

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FH 5275

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Colonial &  
Revolutionary  
War Sea Songs  
& Chanteys  
Sung at Seaport '76  
*by Cliff Haslam  
& John Millar*

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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# Colonial & Revolutionary War Sea Songs & Chanteys



Sung at Seaport '76  
*by Cliff Haslam & John Millar*

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## SEAPORT 76

### SEAPORT '76

Seaport '76 is a non-profit corporation which was formed in 1972 for the purpose of developing a Colonial/ Revolutionary period seaport museum on the historic waterfront of Newport, Rhode Island (because that Colonial seaport town, having the most pre-Revolutionary buildings still standing anywhere in America, is the most authentic setting for such a museum and because the waters around Newport were the cradle of our American Navy). Of all the many maritime museums, this seaport will be unique in presenting the Colonial and Revolutionary parts of our maritime heritage. The museum includes two full-sized examples of Colonial and Revolutionary period ships (the 24-gun frigate Rose and the 12-gun sloop Providence) with the hope of obtaining more at a later date.

Seaport '76 has officially been designated a tax-exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service, and its achievements and plans have been recognized by both the Rhode Island Bicentennial Commission and the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration in Washington. One of its activities consists of weekly concerts of Sea Chanteys and other traditional music on the deck of the frigate Rose in the summer months.

Enquiries are welcomed at the Seaport's mailing address: 60 Church Street, Newport, Rhode Island 02840; telephone (401) 846-1776.

Notes by John F. Millar  
Recording Engineer - James Cagney, Jr.

### CLIFFORD HASLAM

Cliff was born in 1945 and brought up in Warrington, Lancashire (which he is horrified to learn has been moved into Cheshire, now that the boundary lines have been shifted), and came to the U.S. in 1966. He lives near New Haven, Connecticut, and works as an engineer in a computerized machinery company. Those who have heard him sing at various clubs, pubs and folk festivals around New England say that he is one of the finest British traditional singers ever to sing in America. He has spent one summer crewing on the frigate Rose, which gave him a practical use for all the sea chanteys he had learned over the years.

### JOHN F. MILLAR

John was born in 1945 and divided his early years between England and Rhode Island. He was graduated from Harvard in 1966 and is becoming quite widely known as an author and historian of the Colonial period. He and his wife Cathy live in a 1704 house in Newport, where he teaches at Salve Regina College and works as Curator of Seaport '76, in addition to his duties as Vice President of the Newport Bicentennial Commission. Musically, he is equally at home with Handel in his church choir and British traditional folk music, both of which he started singing at an early age at school in England.

### OTHER PERFORMERS ON THIS RECORD

Norman Ott, a neighbor of Cliff's in Connecticut, is a well-known fifer in some of Connecticut's fife and drum units. James Cagney, Jr., lives in Newport, where he works in a shipyard and plays a variety of instruments. Gary Martin is a Newport silversmith, and has been singing Chanteys on the frigate Rose for years, as has Norma McHenry.

Boston Harbour - Chanteys of any kind are rare before the nineteenth century, but this song can be dated fairly closely to the period 1765 to 1775 by the inclusion of the sail known as a ringtail. This song has been recorded more than once using a late nineteenth century music-hall tune, but we feel that it fits this tune of its own period more appropriately. This song was definitely written by a common seaman.

From Boston Harbour we set sail;  
The wind it blew a devil of a gale.  
With a ringtail set all abaft the peak  
And a Rule Britannia, boys ploughing up the deep,  
Derry down, down, down derry down.

The captain comes up from down below;  
It's "Lay aloft, lads, look alow!"  
And it's "Look alow and it's look aloft!"  
And it's "Coil up your ropes, lads, fore and aft!".....

Well, down to his cabin then he crawls,  
And to his poor old steward bawls:  
"Go fetch me a drink that will make me cough,  
For it's warmer down here than it is up aloft!".....

Now, we poor sailors on the decks,  
With the blasted rain pouring down our necks:  
Not a drop of grog would he to us afford,  
But he damned our eyes at every other word.....

Now there is one thing that we do crave:  
That our captain he meets with a watery grave.  
We'll throw him right down into some dark hole  
Where the sharks'll have his body and the devil have  
his soul.....

Sung by Cliff Haslam and chorus

Sam's Gone Away - Sea Chanteys that are part of today's traditional repertoire come mainly from the nineteenth century, and from merchant ships rather than warships. On naval vessels the work was accompanied by whistles rather than singing, so that the crew could more easily hear crucial orders. However, this capstan chantey appears to be an exception, and may have survived through its having been adopted by musical West Indians in contact with ships of the Royal Navy in such ports as Antigua or Barbados; in fact, ancestors of many of today's Barbados "redlegs" (poor whites) served in the Royal Navy. True to the form of most chanteys, this one can be expanded ad nauseam by the addition of more verses.

I wish I was a cabin-boy aboard a man of war  
Sam's gone away aboard a man of war  
Pretty work, brave boys, pretty work, I say,  
Sam's gone away aboard a man of war.

I wish I was a gunner.....  
I wish I was the bosun.....  
I wish I was an officer.....  
I wish I was the captain.....

Sung by Cliff Haslam and chorus

Johnny Todd - This well-known song is sometimes identified with a particular port, such as Liverpool (in north-west England), but we feel that it goes back long before the day when Liverpool was any kind of major port, so we have omitted any reference to any town. The moral of this song is clear, and the Methodist movement that was catching hold in England in the 18th century must have been delighted.

Johnny Todd, he took a notion, for to cross the ocean wide,  
And he left his love behind him, standing by the foaming tide.

For a week she lay a-weeping, tore her hair and wrung  
her hands,  
Till she met another sailor walking by the salt sea strand.

"Why, fair maid, are you a-weeping for your Johnny gone to sea?  
If you'll wed with me tomorrow, I will kind and constant be.

I'll buy you some sheets and blankets, I'll buy you a wedding ring.  
You shall have a golden cradle for to rock the baby in."

Johnny Todd came home from sailing, sailing o'er the ocean wide,  
And he found his fair and false one was another sailor's bride.

So all young men who go a-sailing for to fight the foreign foe,  
Do not leave your love like Johnny; marry her before you go.

Sung by John Millar; Norm Ott: Pennywhistle

Pleasant and Delightful - We suspect that this fantastic song was first sung in 1761 on the occasion of the huge British invasion fleet leaving England to attack Cuba, Martinique and St. Lucia in the West Indies; our ship, the frigate Rose was in that fleet. In any case, it is a traditional sailor's song of farewell to his love. Louis Killen and I both learned it as schoolboys in England and then more or less forgot it. Then, just before he died, Sam Lerner, that musical fisherman of Winterton, Norfolk, taught it to Louis and he retaught it to me.

It was pleasant and delightful on that midsummer's morn  
When the green fields and the meadows they were buried  
in corn.  
And the black birds and the thrushes sang in every green  
tree,  
And the larks they sang melodious at the dawning of the  
day.

Well, a sailor and his true love were out walking one  
day.  
Said the sailor to his true love "I am bound far away.  
I am bound out for the Indies where the loud cannons  
roar,  
And I'm going to leave my Nancy; she's the girl that  
I adore."

Said the sailor to his true love "Well, I must be on  
my way,  
For our tops'ls they are hoisted and our anchor's  
aweight.  
Our big ship she lies awaiting for the next flowing  
tide,  
And if ever I return again, I will make you my bride."

Then a ring from off her finger she instantly drew,  
Saying "Take this, dearest William, and my heart shall  
go too."  
And as he embraced her tears from her eyes fell,  
Saying "May I go along with you?" "Oh, no, my love,  
farewell!"

Sung by John Millar and chorus

My Son John - It is said that far more seamen died of disease than in battle in the wars of the 18th century, but a large number of men were still hit in battle. Afterwards, they would meet great difficulties in trying to collect a disability pension from an ungrateful country's bureaucracy. In this song, the legless sailor is asked whether he really lost his legs in battle or if he just lost them somewhere else on his own time. We learned this cheerfully sad ditty from the singing of Tim Hart and Maddy Prior.

My son John was tall and slim, and he had a leg for  
every limb.  
But now he's got no legs at all for he ran a race with  
a cannonball,  
To me roo-dum dah; folleriddle dah; Whack folleriddle  
to me roo-dum-dah.

"Oh, were you deaf or were you blind when you left  
your two fine legs behind?  
Or was it sailing on the sea wore your two fine legs  
right down to your knee?"

I was not deaf, I was not blind when I left my two fine  
legs behind.  
Nor was it sailing on the sea  
Wore me two fine legs right down to me knee.....

But I was tall and I was slim, I had a leg for every  
limb.  
But now I've got no legs at all; they were both shot  
away by a cannonball.

Sung by Cliff Haslam and John Millar

Polly On The Shore - This song, like two others on this record, laments a sailor's bad luck at having been "impressed" or caught by a Pressgang. Although this song has a beautiful melody, it is also one of the most difficult folk tunes we have ever encountered, slipping as it does from key to key. Louis Killen was one of many who inspired us to learn this song.

Come all you wild young men, and a warning take by me:  
Never to lead your simple life astray, and into no  
bad company.

As I myself have done, it being in the merry month of May,  
When I was pressed by a sea captain, and on board a man  
of war I was sent.

We sailed on the ocean so wide, and a bonny, bonny flag  
we let fly.  
Let every man stand true to his gun, for the Lord knows  
who must die.

Our captain was wounded full sore, and so were the rest  
of his men.  
Our mainmast rigging was scattered on the deck, so that  
we were obliged to give in.

Our decks they were spattered with blood, and loudly the  
cannons did roar.  
And thousands of times that I've wished myself at home  
And all alone with my Polly on the shore.

She's a tall and a slender girl, she's a dark and a  
roving eye,  
And here am I lying a-bleeding on the deck, and for her  
sweet sake I will die.

So, farewell to me parents and me friends: farewell my  
dearest Polly, too.  
I ne'er would have crossed the salt sea so wide if I  
had've been ruled by you.

Sung by Cliff Haslam

The Anti-Gallican Privateer - A privateer is a privately-owned armed vessel that has been licensed by its government to capture enemy ships. American privateers captured so many British merchant ships during the War of Independence that they were a major factor in winning Independence. However, the British had privateers, too, and this song is a recruiting song for one called the Anti-Gallican (literally, "against the French") that

sailed out of Newcastle-Upon Tyne around 1780. There was still strong sympathy for the Americans in England, but none at all for the Americans' opportunistic allies, the French and Spanish, and it is significant that the Americans are not mentioned in the song. We learned this one from the singing of Louis Killen, though he's already forgotten the song.

The Anti-Gallican's safe arrived; on board of her with  
speed we'll hie;  
She'll soon be fit to sail away.  
To the Anti-Gallican haste away. ....

For gold we'll sail the ocean o'er from Britain's Isle  
to the French shore.  
No ships from us will get away. ....

These Spaniards, too, the cunning knaves,  
We'll take their ships and make them slaves.  
Till war's at end, we'll never stay. ....

Our country calls us all to arms to keep us safe from  
French alarms.  
Then let us all her voice obey. ....

When we are rich, then home we'll steer,  
And enter Shields with many a cheer,  
To meet our friends so blithe and gay. ....

To Charlotte's Head, then let's repair;  
We'll be received with welcome there.  
We'll enter then without delay. ....

Sung by John Millar; Norm Ott: Pennywhistle

Fathom the Bowl - As much a part of the sailor's traditional life as his girls was - and is - drinking. This is not surprising when you consider that water on ship-board usually tasted so bad that they had to drink cider, beer or rum all the time; in fact, "grog" is a careful mixture of rum and water so that there would be enough rum to hide the taste of the water and enough water to keep him from falling drunk out of the rigging to his death (a serious problem to the 18th century captain). When he came ashore, the sailor naturally continued drinking, with no captain to see that he put water in his punch. To fathom the bowl meant to get right down to the bottom of the bowl, and that's what many a seaman tried to do. We have joined in with this rousing song in many an English pub, where it is still a favorite today.

Come all you bold heroes, give an ear to me song.  
We'll sing in the praise of good brandy and rum.  
It's a clear crystal fountain near England doth roll:  
Give me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl.

From France we do get brandy, from Jamaica comes rum;  
Sweet oranges and apples from Portugal come.  
But stout, and strong cider are England's control:  
Give me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl.

Me wife, she do disturb me when I'm laid at my ease;  
She does as she likes and she says as she please.  
Me wife, she's the devil, she's black as the coal:  
Give me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl.

Me father, he do lie in the depths of the sea,  
With no stone at his head, but what matters for he?  
It's a clear crystal fountain near England doth roll:  
Give me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl.

(repeat first verse)

Sung by Cliff Haslam and chorus

### The Pressgang

At the time of the American Revolution, the Royal Navy resorted to the Pressgang to fill up its depleted ranks with seamen and any other unfortunates who got in the way of this marauding band. It was no more than a legalized form of kidnapping. We got this song from the singing of Ewan MacColl, and it dates from about the time of the Revolution. It was obviously written by a common seaman.

As I walked down on London Street,  
A Pressgang there I chanced to meet.  
They asked me if I'd join the fleet,  
On board of a man of war.

Come, brother shipmates, tell me true,  
What kind of treatment they give you,  
So I may know before I go on board of a man of war.

When I got there to my surprise,  
All that they'd told me was shocking lies.  
There was a row and some jolly old fights  
On board of a man of war.

The first thing they done when they took me in hand,  
They lashed me with a tar of a strand.  
They flogged me till I could not stand  
On board of a man of war.

Now I was married and me wife's name was Kate,  
'Twas she that drive me to this bad state.  
She that caused me to go away on board of man of war.

When next I get my foot on shore  
To see them London girls once more,  
I'll never go to sea no more on board of a man of war.

Sung by John Millar; Norm Ott: Pennywhistle

### All Things Were Quite Silent

Sometimes, when the Royal Navy was particularly short of seamen, the Pressgang would resort to the dirty trick of kidnapping likely sailors at seaside inns frequented by honeymooners, usually in the middle of the night. This song is an example of the all-too frequent result. Why this couple was described as being in a "cave" rather than an inn is probably explained by the ancient meaning of cave as a cellar. We learned this song from Louis Killen.

All things were quite silent, each mortal at rest,  
And me and my true love lay snug in one nest,  
When a bold set of ruffians broke into our cave,  
And they forced my dear jewel to plough the salt wave.

I begged for my true love as I'd beg for my life,  
But they'd not listen to me, although a fond wife,  
Saying "The King must have sailors, to the sea he must go,"  
And they left me lamenting in sorrow and woe.

Through green fields and meadows we oft-times did walk.  
With sweet conversations of love we did talk,  
And the birds in the woodlands so sweetly did sing,  
And the lovely thrushes' voices made the valleys to ring.

Though my love has left me I'll not be cast down.  
Who knows, but some day my love may return,  
And will make me amends for my sorrow and strife,  
And me and my true love might live happy for life.

Sung by John Millar; Norm Ott: Pennywhistle

Hurrah for John Paul Jones - Since Jones spent a lot of time at Amsterdam, the Dutch were quite familiar with his exploits, and they were generally quite pleased to see the Lion's tail being tweaked. This song was written late in 1779 in Amsterdam and commemorates his victory over the Serapis. It is still sung by Dutch school-children, and there is also a version in French. The version on this record was translated directly from Dutch by John Millar and set to the original tune; this is the first time it has ever been recorded in English. The tune is very typical of Dutch music of the period.

Here comes Captain John Paul Jones,  
Sing his praise in hero's tones.  
He is a bold American, his ship went down not far from land.  
Had we him here, had they him there,  
He would command us o'er the sea, good fortune would then  
with us be.

He does many a daring deed for his friends when they're  
in need.  
He landed prisoners on our strand, and they were all from  
England....

He took their ship before our eyes, and he has made a very  
fine prize.  
To Brest in France he next did tack; now let them only see  
his back....

He sails serenely like a swan; he pops his cannonballs like  
corn (!)  
He hangs his broadsword by his side and sails upon the  
foaming tide....

Hurrah for Captain John Paul Jones, sing his praise in  
hero's tones.  
He has done his business well, his mighty acts no tongue  
can tell.  
Had we him here, had they him there,  
He would command us o'er the sea, now Paul Jones will soon  
with us be.

Sung by John Millar; Jim Cagney: guitar

Farewell Nancy - A frequently recurring theme in traditional songs of sailors is that of the sailor bidding farewell to his love, while she begs to be allowed to come along. This is not as far-fetched as one might think: in the first place, the Royal Navy actually encouraged seamen to move their wives or girl-friends onto the ship while they were in port in order to lessen the danger of desertion, and in the second, there are many stories of girls dressing as men and actually getting away with joining the army or the navy. I got this song from the singing of Tim Hart, who was instrumental in founding the Steel-Eye Span.

Fare thee well, my dearest Nancy, for it's now I must  
leave you.  
All on the salt seas I am bound for to go.  
But let my long absence be no trouble to you,  
For I will return in the spring as you know.

"Like some pretty little seaboy I will dress and go  
with you;  
In the deepest of dangers I will stand your friend.  
In the cold stormy weather when the winds they are a-  
blowing,  
My love, I'll be willing to wait on you then."

Your pretty little hands cannot handle our tackle;  
Your pretty little feet to our topmast can't go.  
And the cold stormy weather, love, you never could  
endure,  
Therefore, lovely Nancy, to the sea do not go.

(repeat first verse)

Sung by John Millar; Norm Ott: Pennywhistle

Adieu Sweet Lovely Nancy - In a surprisingly large percentage of traditional sea songs, the girls' names are either Nancy or Sally; it seems that all the Nancys are true loves or childhood sweethearts, while all the Sallys are the kind of girl that a sailor might pick up in a seaport town. I don't know what significance, if any, can be read into this piece of trivia, but here is another song of a sailor saying farewell to his girl, whose name is, of course, Nancy. I got this song from the singing of Tim Hart and Maddy Prior.

Adieu, sweet lovely Nancy, ten thousand times adieu.  
I'm a-going around the ocean, love, to seek for something  
new.  
Come change your ring with me, dear girl, come change your  
ring with me,  
That it might be a token of true love while I am out to  
sea.

And when I'm far upon the sea, you know not where I am,  
Kind letters I will write to you from every foreign land.  
The secrets of your heart, dear girl, are the best of my  
good will,  
So let your body beware at night, my heart will be with  
you still.

There's a heavy storm arising, see how it gathers round,  
While we poor souls on the ocean tide are fighting for  
the Crown.

There's nothing to protect us, love, nor keep us from  
the cold,  
On the ocean wide where we must bide like jolly seamen  
bold.

There's tinkers, tailors, shoemakers lie snoring fast  
asleep,  
While we poor souls on the ocean wide go ploughing through  
the deep.  
Our officers commanded us, and them we must obey,  
Expecting every moment for to get cast away.

But when the wars are over, there'll be peace on every  
shore.  
We'll return to our wives and our families and the girls  
that we adore.  
We'll call for liquor merrily, we'll spend our money free,  
And when our money is all gone, we'll bodily go to sea.

Sung by Cliff Haslam and John Millar

Pretty Nancy of Yarmouth - There are numerous songs of  
sailors bidding farewell to their lasses, and many  
others of seamen (the same men?) carousing with wenches  
in foreign ports, but there are surprisingly few giving  
equal time to the ladies, who weren't always waiting  
patiently on the shore for their love to return. The  
moral is obvious: get married before you go, or even  
better still: don't go at all. Yarmouth is a large port  
on the east coast of England famed for its fishing fleet,  
and also in those days for its flourishing trade with  
Holland and Scandinavia. We got this song from Peter  
Bellamy and the Young Tradition.

Pretty Nancy of Yarmouth, she's me own heart's delight,  
And a long and kind letter unto her I did write,  
All for to inform her what we had to undergo  
While sailing on the ocean where the stormy winds blow.

On the 18th of October our bark it set sail.  
Pretty Nancy come down for to bid me farewell.  
She said "While you're sailing on the wide ocean blue,"  
She said "My young sailor, I'll be faithful to you."

Long years then did pass when back I did return.  
Pretty Nancy was married, had a home of her own.  
While I was a-sailing on the wide restless sea,  
Pretty Nancy proved faithless and false unto me.

Come all you young sailors and listen to me,  
And never leave the lass you love for to plough the  
salt sea,  
For while you're a-sailing on the wide ocean blue,  
She'll prove faithless like Nancy of Yarmouth to you.

Sung by Cliff Haslam and John Millar

Yankee Privateer - The 28-gun Continental frigate Providence  
(not to be confused with the 12-gun Continental sloop  
Providence, whose replica is on display at Seaport '76 in  
Newport, Rhode Island) was by no stretch of the imagination  
a privateer for she was a part of the regular American  
Navy in the War of Independence. The song-writer may have

taken liberties in that regard, but the incident narrated  
by the song is absolutely true and took place in July,  
1779. Whipple and the Providence were captured by the  
British in 1780 at the fall of Charleston, South Carolina,  
but by then he was universally regarded as an able Navy  
captain, so there was no question of his being hanged at  
a yard-arm as Captain Wallace of the frigate Rose had  
threatened him in 1775 (verse 2). Whipple was actually  
a much more deserving hero than John Paul Jones, but  
didn't manage to have so many songs written about him.  
We set these words, found in a book with no tunes, to an  
18th century tune.

Come listen and I'll tell you how first I went to sea  
To fight against the British and earn our liberty.  
We shipped with Captain Whipple who never knew a fear,  
The Captain of the Providence, the Yankee privateer.  
We sailed and we sailed, and we made good cheer;  
There were many pretty men on the Yankee privateer.

The British Lord High Admiral, he wished old Whipple  
harm;  
He wrote that he would hang him at the end of his yard-  
arm.  
"My lord," wrote Captain Whipple back "It seems to me  
it's clear  
That if you want to hang him you must catch your privateer."  
We sailed and we sailed and we made good cheer,  
For not a British frigate could come near the privateer.

We sailed to the south'ard and nothing did we meet  
Till we found three British frigates and their West  
Indian fleet.  
Old Whipple shut our ports up as we crawled up near  
And he sent us all below on the Yankee Privateer.  
So slowly he sailed we dropped back to the rear  
And not a soul suspected the Yankee privateer.

At night we put the lights out and forward we ran,  
And silently we boarded the biggest merchantman.  
We knocked down the watch and the lubbers shook for fear.  
She's prize without a shot to the Yankee privateer.  
We sent the prize north'ard while we lay near,  
And all day we slept on the Yankee privateer.

For ten nights we followed and ere the moon rose  
Each night a prize we'd taken beneath the Lion's nose.  
When the British asked why their ships should disappear,  
They found they had in convoy a Yankee privateer.  
But we sailed and we sailed and we made good cheer,  
For not a coward was on board the Yankee privateer.

The biggest British frigate bore round to give us chase,  
But though he was the fleetest old Whipple wouldn't race  
Till he's raked her fore and aft and the lubbers could  
not steer;  
He showed them the heels of the Yankee privateer.  
Then we sailed and we sailed and we made good cheer,  
For not a British frigate could come near the privateer.

Then northward we sailed to the town we all do know,  
And there lay our prizes all anchored in a row.  
And welcome were we there to our friends so dear,  
And we shared a million dollars on the Yankee privateer.  
We'd sailed and we'd sailed and we'd made good cheer,  
And we all had full pockets on the Yankee privateer.

Then we each manned a ship and our sails we unfurled,

And we bore the Stars & Stripes, me boys, o'er the oceans  
of the world.  
From the proud flag of Britain we swept the seas quite  
clear,  
And we earned our Independence on the Yankee privateer.  
Then landsmen and sailors, let's give one more cheer!  
Here is three times three for the Yankee privateer!

Sung by John Millar; Jim Cagney, Jr. guitar

The Ballad of John Paul Jones - Virtually every American  
schoolboy has heard the story of how Jones on the 42-gun  
rotten, leaky Bonhomme Richard exclaimed "I have only  
just begun to fight!" and then captured the 44-gun  
British warship Serapis in 1779. Captain Pearson, who  
surrendered the Serapis after a long fight, was later  
knighted because he had managed the battle skillfully  
enough as to allow the rich convoy he was guarding to  
escape safely into a British port, but this part of  
the battle is often overlooked by over-zealous fans of  
Jones. Many will recognize the tune as being close to  
Sweet Betsey from Pike, which however is a tune used with  
many 18th century songs.

An American frigate, a frigate of fame,  
With guns mounted forty the Richard by name,  
Was cruising the Channel of old England,  
With a noble commander, Paul Jones was the man.

We had not sailed long before we did espy  
A large 44 and a 20 close by;  
Well manned with bold seamen and plenty of store,  
They quickly pursued us from old England's shore.

At the hour of 12 Pearson came alongside.  
With a loud-speaking trumpet "Whence come you?" he cried.  
"Pray give me an answer; I've hailed you before,  
For at this very instant a broadside I'll pour."

Paul Jones he exclaimed "My brave boys, we won't run.  
Let every bold seaman stand close to his gun."  
When the broadside was fired by those brave Englishmen  
Like bold buckskin heroes we returned it again.

We fought them eight glasses, eight glasses so hot,  
Till 60 bold seamen lay dead on the spot.  
70 more they lay bleeding in gore,  
While the pieces of cannon like thunder did roar.

One gunner got frightened, to Paul Jones he came  
"Our ship she's a-sinking; her side's but a frame."  
Then Paul Jones exclaimed in the height of his pride  
"If we can't do better, we'll sink alongside."

Our shot flew so fast that they could not stand.  
The proud flag of Britain was forced to come down.  
Now, my brave boys, we have taken a prize:  
A large 44 and a 20 likewise.

God bless the widows who shortly must weep  
For the loss of their husbands now sunk in the deep.  
Here's a health to bold Paul Jones, his sword in his hand,  
Who stood up in action and gave the command.

Sung by John Millar; James Cagney, Jr., guitar

The Stately American - This song, which has sometimes mistakenly been combined into one song with The Yankee Man of War, concerns an incident in 1778 off the coast of southern Ireland in which John Paul Jones and his 18-gun corvette Ranger were able to escape being caught by a British fleet that was out looking for them. The Ranger's exceptional turn of speed helped her to escape. We got this version from the singing of Tim Hart and Maddy Prior, who in turn picked it up through British traditional sources rather than American, surprisingly enough.

She was a stately American that flew the Stripes and Stars.  
The whistling wind from the west-north-west blew through her pitch-pine spars  
As like an eagle swiftly on she flew before the gale.  
Till late that night she raised a light, the old Head of Kinsale.

No thought was there of shortening sail by him who trod the poop  
For by the weight of a ponderous jib the boom bent like a hoop.  
Her groaning chest-tree told the strain that bore the stout main-tack,  
But he only laughed as he gazed abaft at the bright and silvery track.

It was a fine and a cloudless night, the breeze held steady and strong,  
As gaily over the shining deep our good ship bowled along.  
In foam beneath her trembling bows the mounting wave she spread,  
As stooping low her breast of snow she buried her lee cathead.

What looms upon the starboard bow, what hangs upon the breeze?  
'Tis time the packet hauls her wind abreast the old saltease.  
But high a mighty press of sail that clothed each ponderous spar:  
That ship we spied on the misty tide was a British man of war!

"Out booms, out booms!" our skipper cried, "Out booms, and give her sheet!"  
And the swiftest ship that ever was launched got away from the British fleet.  
As midst a murderous hail of shot our stuns'ls hoisted away,  
Down Channel clear Paul Jones did steer just at the break of day.

Sung by John Millar

The Yankee Man of War - Abraham Whipple, John Barry and Nicholas Biddle, among others, were probably more deserving to be American Naval heroes of the War of Independence than John Paul Jones, but the public never caught on to anyone as they did to Jones. Jones, a Scotsman who was wanted for murder in the West Indies, joined the infant Continental Navy as a lieutenant. His first command was the little sloop Providence, whose

replica is on display in Newport, R.I. He was then promoted to command the new 18-gun corvette Ranger, and the incident in this song took place off the coast of Ireland in 1778. The "English Man of War" was actually the Drake, a former Philadelphia merchant ship aboard which the Royal Navy had mounted 20 cannons. This song is frequently sung as part of another, which it was not, and we have separated them; the other is The Stately American.

What's that, what's that on the starboard bow from our masthead described?  
"It is an English man of war," our gallant captain cried.  
"Bear down, bear down on his port bow, and we'll give to him a broadside,  
And we'll let him know that John Paul Jones is king of the Irish tide."

'Twas 11 o'clock in the forenoon when we ranged up along-side.  
Locked yard-arm to yard-arm our foes we then described.  
"Come on, come on, you cowardly curs!" was heard above the din;  
"If you've got brass for outward show we've got good steel within."

For five long hours the battle raged, 'twas furious and fast.  
Paul Jones he led us in the van, and we conquered them at last.  
'Twas four o'clock in the afternoon the English flag rolled down.  
"Well done, me boys," Paul Jones he cried, "'Tis a battle of renown."

Sung by John Millar; Jim Cagney - guitar

Sir Peter Parker - Early in the summer of 1776, Commodore Sir Peter Parker took an invasion fleet to Charleston, South Carolina, but was repulsed by the stout defenders of a palmetto-log fort. That was newsworthy by itself, but when it was learned that an American cannonball grazed Sir Peter's rump and made a large hole in his breeches, well, that was material for a satirical song, and many a flagging Patriot was probably cheered back to renewed vigor in the early stages of the War of Independence by this ballad.

My Lords, with your leave, an account I will give  
That deserves to be written in metre:  
For the Rebels and I have been pretty nigh,  
Faith! Almost too nigh for Sir Peter.  
Ri-toot!-O, ri-toorali-A, Faith! Almost too nigh for Sir Peter.

With much labour and toil unto Sullivan's Isle  
I came, firm as Falstaff or Pistol;  
But the Yankee, God rot 'em I could not get at 'em,  
Most terribly mauled my poor Bristol.....

Devil take 'em! Their shot flew so swift and so hot,  
And the cowardly dogs, stood so stiff, sir,  
That I put ship about, and was glad to get out,  
Or they would not have left me a skiff, sir.....



JOHN F. MILLAR

Bold Clinton by land did quietly stand  
While my guns made a terrible rumpus;  
But my pride took a fall when a well-aimed ball  
Propelled me along on my bumpus! ....

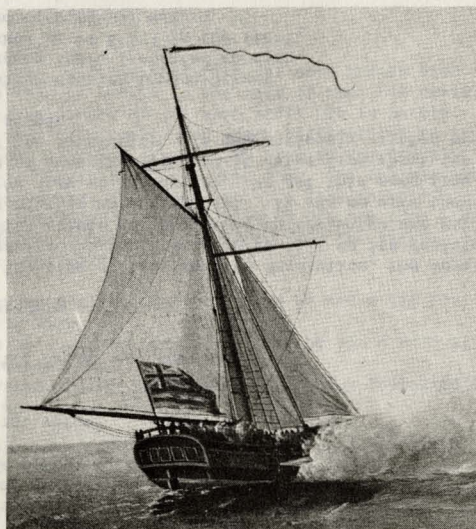
Now, bold as a Turk I proceed to New York,  
Where with Clinton and Howe you may find me.  
I've the wind in my tail (!) and am hoisting my sail  
To leave Sullivan's Island behind me.....

But, my Lords, do not fear, for before the next year,  
Although a small island could fret us,  
The Continent whole we shall take, by my soul,  
If the cowardly Yankees will let us.....

Sung by John Millar; Jim Cagney: chorus and autoharp



CLIFF HASLAM



THE CONTINENTAL SLOOP  
"U.S.S. PROVIDENCE," 1774-1779.  
(FROM A PAINTING BY  
FRANCIS HOLMAN, 1777)



THE 24-GUN REVOLUTIONARY WAR FRIGATE "ROSIE", AT SEAPORT '76, NEWPORT, R.I.