

Successes and Losses 10



Hezekiah Niles

“New privateers are daily pushing out from our several ports. There will be a precious tale told at Lloyd’s within three months.”

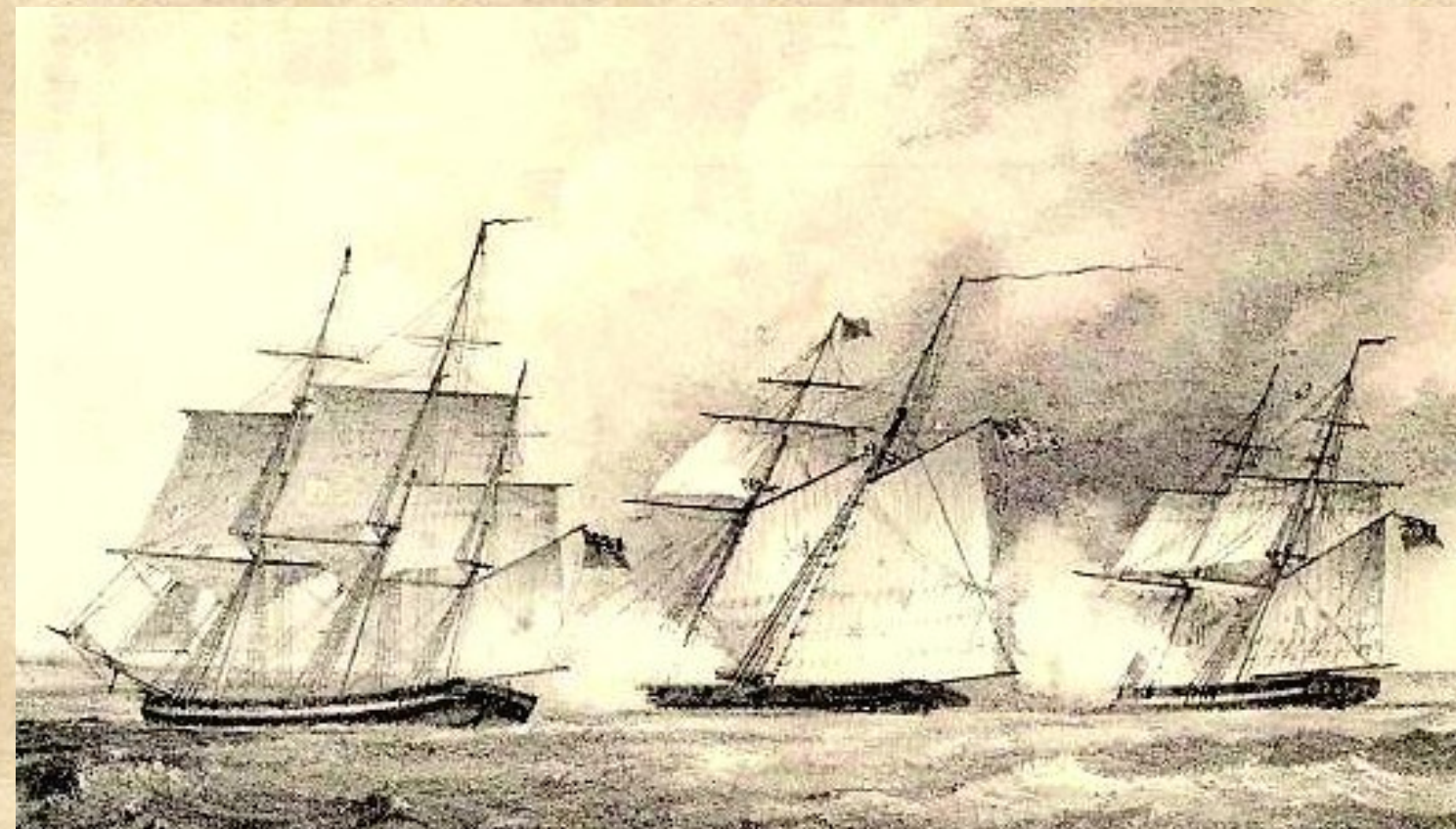
-The Weekly Register

In 1811, Baltimore’s Hezekiah Niles began publishing the *Weekly Register*, a subscription newspaper that reported on the events of the day. At the start of the war, he began publishing reports of privateer actions, captures, losses and the arrival of prizes drawn from customs records, captains’ logs and a variety of sources. By the end of the war, Niles had compiled a record of American privateering activity that is unsurpassed even today.

The Weekly Register, August 22, 1812:

“The British have lately captured 3 fine privateers from Boston. . .”

Dolphin and William Stafford



Dolphin vs. Hebe and the brig Three Brothers

“he did not expect to find a d—d Yankee privateer in that part of the world”

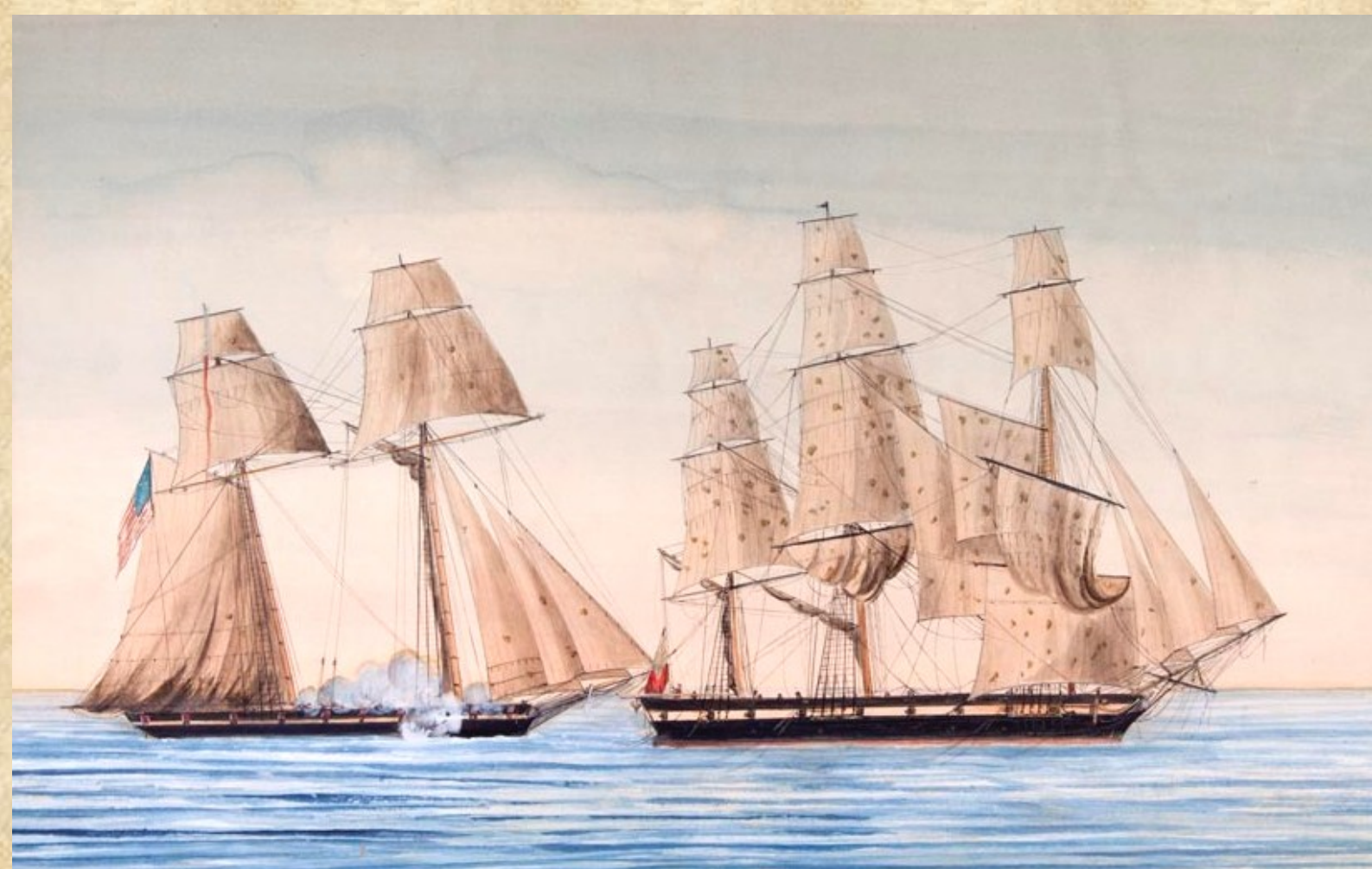
- Hebe’s Captain, as quoted in the Weekly Register

In January 1813, *Dolphin* of Baltimore encountered *Hebe*, of 16 guns, and the 10-gun brig *Three Brothers* off the coast of Spain. Against the odds, Stafford pressed the attack on both vessels. *Hebe*’s losses forced her to surrender, and the brig followed soon after. Success was short-lived - both prizes were soon recaptured. *Dolphin*’s career as a privateer ended soon after as well. On April 10, Niles reported that the British had captured *Dolphin* and three Baltimore traders in the Rappahannock, after “stout resistance.” *Dolphin* was taken into the blockade squadron as a tender, and was active in raids on the Upper Chesapeake later that summer.

The Weekly Register, February 25, 1814:

“The famous privateer Decatur has returned to Charleston, S.C. after a cruise of 80 days without making a single capture.”

Surprise 1813 - 1814



Surprise captures the Star, January 28, 1814.

Surprise was one of the largest of the Baltimore based privateers. 110’ long, she carried 10 - 18 pounder carronades and a crew of 120 men. During three cruises under captains Cathell, Barnes and Barstow, she captured 45 vessels before being wrecked on the New Jersey coast. After the war, Niles rated *Surprise* as the most successful of all the American privateers.

The Weekly Register, April 15, 1815:

“The Star arrived at New York on the 28th of February. Her cargo consisted of 1,180 bags sugar 5,028 bags coffee 45 tubs camphor 297 bags sago 240 cwt. Sapan wood, 22 bales nankeen, 83 cases cinnamon 45 cases tortoise shell. The whole worth about \$300,000”.

The Weekly Register, February 20, 1813:

“The cartel ship Bostwick arrived in New York from Bermuda with 480 American prisoners on board. We hail their restoration. Among them are officers and crew of the Highflyer and Teaser privateers, famous for their successes, but at last overtaken by superior force”.

Next: Thomas Boyle and Comet

