

John Paul Jones's Locker

The Mutinous Men of the Continental Ship *Ranger*
and the
Confinement of Lieutenant Thomas Simpson



Jonathan Feld



Naval History and Heritage Command

John Paul Jones's Locker

Published by

Naval History and Heritage Command

805 Kidder Breese Street SE

Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060

www.history.mil

Cover image: Excerpt from “John Paul Jones,” Charles Wilson Peale, c. 1781

Use of ISBN

This is the official U.S. Government edition of this publication and is herein identified to certify its authenticity. Use of 978-1-943604-22-7 is for this edition only.

John Paul Jones's Locker

The Mutinous Men of the Continental Ship *Ranger*
and the Confinement of
Lieutenant Thomas Simpson

Jonathan Feld

NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON, DC

Introduction

As smoke hung over the water off Flamborough Head, stinging sailors' eyes and burning in their throats, a loud voice boomed across the sea, allegedly proclaiming, "I have not yet begun to fight." John Paul Jones, captain of *Bonhomme Richard*, was on the verge of sailing into American naval history as one of the fathers of the U.S. Navy. However, much has been forgotten about his earlier service for the cause of American independence.

In 1777, Jones was given command of the Continental sloop of war *Ranger* and instructed to outfit her from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and command her until his arrival in France, whereupon he would take command of *L'Indien*, a frigate under construction in the Netherlands. In the end, these plans never materialized and *L'Indien* was sold by the American commissioners in Paris to the French government. In turn, the commissioners instructed Jones to retain command of *Ranger* and employ her as he saw fit. However, even before he sailed *Ranger* in harm's way, the recalcitrance of the ship's complement threatened his ability to command her. Time and again, Jones's officers and crew, drawn largely from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, were insubordinate and mutinous, questioning Jones's methods, tactics, and goals. In fact, as the crew returned to France following *Ranger*'s moderately successful cruise of 1778, they submitted a petition to the American commissioners recommending that Jones be removed from command.

Historians and scholars have extensively scrutinized and debated the motivations and dynamic of this particular crew. Disagreement lies along several axes, namely in assigning responsibility for the mutinous attitude of the crew.

One school of thought holds that the crew autonomously turned against Jones.¹ Within this broad category, several theories attempt to explain the underlying causes of the crew's mutinous actions. Some argue that the sailors, given the democratic spirit of the American Revolution, were ideologically unwilling to accept commands from any single, unelected officer. In particular, historians point to the common New England identity of most of Jones's sailors as a factor that united them against their captain.² For example, *Ranger* was initially named *Hampshire* when being built in John Langdon's shipyard in Portsmouth, signifying the centrality of New England to the identity of the ship and her crew.³ This common heritage would have set Jones apart from the other men aboard the ship. In a similar vein, certain historians note that American crews, in general, lacked discipline.⁴ Other interpretations are given in more pragmatic terms, noting that the crew was generally unwilling to undertake tasks

¹ For more, see Anna de Koven, *The Life and Letters of John Paul Jones* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913).

² In particular, Evan Thomas discusses the tensions between Jones and the crew of *Ranger* at length. For more, refer to Evan Thomas, *John Paul Jones: Sailor, Hero, Father of the American Navy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004).

³ Joseph G. Sawtelle, *John Paul Jones and the Ranger: Portsmouth, New Hampshire, July 12–November 1, 1777, and the Log of the Ranger, November 1, 1777–May 18, 1778*, (Portsmouth, NH: Peter E. Randall, 1994), 2.

⁴ Thomas, 115–16.

that would not result in booty or plunder.⁵ Lastly, some cast John Paul Jones as an overbearing leader whose cruelty forced the crew to revolt.⁶

An entirely different school of thought explains the actions of the crew largely in terms of the comportment of *Ranger*'s first lieutenant, Thomas Simpson, whose jealousy led him to despise Jones. The two men clashed because of deep-seated personal conflicts and disagreements over styles of leadership. Apparently, Simpson's insubordination was motivated by his hopes of being appointed captain once *Ranger* made her landfall in France.⁷ When Jones was allowed to retain command of the ship, Simpson's actions might have been inspired by the supposition that he would be Jones' successor.

Despite their largely valid arguments, the proponents of both of these schools omit or underemphasize the role of junior officers and the rest of Jones's wardroom in allowing and perpetuating the disloyalty of the ship's company. The historical resources, including newspapers, diaries, affidavits, and letters, that specifically address this period in the life of the famed Captain Jones yield a more holistic picture of the dynamic aboard *Ranger*: They explain the actions and affairs of the crew as the result of the cooperation of the entire wardroom against their captain.

Jones's experiences aboard *Ranger* were remarkably atypical for one of the most successful captains in the fledgling American navy during the Revolution. The tumultuous beginning of his command, in which Jones struggled to bring the ship's complement up to strength and accepted others' selections for officers under duress, foreshadowed the troubles he would encounter throughout the cruise. From his first days as captain of *Ranger*, Jones fought against the odds: constantly facing opposition from his crew and others, failing to obtain command of *L'Indien* as promised by Congress, and struggling to make his way out of France to begin his raiding operations. Even after Jones got under way, his crew's opposition to his plans nearly thwarted his proposed raids of Whitehaven, England, and St. Mary's, Scotland.

Certain features of Jones' character and his thoughts can explain the conflict experience during *Ranger*'s cruise in the Irish Sea. In particular, Jones's character illuminates some of the factors that set him apart from his crew and officers. His constant care for the well-being and health of the men under his command frequently conflicted with his search for fame and glory, hunger for affirmation and augmentation of his social status, and delusions of nobility.

Similarly, Jones's innovative strategy also separated him from his contemporaries and partially explains the opposition he encountered aboard *Ranger*. He recognized that raids could have instrumental value beyond the materiel seized. Although Jones's practice of psychological warfare and his goal

⁵ John Paul Jones as covered in de Koven, 273. Also, S. P. Waldo discusses at length the laxity of discipline aboard American ships and describes the shock of Jones' relatively strict rule to *Ranger*'s crew. S. Putnam Waldo, *Biographical Sketches of Distinguished American Naval Heroes in the War of the Revolution between the American Republic and the Kingdom of Great Britain* (Hartford, CT: Silas Andrus, 1823), 93.

⁶ Scott Martelle emphasizes Jones's autocratic leadership style when discussing Jones's experiences aboard *Ranger*. See Scott Martelle, *The Admiral and the Ambassador* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2014), 50.

⁷ Many historians discuss the clash between Jones and Simpson, but for a brief overview of the timeline of their interaction, see Thomas, 91.

of achieving a naval prisoner exchange proved strategically successful, evoking praise in colonial newspapers and panic in their British counterparts, it proved wildly unpopular with the sailors of *Ranger*, partially accounting for the later troubles aboard the ship.

In explaining the petitions against Jones that his crew sent to the American commissioners in France in 1778, the responsibility can be assigned to any of several groups. In one version of events, the crew autonomously and mutinously turned against Jones. This version relies on explanations of either localism or greed to account for the crew's opposition to its commanding officer. The common geographic origin of the men on the roll of the *Ranger* who signed the crew's petition could be used to support this narrative. However, in other ways, this same muster roll casts doubt on this version's plausibility.

Another interpretation points to Thomas Simpson as the culprit, leading the crew against Jones in an attempt to take command of the ship.⁸ Recorded tensions between the two men point to a deep fissure between the captain and his first lieutenant. However, it is unlikely that Simpson ever could have led the crew by himself. Rather, a logical and empirical analysis points to a seldom-explored and often-neglected interpretation of these events. In actuality, the mutinous actions of the crew were supported by Simpson, but it was the collusion of all of *Ranger's* junior officers that proved decisive. Without the support of men such as Lieutenant Elijah Hall, Surgeon Ezra Green, and Master David Cullam, the mutinous actions aboard the ship never could have succeeded. To the contrary, the rebellious Lieutenant Simpson's plans probably would have been crushed had he acted alone, as other incidents in the American navy suggest.⁹ To understand the full explanation of the events that transpired during John Paul Jones's command of *Ranger*, one must look beyond the apparent simple truth of the matter. By delving deeply into contemporary newspapers, private correspondence, and public petitions, one can uncover the integral role played by *Ranger's* junior and warrant officers in encouraging the crew to turn against Captain Jones. This investigation should fully restructure the narrative of John Paul Jones's command of the Continental ship *Ranger*.

⁸ It seems that the crew either followed him for monetary reasons or from shared regional identity. This is largely irrelevant for the argument, though, as it really hinges on whether or not Simpson was directly responsible for their misconduct, encouraging and promoting their actions rather than passively allowing them (or opposing them).

⁹ The annals of the Continental Navy include at least six unsuccessful mutinies. Captain Nicholas Biddle suppressed a small mutiny among British sailors in *Randolph* outside Charleston, S.C., in early 1777. Captain Samuel Tucker discovered a plot to poison *Boston's* provisions, kill the officers, and sail the ship from Bordeaux, France, to England, in June 1778. Captain Pierre Landais spoiled the plans of British and Irish seamen to take over *Alliance* in February 1779. John Paul Jones stopped a plot among British sailors in the crew to take over *Bonhomme Richard* in June 1779 and a similar plot in *Ariel* in early 1781. And Captain John Barry foiled a plot by British sailors to take over the ship. The one successful mutiny in the Continental Navy required the cooperation of the ship's officers. When his crew balked at Landais's orders to sail *Alliance* to Philadelphia, preferring to head to Boston where the chance of being captured by British cruisers was less, Landais refused to leave his cabin and confront the crew. Lieutenant James Degge then assumed command and took the ship into Boston. Both Landais and Degge were court-martialed and cashiered. Gardner W. Allen, *A Naval History of the American Revolution*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), 198–99, 355, 439–41, 449, 529, 534, 548–50; William Bell Clark, *Gallant John Barry* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 211–13; Thomas, *John Paul Jones*, 246.

The Saga of *Ranger*

The story of *Ranger* begins with Jones's 14 June 1777 orders appointing him as her commander. Finding supplies and munitions for *Ranger* and her crew occupied Jones throughout the summer of 1777. Very concerned about manning his ship, Jones published a broadside that proclaimed this would be a journey where men could "distinguish themselves in the GLORIOUS CAUSE of their Country" while simultaneously being able to "make their Fortunes."¹⁰ One task that, unfortunately for him, did not require his attention was the appointment of the ship's officers. As Anna de Koven notes, the only officer he was allowed to appoint was Matthew Parke, who would serve as captain of Marines on board *Ranger*.¹¹ Furthermore, Jones was also allowed to bring a personal friend, Major John Gizzard Frazer, aboard for the voyage.¹² All other officers were appointed by a commission that included Jones, but was dominated by John Langdon and William Whipple, prominent citizens of Portsmouth who had both served as delegates to the Continental Congress.¹³ Langdon and Whipple followed the example of other men in related positions who used their power to appoint friends and family members to prestigious military and naval positions, regardless of martial skill or qualification. The two men they selected as lieutenants, Thomas Simpson and Elijah Hall, were expected to apply their experience as merchant mariners to their naval service, since, as de Koven notes, neither of them "had ever sailed before in a ship of war."¹⁴ In contrast, Jones had a year and a half of experience as a naval officer: Appointed lieutenant in Continental Navy frigate *Alfred* on 7 December 1775, he subsequently commanded the sloop *Providence* and *Alfred* before his appointment to *Ranger*. The disparity between Simpson's and Hall's notions of naval discipline and Jones's would prove to be a major source of tension during the cruise.

Following *Ranger*'s arrival in France through the end of 1777 and into the early months of 1778, Jones struggled with American and French authorities to claim *L'Indien*. Jones even received a letter from Benjamin Franklin, the Continental Congress's senior commissioner in France, which indicated that Jones would "have the frigate from Holland, which actually belongs to [the] government, and will be furnished with as many good French seamen" as he needed, solving the issues presented by potentially commanding a ship without a crew.¹⁵ After these efforts fell through, Jones began to prepare *Ranger* to raid and harass English ports and shipping along the British coast. At the same time, though, the seeds of discord between the captain and his officers had already been sown. Jones wrote that following the

¹⁰ See "Recruitment Broadside for the *Ranger*" as published in Sawtelle, 27.

¹¹ De Koven, 282.

¹² Samuel Eliot Morison, *John Paul Jones: A Sailor's Biography* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown 1959), 111.

¹³ It is worth noting here that there is some minor (implicit) disagreement about the composition of the Marine Committee. De Koven writes that it was not William Whipple but Abraham Whipple, the sea captain from Providence, Rhode Island., who served on the committee. Whether this is a research error or a more serious assertion is difficult to assess. In all likelihood, William Whipple was the one who sat on this commission. See also Morison, 105.

¹⁴ De Koven, 282.

¹⁵ Letter of Benjamin Franklin to John Paul Jones, Benjamin Franklin, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, Leonard W. Labaree, et. al., eds., (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959-) 26: 606-607.

dismissal of Marine Captain Matthew Parke in February 1778, who had been the only officer he had been allowed to appoint, he was “single and alone in Europe” and “surrounded with enemies” in a situation where “any misunderstanding among my little Crew might prove fatal to my designs as well as my reputation in the service.”¹⁶ Between the departure of Parke and the disappointment of Major Frazer, who turned out to be an unreliable drunkard rather than a dependable support, Jones truly was alone aboard his ship of mostly New England men.¹⁷ On account of this setback, Jones wrote in his memoir that he recognized “it was necessary at this point in the war to command by persuasion.”¹⁸ The stage was set for the tension that would suffuse the cruise.

Initially, Jones’s raids on British shipping were highly successful and certainly contributed to his deliberately constructed and self-promoted stature as a naval hero. However, this success was undercut from the moment his crew began to actively oppose his plans, which, once carried out, would carve for them all a place in American naval lore. Almost immediately after setting sail, *Ranger* captured the British merchant ships *Lord Chatham* and *Dolphin*. As the *Continental Journal* noted, *Ranger*’s “two Prizes, [were] laden with Raisons, Figs, Lemmons, and Wine,” goods of exceptional quality that would be sold for a considerable return once “carried...to a French port.”¹⁹ Having captured merchantmen, Jones set his sights on a larger, more audacious operation: He wanted to land at Whitehaven, an Irish Sea port in northwestern England just south of the Scottish border, and set fire to the town, its harbor, and its shipping. As Sam Willis writes, the act of burning a ship is the only true way to “kill a ship,” serving as a “powerful symbolic element.”²⁰ In a sense, burning a ship created “a statement as much as an action and a symbol as much as a tactic.”²¹ Jones would later write that “250 or 300 sail of large ships at Whitehaven would have been laid in ashes” had his plan been executed to the fullest.²² Jones chose Whitehaven on account of his knowledge of those waters, since he had served there as an apprentice seaman aboard the merchantman *Friendship* in his youth.²³ The raid was to be Jones’s first strike on the British Isles.

The success of the Whitehaven raid was undercut by a recalcitrant crew and malingering officers. During the raid, Jones’s lieutenants avoided participation by feigning sickness.²⁴ Simpson and Hall, after declining to lead the shore parties, allegedly organized a plot by which they would strand Captain Jones ashore as the raiding parties rowed back to *Ranger*.²⁵ This plan was only dashed by the intervention of Lieutenant Meijer, who remained with one of the boats to be sure it waited for Jones

¹⁶ “John Paul Jones’ Note Explaining the Dismissal of Matthew Parke,” *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, William B. Clark, et. al., eds. (Washington, DC: Naval History and Heritage Command, Department of the Navy, 1964–), 11: 1037.

¹⁷ Morison, 117.

¹⁸ Jones, John Paul, Gerard W. Gawalt, and John R. Sellers. *John Paul Jones’ Memoir of the American Revolution Presented to King Louis XVI of France* (Washington, DC: American Revolution Bicentennial Office, Library of Congress, 1979), 8.

¹⁹ “Extract of a Letter from Messieurs Guardoqui and Son, at Bilbao, to the Board of War in this town, dated March 30, 1778,” *Continental Journal* (Boston, MA), 5 July 1778, 3.

²⁰ Sam Willis, *The Struggle for Sea Power: A Naval History of American Independence* (London: Atlantic Books, 2015), 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Jones’ “Memorial to Congress” from the Texel in 1779, in de Koven, 280.

²³ Thomas, 18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁵ *John Paul Jones’ Memoir...*, 18.

to return.²⁶ Once ashore in the middle of the night of 23 April 1778, the party of raiders not led by Jones immediately found their way to a local tavern, eschewing all interest in the British shipping lying unguarded in the harbor. As the *Maryland Journal* reported, “about 30 men from the Ranger... landed privately at this place, and proceeded to Nicholas Addison’s public house on the Old Quay; they made very free with the liquor store, and would not allow any of the family to stir out,” reveling in the consumption of alcohol rather than its combustion.²⁷ Jones himself would end up spiking several dozen cannon in the port’s fortifications. However, in the middle of this evolution, one of Jones’s shore party, a sailor by the name of David Freeman (alias David Smith), ran through the town, calling for the townspeople to save their harbor. Allegedly, Freeman was a British deserter in the colonies who had signed aboard *Ranger* with the intention of deserting as soon as he could make his way home.²⁸ Jones apparently never realized the traitor in his midst, as he wrote in his subsequent report of the action that “one of my people was missing and must I fear have fallen into the hands of our enemy.”²⁹ Therefore, the raiders were forced to flee the port prematurely, only having burned one of the many ships in the harbor. Again, the *Maryland Journal* notes that “a party went on board the Thomson, a coal laden [sic] vessel...and set her on fire” but, in short order, “the fire was happily extinguished, without damaging any other vessel” as Jones and his crew rowed back to safety in the early-morning sunrise.³⁰ Still, the raid did provoke the intended response, as newspapers across England were furious with the government whose perceived laxity had allowed this raid to happen. The *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer* questioned “when such ravages are committed, all along the coast, by one small privateer, what credit must it reflect on the First Lord of the Admiralty?”³¹

Similar hysteria arose in the press in response to Jones’s next exploit. Jones proposed to capture the Earl of Selkirk—whose estate was across the Solway Firth from Whitehaven—and hold him hostage in exchange for American prisoners.³² Jones led approximately 30 of his men on shore as they began to search for the earl on his estate. Upon being questioned by the earl’s laborers, the sailors cleverly adopted the guise of a British press gang, which caused the workers to flee. During their search, they learned that the earl was not present. Jones attempted to end the abortive raid, but his men demanded to pillage the estate. As a compromise, Jones ultimately gave them permission to take all the family silverware from Lady Selkirk—though nothing else—and the sailors complied.³³ In the following days, accounts of this daring operation appeared in newspapers across England and, shortly thereafter, in America.³⁴ In one of the rare (and unintended) combinations of humor and honor in Jones’s life, he

²⁶ Certificate of Lieutenant Jean Meijer as found in de Koven, 287–88.

²⁷ “France; Spain; America; India,” or “Whitehaven, April 23,” *Maryland Journal* (Baltimore, MD), 21 July 1778, 2.

²⁸ Morison, 141.

²⁹ “John Paul Jones to the American Commissioners in France,” 27 May 1778, in Clark, et. al., eds., *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* 12: 758.

³⁰ “France; Spain; America; India,” or “Whitehaven, April 23,” 2.

³¹ “House of Commons. Thursday, April 30,” *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer* (London), 1 May 1778, 1.

³² Morison, 143. One of the motivations behind Jones’s actions was to take British prisoners to exchange for captured American sailors. Although prisoner exchanges of army personnel was commonplace throughout the revolution, the Royal Navy refused to recognize the Continental Navy or Congressional letters of marque, holding captured sailors as pirates and thieves.

³³ Thomas, 126.

³⁴ “Belfast Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman at Kirkcudbright (in Scotland) to His Correspondent in This Place,” *Maryland Journal*

wrote a long-winded letter to Lady Selkirk, promising that he had not wanted to steal her property but it had been necessary to appease his crew and that he would, as soon as possible, purchase the crew's share of the plunder and return it to her. Lord Selkirk's stinging reply undercuts the immense sense of honor that drove Jones to fulfill his promises to the letter. The raid on Whitehaven and the Selkirk incident comprise the two best-known operational elements of Jones's cruise aboard *Ranger*.

Ranger's voyage was far from over, and other events lay ahead. On 24 April 1778, Jones and *Ranger* engaged HMS *Drake*, a sloop of war, in battle. It is worth noting that Jones had made two prior, stealthier attempts to capture *Drake*. Since *Drake* had been riding at anchor in a relatively unguarded position outside Carrickfergus, Jones had tried twice to float *Ranger*, disguised as a merchantman, alongside in order to capture her, but he had failed on account of adverse sailing conditions and his crew's marginal competence. As battle approached, the crew of Jones's ship was initially on the verge of mutiny, but the capture of several sailors from the *Drake*'s launch lifted their spirits enough for them to fight.³⁵ Following a 65-minute engagement, *Drake*'s commander struck his colors, marking one of the few major American naval victories of the Revolution.³⁶

Jones subsequently detached Lieutenant Simpson and a prize crew to the British ship to bring her to France in company with *Ranger*. This decision set the stage for the ensuing drama and a steep increase in tension between Jones and his crew. The primary incident that sparked the fury of the crew and officers occurred during the return voyage to France. *Ranger*'s crew having put *Drake* into condition to sail independently, Jones cast off the towline between the ships and ordered Simpson to follow *Ranger* as she pursued a potential prize. Simpson later wrote that Jones "ordered me to cast her loose and—so we all understood—make my own way to port," so he took *Drake* southward and away from *Ranger*.³⁷ In fact, the orders issued to Simpson to stay with *Ranger* were clear and should have been more carefully followed.³⁸ Jones lost a great deal of time searching for the lost *Drake*. On finding her, he sent Lieutenant Hall aboard and, as he wrote to the American commissioners, "confined Lt. Simpson for disobedience."³⁹ Simpson's arrest and confinement brought the struggle between Jones and *Ranger*'s crew to a head, inspiring a call for Jones's removal from command.

Upon arriving in France on 8 May, Jones was feted for his victory. One can only imagine the sight of Jones entering Brest with a British warship as his prize, a spectacle that caused one observer to note his extreme "pleasure to see the English flag flying under the American stars and stripes."⁴⁰ However, Jones had little time to rest on his laurels. As the ship landed, the sailors, their petty officers, the prize crew of *Drake*, and several officers sent petitions to the commissioners asking for Jones's censure and removal from command. In reply, Jones wrote repeatedly in his own defense, vainly requesting a court-martial of Lieutenant Simpson. Ultimately, the American Commissioners in France persuaded

(Baltimore, MD), 18 August 1778, 4.

³⁵ Morison, 157.

³⁶ "Boston, July 2," *Providence Gazette* (Providence, RI), 4 July 1778, 3.

³⁷ Simpson to the American Commissioners, Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 26: 417.

³⁸ Cyrus Townsend Brady, *Commodore Paul Jones*, (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1906), 146.

³⁹ John Paul Jones to the American Commissioners, 9 May 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 26: 424.

⁴⁰ "Boston, July 2," *Providence Gazette* (Providence, RI), 07/04/1778, 3.

Jones to drop his prosecution of Simpson, allowing Simpson to command the *Ranger* and return to America with her crew. Unlike Jones's victories, this political defeat went generally unreported in the press. A short piece in the *Providence Gazette* from 24 October 1778 briefly notes that "arrived here from France...The ship of war Ranger, commanded by...Simpson," marking the earliest public mention in America of any change of command aboard the ship.⁴¹ With transfer of command to Simpson, Jones's direct association with *Ranger* ended.

John Paul Jones's Character

A better grasp of Jones's character can be instrumental to understanding the crew's grievances with their commander and prepare the ground for delving into the causes of the discord between Jones, his officers, and the sailors.

Jones fancied himself a gentlemen and a hero and gloried in his ability to rise to high social rank despite his low birth. Although his accomplishments were genuinely impressive, he was never averse to self-aggrandizement or exaggeration of fact. Later, in 1779, Jones surely reveled in the fact that when he brought captured HMS *Serapis* into the Texel in the Netherlands, the Dutch public saw him as "flesh-and-blood proof...that the American colonists had risen up against the might of the British and had, almost unbelievably, been so successful that they had brought their war across the Atlantic," essentially elevating Jones as the Revolution incarnate.⁴² Moreover, incidents such as the Selkirk estate raid caused Jones's exploits to be published in "newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic, thus contributing to Jones's public image as a dashing and courteous captain," whose victories were complemented by courtly manners.⁴³

Jones's life became the subject of exaggeration by later historians who inadvertently complemented Jones's self-publicizing efforts. One needs to look no further than the analysis of the lieutenant's commission granted to Jones by John Hancock in December 1775, which was ultimately superseded by a captain's commission in October 1776.⁴⁴ Some historians write that through this document John Paul Jones became "the first officer of the Continental Navy to receive his commission," building on the mythology of Jones as a founder of the American navy.⁴⁵ Elsewhere, the enlargement of Jones's stature was seemingly coincidental, but significant nonetheless. In a later report of a contemporary newspaper, the *Independent Ledger* of Boston, Jones's exploits aboard *Ranger* were placed immediately adjacent to the announcement of the death of William Pitt the Elder, whom, the paper notes, "Britain will miss" and, despite the fact that "in the present stage of our contest [America] will lose nothing by his death," the American people would still mourn his death.⁴⁶ Although Jones in his writings never acknowledged

⁴¹ "Portsmouth, October 19," *Providence Gazette* (Providence, RI), 24 October 1778.

⁴² Willis, 396–97.

⁴³ Daniel J. Ennis, "Poetry and American Revolutionary Identity: The Case of Phillis Wheatley and John Paul Jones," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 31 (2002): 90.

⁴⁴ U.S. Continental Congress, *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*, Worthington C. Ford and Gaillard Hunt, eds. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1904–37), 6: 860–61.

⁴⁵ Frederic Stanhope Hill, *Twenty-Six Historic Ships; The Story of Certain Famous Vessels of War and of Their Successors in the Navies of the United States and of the Confederate States of America from 1775 to 1902*, (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1903), 13.

⁴⁶ "Boston, July 6," *Independent Ledger* (Boston, MA), 1.

seeing this article, he likely would have been flattered by his juxtaposition with a prior defender of the American colonists' liberties, British though he was. Jones's genteel aspirations are apparent in several instances. Before *Ranger's* departure from Portsmouth, Jones was in the process of inquiring about the purchase of an estate in Virginia, which he had learned about from his passenger, Major John Frazer. In his writings, he describes it as an "Elysian...small estate," revealing Jones's desire for the pastoral life of the Virginia gentry and his hopes to ascend the pre-revolutionary rungs of the colonial social ladder.⁴⁷ As Ennis notes, Jones created a coat of arms while in Portsmouth, combining elements from the Paul family and Jones family crests (although he lacked any actual relation to either family). By way of this construct, Jones began to fill out his self-image of gentility. Interestingly, Jones chose the motto "Pro Republica." As Ennis rightly notes, in Jones's estimation "republics...[apparently] do not preclude gentlemen."⁴⁸ In fact, Jones tried to raise himself in every aspect of life, for instance attempting correspondence with Phillis Wheatley, the black Bostonian poet. In both the military and social spheres, Jones attempted to ascend the rungs of the colonial social ladder.

In many ways, Jones attempted to style himself as an aristocrat. Jones adamantly believed that, as he wrote, "A Captain of the Navy ought to be a man of Strong and well connected Sense with a tolerable education, a Gentleman as well as a Seaman both in Theory and Practice."⁴⁹ Following his induction by King Louis XVI into the Institution du M rite militaire with the grade of chevalier, Jones styled himself accordingly. As Ennis notes, the "Chevalier Paul-Jones ceased to exist only" when supplanted by the elevated "Kontraadmirol Pavel Ivanovich Jones" of Catherine the Great's Imperial Russian Navy.⁵⁰ Jones's obsession with titles is an embodiment of his concern for symbols of status and pedigree.

Jones expended much energy pursuing the "image of gentility."⁵¹ He constantly fretted about his image, even attempting to seek General George Washington's favor by sending him a pair of gilded epaulets as a gift.⁵² Jones spent his life in the unending pursuit of higher status, a never-ending climb up the ranks of the period's elite.

However, some of the greatest leaders of the Revolution attested to Jones's character. Jones was so concerned with these testaments from social and professional superiors that he "scrupulously collected testimonials from his associates on everything from his seamanship to his ability as a diplomat," leading him to gather "massive documentary evidence of others' good opinions of him" by the time of his death.⁵³ In an early note, Washington wrote that "Mr. Jones is clearly not only a master mariner within the scope of the art of navigation, but he also holds a strong and profound sense of the political and military weight of command on the sea. His powers of usefulness are great and must be constantly

⁴⁷ Jones as quoted in Sawtelle, 50.

⁴⁸ Ennis, 89.

⁴⁹ John Paul Jones to Joseph Hewes, 19 May 1776, in Clark, ed., *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* 5: 151–52.

⁵⁰ Ennis, 89.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Thomas, 145

⁵³ Ennis, 88. Note that Jones is practically using an 18th-century version of current-day networking, asking for recommendations from everyone to bolster his professional skills.

kept in view.”⁵⁴ Presumably, Washington wrote this letter after Esek Hopkins assigned Jones to transport his soldiers along the Atlantic seaboard.⁵⁵ In other correspondence, Benjamin Franklin, who had become a close personal friend through their shared experiences in France, lauded Jones. Franklin wrote to Jones following the exploits of *Ranger*, saying that “your small vessel, commanded by so brave an officer” had proven invaluable to the patriot cause, undoubtedly boosting Jones’s ego with his praise.⁵⁶ Similarly, another American commissioner in France, Silas Deane, also wrote that he had “the highest opinion of the merits of Captain Jones and his zeal for the service.”⁵⁷ Although parallel recommendations are absent from the remaining two commissioners who served in France during the American Revolution (Arthur Lee and John Adams), one suspects that this absence is due to political struggles and intrigue rather than the serious belief by either of them that Jones was somehow deficient or incompetent. Jones was also lauded by his maritime colleagues, such as Abraham Whipple, the famed Rhode Island privateersman and Continental Navy captain, who would have had a solid understanding of Jones’s exploits. Whipple subsequently wrote that he had a “very good opinion of...[the other captains of] the Alfred” while “particularly one” held greater distinction, alluding to Jones, who had served as her captain from August 1776 to May 1777.⁵⁸ Although Jones’s conduct had motivations beyond the general contemporary notions of honor, his demeanor approached vanity as he pursued recognition for his daring deeds.

Jones’s thin-skinned character led to tension and conflict with his superiors in the American government. Jones allowed his anger to get the better of him over the infamous “Captain’s List” compiled and issued by the Continental Congress in October 1776. The list was presumably arranged by seniority in the service, but this order was often disrupted by acts of patronage and personal preference by the members of the Continental Congress. Jones’s reaction to his place on the list, behind over a dozen other Continental Navy officers, is illustrative of his sense of self-importance. As Jones wrote to General William Whipple, “malice is a stranger to my nature” and he would do a great deal to prevent “domestic broils and misunderstandings,” but the injustice of the “Captain’s List” could not be allowed to stand.⁵⁹ In fact, Jones was “in the highest degree tenacious of the respect due” to him, and he would not allow political interference to cause him to lose his respected position among American naval officers.⁶⁰ Although Jones’s zealous defense of his honor is not exceptional for a respectable man of 18th-century gentry, it clarifies his motivations, and later actions. As another example of the weight that Jones gave to his honor, he once wrote to a friend that “I would lay down my life for America, but I cannot trifle with my honor,” indicating the seemingly limitless bounds to which Jones cared about prestige.⁶¹ It was Jones’s opinion that he was “superseded by 13 persons, who cannot plead superior

54 Washington as quoted in Frederic Stanhope Hill, 12.

55 See *The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series* Volume 4, 283.

56 Benjamin Franklin to John Paul Jones, 27 May 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 26: 534.

57 Letter of Silas Deane, *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, Volume 11: 868.

58 Letter of Abraham Whipple, *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, Volume 11, 1151.

59 John Paul Jones to General [William] Whipple, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. 3rd ed., 11: 338–40.

60 Ibid.

61 John Paul Jones to A. Livingston, 4 September 1777, as found in Heinl, 151.

services or Abilities,” and who were chosen for their local or political connections.⁶² It is also possible that Jones had been further cheated out of his rightful position on the “Captain’s List.” After all, Jones received one of the earliest commissions in the Continental Navy, directly from John Hancock, yet he was placed 18th on the list. When trying to explain this phenomenon, since seniority was theoretically based on time spent in the service, some historians allege that John Hancock conveniently misplaced John Paul Jones’s original 7 December 1775 commission (as a lieutenant) and then reissued Jones’s original 8 August 1776 captain’s commission, dating his service to the time of the 10 October 1776 reissue.⁶³ Jones himself bemoaned that he could not abide the “dishonor” of being placed behind men who had joined after him, since the implication was that Jones had somehow failed in his command.⁶⁴ Jones’s heightened self-value led to these types of conflicts throughout his life. In a sense, his objection is logical, since any place lower on the list suggested demotion, as though his prior service was less valuable than that of his peers or a lack of gallantry in action had led to his fall in status among the other officers. This incident contextualizes Jones’s driven character and his ongoing focus on honor and position in preference to material wealth. In Jones’s conflicts with others, those character traits that contributed to the adverse situation on board *Ranger* are readily apparent.

At the same time, it is worth noting that one of the defining components of Jones’s character as a captain was his ceaseless care for the health and welfare of his crews. Throughout his voyages, but especially those on *Ranger*, Jones showed genuine regard for his sailors. As then-Midshipman Nathaniel Fanning, who served with Jones aboard *Bonhomme Richard*, wrote upon returning to the ship after his launch had gotten lost in a squall, he and the boat’s crew were received by their comrades with “a hearty welcome and a great deal of joy, especially by the commodore” who had worried about them ever since they had lost contact.⁶⁵ It is remarkable that even in an account that is as generally critical of Jones’s leadership as Fanning’s (which likely derives from an incident in which Jones kicked Fanning down a ship’s ladder), the author is forced to admit the captain’s concern for his crew. This concern would remain evident throughout the duration of the cruise. Repeatedly, he attended to the well-being of the crew, placing special importance on providing with fresh provisions and ensuring the status of the prize money earned during their raids.⁶⁶ In the latter case, Jones became so frustrated that he resorted to less-than-conventional measures to satisfy his crew. At one point, he even drew from his own personal wallet to pay the crew while they waited for the sale of the prize. At another, Jones informed the American commissioners that he had asked a French financier for “24,000 l.t. [livres tournois] to distribute among my officers and men” who “need to provide for their families in America” while away at sea for many months at a time.⁶⁷ The same sentiment was echoed explicitly in Jones’s writings. At one point, Jones wrote to Lieutenant Hall that he “want[ed] to see every person about me happy and contented,” indicating his desire to keep the entire ship’s complement satisfied

⁶² John Paul Jones to the American Commissioners, 30 August 1777, as found in Sawtelle, 37.

⁶³ *Journals of the Continental Congress* 6: 860–61. For a further account of this intrigue, see Thomas, 81.

⁶⁴ John Paul Jones to Joseph Hewes, 1 September 1777, as printed in Sawtelle, 38.

⁶⁵ *John Paul Jones’ Memoir...*, 57.

⁶⁶ John Paul Jones to the American Commissioners, 15 January 1778, as found in Sawtelle, 114.

⁶⁷ John Paul Jones to the American Commissioners, 16 May 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 26: 476.

during his voyages, to the point of explicitly noting it to his officers.⁶⁸ Moreover, Jones wrote that “the care and increase of our seamen is a consideration of the first magnitude,” emphasizing the priority he placed on the welfare of the men aboard his ships.⁶⁹ Although Jones may have been vain, a more complete analysis of his character cannot overlook his devotion to those he commanded.

Still, there were negative aspects to Jones’s character. Like that of many men of his era, Jones’s life was complex, and this caused some to denigrate him or cast doubt upon his integrity. In April 1778, London’s *Public Advertiser* alleged that Jones had “stood a trial in London for the murder of his Carpenter, and was found guilty, but made his escape.”⁷⁰ Based on the best existing evidence to the contrary, this statement is patently false. Although there had been murmurs of Jones killing a mutinous ship’s carpenter aboard a merchant ship in the Caribbean nearly a decade earlier, he never stood trial for the defensive action, either in the colonies or England. However, the same paper also adds details that can illuminate some of the more negative aspects of Jones’s character. For example, it notes that he “is said to be a very passionate Man,” and that his “Crew [is] much dissatisfied with his Conduct,” foreshadowing Jones’s experiences aboard *Ranger*.⁷¹ Furthermore, other historians have noted Jones’s infamous temper. As McManemin writes, the “intemperate acts of the captain to his officers” would eventually lead many, namely Nathaniel Fanning aboard *Bonhomme Richard*, to be “highly critical of Jones” as a leader.⁷² Of course, any such criticisms must be put into the appropriate context, as other historians have noted that although Jones had to “put up with insolence and downright dereliction from his men,” he still allegedly never “ordered the cat-o’-nine tails taken from its red baize bag” during any of his commands.⁷³ Seemingly, the dissatisfaction of *Ranger*’s sailors would have been nothing more than that of other crews aboard contemporary American ships of war, were it not for the mutinous events that followed. An understanding of Jones’s character remains essential to unraveling the motivations *Ranger*’s crew and officers during and following their successful cruise in the Irish Sea.

Jones’s Innovative Strategy

Before examining the mechanics of the crew’s actions, the underpinnings of this recalcitrance must first be understood within the context of the innovative tactical concepts employed by Jones during *Ranger*’s cruise. Viewing Jones’s strategy within the context of conventional naval operations in the late 18th century contributes to an understanding of the grievances of Jones’s crew.

Generally speaking, the conduct of naval warfare in this era was the nautical equivalent of land warfare with its emphasis on battlefield maneuver and ultimate goal of outflanking a foe. The fleets employed by the period’s great powers would form up in opposing battle lines, close, and blast away at each other at fairly close quarters. These encounters often relied on superior seamanship and estimation of

⁶⁸ John Paul Jones to Lieutenant Elijah Hall, 29 July 1777, as found in Sawtelle, 30.

⁶⁹ John Paul Jones to Robert Morris, 11 December 1777, as found in Sawtelle, 107.

⁷⁰ *Public Advertiser* (London), 28 April 1778, 2.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² McManemin, John A., *Captains of the Privateers of the American Revolution* (Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ: Ho-Ho-Kus Pub., 1985), 400.

⁷³ Thomas, 115.

advantageous sailing positions to gain opportunities to break the opposing fleet's line of battle, firing into bow and stern of enemy vessels ("crossing the T"), and possibly board them. In ship-to-ship combat, the same general principles usually applied. In a sense, Jones did nothing to revolutionize this system. Hard-fought fleet actions would continue through the American Revolution and the Napoleonic era.

Rather, Jones added innovation to existing naval strategy. He realized the foolhardiness of building larger frigates and ships of the line that could challenge the British fleet, understanding that any attempt to confront the Royal Navy directly would end in disaster. While bemoaning the weakness of the Continental Navy (crying out "Without a Respectable Navy— alas America!"⁷⁴), Jones recognized the impossibility of trying to build a navy from nothing that would be capable of challenging the period's preeminent maritime power. The Royal Navy had already established a naval superiority unparalleled since the Romans had termed the Mediterranean "mare nostrum."⁷⁵ In an April 1776 letter to the American commissioners in France that was contrary to the Continental Congress's position, Jones noted that "we cannot yet fight their Navy, as their numbers and force is so far superior to ours," and any attempts to face them on their terms would be disastrous.⁷⁶ Jones correctly assessed two of the key reasons why the Royal Navy would destroy any American fleet built to challenge them, but, if anything, he understates the difficulties of trying to fight the British directly. Beyond numbers and capabilities of its vessels, the British navy was better manned, better trained, better supplied, and much more professional than anything the Americans could offer, making any attempt to challenge British naval supremacy an exercise in futility.

Until Jones's cruise aboard *Ranger*, smaller vessels flying the American colors and acting under Continental orders served essentially the same function as privateers, capturing enemy merchant ships and sending them to friendly ports to sell their wares, with a portion of the prize money going to the crews and captains. Jones was not convinced that this "lone wolf" approach was optimizing the Continental Navy's limited resources. Raiders such as Gustavus Conyngham and Lambert Wickes had captured dozens of British merchantmen in the West Indies, the eastern Atlantic approaches to the British Isles, and the English Channel. Their ships' names—*Revenge* and *Reprisal*—fittingly illustrate the frustrations experienced by Americans in the early phases of the war and their desire to strike out at the British. Despite the successful depredations on the British merchant fleet, Jones had an alternative plan that he thought would bring even greater success. He posited that "small squadrons could be employed to far better advantage," as was later proved by the strategic impact of his small squadron of *Bonhomme Richard*, *Pallas*, and *Alliance*, and, ultimately, the capture of HMS *Serapis* and *Countess of Scarborough*.⁷⁷ Moreover, instead of preying on enemy merchant shipping, Jones noted that there are "many important places in such defenceless situations, that they might be effectually surprised and

⁷⁴ John Paul Jones to Robert Morris, 17 October 1776, as found in Heintz, 288.

⁷⁵ The expansion of the British Empire was only possible through the maritime superiority of the Royal Navy.

⁷⁶ John Paul Jones to the American commissioners, 4 December 1776, as found in de Koven, 232.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

attacked, with no very considerable force.”⁷⁸ This insight would animate the rest of Jones’s Continental Navy career.

Jones’s strategic adjustment was based on several guiding principles. On the whole, Jones hoped to use the “natural province” of the numerically inferior combatant and “surprise [the] defenceless places [of the British] and thereby divide their attention and draw it off from our coasts.”⁷⁹ Essentially, Jones was hoping to exploit a chink in the armor of the British Empire. British forces had become overextended by the operational necessities of a war that was becoming increasingly global (with the final shots of the American Revolution being fired off the Indian subcontinent at the battle of Cuddalore between British and French squadrons on 20 April 1783), and had few resources left to secure the British Isles. Jones recognized this deficiency and was proposing to exploit it, as he would eventually do at Whitehaven and St. Mary’s. Frequently, Jones emphasized the “surprise and dispatch” that would be essential to the success of his tactics.⁸⁰ However, there are some important features of this plan that also must be drawn out. One element that would prove to be crucial was the issue of the crew’s remuneration. A major drawback of Jones’s aspirations was that it was particularly unclear how the crew would be rewarded, making them unwilling to participate. As it stood, rewards for captured merchantmen were tangible and explicit, based on a division of earnings from the prize money. The savvy crew would question how they would be paid for the act of burning a British city or putting it under subscription (effectively taking it hostage). In response, Jones obtained the consent of the American commissioners that his men would be paid in accordance with their gallantry and the magnitude of their actions, but such assurances were seemingly not enough for an already aggrieved ship’s complement.⁸¹ Nonetheless, these promises theoretically would have made Jones’s raids plausible with a more willing crew.

Jones’s shift in strategy also had several important goals that could be achieved through his proposed methods. One of his secondary goals was based in his personal compassion and an understanding of the potential utility of captured American sailors. At the time, the British government did not recognize American sailors as legitimate combatants on the high seas. While American troops were given due recognition and were therefore treated according to established laws of warfare, captured American sailors were imprisoned and treated as pirates. Jones both condemned this hypocrisy and understood the immense utility that captured American sailors could have for the Continental Navy upon their release. Thus, one of Jones’s secondary objectives was to capture as many British sailors as possible in order to effect a prisoner exchange. This was a practice that was commonplace between the land forces during the conflict, but which would also amount, for all intents and purposes, to a recognition of American maritime power by the British. In fact, this mission would serve Jones well, as he was able to recruit 100 freed American sailors to serve with the *Bonhomme Richard*. Jones’s time in France was constantly plagued by the worry that his captured British sailors would be sent back to England

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ John Paul Jones’ Memorandum, 4–5 July 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 27: 45.

⁸¹ Morison, 126.

without due exchange. In one letter to the American commissioners, Jones relayed his anxiety that he had “almost 200 prisoners” but they could, at any moment, be “surrendered without an exchange,” rendering his aims null and void.⁸²

More radical, though, was the intended effect of Jones’s raids. In essence, Jones’s entire strategic concept was based on the notion that the war could be fought on axes that transcended the material importance of ships and troops. Jones became a practitioner of unconventional and psychological warfare. Thus, from the British public perspective he was no better than a pirate despite serving as a commissioned officer in the Continental Navy. Jones wrote that if any of his attacks were successful, there would be “almost inconceivable panic in England,” causing immense uneasiness among the population.⁸³ Jones knew that Britain’s immense material resources meant that the only way for the Americans to win the war would be for the British to withdraw or capitulate of their own accord. By spreading fear, Jones intended his raids to hasten the process of undermining the segment of British public opinion that favored prolonging the war. Furthermore, Jones envisioned that his attacks would “convince the world of [Britain’s] vulnerability and hurt her public credit,” serving a distinct political purpose within the broader conduct of the war.⁸⁴ Jones had hoped that he would be so successful in this endeavor that, “the English nation may hate me, but I will force them to esteem me, too.”⁸⁵ On the whole, then, Jones’s approach to war was innovative, utilizing a holistic understanding of the effects of war to advance the American cause, but it also exacerbated some of the seeds of discontent that would sprout during the cruise of *Ranger*.

Factors of Regional Affiliation and Manning

Despite the immense body of documentary evidence regarding the cruises of John Paul Jones, historians have failed to reach a consensus explaining how and why the sailors aboard *Ranger* acted as they did vis-à-vis their commanding officer. In one of the most intuitive assertions regarding *Ranger*’s crew, Anna de Koven explains their conduct in light of their regional affiliation. Drawing on largely New England–based manpower, Jones may have experienced his difficulties due to a cultural conflict between himself and them. The men from Portsmouth would likely not have taken kindly to the autocratic, king-like rule of a captain on board a naval vessel, preferring the type of egalitarianism embodied by the direct democracy of their town assemblies. Some historians have argued this point exhaustively. Evan Thomas writes that “[Jones] understood that the spirit of liberty that animated the Revolution was a double-edged sword when it came to discipline. He could see that the crew regarded their fellow New Englander, Simpson, as the defender of their rights.”⁸⁶ He further notes that Jones identified the same potential conflict when he wrote that his crew saw themselves as “‘Americans fighting for liberty,’” meaning that “‘the voice of the people’ ought to overrule every measure of an arbitrary foreign captain

⁸² John Paul Jones to the American commissioners, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 26: 424.

⁸³ John Paul Jones’ Memorandum, 4–5 July 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 27: 45.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ John Paul Jones to Madame d’Ormy, 16 October 1780, in John Henry Sherburne, *The Life and Character of John Paul Jones, a Captain in the United States Navy during the Revolutionary War* (New York: Adiance, Sherman & Co., 1851), 331.

⁸⁶ Thomas, 115–16.

which was not sanctified by their general approbation.”⁸⁷ A similar approach has been taken by Anna de Koven. Writing about the crew, she argues that “the new notions of republican independence were also strongly prevalent among them, and they declared that their opinions, as representing the voice of the people on the American vessel, should prevail even over those of their commander.”⁸⁸ As an early biographer notes, Jones experienced particular trouble with the sailors of *Ranger* because they were “a crew of high-minded Americans but yet little accustomed to discipline,” which would have made any attempts at creating a functional fighting group out of this motley assortment a difficult task at best.⁸⁹ These factors provide a partial understanding of why the crew, and particularly the men from New England, opposed Jones despite the relative strategic success of their cruise.

Several factors support a correlation between sailors’ regional identity and their participation in the actions that challenged Jones’s command. At Whitehaven, St. Mary’s, and throughout the cruise of *Ranger*, the New Hampshire sailors often vehemently disagreed with Jones to the point of disobeying orders, even approaching mutiny. The most convincing evidence for this argument is the statistical analysis of petitions signed by the crew as they returned to France from their cruise in the Irish Sea. Several results of the analysis of the *Ranger* muster roll and the composition of those who signed the crew petition point to the significance of local or regional identity. For example, of 68 sailors from New Hampshire aboard *Ranger*, roughly 70 percent signed the petition.⁹⁰ In contrast, only 25 percent of the sailors from Massachusetts and 12.5 percent of those from Pennsylvania signed it.⁹¹ Similarly, a related petition was signed by 27 members of the prize crew aboard *Drake* to protest the treatment of Lieutenant Simpson. The 12 identified individuals were all from New England.⁹² There are theoretical explanations for this phenomenon. As mentioned above, the New Englanders had different notions of government, which would have clashed with Jones’s opinion that all orders derived from the captain and required the utmost obedience of the crew. This explanation hinges on the democratic nature of New England life, which is also often cited as one of the factors causing the outbreak of the revolution in 1776. The same notions that led to the Stamp Act Riots in Boston beneath the Liberty Tree in 1765 and the Boston Tea Party in 1773 easily could have easily been present in the minds of these sailors, who, with reason, may have envisioned themselves as fighting for a republican form of government. As F. W. Anderson writes, by the time of the French and Indian War, the colonists who were serving in the “provincial” regiments saw themselves as extensions of their respective regional governments.⁹³ Even as early as 1756, men such as Governor Thomas Fitch of Connecticut were thinking in terms of the “rights” of soldiers who had enlisted and the specific “contract between them

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ De Koven, 272–73.

⁸⁹ Waldo, 87.

⁹⁰ Approximately 48 sailors signed this petition. Given the number of illiterate sailors aboard *Ranger*, the exact amount cannot be ascertained.

⁹¹ *Ranger* Crew Members to the American commissioners (“Petition of the Crew of the *Ranger*”), 3 June 1778, as found in Sawtelle, 181.

⁹² Members of *Drake*’s Prize Crew to the American commissioners (“Petition of the *Drake*’s Prize Crew), 16 May 1778, as found in Sawtelle, 178.

⁹³ F. W. Anderson, “Why Did Colonial New Englanders Make Bad Soldiers? Contractual Principles and Military Conduct during the Seven Year’s War,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 38: 3, 400.

and their Constituants [sic].”⁹⁴ This notion certainly would have clashed with Jones’s seemingly high-handed style of command.

Another regional demographics–based explanation deals with the type of naval experience held by these sailors. Some authors argue that sailors from New England, schooled in the merchant mariner’s tradition, would have expected a more relaxed form of shipboard discipline that was more democratic in spirit. S. P. Waldo notes that “there was but little of naval discipline, system, or subordination” aboard American naval ships in the early Revolutionary era.⁹⁵ This experience could be sharply contrasted with what is often noted to be Jones’s particularly strict command style, which demanded total obedience from his officers and crew.⁹⁶ This explanation also presupposes that the sailors’ earlier occupation aboard merchant ships shaped their expectations of life aboard a warship. It was ultimately the sharp contrast between civilian “discipline” and naval authority that led to the conflict between sailors and the embodiment of that authority, Captain Jones. In this vein, Scott Martelle writes that “the captain’s autocratic impulses were beginning to chafe on the men he most relied upon for the success of the mission,” positing that exerting the authority necessary for the efficient operation of a warship ran counter to the crew’s egalitarian inclinations.⁹⁷ In general, there are a multitude of theoretical explanations and statistical examples that attempt to demonstrate that *Ranger*’s crew acted mutinously on account of their regional identity.

It is worth noting that there are several other explanations of these events that are also predicated on the agency of the crew but that do not necessarily involve regional unity or democratic ideology. In fact, there is a significant argument to be made that the opposition to Jones was rooted in pragmatic rather than ideological concerns. Such an analysis primarily hinges on the crew’s expectations of remuneration. As one historian notes, the members of the crew “all were infected with the singular greed for gain which privateering had bred in the American seamen, to the detriment of government service,” thus explaining how they came to expect to be rewarded handsomely for their contributions to the American cause.⁹⁸ The recruitment broadside for *Ranger*, posted in Portsmouth due to Jones’s manning crisis in the summer of 1777, led the ship’s crew to expect substantial monetary rewards from their exploits on the high seas, including an advance of 40 dollars for able seamen and 20 dollars for landsmen.⁹⁹ Ultimately, however, their experience in this regard was disappointing. As a result of the still-tenuous official relationship between England and France at the time of the *Ranger*’s arrival, Jones experienced a great deal of difficulty in selling his British prizes in French ports.¹⁰⁰ In fact, there were lengthy delays in finding buyers for these “stolen” ships, although some French merchants were willing to purchase the ships and assume legal responsibility for the cargoes, albeit at a steep discount. In any event, these complications prevented Jones from paying out prize money to his crew, leaving

⁹⁴ Gov. Thomas Fitch to Lord Loudoun, 3 August 1756, as printed in Anderson, 402.

⁹⁵ Waldo, 93.

⁹⁶ Thomas, 121.

⁹⁷ Martelle, 50.

⁹⁸ Jones as quoted in de Koven, 273.

⁹⁹ See *Ranger*’s “Recruitment Broadside” as published in Sawtelle, 27.

¹⁰⁰ Morison, 105.

them increasingly disgruntled. Despite Jones's best efforts, to the extent of giving them advances on their prize money out of his own pocketbook, these difficulties were likely a factor in setting the crew against him.

It was due to this fixation on prize money that the crew opposed Jones's proposed operations. On account of the contemporary allocation of prize money, the crew felt that raids on the English homeland, however potentially instrumental in the broader prosecution of the war, would have stood to give them no personal gain. To remedy this situation, the American commissioners in France wrote that Congress would issue rewards in proportion to the sailors' accomplishments, hoping to dispel their reluctance.¹⁰¹ Despite this, the crew still opposed plans that featured activities other than raiding British commerce. Although Martelle explains the crew's rebelliousness as a result of the conflict between democratic sensibilities and autocratic regimen, he also notes that the "crew was becoming increasingly frustrated with...Jones's focus on causing damage ahead of seizing prize ships," highlighting the men's for remunerative and financially lucrative pursuits over militarily valuable ones.¹⁰² In the case of the Whitehaven raid, Jones struggled to get even 30 volunteers to engage in the raid. In response, he was prompted to write that "plunder rather than honor was the object of the *Ranger's*... crew," emphasizing how he thought that a primary reason for the crew's actions was monetary (rather than due to regional allegiances).¹⁰³

In fact, Jones found the crew to be particularly concerned with spoils in several other incidents during the cruise of the *Ranger*. A similar phenomenon occurred during the crew's raid on the estate of the Earl of Selkirk. After their plans to kidnap the earl were foiled, Jones was forced to acquiesce in the crew's demands to raid the earl's home, albeit managing to limit their pillaging to the family silver.¹⁰⁴ In other more minor instances, greed, rather than ideology, seems to be the root cause that explains the crew's dissatisfaction with Jones. After British revenue wherry *Hussar* narrowly escaped capture by *Ranger*, five days before the raid on Whitehaven, Dr. Ezra Green, the ship's surgeon, noted that the crew blamed Jones for letting the bounty "slip through their fingers."¹⁰⁵ This statement gestures towards an important alternative understanding of the events on board *Ranger*.

However, despite the internal logic of these analyses, it seems likely that, as a whole, an explanation of the mutinous actions aboard the *Ranger* based on the crew's make-up and motivations cannot be fully sustained. Many historians assert that there was little or no relationship between regional identity and the conduct of Continental Navy sailors. As Tim McGrath's comprehensive naval history of the American Revolution makes clear, there was certainly no distinction between these different groups in battle.¹⁰⁶ The ancestry of particular captains clearly had little effect on their performance, as the Philadelphian Nicholas Biddle was as successful as the Irish John Barry, the Scottish Jones,

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 126.

¹⁰² Martelle, 50.

¹⁰³ John Paul Jones's *Memoir*..., as quoted in de Koven, 286.

¹⁰⁴ The amount of silverware was notable, with a value of several hundred British pounds. See Thomas, 127.

¹⁰⁵ Dr. Ezra Green as quoted in Thomas, 118.

¹⁰⁶ For an exhaustive naval history of the American Revolution, see Tim McGrath, *Give Me a Fast Ship*, (New York: Penguin, 2014).

or Rhode Island's Whipple. Similarly, the failures of officers such as captains McNeil and Manley (Massachusetts), Nicholson (Maryland/Virginia), and Saltonstall (Connecticut) attest to the fact that no regional affiliation made any group of men inherently better sailors than those from another area or locality. Thus, it may be argued, then, that geographic background was not a contributing factor to the conduct of sailors and, by extension, to the relative capability of the crews. Generally speaking, sailors may have preferred officers from their hometowns, but the anecdotal evidence provided by records of the American Revolution demonstrates that no particular region provided crews who were more or less capable or loyal than any other. While crew cohesiveness may have been important, it seems unlikely that sailors from New England would have been any more mutinous than their counterparts from Pennsylvania or South Carolina.

A similar rebuttal can be applied to the assertion that the town-assembly style of government somehow enflamed the rebellious sailors' egalitarian fervor. New Englanders initiated the American Revolution and were often zealous supporters of it, but one cannot be too sure that this played any significant role in the conduct of individuals. After all, nearly all the sailors in the Continental Navy, including the vast majority who never even considered mutiny, were willing to risk their lives for the sake of the republic and therefore must have believed in its political underpinnings to some degree, regardless of local identity.

Although the slightly greater number of disgruntled New Hampshire sailors could be used in conjunction with an analysis of the officers and their conduct to explain the events on board *Ranger*, explanations stressing regional affiliations cannot be upheld as either definitive or exclusive. The prize money-based argument also cannot fully explain the events on board the *Ranger*. Its points may largely be valid, but this theory fails to establish a causal link between the type of perceived grievances experienced by the crew and their actions toward their captain. After all, pay and prize money issues were nearly universal in the Continental Navy, so while these might have contributed to the events on *Ranger*, this argument cannot provide a complete explanation. These arguments, which hinge on the agency of the crew, often provide compelling evidence and logical theoretical progression, but, in the specific case of *Ranger*, they do not satisfactorily explain the tension between Jones and the entire ship's complement.

Still, the strongest argument that suggests the crew was not primarily responsible for the events on board *Ranger* can be constructed from the relative lack of support this explanation finds in the primary material. For example, as Jones himself wrote, and as was later recorded in the *London Chronicle*, the silver stolen from the Earl of Selkirk was "to be sold for the benefit of the crew," demonstrating how highly Jones regarded the importance of the crew receiving its dues.¹⁰⁷ It was only through his own personal sense of honor that he later "promise[d] to buy it and return it or the value in a present to Lady Selkirk."¹⁰⁸ From these writings, it is clear that Jones made every effort possible to ensure that his crew received fair compensation, ultimately paying them out of his own pocket to do

¹⁰⁷ *London Chronicle* (London, England), 20–23 June 1778, no. 3362.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

so. Interestingly, there is evidence that some of the crew may have praised Jones during the cruise. One letter written by a *Ranger* sailor reprinted in the 14 April 1778 issue of the New Hampshire-based *Freeman's Journal* explained that Jones was considered “a Gentleman of great COURAGE and CONDUCT, and is deserving of the best ship in America,” noting that “his men greatly like him.”¹⁰⁹ Such acclaim hardly echoes the sentiments of a mutinous sailor on board the ship and gives no indication of widespread discontent among Jones’s men. Furthermore, by the process of deduction, one can conclude that Jones himself actually agreed that the crew of the *Ranger* was not particularly dastardly. Jones’s memoir to King Louis XVI of France shows that he had a proclivity to denigrate the crews of the ships on which he served. For example, Jones wrote that “it is easy to understand that the Bonhomme Richard had one of the worst crews ever found on a vessel.”¹¹⁰ Going further, Jones wrote that his effectiveness as captain of his subsequent command, *L’Ariel*, was attributable only to the “great advantage of having several good officers” on account of the fact that “never was there a crew worse than that of L’Ariel.”¹¹¹ By deductive reasoning, one can learn quite a bit about Jones’s opinion of *Ranger*’s crew. While Jones had a penchant for criticizing poor sailors, he did not once denigrate the capabilities of the sailors of *Ranger*. Such a phenomenon may be indicative of the fact that they were not as mutinous or problematic as many have argued. Finally, an examination of the exchange of correspondence between American officers and officials in France clarifies any role the crew may have had in the actions aboard *Ranger*. The letters between Jones and senior officials do not mention that the crew may have been mutinous. Rather, several letters note that the sailors of *Ranger* were “homesick” and expected to return to America (which may have been due to differing interpretations of the terms of their enlistment).¹¹² In any event, the primary evidence demonstrates that, although the crew of the *Ranger* may have been partially culpable in the opposition to Captain Jones, they were never identified as the primary cause nor were their concerns based on any specific regional, ideological, or monetary motivation.

The Culpability of Lieutenant Simpson

Due to the inconclusive crew-based explanations, many historians instead have assigned blame to Jones’s second-in-command, Lieutenant Thomas Simpson. Such arguments tend to have multiple variations and assign differing motivations to Simpson, but they all allege that Simpson singlehandedly (or nearly singlehandedly) led the crew and turned them against Jones, who became perceived as an outsider and a foreigner. Although the crew may have followed Simpson because of shared regional origins, there might also have been a monetary component to their support. In any event, this explanation hinges most directly on Simpson’s role in turning the crew against Jones by manipulating underlying

¹⁰⁹ “Extract of a Letter from an Officer on Board the *Ranger* Continental Ship of War, John Paul Jones, Esq; Commander, Dated Nantz [Nantes, France], December 5, 1777,” *Freeman's Journal* (Portsmouth, NH), 14 April 1778. Though there is no precise way of verifying that the letter is authentic, and was not written by Jones himself, anything to the contrary seems improbable. Given Jones’s ostentatious character, it is hard to imagine that he would spend time writing to a local paper in Portsmouth (which officers and crew would have cared about far more than he did) rather than corresponding with members of the social elite.

¹¹⁰ *John Paul Jones' Memoir...*, 26.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹¹² Benjamin Franklin to John Paul Jones, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 26: 606–607.

disagreements to exert his own control. It is worth remembering that Simpson and nearly every other officer aboard *Ranger* were appointed by a committee composed of Jones, John Langdon, and William Whipple, in which much of the authority for naming the officers was taken from Jones. Evan Thomas notes that Langdon and Whipple “controlled” what he called “this little bit of patronage,” which would eventually have a significant and detrimental effect on the results of Jones’s exploits in the Irish Sea.¹¹³ In fact, these men used their positions to appoint “friends and relations” to important posts, with the notable example of Simpson himself, who was Langdon’s brother-in-law.¹¹⁴ Those who assign blame to Simpson emphasize several different aspects of his life that led him to complain about John Paul Jones. Anderson notes that “New England provincial officers” lacked a “military ethos” that valued “loyalty, subordination, and regularity”—all essential attributes for someone like Jones.¹¹⁵ Nearly all historians agree that Simpson had specific and serious character flaws that set him in opposition to his captain. Cyrus Townsend Brady writes that Simpson could be easily understood as an “inefficient and insubordinate first lieutenant.”¹¹⁶ De Koven notes that Simpson was arrested for “disobedience of orders” as prize captain of the *Drake* for a relatively minor misunderstanding because of a pattern of broader insubordination throughout the cruise aboard *Ranger*.¹¹⁷ The real reason for his confinement was Jones’s “exasperat[ion] at length by this last exhibition of insubordination,” insubordination that comported with Simpson’s refusal to follow orders throughout *Ranger*’s cruise.¹¹⁸ Some historians argue that Simpson’s temperament was simply diametrically opposed to Jones’s, and this contrast set in motion the ensuing conflict that would come to a head in mid-May 1778. In this sense, the conflict between the two leaders was inevitable. Evan Thomas notes that Lieutenants Simpson and Hall had an “idea of discipline [that] was considerably more relaxed than Jones’s.”¹¹⁹ In part, this divergence can be attributed to the fact that, as Jones put it, Simpson and Hall “knew nothing about the art of war.”¹²⁰

Another explanation, which echoes the world of realpolitik, notes the power dynamics at play between Jones and Simpson as they vied for command of the ship. Jones himself realized that it was possible that “the crew regarded their fellow New Englander, Simpson, as the defender of their rights,” and that Simpson posed a certain threat to his command.¹²¹ At the same time, Simpson saw himself as the eventual commander of the *Ranger*, predisposing him to defy Jones’s commands.¹²² After all, Simpson viewed Jones as a temporary captain at best. While on board the ship, Simpson wrote, “everything is quiet and good order on board the ship, which I shall endeavor to keep up,” wherein Simpson’s use of the first person indicates his presumption that he was the rightful commander of the ship and that only he was capable of ensuring unity among the crew.¹²³ Although one could read this letter as an example

¹¹³ Thomas, 91.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Anderson, 413.

¹¹⁶ Brady, 79.

¹¹⁷ De Koven, 332.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 349.

¹¹⁹ Thomas, 91.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, Jones as quoted.

¹²¹ Thomas, 115–16.

¹²² Morison, 125.

¹²³ Thomas Simpson to Sir Painbeauf [emphasis added], 19 December 1777, as printed in Sawtelle, 109.

of Simpson accepting his responsibilities as first lieutenant, the tone indicates greater ambitions. The orders issued by Congress ensured an ambiguity of the command structure, which in turn escalated the tension between Simpson and Jones. In fact, it had been Simpson's impression that he would "take over the *Ranger* as soon as the ship reached France."¹²⁴ This reasoning led Simpson to view "Jones less as a superior officer than as a privileged passenger, a rather disagreeable foreigner to whom they had to show deference, but no real respect." Simpson was essentially biding his time until *Ranger* arrived in France and Jones would transfer to his new command.¹²⁵ This expectation might have been reasonable given the circumstances at the time of the departure of *Ranger* from Portsmouth in November 1777. Thus, at this point of the voyage, Simpson's assessment of the situation was not necessarily wrong. However, when the purchase of *L'Indien* fell through, leading the American commissioners (namely, Benjamin Franklin) to allow Jones to retain command of the *Ranger* and proceed to harass British shipping as he saw fit, the tension between the two men must have become untenable. This is best characterized by Cyrus Townsend Brady, who writes that Simpson was "embittered" so much that "so long as he remained under the command of Jones he was a smoldering brand of discontent and disobedience."¹²⁶ It was at this phase in the cruise that Simpson's insubordination must have escalated from mere childish petulance to outright subversion of Jones's command authority.

As one looks more closely at the events for which Simpson was confined, it becomes clear that his actions purposefully undermined Jones. The most notable incident, the one for which Simpson was placed in confinement, was his failure to follow direct orders after being placed in command of *Drake* and her prize crew. As there are many accounts of the narrative, the chronological progression of the events is fairly straightforward. After Jones's victory, he sent Simpson aboard *Drake*. Simpson's orders were very clear, as Jones instructed him that "should bad weather or any accident separate you from the *Ranger*, you are to make the best of your way to France, and I recommend the Port of Brest to Your Preferences."¹²⁷ Shortly thereafter, *Ranger* spotted an unidentified sail on the horizon and Jones ordered the towline, which Jones had re-established between the ships, to be cast off in order to pursue the unknown ship, which turned out to be a neutral, and therefore untouchable, merchantman. However, at the moment the towline was cast off, there was an alleged miscommunication between *Ranger* and Simpson, who stood on *Drake*'s quarterdeck. The prize crew later alleged that "this order was heard so indistinctly that Simpson hailed *Ranger*'s quarterdeck and asked if he was to make the best of his way independently to Brest," to which *Ranger* replied with an enthusiastic "Aye, aye!"¹²⁸ On its face, this incident was apparently a simple misunderstanding. In fact, Simpson seems to have believed that he had acted in good faith to the extent that when he wrote to the American commissioners, he "enclose[d] a copy of [Jones's] instructions," believing they would vindicate him after asserting that "we all understood" that the orders meant he should "make [his] own way to port."¹²⁹ Simpson used the collective phrase "we all" in his own defense to establish that others shared his

¹²⁴ Thomas, 91.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Brady, 82.

¹²⁷ Jones's orders as quoted by Brady, 146.

¹²⁸ Morison, 162.

¹²⁹ Thomas Simpson to the American Commissioners, 8 May 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 26: 417.

understanding of Jones's instructions, yet his report of the chain of events understates his own agency. Simpson deliberately made Jones's efforts to rejoin *Drake* after their separation more difficult—and dangerous—than necessary. As de Koven notes, *Drake* continually “showed her heels to her pursuer,” which happened to be *Ranger*.¹³⁰ In and of itself, Simpson's reluctance to engage with an unidentified ship is understandable, but Jones began to fly all “his signals in vain.”¹³¹ *Drake* “showed no intention of speaking with the *Ranger*, although, as Jones afterward learned, she was recognized and her signals plainly seen.”¹³² As Jones wrote to the American commissioners, “the chase discovered no intention to speak with the *Ranger*” even though after an exhausting pursuit, she “proved to be the *Drake*.”¹³³ For Simpson to directly ignore the signals of the *Ranger* is baffling, and it becomes understandable that Jones became “exasperated at length by this last exhibition of insubordination,” leading him to place Simpson in confinement.¹³⁴ Another accusation leveled at Simpson was related to his conduct after the towline was cast off. One historian notes that after the ships separated, Simpson “hailed off to the south” rather than “continuing to Brest,” as ordered.¹³⁵ Therefore, even if Simpson may have misinterpreted his immediate orders, he also failed to obey his standing orders to make his way directly to Brest. The *Drake* incident illustrates the conflicts brought about by Simpson's position aboard *Ranger* and elucidates the difficulties that arose from Simpson's interaction with Jones.

The *Drake* incident was the culmination of a series of insubordinate acts committed by Simpson under Jones's command. The most famous and explicit of these incidents occurred during Jones's raid on Whitehaven. Since Hall and Simpson both disagreed with Jones's decision to conduct a raid on an English town (apparently fearing that it would not be monetarily profitable), they acted to subvert his plan. In so doing, both of them malingered—as Jones recalled, that they told him that they were too “fatigued” to participate in the dangerous expedition.¹³⁶ Beyond committing dereliction of duty, though, Simpson actively tried to prevent Jones from carrying out his plan. Upon arriving on shore at Whitehaven, the boat crews allegedly attempted to strand Jones, leaving him to be captured by the town's garrison, but were stopped by Lieutenant Meijer, the Swedish officer who had been brought aboard in France.¹³⁷ Both Meijer and Jones later testified that Simpson had been behind this almost cartoonish plot to become captain of the *Ranger*.¹³⁸ This particular incident was part of a recurring phenomenon throughout the voyage in which Simpson continually attempted to agitate the crew to oppose Jones. Samuel Eliot Morison wrote that Jones took the greatest care to provide for his crew. After initially docking in France, Jones purchased fresh food and brandy for the men, but it “had no effect on their morale,” since “the crew had been encouraged by Lieutenant Simpson to believe that Jones was

¹³⁰ De Koven, 332.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ John Paul Jones to the American Commissioners, 27 May 1778, as quoted in McManemin, John A., *Captains of the Continental Navy* (Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ: Ho-Ho-Kus Pub., 1981). 229.

¹³⁴ De Koven, 332.

¹³⁵ Brady, 108.

¹³⁶ Thomas, 121. It is worth noting that Simpson's apparent cowardice is a recurring theme in the events of the cruise of *Ranger*, including his feigning sickness in Whitehaven and his actions as captain of *Drake*'s prize crew.

¹³⁷ De Koven, 286.

¹³⁸ Jones's *Memoir*...as quoted in de Koven, 286.

little more than a passenger.”¹³⁹ Further, Simpson exploited the crew’s morale, actively emphasizing with the sailors that Captain Jones was “working them like hell” and planning “crazy scheme[s], in which there would be no prize money.”¹⁴⁰ In so doing, Simpson was behind the insubordination on the ship, and he merely used the convenient excuses discussed above to cover his own part in adding to the unrest. Thus, Simpson became a “malcontent” who served as “a constant incentive to discord and mutiny.”¹⁴¹ Others note Simpson’s “resent[ment of] the ways of the ‘Scottish foreigner’,” which led him to “encourage discontent among the largely New Hampshire crew members.”¹⁴² In other ways, Simpson stretched the truth in order to make Jones appear more unreasonable and draconian. In his letter to the American commissioners, Simpson decried the conditions of his confinement following the *Drake* incident as inhuman and unbefitting of the conduct due to an officer from his captain. Simpson alleged that he was being held indefinitely in solitary confinement aboard a French ship of the line.¹⁴³ However, although parts of his narrative were factually true, others can not be supported by evidence provided by other sources. In fact, one scholar was forced to admit that a “far more rigorous imprisonment of Simpson had been brought about by the extravagant behavior of the culprit,” noting that he had initially been placed “in normal confinement upon the *Drake*” and that he was allowed a “good state-room.”¹⁴⁴ Another historian notes that Simpson was moved to a French ship where he was “well-treated” and given “freedom of the deck,” which is a far cry from the solitary confinement Simpson protested against.¹⁴⁵ Throughout the cruise, Simpson took on an antagonistic attitude toward Jones, manipulating people and facts to subvert Jones’s command.

Responsibility of *Ranger*’s Officers

Although Simpson took a leading role in opposing Jones, an underappreciated and critical role in this saga is the one played by the rest of the ship’s wardroom. For several reasons, the officers as a whole must be blamed for the crew’s mutinous actions, in which they clearly played a role. As Munro puts it, “all but two officers” were always “on the very verge of mutiny” and complaining that “they had been long away from home, and that their true objective was not honor but profit.”¹⁴⁶ On the one hand, Simpson could not have successfully turned the crew against Jones without the consent and active participation of the other officers. If any significant numbers of the other officers had opposed Simpson, he could not have possibly succeeded in the way that he did. This does not mean that Simpson was not the central figure of resistance. Rather, this interpretation establishes a nuanced framework by which we can recast and contextualize the events that transpired during Jones’s time as captain of *Ranger*. On the other hand, the crew also could not have successfully turned against Jones unless the officers as a whole allowed it. Other mutinies in this era were successfully quelled when a united wardroom

¹³⁹ Morison, 125.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Brady, 123.

¹⁴² Norton, 120.

¹⁴³ Thomas Simpson to the American commissioners, 25 May 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 26: 527.

¹⁴⁴ De Koven, 349.

¹⁴⁵ Brady, 123.

¹⁴⁶ Donald J. Munro, *Commodore John Paul Jones, U.S. Navy* (New York: William-Frederick Press, 1954), 52.

rallied to defend their captain, as happened in 1781 aboard *Alliance* under the command of Captain John Barry, when the officers successfully resisted a mutinous crew.¹⁴⁷ To understand why the officers may have opposed Jones, it is important to remember that they, like Simpson, had been chosen by John Langdon and William Whipple in Portsmouth. They shared the regional origins and the antipathy of Simpson and the crew against their captain. For some reason, it became the case that Jones “was not beloved by his subordinates although he seemed to take pains to be just and even liberal,” and his charm “seemed to fail where these Yankee sailors were concerned.”¹⁴⁸ However, it is through the tacit consent of the officers that the crew became mutinous and ultimately successful in their campaign to have Simpson replace Jones as *Ranger*’s commanding officer.

To understand the critical role played by the wardroom of *Ranger* in opposing Jones’s command, one must look carefully at the wide array of petitions sent out by the officers as well as their personal correspondence. In truth, the officers of *Ranger* were poor leaders. As Jones wrote in his “Memorial to Congress” from the Texel, 7 December 1779, one of his officers “acknowledg[ed] that he had no turn for enterprise,” essentially admitting to cowardice, leading Jones to declare in the same letter that “had the [officers from *Providence* and *Alfred*] been with me in the *Ranger*, 250 or 300 sail of large ships at Whitehaven would have been laid in ashes.”¹⁴⁹ Jones himself blamed his wardroom for the relative tactical failure of the Whitehaven raid. Nathaniel Fanning wrote from *Bonhomme Richard* that he had heard that “Jones’s former lieutenants, appointed by Congress, and regularly commissioned, had had some dispute with him; in consequence of which they had quit him, carrying away their commissions with them, at the same time.”¹⁵⁰ At the time, Jones requested that those of *Ranger*’s officers who had complained that they were “dangerously ill” might eventually “have liberty to lay down their too heavy commissions or warrants, and that others might be given to men of stronger nerves.” Jones particularly rued the fact that his officers were not “too proud to think themselves Servants by the Year” rather than feel committed for the course of the war, however long that might be.¹⁵¹ Jones despised his officers for their lack of sense of honor and duty, and through this letter, he ridiculed their cowardice in the face of the enemy. Similarly, Samuel Eliot Morison wrote that the officers “were a pretty sorry lot” who frequently “acted in a manner that can only be described as yellow” when their courage was most needed.¹⁵² De Koven speculates that Jones must have frequently “compared those beloved and loyal officers of the *Alfred* and the *Providence*” to the “motley and mutinous” ones aboard the *Ranger*.¹⁵³ Presumably, the poor quality of these officers stemmed from their experiences as merchant mariners, rather than as fighting men, a factor overlooked by the patronage that had secured their commissions for them.¹⁵⁴ In fact, although Jones was given a wide degree of latitude by the American commissioners

¹⁴⁷ McGrath, 393.

¹⁴⁸ Preedy, 78.

¹⁴⁹ Jones’s “Memorial to Congress” from the Texel, 7 December 1779, as found in de Koven, 280.

¹⁵⁰ Fanning’s statement that the officers were appointed by Congress is disingenuous, unless he only means to point out that they most likely held commissions issued by Congress. Significant is that they were chosen by Langdon and Whipple. Nathaniel Fanning, as published by John S. Barnes in *Fanning’s Narrative* (New York: New York Times, 1968), 25.

¹⁵¹ John Paul Jones to Benjamin Franklin, 1 June 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 26: 566.

¹⁵² Morison, 172.

¹⁵³ De Koven, 281.

¹⁵⁴ Sawtelle, 5.

to raid the English coast aboard *Ranger*, he would soon “discover that his officers were by no means ready to support him.”¹⁵⁵ Their opposition to his plans would prove detrimental to Jones’s aims, which were ultimately successful despite his officers rather than because of them. Jones judged the wardroom of *Ranger* “poor” officers who “excited the [crew] to disobedience,” convincing them of their “right to judge whether a measure that was proposed to them was good or bad.”¹⁵⁶ At one point, Jones wrote to the American commissioners that he was “unable to depend on the *Ranger*’s officers” to guard the confined Simpson, so he had to ask the French Admiral Comte D’Orvilliers for a guard detail.¹⁵⁷ It is a testament to the incompetence and insubordination of his officers that Jones could not trust them to carry out a routine duty. In the end, Jones wrote in his journal that “plunder rather than honor was the object of the *Ranger*’s officers,” explaining their refusal to support Jones’s plans.¹⁵⁸ More specifically, Jones wrote during his report of *Ranger*’s second attempt to seize the anchored *Drake* that his officers had opposed him since “the project...involved honor more than self-interest, their only motive.”¹⁵⁹ Another officer confirmed the rebelliousness of Jones’s wardroom. Lieutenant Jean Meijer testified to the events that occurred aboard the ship, reporting that “cabals and plots were being formed against” Jones and that they were being planned by “the majority of the officers,” who disliked Jones “because he was a Scotchman.”¹⁶⁰ In his narrative memoir addressed to Louis XVI, Jones partially confirmed Meijer’s position, reporting that he was “the object of much jealousy and false speculation” among the officers.¹⁶¹ Jones’s officers, then, were the true culprits, acting as facilitators of and agitators for insubordination and discord aboard *Ranger*.

One unique vantage point that illuminates the *Ranger*’s officers’ intransigence is that of Dr. Ezra Green. Though Green never explicitly noted the reasons for his own insubordination and unfavorable opinion of Jones, his diary portrays the common grievances against Jones from the perspective of his officers. As Samuel Eliot Morison wrote, Dr. Green “never altered his opinion that Paul Jones was a poor commander and that Lt. Simpson had been unjustly treated.”¹⁶² Interestingly, a recurring theme in Green’s own writings is that he considers Jones a poor tactician, which is especially remarkable considering Green himself had no naval training or experience. Green wrote that, during the engagement between *Ranger* and HMS *Hussar*, Jones was incompetent, but “could have taken her with great ease.”¹⁶³ Ignoring all facts of the matter itself, in which it was impossible for Jones to have captured *Hussar* given the circumstances, Green goes out of his way to criticize Jones’s conduct. At other points, Green refers to Jones as the “enterprising captain” of *Ranger*.¹⁶⁴ Without a doubt, Green was mocking Jones’s plans to raid the English coast. However, Green often went even further

¹⁵⁵ De Koven, 272–73.

¹⁵⁶ *John Paul Jones’ Memoir...*, 17.

¹⁵⁷ John Paul Jones to the American Commissioners, 28 August 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 27: 313.

¹⁵⁸ De Koven, 286.

¹⁵⁹ *John Paul Jones’ Memoir...*, 20.

¹⁶⁰ “Certificate of Lt. Jean Meyer” as found in de Koven, 287–88. It is possible that Meijer is subtly identifying the prevalent anti-Scottish prejudice in the British colonies through this report and implying that it played a role in the crew’s attitude toward Jones.

¹⁶¹ *John Paul Jones’ Memoir...*, 23.

¹⁶² Morison, 172.

¹⁶³ Diary of Dr. Ezra Green as found in Sawtelle, 203.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 204.

in demonstrating his distaste for Jones. Upon Jones's dismissal from command of *Ranger*, Green wrote that Simpson came aboard to take command of the ship "to the joy and satisfaction of the whole ship's company."¹⁶⁵ Although he fails to explicitly accuse Jones of wrongdoing, his bias is apparent in his delight at Simpson's assumption of command. Viewed through the lens of Dr. Green's diary, the type of opposition that was mounted against Jones by the wardroom officers subordinate to Simpson becomes apparent.

More dramatically, though, one can see the grievances of the officers begin to evolve when one delves deeper into their writings and takes into account the actions of individuals such as Lieutenant Hall and Sailing Master Cullam. Following Jones's raids, the petitions of the crew and of the prize crew of the *Drake* are often emphasized when explaining the events that transpired. However, there was also a petition written and signed exclusively by officers of *Ranger*, namely Hall, Cullam, and Green, who directly contradicted the testimony of their captain. In this petition, they call the treatment of Simpson "unheard of" and "inhumane," going so far as to assert that it "threaten[ed] the cause" of American independence.¹⁶⁶ At the same time, another letter written by Lieutenant Hall to the American commissioners further demonstrates the opposition mounted by individual officers to Jones's authority. Hall wrote that Jones "deceived us" and "tricked us into enlisting" for an extended period, complaining that "if I cannot be where I am of use to my country, I beg to resign."¹⁶⁷ He even signaled the possibility of mutiny to the commissioners by saying that he and the men "are determined not to sail with the Captain except to America."¹⁶⁸ Hall showed his distaste for Jones's command in other ways. In a separate letter to the commissioners, he exclaimed that "we have been out for seven months and not two at sea; our time is spent in useless refitting," referring to Jones's fastidious concern with ensuring the ship was re-rigged to eliminate poor seakeeping qualities.¹⁶⁹ Elsewhere, Hall criticized Jones's adjustments to *Ranger*'s rigging by affirming they served "little or no purpose."¹⁷⁰ Aside from the fact that this critique was demonstrably wrong and the refitting was essential to the ship's eventual success by helping it become more maneuverable and agile, the letter demonstrates the low esteem in which he held Jones, feeling free to criticize his commanding officer openly. At the same time, one might note that—ironically—although Hall complained that the ship was not at sea, he would eventually avoid taking part in the raid on Whitehaven by feigning sickness, exhibiting a degree of cowardice. Even before Jones's raids, Hall and Cullam allied themselves with Simpson against Jones. On 14 February 1778, the three of them sent a letter to Jones demanding that Jones "dispose of Captain Parke" because they thought it was a "hardship peculiar to us that a person in his Capacity" should share the prize money with them.¹⁷¹ Parke, a Marine captain, had joined *Ranger* in expectation of

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 207.

¹⁶⁶ The *Ranger*'s Officers to the American Commissioners (The "Officer's Petition"), 30 May 1778, as found in Sawtelle 179–80.

¹⁶⁷ Elijah Hall to the American Commissioners, 3 June 1778, as found in Sawtelle, 180. Ironically, the fact that sailors on board *Ranger* served longer than intended seems to have been the result of Hall's failure to communicate the terms of their enlistment during their time in Portsmouth.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Elijah Hall to the American Commissioners, 3 June 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 26: 579.

¹⁷⁰ Hall as quoted in Morison, 132.

¹⁷¹ Elijah Hall, David Cullam, and Thomas Simpson to Captain Jones [emphasis original], 14 February 1778, in Sawtelle, 122–23.

serving in the larger frigate to which Jones was slated to transfer in Europe. The crew objected that the Marines of a vessel of *Ranger*'s rate should be commanded by a lieutenant, whose share of prize money was less than that of a Marine captain. In Parke's place, Jones would appoint Jean Meijer, a Swede recommended by Silas Deane, formerly one of the American Commissioners in France, as Marine lieutenant. Several things may be surmised from the three officers' letter. For one, the officers were so covetous of their prize money that Jones was to ask the only officer he had personally appointed to leave the ship's company. More importantly though, this incident illustrates the basis of the discord that would later emerge. The very existence of this letter indicates the formation of a conspiratorial cabal of officers who opposed Jones every step of the way, explaining the ultimately mutinous actions of the *Ranger* crew.

Moving beyond their the conspiratorial mutterings, the officers of *Ranger* eventually did more than write letters of complaint to American officials in France. In two separate incidents, the officers acted to garner the support of the crew and turn them against Jones. In one case, Cullam attempted to storm the quarterdeck and depose Jones. However, Jones had been alerted by an informant among the crew, so that when Cullam began his coup, Jones "pulled out his pistol and put it to the master's head," causing Cullam and his conspirators to retreat and abandon their plan.¹⁷² Notably, this incident represents the closest attempt at mutiny aboard the *Ranger*, certainly much more so than the letters written by crew members. This effort was led by Cullam, meaning that neither Simpson nor others initiated this incident and suggesting that other expressions of dissatisfaction were similarly led, or at least approved by, the officers of the *Ranger*. In fact, this had been a longstanding plot, as the officers had conspired before they even left Brest to "kill or confine their captain and return to America under Lieutenant Simpson."¹⁷³ Throughout the cruise, the officers frequently stirred the crew to act against Jones. For example, when the lieutenants refused to lead the raid on Whitehaven, they also spread their discontent among their subordinates. Evan Thomas notes that had Simpson and Hall been given more time, "the crew would [have been] so truculent and demoralized that Captain Jones would have [had] to row into Whitehaven alone."¹⁷⁴ Therefore, not only did the officers oppose Jones individually and collectively, but they also acted to turn the rest of the crew against Jones.

Conclusion

The best way to understand the incidents that transpired aboard *Ranger* is by viewing them as a synthesis of Simpson's ringleadership and of the actions of the other officers set on opposing Jones. Without the support of his fellows, Simpson never could have been successful in his attempts to supersede Jones. It was only through their support both during the Irish Sea cruise and afterward that Simpson was eventually freed from his confinement, released from the threat of a court-martial, and given command of *Ranger*. Although the officers are often not held accountable for their role in this subversion, the documentary evidence demonstrates their critical part in this drama. Throughout

¹⁷² Thomas, 115.

¹⁷³ De Koven, 282.

¹⁷⁴ Thomas, 121.

Simpson's intransigence, the officers supported him against Jones. In one case, Cullam, Hall, and Green wrote that Simpson "always behaved as an officer and gentleman" and had the "respect of all who knew him" in an attempt to justify his actions to the American commissioners and secure his release.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, Lieutenant Hall wrote that Lieutenant Simpson had "the best" character and did not deserve the punishment given to him by Jones.¹⁷⁶ It is worth noting that the aforementioned petition signed by members of the crew may have been attached to Hall's letter and contained many of the same criticisms of Jones.¹⁷⁷ It is not unreasonable to imagine that Hall and the other officers persuaded members of the crew to write the petition, suggesting to them the types of grievances that would exonerate them and Lieutenant Simpson. In fact, while in confinement, Simpson wrote to the American commissioners and begged them to "appeal to the Ranger's officers" on his behalf, submitting that he would "stand or fall by what they say."¹⁷⁸ For all of Simpson's bravado, his letter shows his confidence in the officer's support of his insubordination, being so convinced of their affirmation of his rights that he would stake his career and potentially even his life on it. Finally, upon his release, Simpson reported to the commissioners that their "appointment of [him] met with the greatest satisfaction of the officers and men" of *Ranger*.¹⁷⁹ Without a doubt, the support of the other officers was the critical element of Simpson's success against Jones. Without their active role, Simpson's insubordination never could have stirred the entire crew against Jones so that he could ultimately take command of the ship.

Admittedly, the sketch of Jones's command of *Ranger* provided above disrupts much of the constructed notion of Jones as a chivalric, heroic character. Jones sculpted his entire life so that he could project heroism, gentility, and honor. As the events aboard *Ranger* suggest, Jones did not always retain command of his men. This fact should not diminish his accomplishments during this cruise. Jones's raids on Whitehaven and St. Mary's, combined with his capture of HMS *Drake*, provided serious material and psychological rewards for the wavering American cause. At a time of critical significance, Jones's accomplishments provided a glimmer of hope at a time of general despair. The crew's intransigence helps to construct, if anything, an even more impressive portrait of Jones. Through the sheer power of his own will, Jones forced a crew of truculent sailors and officers into successfully executing raids and fighting battles that they actively opposed. One can only imagine what Jones could have achieved if he had attacked the English coast with a loyal crew and trustworthy officers.

¹⁷⁵ The *Ranger's* Officers to the American Commissioners (The "Officer's Petition"), 30 May 1778, as found in Sawtelle, 180.

¹⁷⁶ Elijah Hall to the American Commissioners, 3 June 1778, as found in Sawtelle, 181.

¹⁷⁷ See note in Sawtelle, 183.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Simpson to the American Commissioners, 25 May 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 26: 527.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Simpson to the American Commissioners, 27 July 1778, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 27: 167.

Appendix

Comparison of Petition Signatures

(For the various petitions—and lists of individual signatories—see Sawtelle, 176–86).

Comparison of Total Regional Composition of Ranger Crew Petition Signatures and Ranger Roster

	Total	NH	MA	PA	VA	Not Found
Roster	128	68	40	16	2	2
Petition	76	48	10	2	2	14

Note: The number of names that were “Not Found” on the petition far exceeds that of the roster for several reasons. One is that the additional names never appeared on the initial roster of men who signed aboard in Portsmouth, NH. It is possible that some men used pseudonyms because of fear of repercussion for the mutinous act. Jones, after all, had the reputation of having a mutinous sailor flogged to death and actually killing another in the Bahamas. A more mundane explanation for this fluctuation might be the turnover of sailors in 18th-century navies, as some must have jumped ship in France while others, like Lieutenant Jean Meijer, must have signed on later. Also worth noting is that the two “sailors” from Virginia were Jones’s slaves, Cato and Scipio Jones (and their opposition to Jones’s authority would clearly have a unique basis).

Comparison of Percentage Regional Composition of Ranger Crew Petition Signatures and Ranger Roster

	Total	NH	MA	PA	VA	Not Found
Roster (% of Total Crew)	128 (100%)	68 (53.1%)	40 (31.3%)	16 (12.5%)	2 (1.6%)	2 (1.6%)
Petition (% of Signers)	76 (100%)	48 (63.2%)	10 (14.7%)	2 (2.6%)	2 (2.6%)	14 (18.4%)
Proportion on the Petition	76 / 128 (59.3%)	48 / 68 (70.6%)	10/40 (25%)	2 / 16 (12.5%)	2 / 2 (100%)	NA

There were also several other letters that were written on Lt. Simpson’s behalf and accused Jones. Attached below is a similar analysis of the regional composition of the correspondents. The overall paucity of sources makes any substantial analysis of these findings impossible. Nonetheless, they are shown below.

Regional Composition the Petty Officers Signing Petition (Sawtelle, 184–85)

	Total	NH	MA	PA	VA	Not Found
Petition	28	2	2	1	0	23

Regional Composition of Drake's Prize Crew Signing Petition (Sawtelle, 176–78)

	Total	NH	ME	MA	Not Found
Petition	27	4 (including 3 from Portsmouth)	6	2	15

Bibliography

Primary Sources

1. Printed Primary

Fanning, Nathaniel, and John S. Barnes. *Fanning's Narrative*. New York: New York Times, 1968.

Franklin, Benjamin. *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*. William Bradford Willcox, ed. vols. 26 and 27. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986.

"The HMS *Drake* Court Martial." PastPresented. www.pastpresented.ukart.com/drake-court.htm, accessed 13 February. 2017.

"John Paul Jones's Report on His Whitehaven Raid, 1778." PastPresented. www.pastpresented.ukart.com/jonesrep.htm, accessed 13 February 2017.

Jones, John Paul, Gerard W. Gawalt, and John R. Sellers. *John Paul Jones' Memoir of the American Revolution Presented to King Louis XVI of France*. Washington, DC: American Revolution Bicentennial Office, Library of Congress, 1979.

"Letter of John Paul Jones to General [William] Whipple." Letter. 11 December 1777. *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. 3rd ed., vol. 11 (1887), 338–40.

"Treaty of Alliance with France." *Primary Documents of American History*. Library of Congress, 6 February 1778. <https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/alliance.html>.

2. Newspapers

"Belfast Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman at Kirkcudbright (in Scotland) to His Correspondent in This Place." *Maryland Journal* (Baltimore, MD), 18 August 1778: 4.

"Boston, July 2." *Connecticut Gazette* (New London, CT), 10 July 1778: 4.

"Boston, July 2, Or, Extract of a Letter from Nantz [Nantes, France], Dated May 19, 1778." *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette* (Baltimore, MD), 30 June 1778: n. pag.

"Boston, July 2." *Providence Gazette* (Providence, RI), 4 July 1778: 3.

"Boston, July 6." *Independent Ledger* (Boston, MA), n.d.: 1.

"Extract of a Letter from an Officer on Board the Ranger Continental Ship of War, John Paul Jones, Esq; Commander, Dated Nantz [Nantes, France], December 5, 1777." *Freeman's Journal* (Portsmouth, NH) 14 April 1778: n. pag.

"Extract of a Letter from Messieurs Guardoqui and Son, at Bilboa, to the Board of War in This Town, Dated March 30, 1778." *Continental Journal* (Boston, MA), 7 May 1778: 3.

“France; Spain; America; India, Or, Whitehaven, April 23.” *Maryland Journal* (Baltimore, MD), 21 July 1778: 2.

General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer (London) 19 September 1778, no. 486: n. pag.

“House of Commons, May 8th.” *Independent Ledger* (Boston, MA), 13 July 1778: 2.

“House of Commons, Thursday, April 30.” *General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer* (London) 1 May 1778: 1.

London Chronicle (London), 23 June 1778, no. 3362: n. pag.

“London, House of Lords.” *Public Ledger* (London) 8 December 1778, no. 5874: n. pag.

“London, Or, From the Cumberland Packet of April 28, Whitehaven, April 28.” *General Evening Post* (London) ,2 May 1778: n. pag.

Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser (London), 15 September 1778, no. 2908: n. pag.

Morning Post and Daily Advertiser (London), 18 September 1778, no. 1847: n. pag.

“Portsmouth, October 19.” *Providence Gazette* (Providence, RI), 24 October 1778: n. pag.

Public Advertiser (London), 28 April 1778: 2.

“St. James, May 2.” *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* (New York), 6 July 1778: 1.

3. Anthologies

Clark, William Bell, William James Morgan, and Michael J. Crawford. *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*. Vol. 11 (Washington, D.C: Naval Historical Center, 2005).

Sawtelle, Joseph G. *John Paul Jones and the Ranger: Portsmouth, New Hampshire, July 12–November 1, 1777, and the Log of the Ranger, November 1, 1777–May 18, 1778*. Portsmouth, NH: Peter E. Randall, 1994.

Secondary Sources

Anderson, F. W. “Why Did Colonial New Englanders Make Bad Soldiers? Contractual Principles and Military Conduct during the Seven Year’s War.” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 3 (1981): 395.

Brady, Cyrus Townsend. *Commodore Paul Jones*. New York: D. Appleton, 1906.

Cotten, Elizabeth H. *The John Paul Jones–Willie Jones Tradition: A Defense of the North Carolina Position*. Chapel Hill, NC: Cotten, 1966.

- De Koven, Anna. *The Life and Letters of John Paul Jones*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913.
- Ennis, Daniel J. "Poetry and American Revolutionary Identity: The Case of Phillis Wheatley and John Paul Jones." *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, vol. 31, no. 1 (2002): 85–98.
- Fox, Joseph L. *Captain John Paul Jones, Forgotten Naval Hero*. Chicago: Adams, 1987.
- Hill, Frederic Stanhope. *The Romance of the American Navy*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910.
- . *Twenty-Six Historic Ships; The Story of Certain Famous Vessels of War and of Their Successors in the Navies of the United States and of the Confederate States of America from 1775 to 1902*. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903.
- Martelle, Scott. *The Admiral and the Ambassador*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Review, 2014.
- McGrath, Tim. *Give Me a Fast Ship: The Continental Navy and America's Revolution at Sea*. New York: Penguin, 2014.
- McManemin, John A. *Captains of the Continental Navy*. Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ: Ho-Ho-Kus Pub., 1981.
- . *Captains of the Privateers of the American Revolution*. Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ: Ho-Ho-Kus Pub., 1985.
- Morison, Samuel Eliot. *John Paul Jones, A Sailor's Biography*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1959.
- . "The Willie Jones–John Paul Jones Tradition." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 2 (1959): 198–206.
- Munro, Donald J. *Commodore John Paul Jones, US Navy*. New York: William-Frederick, 1954.
- Norton, Louis A. *Captains Contentious: The Dysfunctional Sons of the Brine*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009.
- Otis, James. *The Life of John Paul Jones*. New York, NY: Grosset and Dunlap, 1900.
- Paullin, Charles O., ed. *Out-Letters of the Continental Marine Committee and Board of Admiralty*. New York: De Vinne, 1914.
- Preedy, George R. *The Life of Rear Admiral John Paul Jones*. London: H. Jenkins, 1940.
- Sherburne, John Henry. *The Life and Character of John Paul Jones, a Captain in the United States Navy During the Revolutionary War*. New York: Andriance, Sherman & Co., 1851.
- Thomas, Evan. *John Paul Jones: Sailor, Hero, Father of the American Navy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.
- Waldo, S. Putnam. *Biographical Sketches of Distinguished American Naval Heroes in the War of the*

Revolution Between the American Republic and the Kingdom of Great Britain. Hartford, CT: Silas Andrus, 1823.

Willis, Sam. *The Struggle for Sea Power: A Naval History of the American Revolution.* New York: Norton, 2016.

JONATHAN FELD, from Philadelphia, is a junior at Princeton University, where he is pursuing a certificate in history and the practice of diplomacy. He is a two-time recipient of the university's Shapiro Prize, an annual award for academic excellence. He is also the president emeritus of the senate of the American Whig-Cliosophic Society, the nation's oldest political, literary, and debate society. His academic interests range from the classical antiquity field to the study of naval power in the early American republic, most specifically during the American Revolution. Mr. Feld is also a member of the Princeton Tower Club and an avid baseball fan. He served an internship at the Naval History and Heritage Command in 2016.