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### CAPTURE OF THE PRESIDENT.

of a letter from Com. Alexander Murray, President of a Court of Inquiry, lately held at New-York, to investigate the causes of the capture of the U. S. frigate President, to the Secretary of the Navy, dated New-York, April 17, 1815.

I herewith transmit to you the report of the court of inquiry, respecting the capture of the frigate President, with the opinion of the

ident, with the opinion of the President. We have been the more minute in our investigation than might at first view have been deemed necessary; but as there has been a diversity of opinions prevailing among British commanders, concerned in her capture, it was desirable in view, to lay before the world the most correct manner, every circumstance that led to that event, which has afforded another high proof of American heroism, and so every officer and crew, that every American citizen must feel a pride in knowing, that our flag hath been nobly defended.

The minutes of the court having been read and approved, the court cleared, and after due deliberation, resolved to express the sentiments and opinions of the members, on the matters submitted to them as follows:

In execution of the orders of the Secretary of the Navy, we (with the exception of two young midshipmen) examined every officer belonging to the President, within the reach of the court, who survived the late glorious contest between the frigate President and a squadron of H. B.

We are of opinion that the primary cause of the loss of the President, was her running on the bar, and she was leaving this port. The silence and continuance of the rocks she received for an hour and half or more, considering that she was laden with stores and provisions for a very long cruise, could not have injured her greatly, but must have impeded her sailing, and hoggid and twisted appearance when she arrived at Bermuda, must have been the effects of this unfortunate accident. We are convinced that it was owing to this, that the enemy were able to overtake

The striking of the President on the bar cannot be imputed to the fault of any officer who was attached to her; on the contrary, we think every possible precaution was taken, and the utmost exertions were used by her commander and crew, to insure her safe passage over the bar, and to relieve her after she had struck. The accident was occasioned by some mistake in the sailing of the boats, which were to serve as beacons for the President, through a channel always dangerous to a vessel of her draught, but particularly so at such a time as she was obliged to select for passing it, when the land marks could not be distinguished.

From the time that the superiority of the enemy's force was ascertained, and it became the duty of the President to evade it, we are convinced that the most proper measures were pursued, and that she made every possible effort to escape. In our opinion, were she to be attended with success, those which were adopted by Com. Decatur. Any suggestions that different measures would have been more proper, or more likely to accomplish the object, we think are without foundation, and may be the result of ignorance, or the dictates of a culpable ambition, or of envy.

We consider the management of the President from the time the chase commenced till her surrender, as the highest evidence of the experience, skill and resources of her commander, and of the ability and seamanship of her officers and crew. We fear that we cannot express, in a manner that will do justice to our feelings, our admiration of the conduct of Com. Decatur, and his officers and crew, while engaged with the enemy, threatened with a force so superior, possessing advantages, which must have appeared to render all opposition unavailing, otherwise than as it might affect the honour of our navy, and the character of our seamen. They fought with a spirit which no prospect of success could have heightened, and if victory had met its common reward, the Endymion's name would have been added to our list of naval conquests. In this unequal conflict the enemy gained a ship but the victory was ours. When the President was obliged to leave the Endymion to avoid the other ships, which were fast coming up, the Endymion was subdued; and if her friends had not been at hand to rescue her, she was so entirely disabled that she soon must have struck her flag. A proof of this, is that she made no attempt to pursue the President, or to annoy her by a single shot while the President was within her reach, when, with the hope of escape from the overwhelming force which was nearly upon her the President presented her stern to the Endymion's broadside. A further proof that the Endymion was conquered is, the shattered condition in which she appeared, while the President in the contest with her had sustained but little injury; and the fact that the Endymion did not join the squadron till many hours after the President had been surrounded by the other four enemy's ships, and had surrendered to them, is strong corroborative evidence of the disabled state in which the President left the Endymion.

We think it due to Com. Decatur and his heroic officers and crew, to notice the proposition he made to board the Endymion, when he found she was coming up, and the manner in which this proposition was received by his gallant crew. Such a design, at such a time, could only have been conceived by a soul without fear, and approved with enthusiastic cheerings by men regardless of danger. Had not the enemy perceived the attempt, and availed himself of the power he had in the early part of the action to shun the approach of the President, the American stars might now be shining on the Endymion. In the subsequent part of the engagement, the enemy's squadron was too near to permit the execution of this design and the disabled state of the Endymion would have frustrated the principal object which Com. Decatur had in making so bold an attempt, which was to avail himself of the Endymion's superior sailing to escape with his crew from his pursuers.

We conclude by expressing our opinion, that Com. Decatur, as well during the chase, as through his contest with the enemy, evinced great judgment and skill, perfect coolness, the most determined resolution, and heroic courage. That his conduct, and the conduct of his officers and crew, is highly honourable to them, and to the American navy, and deserves the warmest gratitude of their country. That they did not give up their ship till she was surrounded and overpowered by a force so superior, that further resistance would have been unjustifiable and a useless sacrifice of the lives of brave men.

The order of the Secretary of the Navy requires us to express an opinion as to the conduct of the officers and crew of the President after the capture. The testimony of all the witnesses concurs in enabling us to give it our decided approbation.

By the court,  
ALEX. MURRAY, Pres.  
True copy from the original,  
Cadwalader D. Colden,  
Judge Advocate.  
Navy Department, April, 20, 1815.

APPROVED—  
B. W. CROWNINSHIELD.

### SIR,

In the course of official duty, it is my highest satisfaction to render justice to the gallantry and good conduct of the brave officers and seamen of the United States Navy.

In giving an official sanction to the recent proceedings of the court of Enquiry, instituted at your request, to investigate the causes of the loss, by capture, of the Frigate President, late of the Navy of the United States, while under your command; and to enquire into the conduct of the commander, officers and crew of the said frigate, before and after surrender to the enemy; it would be equally unjust to your merit, as well as to my sentiments and feelings, to pass over this investigation with a mere formal approbation—I have therefore, sir, to express to you, in the fullest manner, the high sense of approbation which the President of the United States and this department entertain for your professional character as an officer, who in every instance has added lustre to the stars of the union; and whose brilliant actions have raised the national honor and fame, even in the moment of surrendering your ship to an enemy's squadron of vastly superior force, over whose attack singly, you were decidedly triumphant: and you will be pleased to present to each of your gallant officers and crew, the thanks of your government, for their brave defence of the ship, and the flag of the United States.

The proceedings and opinion of the court of Enquiry of which Commodore Alexander Murray is President, are approved.  
I am very respectfully, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
B. W. CROWNINSHIELD,  
Com. Stephen Decatur, U. S. navy,  
New-York.

### FALLS OF THE MISSOURI.

The following striking description of the Falls of the Missouri, is extracted from that highly interesting and valuable work, Lewis and Clarke's Travels; a book which ought to belong to the library of every man able to purchase it.

Captain Lewis had gone about two miles, when his ears were saluted with the agreeable sound of a fall of water, and as he advanced, a spray which seemed driven by the high southwest wind arose above the plain like a column of smoke, and vanished in an instant. Towards this point he directed his steps, and the noise increasing as he approached, soon became too tremendous to be mistaken for any thing but the Great Falls of the Missouri. Having travelled seven miles after first hearing the sound, he reached the falls about 12 o'clock; the hills as he approached were difficult of access and 200 feet high; down these he hurried with impatience, and seating himself on some rocks under the centre of the falls, enjoyed the sublime spectacle of this stupendous object, which since the creation had been lavishing its magnificence upon the desert, unknown to civilization.

The river immediately at its cascade is 300 yards wide, & is pressed in by a perpendicular cliff on the left, which rises to about 100 feet, and extends up the stream for a mile, on the right, the bluff is also perpendicular, for 300 yards above the fall. For ninety or a hundred yards, from the left cliff, the water falls in one smooth, even sheet, over a precipice of at least 80 feet. The remaining part of the river precipitates itself with a more rapid current, but being received as it falls by the irregular and somewhat projecting rocks below, forms a splendid prospect of perfectly white foam two hundred yards in length, and eighty in perpendicular elevation. This spray is dissipated into a thousand shapes, sometimes flying up in columns of 15 or 20 feet, which are then oppressed by larger masses of the white foam, on all which the sun impresses the brightest colours of the rainbow. From the Falls he directed his course south-west up the river; af-

ter passing one continued rapid, and three small cascades, each three or four feet high, he reached, at the distance of five miles a second fall. The river is about 400 yards wide, and for the distance of 300, throws itself over the depth of 19 feet, and so irregularly, that he gave it the name of Crooked Falls. From the southern shore it extends obliquely upwards about 150 yards, and then forms an acute angle downwards nearly to the commencement of four small islands close to the northern side. From the perpendicular pitch to these islands, a distance of more than 100 yards, the water glides down a sloping rock with a velocity almost equal to that of its fall. Above this fall the river bends suddenly to the northward; while viewing this place Capt. Lewis heard a loud roar above him, and crossing the point of a hill for a few hundred yards, he saw one of the most beautiful objects in nature; the whole Missouri is suddenly stopped by one shelving rock, which without a single niche, & with an edge as straight and regular as if formed by art, stretches itself from one side of the river to the other, for at least a quarter of a mile. Over this it precipitates itself in an even, uninterrupted sheet to the perpendicular depth of 50 feet, whence, dashing against the rocky bottom it rushes rapidly down, leaving behind it a spray of the purest foam across the river. The scene which it presented was indeed regularly beautiful, since, without any of the wild, irregular sublimity of the other falls, it combined all the regular elegancies which the fancy of a painter would select to form a beautiful water-fall. The eye had scarcely been regaled with this charming prospect, when, at the distance of half a mile, Capt. Lewis observed another of a similar kind; to this he immediately hastened, and found a cascade stretching across the whole river for a quarter of a mile with a descent of 14 feet, tho' the perpendicular pitch was only 6 feet. This too, in any other neighbourhood would have been an object of great magnificence, but after what he had just seen it became an object of secondary interest; his curiosity being however awakened, he determined to go on, even should night overtake him, to the head of the falls. He therefore pursued the s. w. course of the river which was one constant succession of rapids & small cascades, at every one of which the bluffs grew lower, or the bed of the river became more on a level with the plains. At the distance of two and a half miles he arrived at another cataract of twenty-six feet. The river here is six hundred feet wide, but the descent is not immediately perpendicular, tho' the river falls generally with a regular and smooth sheet; for about one third of the descent, a rock protrudes to a small distance, receives the water in its passage and gives it a curve. On the south side is a beautiful plain, a few feet above the level of the falls; on the north the country is more broken, and there is a hill not far from the river. Just below the falls is a little island in the middle of the river well covered with timber. Here, on a cottonwood tree, an eagle had fixed its nest, and seemed the undisputed mistress of a spot, to contest whose dominion neither man nor beast, would venture across the gulfs that surrounded it, and which is further secured by the mist rising from the falls. This solitary bird could not escape the observation of the Indians, who made the eagle's nest a part of their description of the falls which now proves to be correct in almost every particular, except that they did not do justice to their height." Vol. I. p. 260-264.

For more than thirteen miles (says the Journal in another place) we went along the numerous bends of the river, and then reached two small islands; three and three quarter miles beyond which is a small creek in a bend to the left, above a small island on the right side of the river. We were regaled about ten o'clock, P. M. with a thunderstorm of rain and hail, which lasted for an hour, but during the day in this confined valley, through which we are passing, the heat is almost insup-

portable; yet whenever we obtain a glimpse of the lofty tops of the mountains, we are tantalized with a view of the snow. These mountains have their sides, and summits partially varied with little copes of pine, cedar, and balsam fir. A mile and a half beyond this creek, the rocks approach the river on both sides, forming a most sublime & extraordinary spectacle. For 5 & three quarter miles, these rocks rise perpendicularly from the water's edge to the height of nearly 1200 feet. They are composed of a black granite near its base, but from its lighter color above, from the fragments we suppose the upper part to be flint of a yellowish brown and cream colour. Nothing can be imagined more tremendous than the frowning darkness of these rocks, which project over the river and menace us with destruction. The river, of 150 yards in width, seems to have forced its channel down this solid mass, but so reluctantly has it given way, that during the whole distance the water is very deep, even at the edges, and for the first three miles there is not a spot except one of a few yards, in which a man could stand between the water and the towering perpendicular of the mountain: the convulsion of the passage must have been terrible, since at its outlet there are vast columns of rock torn from the mountain, which are strewn on both sides of the river, the trophies as it were of the victory. Several fine springs burst out from the chasms of the rock, and contribute to increase the river, which has now a strong current, but very fortunately we are able to overcome it with our oars, since it would be impossible to use either the cord or the pole. We were obliged to go on some time after dark, not able to find a spot large enough to encamp on, but at length, about two miles above a small island in the middle of the river, we met with a spot on the left side, where we procured plenty of lightwood and pitchpine. This extraordinary range of rocks we called the Gates of the Rocky Mountains. We had made twenty two miles, and four and a quarter miles from the entrance of the gates. The mountains are higher to day than they were yesterday. We saw some big-horns, a few antelopes and beaver, but since entering the mountains have found no buffalo; the latter however, are in great plenty; the mosquitoes have become less troublesome than they were.

Vol. I. p. 310, 311.

From a London paper of Jan. 3. The Turkish frigate called the Camel, Abdallah Hamed commander, was recently employed in collecting the annual tribute of the inhabitants of the islands in the Grecian Archipelago. While at anchor off Mytilene, the following tragical circumstance took place:—A Greek being unable or unwilling to pay the assessment, had been conveyed on board the ship, and after undergoing repeated bastinadoes, was threatened with further punishment. Having next day refused compliance his wife and daughter were, by Hamed's order, put to death, after treatment two cruel to describe. This scene took place in the presence of the wretched husband, who maddened by the sight devoted himself to destruction to obtain revenge for such outrages on the common feelings of nature. While the crew were asleep, he gained the powder chamber and fired it. An instantaneous explosion, which scattered burning fragments over the neighboring islands, announced the terrible catastrophe to the inhabitants. What remained of the frigate was speedily consumed; and, of the crew, 160 perished. The survivors including Hamed, the Commander were dreadfully mutilated.

The first squadron of the American fleet destined to act against Algiers, consists of the frigates Guerrier, com. Decatur, capt. Lewis, Macedonia, capt. Jones, Constellation, capt. Gordon, and sloops Ontario, capt. Elliott, Epervier (brig) capt. Downes, and the corvets Firefly, It. Rodgers, Flambeau, J. J. Nicholson, Spark, Gamble, Spitfire, Dallas, and Torch, Chauncey. N. Y. paper.

The subscriber will find in this paper a full and complete list of the names of the subscribers to the Maryland Gazette and Political Intelligencer, for the year 1815. The names of the subscribers are as follows:—

**60 Dollars Reward.**  
Run away from the subscriber on the 2nd of October, 1814, a negro named DICK: he is a short, yellow complexioned fellow, about 35 years of age, 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high, and polite when spoken to. He took with him a pair of cotton country cloth trousers, with a broad blue stripe, & a white country cloth jacket and a coat. He is a rough shoemaker, and took away with him his tools. He ever brings home the said negro, and cures him so that I get him again, and receive the above reward with all reasonable charges.  
Benjamin Harwood, of A. A. County, South River Neck, near Annapolis.  
N. B. It is supposed the above man may have gone to Montgomery county, where his mother lives, Mrs. Murray, near Montgomery Court House, and may have a pass. B. A. December 1.

**NOTICE.**  
Mr. Isaac Parker having assigned the subscriber all the debts due to his books, which have accrued equal establishment in the Union Tavern, those indebted on said books, are required to make payment to the subscriber only. Indulgence cannot be given, no discrimination can be made in mode of collection. James S. March 2.

**Six Cents Reward.**  
But no Charges to be paid. Run away from the subscriber, on the 1st of the spring of 1813, a time to the tailoring business, George Richards, about 14 years of age, stout built, hard-featured, and hair.  
N. J. Walker April 13.

**NOTICE.**  
The subscriber having obtained the testamentary on the personal estate of Mrs. Mary Watson, of Anne Arundel county, deceased, requests all persons having claims on said estate, to produce them, authenticated, to the subscriber, who are indebted to make payment.  
Charles Watson, Executor April 23.

**State of Maryland.**  
Orphans Court April 23.  
On application by petition of the Norris of The executor of the will and testament of Mary Harwood, of Anne Arundel county, deceased, ordered that he give the notice required by law for creditors to exhibit claims against the said deceased, that the same be published each week, for the space of six consecutive weeks, in the Maryland Gazette and Political Intelligencer.  
John Gassaway, Reg. M. A. A. County.

**This is to give notice.**  
That the subscribers of Baltimore county, have obtained from the court of Anne Arundel county, Maryland, letters testamentary, personal estate of Mary Harwood, of Anne Arundel county, deceased. All persons having claims against said deceased, are hereby required to exhibit the same, with the vouchers of the same, to the subscribers, on the 13th day of April, 1815.  
John Gassaway, Reg. M. A. A. County.

**Declaratory.**  
Bonds, & Com. at this Office.