

**JOURNAL OF THE
COMMISSIONERS OF THE NAVY
OF SOUTH CAROLINA OCTOBER
9, 1776-MARCH 1, 1779**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649143566

Journal of the Commissioners of the navy of South Carolina October 9, 1776-March 1, 1779 by
A. S. Salley

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

A. S. SALLEY

**JOURNAL OF THE
COMMISSIONERS OF THE NAVY
OF SOUTH CAROLINA OCTOBER
9, 1776-MARCH 1, 1779**

JOURNAL
OF THE
Commissioners of the Navy
OF
South Carolina

October 9, 1776—March 1, 1779

Edited by
A. S. SALLEY, JR.
Secretary of the Historical Commission of South Carolina

Printed for
THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA
By The State Company, Columbia, S. C.
1912

E263
S7S73
v.1

INTRODUCTION

On Saturday, September 21, 1776, the General Assembly "Ordered That Leave be given to bring in a Bill for appointing Commissioners to superintend and direct the Naval Affairs of this State And that the Honourable M^r Edwards Captain Roger Smith M^r. Corbett M^r. Neufville and M^r. Ward be a Committee to prepare and bring in the same".

On September 26th Col. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and Attorney General Moultrie were added to this committee.

On September 27th Mr. Edwards presented the bill to the House and it was received and read the first time and ordered to a second reading.

On October 1st the House proceeded to ballot for commissioners to superintend and direct the naval affairs of South Carolina, and, having selected Edward Blake, Thomas Savage, Josiah Smith, Jr., Thomas Corbett, Roger Smith, George Abbott Hall, and Thomas Shubrick, the bill was given a second reading, the names of these commissioners were inserted, and the bill was sent to the Legislative Council.

On October 3rd the bill was returned from the Legislative Council, where it had received two readings and had been amended by striking out the name of Thomas Shubrick and inserting another name.

On October 4th the bill came up in the House for its third reading. It appearing on the reading of the first clause that the name of Thomas Shubrick, one of the commissioners named by the House, had been stricken out by the Legislative Council, the House proceeded to ballot for another commissioner, and George Smith being selected his name was inserted, and the bill was given a third reading; its title ordered changed to that of an Act, and it was ordered that Mr. Thomas Waring and Mr. Keating Simons carry it to the Legislative Council for concurrence, which they did and so reported to the House a few minutes later.

On October 8th the House appointed Mr. Heyward and Mr. Young to join with a member of the Legislative Council to examine and compare the engrossed bill. A short time thereafter they reported that they had examined it and found it correct. Later in the day the Speaker and House "attended His Excellency in the

Council Chamber" and presented it (with other Acts) to President Rutledge, who signed it.

On October 9th the commissioners met and organized for business. Their journal from that date to March 23, 1780, when the close investment of the American lines at Charles Town put an end to their activities, an engrossed copy of the portion thereof to March 1, 1779, and a volume of accounts kept by the commissioners, were among the manuscripts in the State Library of New York when the New York State capitol at Albany was partially destroyed by fire, March 29, 1911, and they were considerably damaged thereby. How these records came to be in Albany has not been ascertained, but the records of the State department of New York show that in 1818, when J. V. N. Yates became Secretary of State of New York, he found these volumes in the State archives thereof. At the time of the fire in 1911 a bill for the returning of these volumes to South Carolina was pending before the General Assembly of New York. This bill subsequently became a law and the damaged records were returned to South Carolina.

In copying for publication the text of the original journal was used, save where the mutilation or destruction necessitated the use of the engrossed copy. It has often been found necessary to piece together the copy from scraps of the pages of each volume, and often after the copying has been done the paper, burned to charcoal, has crumbled to pieces. The words taken from the engrossed copy are put in italics. That part of this journal which covered the latter part of 1776 was printed in volumes II (Washington, 1851) and III (Washington, 1853) of the fifth series of Force's *American Archives*. Such words as have been burned from both copies of the manuscript journal, or rendered illegible by the fire, have been supplied from the *Archives* and are set in black type.

Charlestown, South-Carolina, Wednesday, 9th October 1776

In pursuance of an act of the **General Assembly**, passed the 4th October 1776 The following Commissioners Edw Blake &c to Superintend **and direct the Naval** affairs of this State, met **and previous to their forming** a board, took the following **Oath of Qualification** viz^t.

I Do Swear that I will well & truly Execute the duties of my Office, as a Commissioner of the Navy Board to the best of my skill and Judgment. So help me God.....

The Commissioners then proceeded to the election of the First Commissioner, and Edward Blake Esq^r. was by a majority of votes chosen First Commissioner of the Navy, and took his seat accordingly—

Resolved That the following Advertisement, for a Clerk of the Board, be published viz^t.

The Commissioners of the Navy Board, give this public Notice that they are in want of a Clerk, whose duty and Business will be, to keep Regular Accot^s. and Journals of all Transactions, Relating to the said Board, also, when required, to go on Board the Vessels of War in the service of this State, & take exact accounts of the Officers & Seamen on board, to pay off the wages due them Respectively, & to make proper returns thereof to the said Board, on Oath, The Salary allowed for such Business will be *Fourteen Hundred pounds per Annum.* Any person willing to engage will apply before Nine OClock on Saturday morning, the 12th Instant by letter directed to, **Edward Blake, First Commissioner.**

The Board upon enquiry *into the state of the Navy*, found that there was a vacancy for a *Captain to command the brigantine-of-war Comet.*

Ordered That the Following Letter be sent to **the General Assembly then sitting.** *Viz^t.* To the *Honble James Parsons Esq., Speaker,* & Gentlemen of the General Assembly—

The Commissioners of the Navy Board on Enquiry find that a Captain is wanted for the Brig^t Comet They recommend Captain Stephen Seymour, & Captain Edward

Allen, as fit Persons for the Legislature to make choice of—²

Adjourn'd to next Saturday morning nine o'clock.

Navy Board Saturday 12th Oct^r. 1776—

The Board met according to adjournment.

Present. Edward Blake first Commiss^r—

Thomas Savage, Josiah Smith Jun Geo Abbot Hall, Thomas Corbett, Roger Smith, George Smith—

Read several applications to the Board for the Clerk's office & then proceeded to choose a Clerk—

M^r. John Calvert was declared unanimously Elected to be Clerk of this Board & he took the following Oath of qualification viz^t.

I John Calvert do swear that I will well & truly execute the duties of my Office as Clerk of the Navy Board to the best of my skill & Judgement & that I will faithfully keep secret the Business of the said Board, when requir'd

So help me God

Received a Muster Roll of the Brig^t.. Defence

do.. a Muster Roll of the Brig^t.. Comet

The following Letter was sent to Cap^t.. Thomas Pickering

Cap^t.. Thomas Pickering

You are hereby required to use the utmost diligence in Manning the Brig^t.. Defence under your Command & getting her ready for Sea, in particular we recommend that you take the most effectual means, for recovering the Seamen who have deserted from your Vessel as speedily as possible if they are to be found in Town & make a return to the Navy Board of your Compliment of Men by Tuesday next at Nine OClock in the Morning A similar Letter was also sent to Cap^t.. Edward Allen Commander of the Brig^t.. Comet:

Adjourned to next Tuesday Morning Nine OClock

²See *Journal of the General Assembly of South Carolina, September 17, 1776-October 20, 1776*, for Wednesday, October 9, 1776, page 99. The same journal for the next day shows that Capt. Allen was selected.

Tuesday 15th . . . October 1776.

The Board met according to Adjournment

Present: *Edward Blake Esq: First Commissioner*

Geo: Abbott Hall, Josiah Smith

Tho^s . . Savage Thomas Corbett

George Smith Esquires

Read the Minutes of the last Meeting

Ordered, That the following Advertisement be inserted in the Gazette & that three Hundred Handbills be struck off & dispersed in the Country

The Commissioners of the Navy are in want of a quantity of Salted beef and Pork in barrels. Any persons inclined to furnish them therewith are desired to send proposals in writing to the subscriber, mentioning the quantity of salt required for each barrel of Beef and Pork, (which the Commissioners will supply the contractors with upon their entering into contract with them,) and the price they will deliver the Beef and Pork at in Charlestown, the same being properly cured and packed in tight barrels, weighing two hundred pounds neat weight. They are also in want of a quantity of Ship Bread and Flour, for which they will give the market price, or enter into contract with any person inclined to supply them.

Edward Blake, First Commissioner.

Returns were received from the officers of the Brigantine Comet and the Brigantine Defence.

Orders were given to Captain Edward Allen to get his Water, Provisions, and other necessaries on board, ready to proceed to sea as soon as possible, and to report when he is ready.

Orders were given to Captain Thomas Pickering to apply to the Commissary to furnish him with such Sails as are wanting for the Brigantine Defence, and other Necessaries to get her ready for Sea.

Alexander Horn the Public Boat keeper was ordered to attend the next Meeting.

Adjourned to next Thursday Morning 9 OClock

Navy Board Thursday 17th . . October 1776.

The Board met according to Adjournment

Present

Edward Blake Esq: First Commissioner

Thomas Savage, Thomas Corbett

Geo: Abbott Hall Josiah Smith } Esq^{rs}:

George Smith, Roger Smith }

Read the Minutes of last Meeting

The following Letter was agreed to be sent to Mr. . . Anthony Bonneau, at George Town.

Navy Office Charlestown, October 17, 1776.

Mr. . . Anthony Bonneau

Sir

Capt. . . Seymour having represented to the Commissioners of the Navy, the Necessity of having a proper person at Georgetown to furnish Provisions &^{ca}. . for the armed Schooner *Rattlesnake* stationed there, they will be glad if it should suit your Convenience, to transact that business; and in order that you may be acquainted with the Nature of it, you will find enclosed an indent of such provisions as the Seamen in the Navy are allowed daily; also a form of a Return to be made & signed by the Purser monthly, when your accounts ought to be made out and transmitted to this Board, for the amount of which they will pay your order, upon the account being separately certified by the Purser and yourself. Captain Seymour is to send to you for provisions as they are wanted; for which purpose the Board recommend that you buy a good canoe and oars for the schooner, to be used only as a harbour boat; and whenever she may be ordered to sea, the canoe to be left in your or some other person's custody, to be taken care of until her return. The Commissioners will be glad to know on what terms you will transact the above business, to which they will give you an immediate answer.

By order of the Board:

Edward Blake, First Commissioner.

The following Letter was wrote to Captain John Copithorn:
Captain John Copithorn:

Sir: The Commissioners of the Navy request that you do immediately make use of your utmost endeavours to procure as many Schooners as you can hire for the service of the publick, & inform me as soon as possible of your success

I am Sir your h^{ble} Serv^t. .

Edward Blake, first Commissioner