

## *James Josiah, Master Mariner*

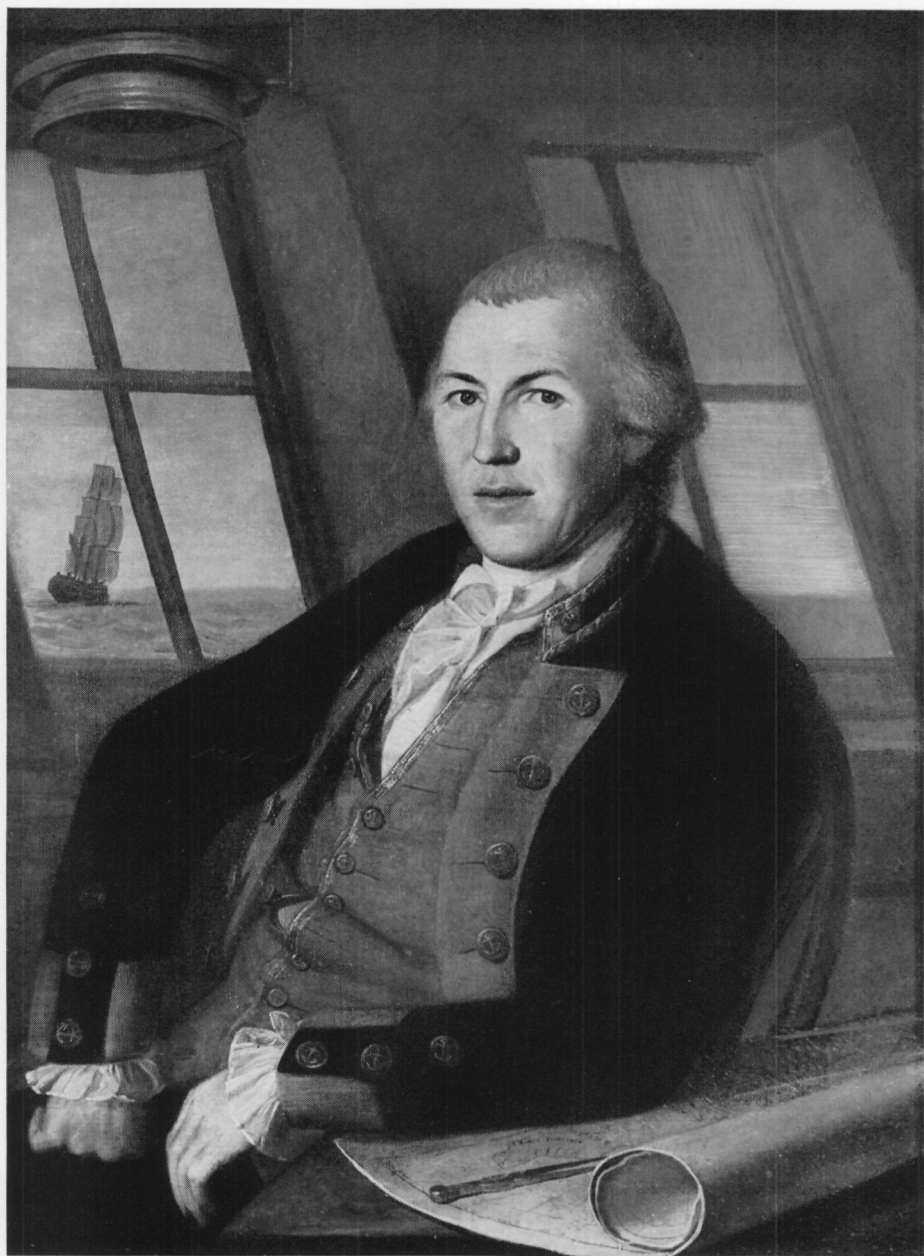
CAPTAIN JAMES JOSIAH, master mariner of Philadelphia, had his portrait painted in 1787 by the celebrated artist, Charles Willson Peale. For background, the captain chose his cabin on board the brig *St. Croix Packet*. The painter, perforce, made his preliminary sketches during a two-week period in March, while the brig lay in port between voyages. Just when the finishing touches were put to the portrait is not clear, as Peale simply noted upon the canvas—"painted by C W Peale 1787."

Through that master's brush is revealed an unusual painting: the captain sitting at ease in the environment he loved, elbow resting beside a pair of calipers upon a partially unrolled chart, overhead a compass suspended from the cabin's ceiling, and through one of the stern windows a glimpse of a ship under full sail. In that setting, James Josiah is an impressive figure, a handsome man in the prime of life, the glow of health in his ruddy cheeks, bits of gray flecking hair close-cropped across the forehead and banged above the ears, and eyes gazing forth with the composed, confident air of a competent seaman.

His attire betokened the successful seaman as well: a black coat with gold-lined collar, long red lapels, sleeves partially cuffed in red, anchor-embossed gold buttons ornamenting both lapels and cuffs, white silk shirt with wrist-covering ruffled cuffs, white stock and cravat, and a red waistcoat edged in gold and spaced with smaller buttons of the same anchor motive.<sup>1</sup>

This, then, was James Josiah as Peale saw him in 1787, a stirring career behind him and many eventful years lying ahead. Elusive, fragmentary incidents of that career are inscribed upon the back of the painting, placed there in 1890 by the loving hand of an adopted

<sup>1</sup> The portrait of James Josiah is owned by Arthur J. Sussel of Philadelphia, with whose kind permission it is reproduced as a black and white illustration. Verbal description can scarcely do justice to the rich colors used by Peale.



Courtesy of Arthur J. Sussel

CAPTAIN JAMES JOSIAH, 1787  
By Charles Willson Peale



daughter's son.<sup>2</sup> Much more about this sea captain is told in the records, public and private, which span the sixty-nine years of his life. To read them is to appreciate better the simple, unassuming greatness of the man who graces the portrait.

James Josiah was born on September 9, 1751, youngest child of Emanuel and Ann Josiah. His father, a shipmaster out of Philadelphia in pre-French and Indian War days, had abandoned the sea for shopkeeping before young James reached his teens. Early boyhood was thus spent amid the aroma of rum, tea, and spices in the Lower Delaware Ward store, where cronies of his father gathered to spin fascinating sea yarns.<sup>3</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that by the time he was sixteen years old, James had forsaken the shop and shipped as cabin boy in a West Indian trader. Nothing is known of these formative years at sea. The notes on the portrait state that he served at one time in the British navy. A record of such service might be discovered in the musty muster roll of some long-forgotten English man-of-war; certainly, a hitch in the navy of the then "Lords of the Sea" seems likely in view of his subsequent efficiency in naval matters. At any rate, by 1775 he had become a shipmaster, and was referred to as Captain Josiah.<sup>4</sup>

During the Revolutionary War, James Josiah emerged from obscurity. The province of Pennsylvania, responding to the recommendation of the Continental Congress that each colony provide armed vessels to protect harbors and navigation along the seacoast,<sup>5</sup> had built thirteen row-galleys during the summer and early fall of 1775. One of these, the *Chatham*, mounting a 24-pound cannon and a number of swivels, when ready for service lacked a first lieutenant.

<sup>2</sup> The son of the adopted daughter was F. Woodward Earl, who noted upon the back of the portrait in April, 1890, a brief outline of Josiah's Revolutionary War services and some genealogical data. Hereafter this will be referred to as F. Woodward Earl Notes.

<sup>3</sup> Emanuel Josiah was one of the early members of the Captains of Ships Charitable Club, his name appearing in the list of members on Oct. 7, 1765. "Managers Quarterly Book, Remarks of the Society from July 4<sup>th</sup> 1765 to Jan'y 1<sup>st</sup> 1781," Records of the Society for the Relief of Poor and Distressed Masters of Ships, Their Widows and Children, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), hereafter referred to as the Shipmasters' Club. In the return of taxables for the city of Philadelphia for 1769 and 1774, he is listed as a shopkeeper in the Lower Delaware Ward. *Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series*, XIV, 151, 257.

<sup>4</sup> F. Woodward Earl Notes.

<sup>5</sup> *Journals of the Continental Congress* (Washington, 1904-1937), II, 189 (July 18, 1775), hereafter cited as *Journals of Congress*.

The Committee of Safety solved the deficiency on November 16 by resolving "That James Josiah be appointed 1st Lieutenant of the Armed Boat Chatham, Commanded by Capt. [Charles] Alexander."<sup>6</sup> He repaired on board her at Fort Island (Fort Mifflin), where the galleys had assembled for the winter.

Service in the *Chatham* was brief—less than a month. A naval committee of the Continental Congress had selected Nicholas Biddle, one of the galley captains, to command the *Andrew Doria*, a fourteen-gun brig in a small fleet being outfitted for the Continental service. Biddle wanted Josiah as his first lieutenant,<sup>7</sup> and on December 11 the Committee of Safety obliged: "Upon application to this Board, in behalf of Captain James Josiah, that he may have leave to resign his commission to enter the Continental Service, liberty was granted him."<sup>8</sup>

Much that is known about the initial operations of the little Continental fleet under Commodore Esek Hopkins can be attributed to "A Journal of a Cruse In the Brig Andrew Doria . . . Begun January 4<sup>th</sup> 1776," which Lieutenant Josiah kept with meticulous care until June 2. During that period he recorded the bloodless capture of New Providence in the Bahamas, the inglorious engagement with His Majesty's ship *Glasgow*, and the subsequent successful cruises of the *Andrew Doria* until the capture of two transports filled with Highland troops. Even then, his quill pen continued a journal as prize master of one of the transports for nine more days until his command, the *Crawford*, fell afoul of the British frigate *Cerberus* early in the morning of June 12. The plucky lieutenant, with 9-pound shot falling perilously close about him, led the enemy a merry chase for twelve hours before he succumbed to superior speed.<sup>9</sup>

Josiah's fate was to be decided by John Symonds, an English captain who looked upon rebels as fit only for the gallows and who treated captives with studied brutality. When the Americans came aboard the *Cerberus* they were jeered at and threatened with the

<sup>6</sup> *Colonial Records* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1851-1853), X, 404.

<sup>7</sup> William Bell Clark, *Captain Dauntless, The Story of Nicholas Biddle of the Continental Navy* (Baton Rouge, La., 1949), 84, 89.

<sup>8</sup> *Colonial Records*, X, 426.

<sup>9</sup> "A Journal of a Cruse In the Brig Andrew Doria," Robert Wilden Neeser, ed., *The Despatches of Molyneux Shuldham* [Naval History Society Publication] (New York, 1913), 275-305.

yardarm. Lieutenant Josiah deposed later that Symonds offered him a mate's berth, which he refused, "and was ordered immediately to the main deck, where the boatswain and his three mates were charged to see him perform the meanest duty in the waist of the ship." Abuse and ill-treatment continued with unrelenting severity while the *Cerberus* cruised along the Connecticut and Rhode Island coasts. On July 27, Josiah managed to smuggle a letter ashore to Captain Biddle, relating his plight with the comment that he was "used worse than he ever thought one *Englishman* could use another."

The aroused captain of the *Andrew Doria* sent the letter to the Marine Committee with one of his own, demanding that Josiah be exchanged and that a protest against the ill-usage be lodged with Lord Howe, the British naval commander.<sup>10</sup> In another letter, Biddle informed Josiah's older sister, Margaret Tarras, of her brother's unhappy situation. Her response was immediate. "With a heart full of greif for the Fate of a worthy brother obligd to Smother that greif For fear of more distressing an aged father," she begged the captain to continue his efforts in behalf of the captive.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, Biddle's and Josiah's letters had been read in Congress, where it was resolved on August 7 that Washington propose to the enemy an exchange of the American lieutenant for a British naval lieutenant in American hands, and "that the general remonstrate to Lord Howe on the cruel treatment Lieutenant Josiah has met with."<sup>12</sup> Washington complied with a strongly worded letter, in reply to which Lord Howe assented to an exchange when the *Cerberus* arrived, promised an investigation, and remarked that "insult and indignities, to persons of whatever rank, who are become parties in these unhappy disputes, cannot be justified."<sup>13</sup> No such investigation took place. The cruise of the *Cerberus* ended on November 16, more than five months after the recapture of the *Crawford*, and Josiah's ill-treatment had continued. When the frigate came to anchor off New York, Captain Symonds sent the lieutenant to the prison ship

<sup>10</sup> Affidavit of James Josiah, Feb. 8, 1777, *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, Apr. 29, 1777; John Hancock to George Washington, Aug. 8, 1776, Peter Force, ed., *American Archives, Fifth Series* (Washington, 1848-1853), I, 832.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret Tarras to Nicholas Biddle, Aug. 7, 1776, Nicholas Biddle Letters, Edward Biddle Estate, HSP; Clark, *Captain Dauntless*, 143-144.

<sup>12</sup> *Journals of Congress*, V, 635-636.

<sup>13</sup> John Almon, ed., *The Remembrancer* (London, 1776-1783), IV, 56-57.

*Whitby*.<sup>14</sup> Even his discharge from that vessel some weeks later was conducted with malice. The Britisher for whom he was to be exchanged had been sent to New York ten days before his release. Josiah had asked to be landed in New Jersey as it was nearer Philadelphia. Instead, he was put ashore in Connecticut without a pass, and was thus forced to encircle the entire British front in the dead of winter to get home.<sup>15</sup>

He reached Philadelphia on January 7, 1777, to learn that fortune had smiled upon him during his enforced absence.<sup>16</sup> In August, old Commodore Hopkins had recommended him for a captaincy<sup>17</sup> and Congress had complied, ranking him nineteenth upon the somewhat notorious seniority list of October 10.<sup>18</sup> Then, with the British advancing through New Jersey, Congress had decamped to Baltimore in December, leaving behind a committee of three. The new captain called upon this committee to confirm "the account of ill usage" he had undergone. By its advice, he made affidavit to this treatment which was, in due time, published.<sup>19</sup> Whereupon, less than three months after his return, he was married in Old Swedes Church (Gloria Dei) to a Miss Sarah Reynolds. Of this event there exists the simple marriage entry for April 1, 1777, and nothing more.<sup>20</sup>

Shortly after the nuptials, Josiah was called into active service as commander of a nondescript vessel named the *Champion*. She was a small ship, a recent prize, rigged as a Mediterranean xebec, armed with several 18-pound guns like a galley, and designed primarily for bay and river defense.<sup>21</sup> The presence of a number of British frigates in Delaware Bay constituted a continual threat to Philadelphia. A

<sup>14</sup> Captain's log, H.M.S. *Cerberus*, Nov. 17, 1776, Admiralty, Class 51, No. 181, Pt. 5, Public Record Office, London.

<sup>15</sup> Affidavit of Josiah, Feb. 8, 1777.

<sup>16</sup> Congressional Committee to Washington, Jan. 7, 1777, Letter Book of Committee to Transact Continental Business in Philadelphia, 35-37, Papers of the Continental Congress, Library of Congress (LC), hereafter referred to as Papers CC.

<sup>17</sup> Alverda S. Beck, ed., *The Correspondence of Esek Hopkins, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Navy* (Providence, R. I., 1933), 86.

<sup>18</sup> *Journals of Congress*, VI, 861.

<sup>19</sup> Congressional Committee to George Washington, Jan. 7, 1777; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, Apr. 29, 1777.

<sup>20</sup> "Marriage Record of the Swedes' Church (Gloria Dei), 1750-1810," *Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series*, VIII, 418.

<sup>21</sup> "The Galley *Champion* to the Commissioners of Naval Stores Dr., September, 1776-August, 1777," draft of account in HSP.

considerable fleet had therefore been outfitted to assist the Pennsylvania navy in the protection of the port. The fleet consisted of the frigate *Delaware*, Captain Charles Alexander, under whom Josiah had served briefly in the galley *Chatham* in 1775; the brig *Andrew Doria*, now commanded by Isaiah Robinson; two sloops, the *Racehorse* and *Fly*; the *Champion*, and another xebec, the *Repulse*. Two unfinished frigates, the *Washington* and *Effingham*, could not be included.<sup>22</sup>

Strategy pointed to an attack upon the enemy in the lower bay by this fleet reinforced by two large Pennsylvania galleys. They would have dropped down the river toward the end of July, 1777, "but for an improper Demand of Increase of Wages made by the Lieutenants."<sup>23</sup> Josiah's lieutenant, James Armitage, was one of the number. When the twelve officers announced they would not do duty until their grievances were redressed, Congress acted.<sup>24</sup> In a resolution rendering them "incapable of holding any commission or warrant under the authority of the United States," Congress dismissed them from the service and recommended that the states treat them in similar fashion.<sup>25</sup> Three days later, after penitent admission of guilt and sorrow for their rashness, Congress restored them to their former rank and command. But the insubordination retarded the down-river expedition some weeks.<sup>26</sup>

By then there were four frigates with several tenders around the capes. The Continental fleet had rendezvoused behind Reedy Island, and on August 21, observing an enemy frigate and two schooners abreast of Bombay Hook, sallied forth in force—the *Andrew Doria*, *Racehorse*, and *Fly* in the van, the frigate *Delaware* in the center, and the *Champion* and *Repulse*, with two Pennsylvania galleys and some fire ships bringing up the rear. But Josiah was to see no action that day, for the English frigate with her tenders fled down the bay.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Navy Board of the Middle District to Robert Morris, June 13, 1777, Papers CC, 78, XXIII, 409, 411; Navy Board to John Barry and Thomas Read, July 31, 1777, Historical Society of Wisconsin.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, July 25, 1777, Laurens Letter Book, January, 1776–March, 1778, South Carolina Historical Society.

<sup>24</sup> Navy Lieutenants to John Barry, July 21, 1777, Papers CC, 42, IV, 116.

<sup>25</sup> *Journals of Congress*, VIII, 573, 574 (July 23, 1777).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 578, 584 (July 24 and 28, 1777).

<sup>27</sup> Leeson Simmons to Pennsylvania Navy Board, Aug. 21, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives, First Series*, V, 538–539.



After that, since the British main force had entered the Virginia capes, ascended Chesapeake Bay, and was landing at Head of Elk, the Continental fleet withdrew behind the river defenses around Billingsport.<sup>28</sup>

Congress appointed Commodore John Hazelwood, of the Pennsylvania navy, commander of the combined Continental and state naval forces.<sup>29</sup> As the enemy, having defeated the American army along the Brandywine, pressed on toward Philadelphia, the new commander of the combined fleet ordered Charles Alexander in the frigate *Delaware*, supported by a state ship and a Continental sloop, up to the city to oppose any British attempt to fortify the river front. The effort ended in disaster. On September 27, the *Delaware* engaged a shore battery, was set on fire, and a panicky crew ran her ashore.<sup>30</sup> Alexander was taken prisoner, and Isaiah Robinson, outranking Josiah by two numbers on the seniority list, became senior Continental officer in the fleet.<sup>31</sup>

Defense of the river pass became grim business indeed. Desertions plagued the fleet. But for eternal vigilance, the sailors would have fled to shore, "for their spirits [were] quite sunk."<sup>32</sup> Josiah's crew suffered along with the rest. Even before the fleet had dropped down the Delaware, the *Champion's* surgeon—at least he "calls himself a Doctor," Josiah remarked disparagingly—being a Frenchman named Peter Bommont, "chunky, fat and pockmarked," aptly enough took French leave.<sup>33</sup> Now, while they lay off Billingsport, his pilot John Emmes and another hand vanished at night with the ship's yawl.<sup>34</sup>

More serious was the appearance in the bay of Lord Howe's whole fleet to reinforce the four frigates already there. Billingsport became untenable. The fort was demolished, and the little naval force retreated northward behind a second row of river obstructions, flanked

<sup>28</sup> Charles Alexander to Robert Morris, Sept. 15, 1777, *ibid.*, 626.

<sup>29</sup> Marine Committee to John Hazelwood, Sept. 26, 1777, Marine Committee Letter Book, 103, LC.

<sup>30</sup> George Washington to John Hancock, Oct. 3, 1777, Washington Papers, LC; "Extract of a Letter from an Officer in the Army at Philadelphia to his Friend in London, dated the 30th of November last," *The Public Advertiser* (London), Jan. 16, 1778.

<sup>31</sup> Navy Board of the Middle District to Isaiah Robinson, Oct. 3, 1777, Charles Roberts Autograph Collection, Haverford College Library.

<sup>32</sup> William Bradford to Thomas Wharton, Jr., Oct. 3, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives, First Series*, V, 644-645.

<sup>33</sup> Advertisement of Josiah, *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, July 12, 1777.

<sup>34</sup> Court-martial of John Emmes, Aug. 23, 1779, Papers CC, 42, II, 392-398.

on the Jersey side by Fort Mercer and on an island off the Pennsylvania shore by Fort Mifflin. This confined space afforded little opportunity to maneuver the *Champion* and other sailing vessels. Opposition to the upward progress of the enemy fleet devolved mainly upon the shallow-draft, oar-propelled Pennsylvania galleys and floating batteries. That they were unequal to the task became apparent as October rolled along, and the British ships, fending off fire rafts and weighing up the chevaux de frise placed to retard them, crept inexorably closer.<sup>35</sup>

As usual when matters are going badly, discord raised its ugly head. The climax came on October 19 when the commodore hoisted a signal from one of the galleys for all captains to come aboard. They arrived, Isaiah Robinson, James Josiah, Peter Brusstar, Benjamin Dunn and Elisha Warner representing the Continental navy. The galley became overcrowded. Hazelwood tactlessly ordered, rather than requested, adjournment to a more roomy floating battery. Robinson took offense, remarked that the Continental officers seemingly were not needed, and, despite protests, led his captains out of the galley and back to their respective commands.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps the trouble originated in the fact that the commodore's letters studiously omitted any credit to the Continental vessels.<sup>37</sup>

Signal successes a few days later—repulse of the Hessians at Fort Mercer, and destruction of the sixty-four-gun ship of the line *Augusta* and the eighteen-gun sloop of war *Merlin*—seemed to do more even than the admonitions of Washington to restore harmony. Even so, in reporting the latter victory, Hazelwood stated: "We had engaged our 12 Galleys & the two floating Batterys & all behaved extreamly well, the rest of our Fleet could not be brought timely to act with us."<sup>38</sup> Momentary advantages were but a respite. The British army's artillery, beginning November 10, pounded Fort Mifflin daily from five batteries to the north and west. The commodore's puny force on November 15 engaged a sixty-four and two fifty-gun ships, and "a most furious Fire from all sides continued till near Dark, when the

<sup>35</sup> William Bradford and John Hazelwood to Washington, Oct. 11, 1777, *ibid.*, 152, V, 111; Bradford to Thomas Wharton, Jr., Oct. 13, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives, First Series*, V, 668; Samuel Smith to Washington, Oct. 16, 1777, Washington Papers, LC.

<sup>36</sup> Hazelwood to Washington, Oct. 26, 1777, *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Hazelwood to Washington, Oct. 23, 1777, *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Hazelwood to Wharton, Oct. 29, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives, First Series*, V, 721-722.

Ships dropped down." Covered by this noisy engagement, a British floating battery edged up behind Fort Mifflin. She and the shore batteries "tore the Fort all to peices," and at midnight the battered garrison was withdrawn across the river.<sup>39</sup>

A council of war the day before had found all officers, Continental and state, of unanimous opinion that if Fort Mifflin fell, the preservation of the fleet would depend upon the Continental army's holding on to Fort Mercer.<sup>40</sup> But the army, having decided that the fort must be evacuated, recommended to the commodore on November 18 that the fleet endeavor to run up the river past Philadelphia.<sup>41</sup> A grim group of officers gathered next morning in a final council of war and considered their dilemma. There could be no delay. The best time to essay the desperate northward sally would be with a fresh wind on the morning flood tide. The galleys would hug the Jersey shore line past Cooper's Ferry, but the vessels of deeper draft would have to take the western channel, close to the city and under the guns of British shore batteries and the frigate *Delaware*, now an enemy ship. Should the wind prove unfavorable, and the passage impracticable, each vessel was prepared with combustible material. Under no circumstances should they be permitted to fall into British hands.<sup>42</sup>

Time was of the essence, for even then the army was filing out of Fort Mercer. The next morning was calm, but before daylight, plying their oars silently, the galleys got past Philadelphia undetected. The rest of the fleet waited another night. Before dawn of November 21, with a light air, some of the Pennsylvania vessels—a brig, a schooner, and some shallops—attempted to run the gauntlet. A withering fire drove the schooner and one of the shallops ashore. The others passed through in safety. Then the wind died out. Under deserted Fort Mercer lay the Pennsylvania floating batteries, two provincial ships, and the five Continental vessels. There was no alternative. Torches were applied, and they burned furiously—"A most terrible conflagration," one eye-witness reported.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Bradford to Wharton, Nov. 16, 1777, *ibid.*, VI, 11.

<sup>40</sup> "Council of War held on board the Chatham Galley, November 14, 1777," *ibid.*, 20.

<sup>41</sup> Council of War at Fort Mercer, Nov. 18, 1777, *ibid.*, 21.

<sup>42</sup> "In Council of War held on board the Sloop Speedwell off Red Bank, 19 Nov. 1777," *ibid.*, 21.

<sup>43</sup> Bradford to Wharton, Nov. 22, 1777, *ibid.*, 27-29.

Sad-eyed, James Josiah watched the flames roaring through sails and rigging of the *Champion*. He did not, however, join his fellow officers for the long detouring march northward through New Jersey. He and his crew made their way along the shore and seized an enemy barge in which they reached Bordentown on November 23.<sup>44</sup> Two days later, the captain sat upon a court-martial which convicted five deserters from the *Repulse*, apprehended on the very eve of the destruction of the fleet.<sup>45</sup> The Marine Committee of Congress kept the shipless crews at Bordentown through the winter. The officers gradually departed, some assigned to the few remaining vessels of war, some with leave of absence. Among the latter was James Josiah, who, seeing no prospect of any immediate command, brought to a conclusion his Continental naval service.<sup>46</sup>

The captain was not through with sea fighting, however. Less than two months after the British abandoned Philadelphia in June, 1778, he was back in the city in command of a privateer, the brigantine *Gerard*, of six guns and twenty-five men. Her owners, honoring the Franco-American treaty of alliance and the first French ambassador, M. Conrad Alexandre Gerard, had used even the French article in obtaining her commission—she went down in the records as *Le Gerard*.<sup>47</sup> Want of powder and musket cartridges delayed her departure; when provided on loan by the Pennsylvania Council of Safety, she dropped down the river.<sup>48</sup> The *Pennsylvania Packet*, with disregard of security risks, announced on August 14: "On Thursday last sailed from this port the privateer sloop [*of war*] Le Gerrard, on a two months cruize against the enemy of the United States."

That cruise accomplished nothing, except to involve Josiah with Thomas Houston, commanding the Pennsylvania state brig *Convention*, in the celebrated case of the sloop *Active*, seized by the *Conven-*

<sup>44</sup> Marine Committee to John Barry, Jan. 29, 1778, Marine Committee Letter Book, 125, LC.

<sup>45</sup> Court-martial of John Stewart, *et al.*, Nov. 25, 1777, Papers CC, 78, II, 307-311.

<sup>46</sup> Marine Committee to Navy Board of the Middle District, Apr. 8, 1778, Marine Committee Letter Book, 138, LC.

<sup>47</sup> Bond and commission of Pennsylvania brigantine *Le Gerard*, Aug. 1, 1778, Papers CC, 196, VI, 62.

<sup>48</sup> *Colonial Records*, XI, 543-545 (July 30, 1778).

tion with the *Gerard* in sight, although already in possession of Americans who had overpowered her British crew. While an initial admiralty court decision awarded three fourths of the prize proceeds to Houston, Josiah, and the state of Pennsylvania, a reversal and subsequent litigation kept the case in the law courts until 1809. In the end, the captain received no share in the prize.<sup>49</sup> Nor was a second cruise in the *Gerard*, begun around Christmas of 1778, any more successful. In February, 1779, Josiah returned to port, abjuring further privateering.<sup>50</sup>

In the spring of 1779, in his twenty-seventh year, James Josiah turned from the fighting ship to the armed merchantman. He was a well-built, somewhat stocky man (he measured but five feet, seven inches in height), with brown hair and a fresh complexion unmarred by salt air. He was poised and assured, and Philadelphia shipowners recognized him as a resourceful and capable seaman.<sup>51</sup> Two of them employed him for their letter-of-marque ship *Hetty*. In assuming this command, Josiah found his niche—a master mariner, who in time would become one of the outstanding merchant captains of his generation.

The *Hetty* was about one hundred tons burden. She carried eighteen guns and a crew of fifty, and was strong enough to fight off anything short of a twenty-four-gun frigate.<sup>52</sup> Her initial destination was St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies. When she sailed on June 13, it was in company with two more letters of marque, commanded, oddly enough, by two of Josiah's former Continental navy associates, Charles Alexander, late of the frigate *Delaware*, and James Armitage, former first lieutenant of the *Champion*. Just outside the Delaware capes, they took the ten-gun British privateer *Tartar*, removed all but the captain and three men, and sent her for Philadelphia. She

<sup>49</sup> The litigation over the *Active* is given in detail in Louis F. Middlebrook, *Captain Gideon Olmstead* (Salem, Mass., 1933).

<sup>50</sup> Bond and commission of Pennsylvania brigantine *Le Gerard*, Dec. 10, 1778, Papers CC, 196, VI, 63.

<sup>51</sup> The pen picture of Josiah is drawn from the description upon the back of the bond for the Pennsylvania ship *Washington* in 1782. *Ibid.*, 196, XVI, 18; printed in *Pennsylvania Archives, Fifth Series*, I, 658, 659.

<sup>52</sup> Bond and commission of Pennsylvania letter-of-marque ship *Hetty*, May 21, 1779, Papers CC, 196, VII, 69.

arrived at New York instead, the four Britons having overpowered the prize crew.<sup>53</sup>

Upon return from St. Thomas on August 20,<sup>54</sup> Josiah learned that his father had died a day or two after the *Hetty* had sailed in June. Emanuel Josiah had not left a will. The captain was appointed administrator, and entered into bond on August 27 to render an inventory of the estate and an accounting thereon within a year.<sup>55</sup> In the brief period before the *Hetty* sailed again, Josiah had his last experience as a Continental naval officer. He was called to testify at the court-martial of John Emmes, the pilot who had deserted the *Champion* in the ship's yawl almost two years before. Emmes had been discovered in the captured crew of the British frigate *Mermaid*. He was convicted and sentenced to "five hundred Lashes on his Bare Back with the Cat o' Nine Tails" and, surviving that, banishment from the United States.<sup>56</sup>

Josiah's second voyage was to Tenerife in the Canary Islands. It was uneventful. Returning, the *Hetty* arrived off New Castle in the Delaware on February 21, 1780. Her entire cargo, consisting mainly of wine and salt, was consigned to the firm of Bunner, Murray and Company, who in due course advertised their wares, "Imported in the Ship *Hetty*," for sale at their store on Mease's Wharf below the drawbridge.<sup>57</sup> Josiah was compelled to relinquish his command then, and attend to the settlement of his father's estate. Another captain took the *Hetty* to sea.<sup>58</sup>

Appraisal of the inventory of all that Emanuel Josiah had owned—store and household goods and three hundred acres of land in Cumberland County—failed to satisfy the Orphan's Court when submitted on April 13, 1780. A new appraisal was ordered, and was accepted on August 25, along with Josiah's final accounting. The latter showed about £2,200 apiece for the captain and his two sisters,

<sup>53</sup> *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, June 21, 1779; *Pennsylvania Packet*, June 29, 1779.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1779.

<sup>55</sup> Administration bond No. 47, Estate of Emanuel Josiah, Letters of Administration Record Book I, 22, Register of Wills, Phila.

<sup>56</sup> Court-martial of John Emmes, Aug. 23, 1779, Papers CC, 42, II, 392-398.

<sup>57</sup> *Pennsylvania Packet*, Feb. 22 and Mar. 18, 1780; *Pennsylvania Journal*, Mar. 29, 1780.

<sup>58</sup> A new bond and commission for the *Hetty* of Mar. 28, 1780, shows Thomas Houston as captain. Papers CC, 196, VII, 68.

Margaret Tarras and Lydia Williamson, and an undistributed balance of near £600. It seemed a large fortune for each, but as the register of the court noted, "Specie was 60 for 1."<sup>59</sup>

In the ensuing November, Josiah again went to sea, this time in the letter-of-marque ship *Anne*, owned by George Henry and Robert Knox, Philadelphia shipowners, who had signed with him the bond covering the administration of his father's estate. The *Anne* was about the tonnage of the *Hetty*, but was armed with ten guns only and carried a crew of thirty.<sup>60</sup> She cleared the capes in mid-November for L'Orient in France, and arrived there on January 1, 1781.<sup>61</sup> Josiah sailed for home about March 20, but, through some mistake, left his invoices behind. When he brought the *Anne* up the Delaware on May 12, the naval officer of the port could not determine the duties on her imports. More than a month later, in recording the duties collected for the first half year, he still had to report that "The Cargo of the Ship Ann, James Josiah, Master, from L'Orient, is not included, as the value thereof could not be ascertained."<sup>62</sup> Promising to return with the invoices, the captain sailed again for L'Orient in June. He reached there in mid-August, and arrived home in December, bringing back the missing papers and a choice cargo including blankets, chintzes, linens and velvets.<sup>63</sup>

Then, as he had with the *Hetty*, Josiah relinquished command of the *Anne* after this second voyage.<sup>64</sup> The resignation, however, was for a happier reason. How long he had been a widower is not known, but sometime in the years since 1777, his wife Sarah had died. Now the captain was to be married again. His choice was Elizabeth Marsh, twenty-year-old daughter of Colonel Joseph Marsh, II, and

<sup>59</sup> "Inventory of Effects of Emanuel Josiah Deceased taken June 13<sup>th</sup> 1779," "Inventory # 47 Emanuel Josiah's Estate 2<sup>d</sup> Appl," "The Accompt of James Josiah Administrator of the Estate of Emanuel Josiah decd, Philad<sup>a</sup>, August 25<sup>th</sup> 1780," Letters of Administration Record Book I, 22, Register of Wills, Phila.

<sup>60</sup> Bond and commission of Pennsylvania letter-of-marque ship *Anne*, Nov. 15, 1780, Papers CC, 196, I, 65.

<sup>61</sup> James Cummings to Thomas Bradford, Jan. 14, 1781, Thomas Bradford Papers, Naval Prisoners, Correspondence, II, 34, HSP.

<sup>62</sup> *Pennsylvania Packet*, May 12, 1781; *Colonial Records*, XII, 728 (May 15, 1781).

<sup>63</sup> Jonathan Nesbitt to Benjamin Franklin, Sept. 7, 1781, Franklin Papers, XXII, 135, American Philosophical Society (APS); *Pennsylvania Packet*, Dec. 8, 1781.

<sup>64</sup> A commission to John Ashmead for the ship *Anne* was issued Jan. 7, 1782, Papers CC, 196, I, 64.

Sarah (Beasley) Marsh. The wedding took place in Christ Church on April 4, 1782, and Josiah brought his bride to their new home on Water Street, between Almond and Catharine, in Southwark, the district adjoining the city to the south.<sup>65</sup> Another step taken a few months later was to pay six pounds entrance fee, having been "Uan-omusly Admitted" to that select group, the Society for the Relief of Poor and Distressed Masters of Ships, Their Widows and Children.<sup>66</sup>

Once more before the American Revolution ended, Josiah took command of a letter of marque. He was now part owner as well, having invested with George Henry and Robert Knox in the ship *Washington*, newly built in Philadelphia. She was of two hundred and thirty tons burden, mounted eighteen guns and had a crew of one hundred men.<sup>67</sup> When she sailed for L'Orient on August 18, 1782, two other ships were in her company—the *St. James*, Alexander Cain, commander, and the *Queen of France*, Richard Dale. Josiah also had a part interest in the *Queen of France*, a smaller ship of one hundred and fifty tons burden. On their passage this trio took three valuable prizes: the cutter *Will*, from Cork for Charleston; the ship *Luxford*, from Bristol for Newfoundland; and the ship *Lyon*, from Bristol for the African coast. The latter, a double-decker carrying thirty-six guns, her lower battery all 18-pounders, offered but feeble resistance. The American letters of marque carried their prizes, along with ninety prisoners, into L'Orient on September 19.<sup>68</sup>

Peace rumors were thick, so thick that the American consul hesitated about shipping goods on public account in any of the three vessels. He did not want to burden the continent "with large supplies at the End of the war." Another deterrent was his opinion that the captains' freight rates were "extravagantly high."<sup>69</sup> While he

<sup>65</sup> "Marriage Records of Christ Church, Philadelphia, 1709-1806," *Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series*, VIII, 142; "Effective Supply Tax, City of Philadelphia, 1782, Southwark (East Part)," *ibid.*, *Third Series*, XVI, 372; F. Woodward Earl Notes.

<sup>66</sup> "Minutes of the Society of Sea Captains &c." (July 1, 1782), Shipmasters' Club, HSP.

<sup>67</sup> Bond and commission of the Pennsylvania letter-of-marque ship *Washington*, Aug. 10, 1782, Papers CC, 196, XVI, 18; Custom House Records, Port of Philadelphia, Inward Entries, Mar. 15, 1784-Apr. 30, 1785, HSP. This volume gives tonnage and dates of building.

<sup>68</sup> Jonathan Nesbitt to William Temple Franklin, Sept. 20, 1782, Franklin Papers, CIV, 102, APS; *The Independent Gazetteer* (Phila.), Nov. 19, 1782; *Pennsylvania Packet*, Nov. 19, 1782.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas Barclay to Benjamin Franklin, Dec. 16, 1782, Franklin Papers, XXVI, 104, APS.



hesitated, the *Queen of France* sailed for home as 1782 ended.<sup>70</sup> Josiah was preparing to do likewise when the consul decided to ship some goods then expected from inland France in the *Washington*. By the time the goods arrived, blessed peace had come as well. American ships in French ports, therefore, awaited only receipt of British passports to assure them unmolested passage home. These were delivered late in February, 1783.<sup>71</sup> On March 4 Josiah sailed, and on April 10 reached Philadelphia to the relief and joy of his young bride.<sup>72</sup>

James Josiah came through the American Revolution with an established reputation as a courageous and able sea captain. As he thought back over the years, he realized as well how fortunate he had been. Most of the captains with whom he had been closely associated in the Continental navy had been victims of the war. His first commander, Nicholas Biddle, had gone to his death in the frigate *Randolph* in 1778. Of the five men who had shared with him in commanding vessels in the little Continental fleet defending the Delaware, three had been lost at sea in letters of marque—Isaiah Robinson in 1779, Peter Brusstar in 1780, and Charles Alexander in 1782.<sup>73</sup> Josiah had escaped both enemy guns and the sea. From now on, he would have the sea only to contend with.

The *Washington's* guns were removed, her crew reduced to twelve or more men needed to handle so large a ship, and Josiah began his first peacetime voyage on May 14, 1783. He had been home just about a month. His destination was London, but because Philadelphia then had no suitable goods for the English market, he sailed first to Charleston, South Carolina, for a cargo of rice and tobacco.<sup>74</sup> Clearing that port on June 18, the *Washington* arrived at Portsmouth, England, on July 29, one of the earliest vessels of American register to appear in a harbor of the former enemy. From there he coasted around to the Thames and up to London.<sup>75</sup> Two score pas-

<sup>70</sup> *Pennsylvania Packet*, Feb. 27, 1783.

<sup>71</sup> Barclay to John Brown, Jan. 8, 1783, Ferdinand J. Dreer Autograph Collection, HSP; Barclay to Benjamin Franklin, Jan. 29, 1783, Franklin Papers, XXVII, 61, APS; Alleyne Fitzherbert to American Peace Commissioners, Feb. 18, 1783, Francis Wharton, ed., *The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States* (Washington, 1889), VI, 255.

<sup>72</sup> *Pennsylvania Packet*, Apr. 12, 1783.

<sup>73</sup> Clark, *Captain Dauntless*, 238–242; "A List of Names and Time of Entrey from the Year 1777 to Year 1788," Shipmasters' Club, HSP.

<sup>74</sup> *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 14, 1783.

<sup>75</sup> *The London Chronicle*, July 29–July 31, 1783.

sengers embarked for the return voyage to Philadelphia, which began in late September and concluded successfully on November 8. Josiah brought back a cargo which included sixty baskets of Gloucester cheese, twenty cases of London porter, and ten cases of refined sugar. So great was the public demand for these items that the owners sold them at auction to realize the best possible prices.<sup>76</sup> The captain then disposed of his interest in the *Washington* to Richard Dale, and relinquished the command to him.<sup>77</sup> A new adventure was opening up.

Francis Gurney and Daniel Smith, a pair of Philadelphia merchants just entering into an ambitious partnership, had pitched upon James Josiah as the right man to supervise the construction of a large new brig for them in Maryland, and later take command of her. A substantial interest in the vessel was stipulated. The captain accepted.<sup>78</sup> Before leaving for Chestertown, where the brig was to be built, he attended the general meeting of the Society for the Relief of Poor and Distressed Masters of Ships in Lodge Alley on January 5, 1784. He put himself in good standing by paying the treasurer three shillings dues for the current quarter, and fifteen shillings for unavoidable absence from five previous quarterly meetings.<sup>79</sup>

The new brig was not completed until the year 1784 was almost over. Josiah was in Philadelphia a few times consulting his co-owners, but spent most of the year at Chestertown. Gurney & Smith, advertising the brig's availability for charter to Europe or the West Indies in January, 1785, disclosed her name as the "Fair American, James Josiah, Master." Her first voyage was from Maryland to the island of Fayal in the Azores, from whence Josiah brought her into Philadelphia on May 31, with a cargo of wine.<sup>80</sup> Rather than charter her again, the owners decided to put her into a regular run to St. Croix, principal island of the Danish West Indies, whose sugar would find a constant market in Philadelphia. In return, St. Croix welcomed imports of all kinds of comestibles—bread, butter, beef, ham, Indian meal, lard and rice—as well as such staples as tobacco, shingles, and candles. The pending departure of the *Fair American*

<sup>76</sup> *Pennsylvania Journal*, Nov. 8, 1783; *Pennsylvania Packet*, Nov. 11, 1783.

<sup>77</sup> *Pennsylvania Journal*, Nov. 19, 1783.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1785.

<sup>79</sup> "A List of Names and Time of Entrey from the Year 1777 to Year 1788," Shipmasters' Club, HSP.

<sup>80</sup> *Pennsylvania Journal*, Jan. 5, 1785; *Pennsylvania Packet*, June 1, 1785.

on this new venture was advertised on July 2. Ten days later, a change of name was announced: "The Brig St. Croix Packet (lately the Fair American), JAMES JOSIAH, Master; Is now taking in at Willing's wharf, and will sail for the Island of ST. CROIX on Tuesday the 19th instant. For freight or passage apply to Gurney & Smith."<sup>81</sup>

For the ensuing year, Josiah's voyages had a clockwork precision and were so recorded in the customhouse books and the newspapers:

1785, Cleared, July 23; entered, October 14.

Cleared, October 24; entered, December 15.

1786, Cleared, January 10; entered, May 13.

Cleared, June 3; entered, August 14.

Departure was delayed in the latter part of 1786 for reasons not apparent. Josiah did not sail until October 3, and since his return was by way of Charleston, it was March 5, 1787, when the *St. Croix Packet* reached her home port. In the period from March 5 to March 17, the captain sat for Peale's first sketches. His concluding voyage to St. Croix began on March 17. The trade was profitable, but monotonous to a man of Josiah's temperament, and by the time he came up the river on June 4, 1787, completing his sixth visit to the sugar island, the captain had soured on the routine and was ripe for something new.<sup>82</sup>

Opportunity offered almost upon the day of his return—a voyage to Canton, China, as first mate in a ship to be commanded by the redoubtable John Barry. The lure of the China trade had been catching the American fancy ever since the close of the Revolution, and Josiah was quite willing to step down in rank temporarily for the experience a voyage to "Far Cathay" with Barry would afford. He continued his holdings with Gurney & Smith, but another captain could command the *St. Croix Packet*. On August 29 he was "put in pay" as first officer on board a ship that was just off the ways.<sup>83</sup> She was the *Asia*, of two hundred and ninety-two tons burden, built by Josiah's father-in-law, Joseph Marsh, and launched on August 16.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, July 6 and 16, 1785.

<sup>82</sup> Custom House Records, Port of Philadelphia, Outward Entries, May 1, 1785–Aug. 31, 1786, Sept. 1, 1786–Dec. 29, 1787; Inward Entries, June 1, 1786–Dec. 29, 1787, HSP; *Pennsylvania Packet*, July 25, Oct. 15 and 25, Dec. 17 and 22, 1785, Jan. 11, May 15, June 5, Aug. 22, 1786.

<sup>83</sup> Single entry on back page of China Letter Book, John Barry Papers, Hepburn private collection.

The *Asia* was the property of seventeen individuals or business firms in Philadelphia, who fortunately delegated authority to act as agents to two of their number.<sup>84</sup>

It was December before her outfitting was completed, her crew and cargo on board, and four 6-pounders stowed in the hold to be mounted later when the pirate-infested waters of the East Indies would be reached. The *Asia* was registered on December 4. Josiah hauled her out into the stream six days later, and dropped down river to Gloucester Point. Barry, his surgeon, and two supercargoes came on board on December 14, but contrary winds immobilized them for three days, and getting stock off from Port Penn used up several more. On December 20, with a brisk northwest breeze, the *Asia* stood between the Delaware capes. In a note to the owners, entrusted to the returning pilot, Barry wrote, "my Officers and men please me very much for I can truly say I never had a Soberer Ships Company in my life."

The voyage was not uneventful. The third mate, a brooding, morose man, committed suicide, shooting himself in his berth while they were passing down the west coast of Africa. Cape Town was reached on March 29, 1788, and four hundred piculs (almost twenty-five tons) of ginseng taken on board for sale in China, where it was supposed to have great medicinal properties. They sailed from Table Bay on April 13, and next day one of the seamen was washed off the bow in a heavy sea and vanished from sight. Gales plagued them much of the way across the Indian Ocean, but after sighting the isolated and lonely island of St. Paul on May 11, the weather cleared. Guns were brought up, cleaned, and mounted, but no pirate proa or junk was sighted. Days continued mild until they reached and passed through the Straits of Sunda in June. Squalls and rains visited them frequently during the northward passage into the China Sea. On July 7, 1788, the *Asia* dropped anchor off Wampoa, that port on the Si-kiang River beyond which no foreign vessel might proceed.<sup>85</sup>

Barry and the supercargoes went up to Canton, leaving the ship in charge of Josiah, who, for the ensuing six months, learned much of the

<sup>84</sup> *Pennsylvania Packet*, Aug. 20, 1787; Custom House Records, Port of Philadelphia, Outward Entries, Sept. 1, 1786-Dec. 29, 1787, HSP.

<sup>85</sup> A detailed account of this voyage from the journal of Patrick Hayes and the China Letter Book, both in the Hepburn private collection, may be found in William Bell Clark, *Gallant John Barry* (New York, 1938), 331-345.

devious ways of the "heathen Chinees." Occasionally, he had opportunity to visit the factory, or store, which had been set up in the foreign compound of Canton for trading with the hong merchants. Most of the time, however, was occupied in the affairs of the *Asia*—emptying her of cargo, removing gear and stores to the bankshall, a flimsy structure on shore rented for that purpose, cleaning ship, receiving new cargo, discharging ballast, warning off persistent sampans, arguing with comprador and linguist, and selling to the various other foreign ships at Wampoa any surplus stores, such as bread, or cherry brandy, or even rigging. Barry came down infrequently to compliment him on his efficiency. Josiah's last visit to Canton came as the year ended; he went up river with several trusty hands to bring back final purchases.<sup>86</sup>

The *Asia* sailed from Wampoa on January 7, 1789, and from Macao five days later, in company with the ship *Canton*, Thomas Truxtun, master. They parted with Truxtun on March 23 off the Cape of Good Hope, and arrived at Philadelphia on June 4, after a passage of four months and twenty-eight days. There the seventeen owners agreed to sell the *Asia*.<sup>87</sup>

With the experience thus gained, Josiah was immediately sought for to command another ship for a Canton voyage. She was the *Brothers*, of two hundred and twenty-four tons burden, the property of two of the former owners of the *Asia*. The *Brothers* sailed on December 8, 1789, stopping at the Cape of Good Hope for ginseng, and anchored off Wampoa in June, 1790.<sup>88</sup> Fully laden with the best that Canton could offer—nankeens, satins, "lutestrings," silk handkerchiefs, "a general assortment of the best China," and all grades of teas, from Bohea to Souchong—Josiah left Wampoa on December 8, and reached home on May 8, 1791, a passage of five months. "It is pleasing to learn," recorded a newspaper, "that all the hands

<sup>86</sup> Josiah to Barry, Aug. 28 and Sept. 25, 1788, Charles Roberts Autograph Collection, Haverford College Library; Josiah to Barry, Oct. 9, 1788, Simon Gratz Autograph Collection, HSP; Josiah to Barry, Nov. 29, 1788, John Barry Papers, New-York Historical Society; Barry to Josiah, Nov. 26 and Dec. 27, 1788, China Letter Book, John Barry Papers, Hepburn private collection.

<sup>87</sup> *Pennsylvania Packet*, June 5 and Aug. 12, 1789.

<sup>88</sup> Custom House Records, Port of Philadelphia, Outward Entries, Aug. 7, 1789–Apr. 13, 1790, HSP; *Pennsylvania Packet*, Dec. 8, 1789.

who sailed from hence in this ship, have returned in perfect health; nor did they, during the voyage, experience any kind of sickness.<sup>89</sup>

After returning from China, Josiah and his wife moved around the corner into a house on Almond Street,<sup>90</sup> and settled down in domestic bliss. The captain, now approaching his fortieth birthday, toyed with the idea of giving up the sea and entering business. Actually, he was on the eve of a service which would earn him his greatest renown—master of a stately ship in the London trade. The ship was the *William Penn*, launched in Philadelphia in 1791, the property of two Quaker firms, Jesse & Robert Waln and John Field & Son. She was built of new cedar and live oak, was of three hundred and fifty-six tons burden, and had “excellent accommodations for passengers.”<sup>91</sup>

The owners had sent her off for London on her maiden voyage in May, 1791, with Woolman Sutton, a veteran but ailing mariner, as master, announcing at the time that she was “intended for a constant trader.” She returned toward the end of September. Next day appeared an advertisement, which ran daily, announcing that she would sail in about three weeks, and “For freight or passage apply to Captain Sutton, John Field, or Jesse & Robert Waln.” On October 15, James Josiah’s name replaced that of the invalid Sutton. The captain was back on sea duty.<sup>92</sup>

The letter bag for London was taken from the post office at 5 o’clock on the afternoon of October 22, 1791, and delivered to the *William Penn*, lying beside Waln’s Wharf at the foot of Spruce Street. Contrary winds held her in the river and lower bay for a week.<sup>93</sup> She cleared the capes on October 29, and nineteen days later, after a masterly display of seamanship, the captain dropped anchor in the Thames in the heart of London.<sup>94</sup> She lay there, unloading and

<sup>89</sup> Custom House Records, Port of Philadelphia, Inward Entries, Nov. 14, 1789–May 13, 1793, HSP; *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser*, May 10, 1791.

<sup>90</sup> The new address was 37 Almond St. Philadelphia Directory, 1791.

<sup>91</sup> Proof of Ownership, 1790–1801, Port of Philadelphia, in settlement of French spoliation claims, No. 1631, National Archives; *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser*, Apr. 6, 1791.

<sup>92</sup> Custom House Records, Port of Philadelphia, Outward Entries, Apr. 14, 1791–June 16, 1791; Inward Entries, Nov. 14, 1789–May 13, 1793, HSP; *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser*, May 16, Sept. 28 and 29, Oct. 15, 1791.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 20, 22, and 24, Dec. 22, 1791.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 10, 1792.

loading, and then, with six cabin and eight steerage passengers on board, descended the Thames and cleared The Downs in February, 1792. Homeward bound, she spoke two vessels, a slaver for London on February 29, and a ship from Baltimore for Amsterdam on March 15. At noon on March 30, the *William Penn* entered Delaware Bay. The newspapers listed her cabin passengers—Mr. and Mrs. Potter, Mr. John Ogilvey, Henry Meacham, John Richards, Miss Read—and announced a pleasant passage.<sup>95</sup>

No time was lost. The usual advertisement, running daily from April 3 to 28, announced, "For London, The Ship William Penn (Lying at Waln's Wharf) James Josiah, Master, To sail with all convenient speed." On the latter date the London mail left the post office at 9 o'clock in the morning, and by nightfall Josiah was off Reedy Island, outward bound.<sup>96</sup> Again, an expeditious passage; again, a full cargo, and the ship departed from London, bearing four cabin and three steerage passengers. She sailed from The Downs on August 1, in company with the ship *Harmony*, John Osman, master, but soon dropped her astern. Forty-two days later, Josiah came up to Philadelphia; the *Harmony* arrived seven days afterward.<sup>97</sup>

Ten cabin passengers were on board the *William Penn* when she departed from Philadelphia on October 15, and one of them was Elizabeth Josiah. The captain was taking his wife abroad for the first time. The good ship, favored by wind and tide, sailed through the capes at 3 o'clock the next afternoon. The *Harmony* went out the same day, but this time they kept company and arrived at London on November 16.<sup>98</sup> How Mrs. Josiah entertained herself while her husband attended to ship matters is not in the record, but the captain had chosen an unfortunate time to bring his wife to England. Before departure, news came that the French had executed Louis XVI. Great Britain launched a European coalition against "a nation of regicides," and by February 9, 1793, hostilities had commenced. French cruisers and privateers were out, and the United States consulate was "under no small apprehension for the American ships now

<sup>95</sup> Custom House Records, Port of Philadelphia, Inward Entries, Nov. 4, 1789–May 13, 1793, HSP; *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, Apr. 2, 3, and 4, 1792.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 28, 1792.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 11, 13, and 18, 1792; Custom House Records, Port of Philadelphia, Inward Entries, Nov. 4, 1789–May 13, 1793, HSP.

<sup>98</sup> *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, Oct. 16 and 20, 1792, Jan. 9, 1793.

ready to sail, least they should meet with impediments." Passports were issued by the American ambassador. The *William Penn*, with Mrs. Josiah and eight other cabin passengers, was held at Gravesend until her passport was received.<sup>99</sup> She left The Downs on February 17, and encountered several hard gales and contrary winds in her homeward passage, but, fortunately, no French war vessels. The ship arrived at Philadelphia on April 19, and Mrs. Josiah never again ventured to sea.<sup>100</sup>

Not so the captain! The inevitable advertisement appeared on April 20 and daily thereafter until May 8, when the *William Penn* was off again. To be sure of safety through dangerous waters, Josiah cleared her for Falmouth, where he could join a British convoy up the English Channel. He arrived at that outport on June 6, and at London a week later.<sup>101</sup> By the time he sailed on July 31, an allied success at Valenciennes had led all good Britons to believe "the war will subside very soon." That was the message Josiah brought to Philadelphia on September 27.<sup>102</sup>

Set to sail again in November, Josiah became ill. Richard Dale, his comrade of late Revolutionary War days and a warm friend ever since, agreed to take over for the voyage. Dale cleared the *William Penn* for London on November 27, and brought her back with thirty-one passengers on April 28, 1794. Josiah was again in health and resumed command, Dale being called in another month to a captaincy in the new United States navy.<sup>103</sup>

Clearing Philadelphia on May 28, Josiah reached London on July 2, and found himself faced with a problem in securing return cargo. Masters of two ships—"interlopers" he called them—kept an-

<sup>99</sup> "Extract of a letter from London, dated 9th February, 1793," *ibid.*, Apr. 9, 1793.

<sup>100</sup> Custom House Records, Port of Philadelphia, Inward Entries, Nov. 4, 1789–May 13, 1793, HSP; *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, Apr. 20 and 23, 1793.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, May 8, Aug. 2, Sept. 7, 1793.

<sup>102</sup> *Federal Gazette and Philadelphia General Advertiser*, Sept. 26 and 27, 1793.

<sup>103</sup> The usual advertisement announcing that the *William Penn*, under command of Josiah, would sail with all convenient expedition appeared daily in the *Federal Gazette and Philadelphia General Advertiser* from Oct. 31 to Nov. 26, 1793. On the latter date, the same newspaper announced that the letter bag "for the ship William Penn, Capt. Dale" would be taken from the post office the next day. Return of the *William Penn* from London was announced in the *Independent Gazeteer*, Apr. 30, 1794, and Dale was commissioned in the new American navy on June 5, 1794. *War with Barbary Powers, Naval Operations from 1785 to 1801* (Washington, 1939), 75.



nouncing early departure dates in hopes of getting more goods from shippers anxious to be first in the Philadelphia fall market. Josiah solved his problem by "positively" fixing August 1 as the day he would clear out. Shippers then assured him, he wrote to his owners, "that there goods should be ready, by that time; and I shall make it a point to stick to the time."<sup>104</sup> He did not quite make it. The *William Penn* sailed from London on August 11, and reached Philadelphia on October 12. "We learn with pleasure," observed a newspaper editor, "that the passengers in the ship speak highly of the attentive and humane conduct of Captain Josiah."<sup>105</sup>

The ship was in port but a month. Her letter bags for London went off from the post office on the evening of November 12. Josiah ordered the mate to drop down to New Castle, Delaware, where he joined her. The weather was thick, and the pilot refused to go farther until morning. They then ran down to Reedy Island, and, as Josiah wrote on November 16 from off Henlopen, "we Weigh'd from [there] this morning with a Light Breeze from the Westward; which has since increas'd, and bids fare to give us a fine Run off[f] the Coast."<sup>106</sup> He was too optimistic, for the *William Penn* arrived at her London moorings only "after a very stormy passage of 28 days."<sup>107</sup> There were fewer "interlopers" to contend with this time. Josiah secured a cargo, took on board ten cabin and ten steerage passengers, and sailed in March, 1795. He spoke a ship from London for New York on April 10, a snow from Havana for New York on May 4, and arrived in Philadelphia on May 7.<sup>108</sup>

With the largest passenger list to date, the *William Penn* sailed again on June 6. Cabin occupants were Mrs. Penn and family, Mr. Nicholas Waln, a cousin of Jesse and Robert Waln, Mr. John Whitesides and lady, Mr. David Bacon, Mr. Joshua Gilpin, and a half dozen more.<sup>109</sup> When she berthed in London on July 7, one of her

<sup>104</sup> *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, May 28, 1794; *Independent Gazetteer*, Sept. 10, 1794; Josiah to Jesse & Robert Waln, July 21, 1794, Gratz Collection, HSP.

<sup>105</sup> *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, Oct. 13 and 16, 1794.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 12, 1794; Josiah to Jesse & Robert Waln, Nov. 16, 1794, Gratz Collection, HSP.

<sup>107</sup> *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, Mar. 28, 1795.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, May 7, 8, and 9, 1795.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, June 9 and 10, 1795. Mrs. Penn was probably Ann Allen Penn, widow of John Penn who had died in February, 1795. John was the grandson of William Penn, and former lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania.

passengers wrote glowingly: "Capt. Josiah proved in every respect amiable; his table was furnished in the most plentiful manner, with fresh and other provisions, every day, and he was so much disposed to oblige every one on board, that all the passengers (most of whom had crossed the atlantic many times) agreed, they never met with so pleasant a captain; as for myself, I feel particularly obliged to him, as there was no attention I wanted, but he afforded it me, and to his credit be it spoken, that I never heard an improper word from him, during the passage."

This panegyric appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper two days after the *William Penn* came up the Delaware on October 12, forty-three days from London. As the eleven cabin passengers she brought were as loud in their praise, it is small wonder that Josiah became the most courted master in the London trade, and his ship the most popular.<sup>110</sup> But though lauded to the sky, the captain's head was not turned. He attended strictly to business, and the *William Penn* cleared on November 20, and arrived at Gravesend on December 21. Homeward bound, she sailed from London on March 16, 1796, with seventeen cabin and sixteen steerage passengers, a striking indication of the preference of transatlantic travelers for this ship. In a remarkably short western passage of thirty-eight days, she came into port on April 23.<sup>111</sup>

Advertised on April 30 to sail for London "in about three weeks," departure was postponed by the activities of a French privateer, the *Flying Fish*. Neutrality of the United States was being repeatedly violated by the seizure of American merchantmen by French cruisers, and the actions of the *Flying Fish* were particularly heinous. She had lain in the Delaware River, purportedly outfitting, but actually observing the valuable vessels about to sail for foreign ports. Early in June, the *Flying Fish* took the ship *Mount Vernon* within six leagues of Cape Henlopen, forced her crew to leave her in the ship's boat, and sent her off somewhere as a prize.<sup>112</sup> Fifteen sail of American vessels were huddled within the capes at the time, and finally put to sea on June 10. The pilot who took the *William Penn* out reported he had

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 13 and 14, 1795.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 20, 1795, Mar. 28, Apr. 22 and 25, 1796.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 20 and June 1, 1796; Timothy Pickering to P. A. Adet, June 13, 1796, *State Papers and Public Documents of the United States* (Boston, 1819), II, 472, 473.

left her that morning "about 3 miles off the Capes—saw nothing of the Flying Fish privateer." Neither did Josiah, as the ship ploughed her way Londonward.<sup>113</sup>

While the captain did not reach his destination until mid-July, he was able to secure a cargo, and sail for home on August 16. Nicholas Waln was one of the fourteen cabin passengers. Two French frigates brought them to in the English Channel, but after an exchange of amenities permitted them to proceed. Josiah arrived off Fort Mifflin on October 12 and landed his passengers, as some vestige of yellow fever which had been prevalent during the summer still lingered in Philadelphia.<sup>114</sup>

The *William Penn* changed owners in December, or rather Pattison Hartshorne and Ebenezer Large, Philadelphia merchants, bought out the share of John Field & Son. Jesse & Robert Waln continued to hold the major interest, and a new register was prepared and signed by owners and master.<sup>115</sup> It was decided to have her bottom coppered in London, and the mate took her down to Gloucester Point on December 4, with instructions to proceed to New Castle, where Josiah would rejoin the ship. She did not arrive off New Castle for three days. "As the wind was favourable I gott all my stock off [*from shore*] and embark'd my passengers by 12 OClock that night," Josiah reported on December 9 from off Cape Henlopen. The ship had made more water than usual coming down the bay, he commented, and was "a considerable deale cranker then she was coming home, but hope to have a fair Wind, and no occasion to try her side to it."<sup>116</sup> Again his hopes were blasted, as the *William Penn* soon after leaving the capes rode into the most severe thunderstorm he had ever experienced.

The storm commenced at a late hour of the night. Seven of the hands were prostrated on the deck by one bolt of lightning. So impenetrable was the darkness that Josiah remained for some time in ignorance of the condition of the crew, save for the helmsman beside him. He resigned himself to Providence, he wrote, and gave up all for

<sup>113</sup> *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, June 15 and 18, 1796.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 8, 12, and 13, 1796.

<sup>115</sup> Proof of Ownership, Dec. 5, 1796, National Archives.

<sup>116</sup> *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 5 and 7, 1796; Josiah to Jesse & Robert Waln, Dec. 9, 1796, Dreer Collection, HSP.

lost. The storm relented, however, gradually subsiding, and the weather cleared. The men who had been struck by lightning happily recovered, and the *William Penn* escaped with no material damage.<sup>117</sup> Repairs were made in London, where she arrived early in January, 1797. Her bottom was coppered, and Josiah sailed for home, being wind-bound at Deptford until March 19. The ship arrived in Philadelphia on May 17, with twelve cabin and eighteen steerage passengers. Among the former was Sylvanus Bourne, American consul at Amsterdam.<sup>118</sup>

The summer voyage of 1797 began on June 21, with French neutrality violations at a new high and fears for the safety of all shipping uppermost in the minds of the merchants. Josiah was fortunate. The *William Penn* arrived at London with no untoward incident, and sailed from there on August 23 under convoy as far as Falmouth, with thirty-nine passengers, eighteen being in the cabin. She sailed from Falmouth on September 2. On October 17, Josiah spoke a ship out twelve weeks from Le Havre for Philadelphia, and supplied her with water. On October 26, the newspapers "with pleasure announce to the public, the safe arrival of the William Penn, Captain Josiah, from London." She brought, according to a marine insurance agent, "a Rumor of Peace with France & England." No rumor could have been wider of the mark.<sup>119</sup>

Jesse & Robert Waln bought the interests of Hartshorne and Large on December 6, and became sole owners of the ship.<sup>120</sup> Plans for her next voyage, however, were frustrated by the weather. "The winter contrary to our expectations," wrote Robert Waln on February 6, 1798, "continued with unrelenting severity until within a few days past."<sup>121</sup> That same day orders were given Josiah. As the detention in port had been so long, he should make every effort to get the ship away from London as early as possible, which "may possibly prevent your getting a return freight."<sup>122</sup>

<sup>117</sup> *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, Apr. 7 and 8, 1797.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 12 and 26, May 11, 18, and 19, 1797.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, June 21, Oct. 26 and 27, 1797.

<sup>120</sup> Proof of Ownership, Dec. 6, 1797, National Archives.

<sup>121</sup> Jesse & Robert Waln to Bainbridge Ansley & Co., Feb. 6, 1798, Waln Letter Book (1798, 1799), 12-15, Library Company of Philadelphia.

<sup>122</sup> Jesse & Robert Waln to Josiah, Feb. 6, 1798, *ibid.*, 6, 7.

The *William Penn* cleared port on February 6. So thick was the ice in river and bay that she lay at Marcus Hook and Reedy Island until February 27, when she and thirty other vessels finally got to sea.<sup>123</sup> She made excellent going of it thereafter, and by March 21 was three fourths of her way across the Atlantic. Then what Josiah had feared ever since 1793 happened. She was in latitude 48° north and longitude 20° 30' west when the French privateer *Voltaire* brought her to with a shot across the bow. Unarmed, the *William Penn* was helpless to resist. The Frenchmen boarded, decided her cargo was contraband, removed the crew, leaving on board Josiah and one hand, and ordered the prize master to carry her into Bordeaux. "Such a fine fat peaceable old fellow as WILLIAM PENN is the natural prey of the gaunt philosophical villain VOLTAIRE," mused a Philadelphia editor when he heard of the capture.<sup>124</sup>

French triumph was ephemeral. Within twenty-four hours the British frigate *Cleopatra* retook the prize, and Josiah, in his beloved *William Penn*, arrived at Portsmouth, England, ten days later. From there on May 1, the captain informed his owners of his misfortune and subsequent good fortune. Insurance would pay the salvage cost, and he would accept British convoy around to London, where the cargo would be unloaded, and a new one taken in. All this was well along toward accomplishment by June 6, when he further advised that "We are full of Passengers and make no dought of being a full Ship."<sup>125</sup>

The *William Penn* joined a convoy at Portsmouth, which went by way of Cork, leaving there on September 8. Josiah parted with it about two weeks later and came up to New Castle on October 13. A letter awaited him from the owners. Yellow fever still raged in Philadelphia, and he should land his passengers at New Castle. This was done, and he entered the ship as well, and delivered his manifest to the collector of that port.<sup>126</sup> He could not carry the *William Penn* up to the city until November 3, when, after discharging her cargo, he regretfully parted company with her. The Walns had decided to

<sup>123</sup> *Gazette of the United States*, Feb. 6, 10, and 28, 1798.

<sup>124</sup> *Porcupine's Gazette*, Apr. 26 and May 28, 1798.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, May 8, 1798; Josiah to Jesse & Robert Waln, June 6, 1798, Society Collection, HSP.

<sup>126</sup> *Porcupine's Gazette*, Oct. 16, 1798; Josiah to Jesse & Robert Waln, Oct. 13, 1798, Dreer Collection, HSP.

withdraw her from the London trade because of "the great difficulty of procuring a suitable Cargo here & the total incompetence of the freights" from England in time of war. Instead, they had proposed a voyage to Java. The captain, with no desire at that time for another long absence from home, declined and turned the good ship over to a new master.<sup>127</sup>

James Josiah remained at home for the balance of 1798 and most of 1799, but he was not idle. Peter Blight, a Philadelphia merchant, had contracted for a large ship to be built for the East Indian trade, and the captain was engaged to superintend her construction. She was launched in August—a one-thousand-ton vessel—and the old urge to be at sea again, particularly in so majestic a ship, was almost too strong to be overcome. When he learned from Blight that her initial destination would be Batavia for a cargo of that much-in-demand item, Java coffee, he resisted no longer. Despite wifely protests, he assumed command and, with Blight, registered her on December 3, 1799, as the ship *China*. To proof of ownership he subscribed, "I, James Josiah, the present master or commander of the above named vessel, do solemnly Swear that I am a citizen of the United States, having been born therein."<sup>128</sup>

Batavia was the destination of two other Philadelphia ships, both owned by Jesse & Robert Waln, and from other ports vessels were also going out to Java. The Navy Department, with the undeclared war with France still flourishing, appointed two frigates to proceed to Batavia to convoy them home with their coffee cargoes. To furnish the frigates with adequate stores for the return voyage, the owners of the three Philadelphia ships agreed to carry out, without charge, a large shipment of food.<sup>129</sup>

The *China* went through the Delaware capes just after Christmas, 1799, and arrived at Batavia in ninety-five days.<sup>130</sup> Her voyage was

<sup>127</sup> Jesse & Robert Waln to Bainbridge Ansley & Co., Nov. 3 and Dec. 8, 1798, Waln Letter Book (1798, 1799), 119, 131, Library Company of Philadelphia. Joseph Volans took command of the *William Penn* on Dec. 8, 1798. *Ibid.*, 132, 133.

<sup>128</sup> Proof of Ownership, No. 2444, National Archives.

<sup>129</sup> *Naval Documents Related to the Quasi-War Between the United States and France, From August, 1799 to December, 1799* (Washington, 1936), 515, 520-523, 535, hereafter cited as *Quasi-War Documents*.

<sup>130</sup> Samuel Coates to Barnabas Many, Mar. 19, 1800, Samuel Coates Letter Book (1792-1802), HSP; *Gazette of the United States*, Sept. 22, 1800.

eventful only because of trouble with a crew member, one James Martin, "a dangerous man." Josiah disposed of him in due time by sending him on board the frigate *Essex*, arriving on May 15, 1800, the only naval vessel to reach Batavia. Her commander, Captain Edward Preble, informed the masters of the merchant ships then loading—they numbered better than a dozen—that he would sail on June 10.<sup>131</sup> Later, he gave them another week of grace. Josiah, as senior captain and master of the largest vessel, was spokesman for the merchantmen, and he and Preble became good friends.<sup>132</sup>

The convoy sailed from Batavia on June 19. Word of a French privateer in the Straits of Sunda led Preble to order the fleet to anchor on the night of June 20, while he investigated. He returned next morning and dined on board the *China*. He also supplied Josiah with three barrels of gunpowder, and observed, as the fleet passed through the Straits, that the *China* "proves too top heavy to be Safe in Carrying Sail on." That presented a problem for Josiah every day thereafter as the convoy ploughed westward through the Indian Ocean.<sup>133</sup> In early August, off the Bank of Lagullas (Agulhas), they encountered violent gales, which dispersed them. With such a possibility in mind, Preble had specified the island of St. Helena for a rendezvous. By September 21, the *China* and five other merchantmen had arrived there, as had the *Essex*.<sup>134</sup> The balance of the fleet, it was surmised, had passed the island. Josiah and three other masters addressed Preble, requesting that he hasten departure as no more of the convoy need be expected. "Every days detention may be of considerable consequence to our owners," they pointed out.<sup>135</sup> Preble complied and they sailed on September 26. Nearing the American coast, they were beset with gales. Between November 14 and 20, three vessels were separated, and on November 24, the *China* lost contact with the rest of the fleet off Hatteras.<sup>136</sup> Josiah could not

<sup>131</sup> Extracts from the journal of sailing master Rufus Low of the U.S. frigate *Essex*, May 14, 15, and 18, 1800; Edward Preble to Masters of Merchant Ships, May 19, 1800, *Quasi-War Documents*, 516, 521, 533, 534 (January–May, 1800).

<sup>132</sup> Preble to Masters of Merchant Ships, June 9, 1800, *ibid.*, 33 (June–November, 1800).

<sup>133</sup> Extracts from the journal of sailing master Rufus Low, June 22, 23, 25, 26 and 30, July 16, 1800, *ibid.*, 70, 75, 91, 96, 99, 158.

<sup>134</sup> Preble to Secretary of the Navy, Sept. 15, 1800, *ibid.*, 351.

<sup>135</sup> Josiah, *et al.*, to Preble, Sept. 21, 1800, *ibid.*, 371, 372.

<sup>136</sup> *Gazette of the United States*, Dec. 2, 1800.

make the Delaware. He steered for New York, and took a pilot from Sandy Hook, but adverse winds drove him to sea again. Finally, on December 8, he managed to run into Narragansett Bay and drop anchor off Newport.<sup>137</sup>

A letter to notify Blight of his arrival and another to urge his wife to join him at Newport went off immediately. Mrs. Josiah complied with joy, arriving overland on December 14 with news that Peter Blight early in the year had stopped payment, and his debts were supposed to amount to \$600,000. She also brought a kindly letter from Jesse & Robert Waln, "my perticular friends," which cheered the captain mightily. The Walns had arranged the details of Mrs. Josiah's trip, and he expressed his and his wife's thanks. His appreciation he would be "happy to Return by any Servises I can have at any time in my power to Render you."<sup>138</sup>

But James Josiah was through with the sea. At the age of fifty, at least thirty-five years of which had been spent in ships, he was at last determined to abandon the profession which esteemed him so highly. That long, rough passage from Batavia in a top-heavy ship, following his unpleasant experience in the last voyage of the *William Penn*, had convinced him that he was no longer up to the rigorous life of a shipmaster. Also, he had amassed a modest fortune, which, now that the nineteenth century was dawning, he wished to enjoy ashore. So, he took care of the cargo of the *China* for Blight's creditors, and surrendered the ship's register on March 19, 1801, to her new owners. Then he and his wife returned by leisurely stages to their home.<sup>139</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Josiah purchased a countryseat in Bensalem township, Bucks County, a house with a broad lawn running down to the Delaware River. James and Elizabeth were childless, but they had adopted Susan, the daughter of Mrs. Josiah's brother, Joseph Marsh, III, and his wife, Hannah (Hubley) Marsh. Susan's parents seem to have died in one of the yellow fever epidemics which had struck Philadelphia with brutal regularity every summer since 1793. The little family of three moved from Almond Street to the country-

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 9 and 17, 1800.

<sup>138</sup> Josiah to Jesse & Robert Waln, Dec. 25, 1800, Gratz Collection, HSP; Samuel Coates to Barnabas Many, Mar. 19, 1800, Samuel Coates Letter Book, HSP.

<sup>139</sup> Endorsement on Peter Blight's bond, "Surrend<sup>d</sup> at Newport March 19, 1801 New Owners," Proof of Ownership, Dec. 3, 1799, National Archives. The new owners were Gurney & Smith. *Gazette of the United States*, Apr. 20, 1801.



seat in the summer of 1801. Life there was ideal until 1805, when disaster struck. The story comes from the son of Susan Josiah: the captain "endorsed notes for a trusted friend, who proved a scoundrel, & Capt. Josiah surrendered to the creditors of this man all his fortune (even offering them his watch, which they refused to take), out of which only a very few thousand dollars was finally saved."<sup>140</sup>

Badly shaken, in fact made ill, by this perfidy, the captain and his family gave up the country home, moved back to Southwark, and bought a modest dwelling at 23 Christian Street.<sup>141</sup> Josiah perhaps thought his end was near, and on April 5, 1806, he executed a will, naming himself as "late of Bensalem Township in the County of Bucks now of the City and County of Philadelphia Mariner." All that he owned he devised to his "beloved wife Elizabeth."<sup>142</sup> He did not die, however, and once his health was restored, he began looking for some means of regaining part, at least, of the lost fortune. With two associates, he established the firm of Josiah, Harrison & Lee, operating a glass warehouse at 23 Dock Street.<sup>143</sup> He began to take a greater interest in the affairs of the Society for the Relief of Poor and Distressed Masters of Ships. He had always maintained membership, paying back dues whenever in port, and after moving to the country making it a point to attend at least one meeting a year. At the general meeting of the society in Carpenter's Hall on January 2, 1809, he was elected one of the board of managers.<sup>144</sup> He and his wife were members now of a Baptist congregation, and James also became active in the First Marine Bible Society.<sup>145</sup>

Life moved more smoothly; the glass warehouse did well, and the captain, while taking no part in politics, was an interested observer of the gradual ascendancy of the Democratic party of Jefferson and Madison. Then came the War of 1812, and British depredations in the lower Delaware led to the formation of a committee of citizens to raise funds for and to help the navy build and man a flotilla of

<sup>140</sup> F. Woodward Earl Notes.

<sup>141</sup> Philadelphia Directory, 1810.

<sup>142</sup> Will of James Josiah, executed Apr. 6, 1806, Will Book 7, No. 114, p. 190, Register of Wills, Phila.

<sup>143</sup> Philadelphia Directory, 1811.

<sup>144</sup> "Minutes of the Captains Society from May 1803 until October 1829," Shipmasters' Club, HSP.

<sup>145</sup> Poulson's American Daily Advertiser, Sept. 19, 1820.

barges. Josiah was one of fifteen named on May 6, 1813, to that committee. He was actively employed in it until the barges went down the river a month or more later. When word of the burning of the Capitol at Washington was received in Philadelphia, Josiah was again called into public service at a mass meeting in the State House Yard on August 26, 1814. He was one of eight representatives from Southwark elected to a committee of defense, which did much to prepare the city for an attack which never came.<sup>146</sup>

After the war he was appointed a master warden of the port of Philadelphia. In 1817, the partnership of Josiah, Harrison & Lee was dissolved, and the captain joined with George M'Leod in the firm of Josiah & M'Leod, ropemakers and ship chandlers. They opened a store at 40 South Wharves.<sup>147</sup> In July, 1818, the managers of the Society for the Relief of Poor and Distressed Masters of Ships met in Josiah's office, and continued gathering there quarterly through July, 1820.<sup>148</sup> On September 12 of that year, the captain was taken violently ill, and on the morning of Monday, September 18, James Josiah died.

"Another Revolutionary Patriot Gone" was the way *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* next day headlined his death. "JAMES JOSIAH, Esq. Master Warden of the port of Philadelphia, departed this life yesterday morning, after a severe attack of the dysentery, aged 69 years," read the brief obituary notice. Services would be held at his late residence that afternoon at 3 o'clock, and family, friends, and acquaintances were requested to attend.<sup>149</sup> On September 22 appeared a long and appreciative eulogy. "His body lies deposited in the Baptist Cemetery in Second near Arch street," it read, "having been accompanied thither by deeply mourning relatives, numerous friends, and the members of various Benevolent Societies, of which he was an exemplary and active brother."

"The loss of this estimable Citizen," the article continued, "is an event deeply to be regretted by every lover of his Country, and by every friend to the interests of sound morality, humanity, and unas-

<sup>146</sup> *Autobiography of Charles Biddle, Vice-President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, 1745-1821* (Philadelphia, 1883), 343, 351.

<sup>147</sup> Philadelphia Directory, 1817 and 1818.

<sup>148</sup> "Minutes of the Captains Society from May 1803 until October 1829," Shipmasters' Club, HSP.

<sup>149</sup> *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Sept. 19, 1820.

suming piety. Few men possessed or cherished a more ardent love for republican liberty, his native land, religious freedom, and conscientious correctness, both private and public, than Capt. Josiah. As a patriot, he was one of the earliest officers in the Navy of the United States, which in our revolutionary struggle, brought him as a captive, for confinement within the pestiferous hold of a British prison-ship, where he almost forgot his own personal sufferings, amid the dying and the dead, in the suffering of others. . . .

"The benevolent institutions, the Marine Church and Bible Society, the poor and distressed, the religious Congregation of which he was a member, none of them, or others, whoever knew Captain Josiah, can possibly forget his modest worth."<sup>150</sup>

Over his grave, a quarter century later, arose a tombstone, inscribed<sup>151</sup>:

Cap<sup>t</sup> James Josiah  
who died Sep<sup>t</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> 1820  
aged 69 years and 9 days  
An exemplary citizen, a firm, patient  
and christian believer. But the fond  
hopes inspired by pious love draws  
back the veil when spirits meet above.

Also  
Elizabeth Josiah  
widow of Cap<sup>t</sup> James Josiah, who  
departed this life at Burlington, N. J.  
December 27<sup>th</sup> 1844, aged 82 years  
and 3 months.

*Brevard, N. C.*

WILLIAM BELL CLARK

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 22, 1820.

<sup>151</sup> First Baptist Church records in Charles R. Barker, "Fragments from Old Philadelphia Graveyards," *Publications of The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania*, XI (March, 1930), 31.