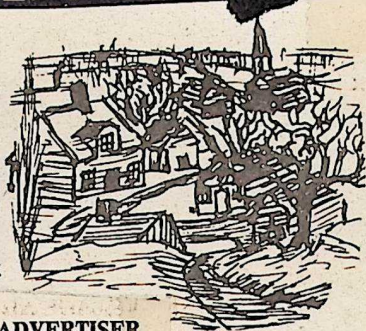


# Village View by Andrea Leonard



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Plans are laid to open a new museum in Boston within the next eighteen months. It will center on one of our nation's historic treasures, will attract tourists by the thousands, and will become one more reason for spending an occasional weekend in this state's Capitol City.

Now we're entering the year of the bicentennial celebration of the founding of the United States of America, greater-than-ever emphasis will be placed on our country's history.

Much of the story of the American Revolution took place here on Cape Cod where James Otis of West Barnstable stirred his fellow Cape Codders to action with angry words encouraging violent action against the King of England, all he stood for, and all who stood by him.

More of the story was enacted all along the length of the Eastern Seaboard. From Independence Hall in Philadelphia, south to Williamsburg, Virginia, and North to the Green Mountains of Vermont, the cry for liberty echoed and re-echoed.

In commemoration of the events leading up to the Declaration of Independence and culminating in the American Revolution, there'll be hundreds of marches, boulders dedicated, Liberty poles raised, and historical markers placed and replaced.

Historic trails will be marked and signed, old buildings will be renovated and refurbished, museums will be cleaned, dusted, and given fresh paint. New museums will open and guides published; tours will be organized.

America's about to embark upon a celebration of her proud history such has never before been contemplated in this hemisphere.

One of the newest of the museums being planned will feature as it's main attraction, "Old Ironsides", the U.S.S. Constitution, the oldest man-of-war in the U.S. Navy still afloat and in commission.

The ship is now undergoing a complete overhaul to restore her to her original condition when she was launched during the administration of the second President of the United States, John Adams in 1797, less than ten years after the War of Independence was won.

Mr. Charles F. Adams, a direct descendant of John Adams, is the moving force behind the new museum.

In announcing the opening of the \$1 million fund-raising drive to finance building the museum, Charles Adams commented, "In these troubled times when Americans seem to have lost faith and confidence in each other, in our way of government, in our country today, fortuitously there comes along the bicentennial with various opportunities for us to refresh our minds as to the history of this county and to look at some of the aspects of character and courage that went to putting America together. There could be no better symbol of our national purpose than the U.S.S. Constitution herself."

Adams, who is chairman of Boston-Raytheon Company, is honorary trustee and fund-raising campaign general chairman for the new museum. The seven other Boston business-leaders who will serve on the Museum Foundation committee hope to reach the million-dollar

goal by mid-1975 to carry out the initial objective.

"I think it's important," Mr. Adams said, "for us in Boston to get behind this program. This can be our contribution to the bicentennial, although the Constitution is by no means a bicentennial exhibit.

"She will go on indefinitely and the museum will go on indefinitely. Here we have one of the great relics, one of the most significant symbols that is left to help us to be able to replay in our minds some of the thoughts and actions of the people who not only founded the Republic, but defended it in some of the early excursions such as the War of 1812."

When the museum is completed, you as a visitor will find it complements the ship which now is Boston's most popular tourist attraction. During the five years preceding the current overhaul an average of 700,000 -- two-thirds of them school children -- visit the ship annually.

It's estimated that during the bicentennial more than 1.5 million people will make their way to the Charlestown Navy Yard each year to visit the ship and the museum. Preparations are being made to welcome a million persons annually into the 1980's.

The museum will be housed in the refurbished Alexander Parris building, built in 1932, located in the Boston Navy Yard Historic Site, adjacent to the berth of "Old Ironsides".

Plans call for preserving the exterior of the building, as is, but adapting the interior, at a cost of \$500,000, to include five principal display galleries.

The first will dramatize the planning and construction of the Constitution during the 1790's.

The second gallery will deal with her daring exploits during the war with the Barbary Pirates.

The ship's battle actions against the British during the War of 1812 will be covered in the third gallery.

The later years, and struggles to preserve the ship, will be presented in the fourth. The final gallery will be designed for changing exhibits showing the storage and preparation of food, the ship's armaments, her sails and rigging, and what life was like aboard ship for the crew of "Old Ironsides".

In addition, it is planned that classrooms will be available, furnished for discussion sessions; packaged lesson-plans will be prepared for teachers' use, as well as a fully-equipped audio-visual center, and public areas. Administration offices will be housed in the same building as the museum itself.

It's expected the educational program planned to complement the museum's displays, including lesson plans, movies, slide presentations and informative literature, will be developed at a cost in excess of \$900,000.

The U.S.S. Constitution Museum Foundation was incorporated in Massachusetts in 1972 as a non-profit educational organization; it is officially recognized as the agency to operate a museum to enhance the inspirational and educational aspects of "Old Ironsides" as she existed in the days of sailing vessels.

If you feel you need still more incentive to plan to make "Old Ironsides" and the museum a part of your itinerary, consider this. The commanding officer of the Constitution, during some of her most active years, a man native to the Town of Barnstable.

His name was John Percival, and until it burned a few years ago, his family's homestead stood on Route 6-A, West Barnstable. The man was known throughout the Cape and throughout the nation's navy as "Mad Jack" Percival. A colorful character was he.

History books today have little to say of the War of 1812, and less of "Mad Jack". Town of Barnstable history recalls that period with bitterness, for in spite of the feeling many Cape Codders had in those days that there was little purpose to the war itself, they suffered great deprivation as a result of it.

The ports on both sides of the Cape were blockaded by British ships, preventing the coasting vessels -- our life-lines to centers of commerce north and south -- from making their voyages.

Bottled up, the vessels lay idle at wharves up and down the Cape. The Britishers demanded, and in some instances collected, tribute from the people along the shore. Failure to comply resulted in bombardment and threats to fire the villages.

We've a personal stake in the history of "Old Ironsides", and the new museum in Boston, when it opens, promises to illustrate the deprivations this ship and it's crew fought valiently to alleviate.

No history of this ship would be complete without additional history coming to light about Captain John Percival, a West Barnstable boy, born, bred and buried -- his headstone stands in the cemetery at the corner of Meetinghouse Way and Route 6-A, -- and no history of this ship would be complete without additional pages being added to our knowledge of Cape Cod and the valiant men she's sent into the world to do battle in the name of our United States.