes were sold clandestinely while negotiations were being made.

While messages flew between the stalling French diplomats and the complaining British diplomats, Wickes invited a carpenter and a caulker aboard to inspect the *Reprisal* and ascertain her unseaworthy condition. Wickes made sure they would attest to this by arranging to pump water secretly into the hold to simulate a leaking bottom. Thus, he was allowed to stay in port "for repairs."

It was not until May 28, 1777, after much diplomatic maneuvering on all sides, that Wickes set sail from France. He was accompanied by the *Lexington*, Captain Johnson, and the *Dolphin*, Capt. Nicholson. The squadron planned to cruise up the Irish Channel, but was forced by adverse winds to sail around the west coast of Ireland and into the North Channel. Several neutral ships were sighted along the way, but none were stopped.

June 18, in the North Channel, the first prize of the cruise was taken. In four days they took a total of nine vessels (three sunk, one released, and five sent with prize crews to France). The squadron headed south

continued on page 27

CHESAPEAKE ECHOES *continued*

down the Irish Channel, taking more ships along the way. Before the cruise ended, a total of 18 enemy ships had been taken. Eight were sent to France with prize crews, two smugglers were released, one ship was sent to Whitehaven with prisoners, and seven were sunk.

On June 26, 1777, while returning to France, a large ship was seen. Wickes thought she might be an Indian and sailed closer, but she turned out to be the *Burford*, a 74-gun British ship-of-the-line.

When the mistake was discovered the squadron bore off, and the *Burford* hoisted all sail to follow. Wickes signalled for the squadron to separate, knowing the *Burford* would follow the *Reprisal*, the largest of the three ships. All day the *Burford* gained steadily. Around 7 p.m. the *Burford's* guns came within range and shot began to fall around the *Reprisal*.

Wickes took desperate measures. He ordered his guns pushed overboard to lighten his ship. Speed increased, but not enough, and the *Burford* still gained. Wickes ordered some of the *Reprisal's* beams sawed through, which increased her resiliency and speed, but weakened the hull.

By 8:30 p.m., after a 12-hour chase, the *Reprisal* was so close to the French coast that the *Burford*, because of shallow water, squally weather, and darkness, gave up. Wickes escaped into St. Malo around noon the next day. The *Dolphin* also sailed safely into St. Malo and the *Lexington* made port in Morlaix.

Wickes later wrote to Nicholson, "My Little vessell is torn all to pieces, if She goes out again from here she must have new Mast Bowsprit etc., however I hope they

will never think of fitting her out again . . ."

But things had become so tense between the French and the British that there was no question of the *Reprisal* being allowed to stay in St. Malo, even though she had been given a hero's welcome by the people there. The *Reprisal* must be sent out. The British had a lookout on the island of Jersey watching for the *Reprisal* and planned to intercept her when she left.

On September 14, 1777, after more months of delay, orders came from the American Commissioners to sail directly for America, and the *Reprisal* left St. Malo with 130 men aboard.

Next heard was the news that all on board except the cook had gone down with the ship in a November storm off the Newfoundland Banks. The cook was picked up by a French fishing boat and taken to France, so the news of the *Reprisal's* loss took five months to get to America. It was March of 1778 before Congress learned of it.

After the *Reprisal* sank and Wickes and his crew drowned they were almost forgotten. Pleas from relatives and descendants of the crew for a share of the prize money due from the *Reprisal's* cruises were ignored. Other heroes like John Paul Jones arose to take the place of Wickes during the remainder of the war.

Not happy to see an Eastern Shoreman go unrecognized, the citizens of Rock Hall, now the town closest to Wickes' birthplace on Eastern Neck Island, have proclaimed Lambert Wickes Day on July 17. On that day a ceremony will be held in Wickes' honor at the site of Wickliffe, where a memorial was placed in 1975. □



INCREDIBLE SUPER POWER DEPTH FINDER

- Easily installed *inside* your hull.
- 3 times more powerful than any other low cost depth finder.
- Light emitting diodes, not neon.
- 4 times brighter, won't burn out.
- Accurate scale — 960 ft. or 160 fathoms.
- Repeater unit available.
- Full 1 year parts & labor warranty.

ONLY \$169

ABLE MARINE ELECTRONICS

"We're ABLE — Our name says it all!"

Sales & Service of CB, Business & Marine Equipment
413 N. Crain Highway, Glen Burnie, Md. 21061

(301) 761-7829

Dealer Inquiries Invited



Professional Documentation,
Ship Mortgage Services
and
Settlements

Boat Documentation, Inc.

Pleasure & Commercial
All Ports

Serving Lenders · Dealers & Owners over a decade

[301] 292-3111

10905 Ft. Washington Rd., Oxon Hill, Md. 20022

BOAT SLIPS

500 Slips, 20' to 50' • Power & Sail

- 8' wide piers
- Gas, oil & repairs
- Showers & bathrooms
- Travelift
- Trailer boat parking
- Marina store

BOWLEYS POINT YACHT BASIN

Route 15, Box 500 (end of Bowley's Quarter Rd.)

Middle River, Maryland 21220

301-335-3553