



SHIP MARY OF BOSTON, CAPTAIN GAMALIEL
BRADFORD, MASTER, ENGAGING THREE FRENCH PRIVATEERS
Water color by Michele Felice Cornè, 1800.

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Captain Gamaliel Bradford, Soldier and Privateersman

By GERSHOM BRADFORD

IT was timely for an energetic soul to have been born on November 4, 1763, and at Duxbury, Massachusetts. Not that it was November, nor the fourth day, but 1763. Impending events of tremendous import were in the air. The colonists were becoming restive. Gamaliel Bradford was arriving with coming opportunities and he was not to be found indifferent to their challenge.

He grew up in a home where knowledge and culture were welcome and he was blessed with the chance to breathe the wholesome air of a countryside where a scant mile away was the constant chop and pound that attended the building of ships. His young ears were filled with endless talk of the sea. This was the environment that was to manifest itself in years to come. There was, however, another influence, for in his home there was a military tone; his father held a commission in the King's Colonial forces.

If environment had an influence in

forming the character and directing the course of Gamaliel's life, he was not without the advantages of heredity. His forebear in each generation, back to Governor William, had notably served the public. His mother Sarah Alden was the great-granddaughter of Pilgrim John.

The youth was happy in being placed under the instruction of a teacher of unusual abilities, George Partridge. With this tutelage the boy acquired a broad and substantial foundation. His tutor not only had that desirable faculty of importing knowledge, but the rarer and important gift of inspiring further exertions in self-education. Gamaliel was a striking example of Mr. Partridge's success in this direction.

Much too soon this orderly instruction came to a close, for darkening clouds were piling high on the horizon. Mr. Partridge was called to larger fields, first to the Provincial, then to the Continental Congress. Gamaliel was twelve years old

when the storm broke at Lexington and the Revolution was on. There were soon to be changes in the home. His father found himself in the difficult situation of transferring loyalty to his commission from the British Governor-general to one issued by the Revolutionary Government. The transition was made and in the spring of 1776 father and son left Duxbury to join the army.

The young soldier served as a private in the company of Captain Thomas Turner of the 10th Massachusetts Regiment from May 28 to December 1, 1776. This company was transferred to the 14th Massachusetts Regiment on January 1, 1777.¹ Early in April this regiment marched for Ticonderoga; on August 13, 1777, it was joined to General John Paterson's brigade. This unit was engaged at Stillwater, at Bemis Heights on September 19 and at Saratoga on October 17, 1777.² This brigade, of which the 14th was still a part, then moved south to join General Washington's army, wintering at Valley Forge.³ Emerging from that experience, Washington moved north in pursuit of the British Army that was heading for Sandy Hook. They met at Monmouth where the 14th Regiment was engaged in the battle of June 28, 1778.⁴

During the year 1778 private Gamaliel was promoted to corporal and later to sergeant. He was given a commission of ensign which was dated October 8, 1779, and shortly transferred to Cap-

tain Thomas Fuller's company also of the 14th Regiment. He was commissioned a lieutenant (sixteen years old) on September 3, 1780, and assigned to Brook's 7th (Massachusetts) Regiment. On January 1, 1781, he was transferred to Jackson's 4th (Massachusetts) Regiment.⁵ After the battle of Monmouth Gamaliel's service was in the Hudson River country, mostly at West Point. At Newburgh June 9, 1783, he became an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati. He served until June 20, 1784.

During this latter time of service he devised a record of events by writing letters to a fictitious friend Marcus. Some of these have survived the years. In them we get a glimpse of the young man after a long period of army life. They are simple recordings, but show a matured mind. There also appears the evidence of his inquiring nature, seeking reasons, motives and details of all that went on around him. Here too is revealed that pleasure in discussion and conversation that marked his later life. Although he has been spoken of as a "brave and resolute officer," his compassion for persons in distress was often strained by the severity of the discipline, as shown by his remarks on courts martial:

Dear Marcus.—

Yesterday I sat on court martial at Major Bauman's (the president's) quarters—two prisoners were brought before the court and tried for desertion. This is to me disagreeable business. One of the prisoners belonged to my company, a little simple fellow, who had left the regiment but a few days before and was taken at Goshen. He was sentenced to one hundred lashes. I felt for the poor little fool and went to the commandant to intercede for a remission of the stripes. Desertion was a heinous crime to plead for. I was sensible to it. The

¹ *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War*, p. 402.

² *Life of General John Paterson*, 1st Ed., pp. 117, 133, 143.

³ Spaulding, *The U. S. Army in War and Peace*, p. 477, and inscription on a monument at Valley Forge.

⁴ *Memorials of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati* (1890), p. 382.

⁵ Heitman's *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army*.

commandant observed that a number of the soldiers had of late been guilty and it was highly necessary that some exemplary punishment should be inflicted in order to deter others. However, at my request he would dispense with half the stripes.

A man must be a profligate villain not to engage my pity when he is punished. For this reason I dislike sitting on courts where they must receive their sentence. I have frequently been on courts where prisoners have been tried for capital crimes and sentenced to death. This to anyone who has not divested himself of every feeling of humanity, is truly affecting. To have a fellow creature standing trembling before you with his life depending on the words which should drop from your tongue, can not fail of exciting the most lively emotions of sympathy. May I never be called to so undesirable a task.

I know you are tired and so farewell,

G. B.

All the communications to Marcus were not on the dismal side. There were accounts of his social activities which were many. One included an affair of the heart with an attractive French girl who could not speak English. It would seem that after the fighting ceased an officer's life at West Point was not of an arduous nature, for he writes on June 11, 1784:

Dear Marcus.—

General Knox is just alanding. The cannon which have been on the banks these several days to salute him, will discharge their offices and retire to the fort.

Our family were invited yesterday to dine with General [name lost, paper disintegrated]. I was on guard, but such duties in peace time do not deprive me of a good dinner. I went.

It was a very disagreeable day, wet and windy. However, we had some sociable company at dinner with us, by which means the afternoon was passed in gaiety. Upon the whole I think we live as happily here on West Point as most of people do in any place—the seat of empire. There is about one dozen or fourteen families of us—some two, some three, some four in each and we either dine with some one of them, or some one of them with us, about four days in a week and so round by this means we live *well* and very sociably. No disagree-

ment between any, but all in perfect harmony. This is everything—friendship sweetens everything that is bitter in the cup of life. We have some ladies, tho' but few. The toast, Miss B . . . is gone to New York—we wait her return with some anxiety.

Our regiment turns out to exercise twice every week day, except Tuesday and Friday, on these days only in the morning. Six in the morning and six in the evening are the hours which the exercise begins and lasts one hour each time. In the interim, which is twelve hours we spend as we please, walk, ride or sail, or if neither of these, you may study—if you have anything to study. If not, there is an end to the matter and an end to the letter.

Adieu

G. B.

After being released from the army Gamaliel Bradford was undecided as to his life's work. His first desire was for further education, but he was deterred by a sensitiveness as to his age among younger classmates. He finally chose a seafaring future. This was a natural choice for his home town was steeped in salt.

His first voyage was to France in 1784.⁶ Then, with probably another between, we learn from a casual note on the back of a subsequent logbook that he shipped as a sailor on April 18 for Havre, arriving on May 26, 1786. The early shipping records reveal that a brig of 88 tons was built at Old York, Maine, and registered in 1786. The owners were Gamaliel Bradford, mariner, and William Hickling, trader. Her name was *West Point*. The implication is strong that our young mariner sailed in this vessel. From our experience we know of no nicer way to learn the ways of the sea than to own a part of the craft one sails in—with one's future father-in-law owning the remainder. It would not be easy to imagine that Captain Nat Lyde

⁶ *Memorials of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati* (1890), p. 112.

of *West Point* would abuse the young sailor under these circumstances—say for not passing a weather earing with alacrity. It all tends to show that Gamaliel was applying the wisdom of experience.

On one of his early visits to France the ship was evidently detained, as was often the case, for he spent several profitable months learning the language, in which he became proficient. It is possible that this ambition had its beginnings in his pleasant efforts to converse with the lovely French girl at West Point. However, his linguistic sights were high for he proceeded later to familiarize himself with the Latin, Italian and Spanish languages, not to mention his splendid command of English. His accomplishments eventually led to an honorary degree of Master of Arts bestowed upon him by Harvard University.

In the spring of 1787 the young mariner secured his first berth as a sea officer, sailing from Newburyport as second mate with a Captain Vickery. The voyage was interesting in that the vessel was bound for the Cape of Good Hope with flour and through singularly running short of water, turned up at Senegal. In that port there happened to be a serious shortage of food which was a neat turn of fortune for Captain Vickery. The cargo was sold and the brig loaded homeward with salt at Bonavista, Cape de Verde Islands.

After this voyage, in which Gamaliel Bradford gained experience as an officer, we lose the record of his travels until we find him in 1791 in the logbook of the brig *Jerusha* of which he was owner and master. While in command of *Jerusha* on August 6, 1792, he married Elizabeth P. Hickling. Five daughters and four sons were born of this marriage.

During his time in *Jerusha* he made

several voyages to Virginia and the West Indies, with one to Madeira, and later *Jerusha* sailed from the Virginia Capes for Oporto, Portugal, arriving September 4, 1793, forty-nine days out. In this vessel only the usual incidents of such voyages occurred. Between this time and 1797 Captain Bradford commanded the brig *Friendship* and the ship *Five Brothers* of 300 tons. In 1795, through a letter, we find him in Bordeaux, in which he states that "this is my fourth visit to France." His patriotic feelings are shown in a paragraph of this letter:

This is our great holiday, the 4th of July. I wonder what you are doing in Boston, paying respect to it I hope. All our colors are flying here and I assure you I think no place can be more handsomely decorated than by having the flag of the United States flying about it. There are a great many of us here to display them today.

On March 4, 1797, Gamaliel Bradford became master of the brigantine *William*. By this time his abilities were widely recognized, as evidenced by the conspicuous compliment of being offered command of the frigate *Boston* by President John Adams.⁷ This confronted the captain with a hard decision. Such service would have gratified his patriotic spirit and satisfied a restless mind. Nor would he have been averse to the prestige of a senior naval command or the possibilities of glory. However, with reluctance he declined the honor of being among that splendid company of seamen who commanded the country's early frigates. His reason was the looming responsibilities of his increasing family. His experience had shown that in a merchant ship, at that time, there was the likelihood of larger returns, though less of fame.

⁷ *Memorials of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati* (1890), p. 112.

Early in 1798 there is a record of a difficult voyage to Surinam in the leaking schooner *New Adventure*, sailing on February 12 and arriving back in Boston on June 26 of that year.

town. His younger brother, Gershom, was the mate. The ship was loaded with salt fish and sugar, Boston for Malaga. No untoward incident occurred until their arrival in the Straits of Gibraltar on



CAPTAIN GAMALIEL BRADFORD, 1763-1824
Portrait signed "D.M."

The next command was the letter of marque ship *Mary* of Boston. She carried 12 guns and a good crew, whose names appearing in the logbook indicate they were largely from the captain's home

town. March 4, 1799, where the waters seemed to be swarming with hostile privateers.

Captain Ebenezer Shillaber of the Salem brig *Cruger* reported to Elias Hasket Derby on March 22, 1799, that

there were 15 or 18 privateers based in the port of Malaga, some having 16 guns and 100 men.⁸

The ship *Mary* passed the Rock of Gibraltar at 7 P.M., March 4, 1799, with the wind breezing up from the ENE and, significant of the times, sighted a large convoy heading into the Straits. The wind being ahead she made little progress. The next evening they made their first contact with the enemy. At 5 P.M. an armed vessel, showing Spanish colors, approached, shifted to the French ensign and sheered off. The weather was moderate during the night as they stood to the southward on the port tack. At 8 A.M., March 6, 1799, the wind was northerly, flattening out. Two French privateers, towards the land, were observed to board several vessels after which they bore down on *Mary*. At 10 A.M. they attacked and the ships were engaged until after noon when the enemy sheered off. (See frontispiece.)

At 2:30 P.M. of the same day, with a light breeze from the SE and four privateers one-fourth mile to the eastward, *Mary* set all sail with the enemy in chase. The privateers passed close aboard, raking the ship with round shot and grape, which was vigorously returned. This engagement lasted until near night when the enemy abandoned the fight. An item in the logbook reads: "At 10 p.m., bro't to a Danish brig that had been taken by the French privateers, but as my commission did not authorize to meddle with any but French and American vessels taken by the French—let her pass. At 5 a.m., anchored in Malaga Roads."⁹

It seems remarkable that no one aboard *Mary* was injured in this fight, for a sheet of paper has come to light on which the

⁸ Derby MSS, Essex Institute, Salem.

⁹ Logbook in the Bradford Collection, Duxbury.

master enumerated each shot that took effect. There were 81 of these in spars, rigging and sails. However, it seems by its appearance that this was the second of two sheets and there is no mention of those shot that struck the hull. The master immediately wrote his wife saying, "but if you could see the *Mary's* sails and rigging and the shot that yet stick about the hull, you might think our heads had been in some danger. . . ."

The Yankee crew proved that they had handled their guns creditably for the next day one of the larger privateers entered Malaga to land her dead and wounded of which there were two killed and 13 wounded, several of whom later died.¹⁰ This little adventure in sea warfare had repercussions beyond the size of the shot or the number of casualties. It came at a time when American prestige was low in that quarter and the boldness of the marauders high. General David Humphreys, American minister at Madrid, took notice of this affair in a dispatch to the Secretary of State, stating that Captain Bradford had "acquired much reputation" through this encounter and cited the salutary effects of his and other instances of effective resistance which had inspired respect for our flag in the crews of French privateers.¹¹

Captain Shillaber again in a letter dated at Malaga May 27, 1799, states: "I am ready for sea and hope to sail in three or four days in company with Captain Hicks of the ship *America*, which has 20 guns and 50 men; Captain Enoch Preble in the *Caroline* of 10 guns and Captain Bradford in the ship *Mary* of 12 guns and think we have nothing to fear

¹⁰ *Quasi-war With France, Nov. 1798 to Mar. 1799*, Navy Department, p. 436.

¹¹ *Quasi-war With France, Nov. 1798 to Mar. 1799*, Navy Department, p. 436.

while we keep company, which will be until we get clear of the land.”¹²

It was not until the tenth of July that *Mary* sailed from Malaga, presumably in company as arranged above. She arrived at Gibraltar on the eighteenth and sailed again on the twenty-first, passing through the Straits with hammock nettings stuffed and guns shotted. With a NE wind she favored the Barbary shore and safely passed Cape Spartel that night.

Those were troublous days and those were seas in which a master was suspicious of every sail. The object of a “letter of marque” was to get her cargo through and fight if necessary to do so, but she did not usually seek trouble. Hence, in those waters Captain Gamaliel either bore away or hauled his wind to avoid the company of strangers. As an example on the twenty-third of July in about 35° N., 10° W., we find this entry in the log:

At 8 a.m., we saw a sail on the lee quarter which came up fast. Ship astern in chase of us; at noon fired two guns to leeward. Keeps overhauling us and at 2 p.m., fired a shot—from 3 to 5 p.m., she fired a number of shots, some of which reached over us. At 5 p.m., tack ship and meet the boat sent by the ship. Find her to be the British sloop-of-war *Cormorant*. Hove-to for her—went aboard, showed my papers and returned & made sail.

When in mid-Atlantic and less sensitive waters on August 20, at midnight, *Mary* came up with several vessels sighted the evening before. The log states they all “left Gibraltar the same day, but a few hours later.” Among others were *Industry*, Captain Goodwin, and *Cruger*, Captain Shillaber. They remained in company for three days.

As *Mary* approached the Americian coast there occurred an amusing navigational incident: At 8:30 A.M., on September 11, after sounding regularly with no

bottom in foggy weather, they heard breakers, “sounded and got 13 fathoms, wore ship and stood offshore. Sent a boat inshore and found it to be Cape Cod between the Highland and Race Point.”

It would appear that Captain Goodwin of the mid-Atlantic meeting just mentioned gave up command of *Industry*, for on November 15, 1799, Captain Gamaliel took her out on a voyage to Italy. She was a letter of marque and carried 24 men, two mates and a passenger, Charles Henley, who was destined to play an important part in the record of this voyage.

When only three days out they met with one of those accidents in which a shipmaster is obliged to make a difficult decision involving the finest judgment. The weather having turned unfavorable the men were aloft shortening sail when one of them fell from the main-topmast head and overboard. The ship was promptly brought-to and the jolly boat put over, manned by two hands. In the rapidly rising wind and sea they almost reached the swimming man when the boat was swamped. So the captain had three men in the water. He decided to risk the yawl with five men. This boat in its futile effort was almost lost to sight and only with difficulty was recovered and hoisted aboard. The ship remained in the vicinity until all agreed that no hope remained.

This accident upset the captain and again brings attention to his sympathetic nature. To his wife he afterwards wrote: “You can not conceive my distress on seeing those poor fellows struggling in the waves whilst we were making every endeavor, tho’ unsuccessful, to relieve them. . . . three of our best hands—three which I was so happy with last voyage.”

The ship *Industry* passed unmolested

¹² Derby MSS, Essex Institute, Salem.

through the Straits and anchored in Gibraltar on December 16, 1799, sailing 12 hours later for Leghorn. After a call at Naples and, perhaps, a run up the Adriatic and back, she sailed homeward. Off the island of Corsica the ship was attacked by two French privateers which were readily beaten off.

Arriving again in the Straits on July 8, 1800, Captain Gamaliel Bradford was engaged in his most important sea fight, a detailed account of which has been preserved in a letter written by Charles Henley, the passenger.¹³

When the ship was about three miles past Gibraltar, a large privateer stood out from the shore, made an appraising inspection of *Industry's* strength, hauled her wind and passed astern. She then hoisted French colors and opened fire. This was at a distance that out-ranged *Industry's* six-pounders, of which she had twelve. The privateer in her armament carried an 18-pounder forward with which she continued to throw grape into the ship and beyond her.

In this uneven and futile situation Captain Gamaliel knew that they must wait until the enemy gained confidence to close in when he hoped "that we should be able to give the rascals what they deserved." At the end of an hour's firing the privateer shortened the distance, but finding this dangerous, hauled off again, continuing to use her bow chaser effectively.

Shortly after this move, three more of the enemy appeared, one large the others smaller. Feeling their superior force they then closed in until *Industry's* guns could maintain a steady fire upon them. The wind was freshening, but by that time, being so cut up aloft, they could carry sail only when before the wind. Hence their

maneuverability was restricted and their progress slow.

The fight had been going on for three hours when a grape shot caught the captain just above and back of the knee, going nearly through the leg. In this critical moment, before being taken below, he insisted on giving instructions to the crew: "Remain calm, keep up a steady fire and do not allow them to board." He knew well the technique of the French—to disable a vessel aloft then, with their large crews, take the ship by boarding with cutlasses. Mr. Henley reported that the crew carried out the captain's instructions with "determined courage."

In the meantime Gershom Bradford, the mate, who during the whole engagement had trained the stern guns, took command and for two and one half hours more continued the fight. The privateers by that time apparently found *Industry* a bit too tough and abandoned their attack.

The captain ordered a course for Cadiz hoping to fall in with some British naval vessel and receive assistance. They were scarcely able to make headway owing to the "shattered condition of rigging and spars." The next day by good fortune they sighted the British ship-of-the-line *Swiftsure*, Captain Benjamin Hallowell, who answered their signal and from whom they received "every mark of attention and humanity." The chief surgeon came aboard *Industry* and cared for the wound, but it was his opinion that the leg should be amputated as soon as possible. As fever had set in it was his advice to remove the patient to *Swiftsure*. For some reason, best known to himself, this solicitude was declined by the captain; he seemed bent on remaining with the ship until she reached Lisbon.

However, Captain Hallowell, though then fully justified in filling away on his

¹³ *Quasi-war With France*, Navy Department, VI, 126.

course, remained hove-to, sent aboard *Industry* a box of medical supplies and his only surgeon's mate to accompany the patient to Lisbon. Furthermore, he sent an order to the British hospital at that port to receive the American captain and John Baylor, a wounded sailor.

This warm-hearted officer of the Royal Navy was one of Lord Nelson's "band of brothers." He and his ship had, only two years before, distinguished themselves at the Battle of the Nile. Captain Gamaliel, even in his wretched condition, must have been stirred by receiving this solicitude from a man so highly possessed of the traits he so admired—courage and intelligence in battle and a humane nature in peace.

Unhappily the wind came out ahead and in the ship's disabled condition they did not arrive in Lisbon for ten days. It was most fortunate that the surgeon's mate was aboard to treat the patient through those days of great suffering and danger of infection.

Mr. Henley wrote: "... we landed our unfortunate commander, and then he underwent the amputation of the thigh. It is now three hours since the operation was performed and I have the high gratification of informing you that he [is] likely to do well. He bore the operation as he did the agony of the wound with the greatest calmness and fortitude."

The ship in due course proceeded for Dublin, Ireland, under the command of the mate, while Captain Gamaliel remained recuperating in Lisbon. In October he got passage in the schooner *Governor Carver* of Plymouth, Massachusetts. Upon arriving and anchoring in her home port he could view the hills of Duxbury and wrote with understandable feelings:

Behold me once more arrived in America my beloved country and near my beloved friends,

if they are alive. After a long and disastrous voyage how pleasant it is to return to objects so dear to us. Often I have enjoyed this pleasure—to return in health and strength and the happy use of our faculties, what a blessing. At present my joys are dampened by reflecting on the unhappy state I am in, but I desire to be resigned to it. . . . In returning home now I have this to comfort me—that I shall not have to leave it again. . . .

We are now in Plymouth Harbor. I have not yet landed but can see where my friends reside. I can see those fields and hills over which I have so often joyfully wandered and are very dear to me. . . .

The intention to terminate his seafaring career did not prevail. Despite the handicap of a wooden leg we find him at sea again in 1804 bound on another voyage to Europe. This time he visited, among others, the ports of Cadiz, Bordeaux and Cherbourg. In 1805 there was a letter written from Havana in which he expresses some satisfaction in short voyages, for, notwithstanding the smaller profit, they brought him home the sooner. Considerable time was spent at home in 1806. On January 9, 1807, his father died and he inherited the house in Duxbury. This he had torn down, replacing it with the handsome four-chimneyed, brick-ended house of his own design which is now the home of Captain Charles Bittinger, U.S.N.R. (Ret.).

Soon Captain Gamaliel was off on his longest voyage in point of time. Sailing in July 1807 in his bark *Mary*, he passed Gibraltar in September and remained trading in the Mediterranean through 1808. In April of that year he was in Smyrna which was a novelty in that his ship was one of the first American vessels to enter that port. Notwithstanding long delays, quarantines, detentions, slow dispatch with cargoes and the menace of privateers and Algerines, the ventures of this period were fairly profitable. Early in 1809, still in European waters, there are

letters showing him to have been in London, then Liverpool loading homeward for Philadelphia. He sighted Cape May in June 1809 and after several months was reunited with his family. This was his last voyage.

In 1813 Gamaliel Bradford was appointed to the position of warden of the Massachusetts State Prison. At first glance this was not the work for a man of sympathetic feelings, yet a shipmaster and army officer is experienced in discipline, sometimes with men of criminal tendencies. Soon, as might have been expected, complaints were heard of too much leniency—advantage had been taken of well-intentioned motives. The captain then in attempting to rectify this situation was charged with severity.¹⁴

Gamaliel Bradford was a student as well as a strict adherent of duty and he had a head as well as a heart. He proceeded to study the problems of penology. He read extensively in English works on the subject and corresponded with the wardens of other states. As a result a system was instituted under his direction that at length made his regime a success.

There were, no doubt, many unrecorded incidents of interest in those ten years of service to the State, yet only one has been preserved. As told by the doctor of the prison, it was a frightening experience—at least for the doctor.¹⁵ In 1819 or 1820 the prisoners were staging a mutiny in the yard and armed with what they could lay their hands on were defying the warden's authority. The guards on the walls were armed with muskets and a cannon controlled the enclosure. Captain Gamaliel, preparing to walk into the

yard, ordered the gunner to load the cannon with grape leaving instructions that if the mutineers attacked him to fire into them regardless of himself. Taking the doctor by the arm he said, "Now Doctor, come with me while I talk with these fellows."

There was a nice touch of drama as the captain stomped out on his peg leg and came to face the rioters. The doctor readily admitted his fright—desperate men in front, grape at his back. However, an old-fashioned quarter-deck talk was singularly effective; the men began to drop their bricks and bars and returned to their quarters.

Captain Bradford in his other shore activities was deeply interested in his duties as a trustee of the Massachusetts Historical Society and when the Massachusetts General Hospital was founded he was also a trustee of that admirable institution. While it has been recorded that "as a soldier and sailor he was brave, resolute and enterprising," and that "no obstacle discouraged and no danger appalled,"¹⁶ yet, in contrast, his domestic life was largely spent in gentle comradeship with his family. His particular pleasure was to gather his children about him of an evening and begin the discussion of some historical or cultural subject. It was so conducted as to provide entertainment, not a task. The result of these diversions were manifest in the children's later life, notably in his eldest daughter Sarah. She married Samuel Ripley and they lived in the Old Manse in Concord, where he was born. Mrs. Ripley became distinguished for her educational accomplishments. She tutored Harvard students in French, Latin and Italian with a specialty in mathematics. It is said that she used to

¹⁴ Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Vol. 1, Series 3, p. 29.

¹⁵ Mr. Frank Sanborn in the *Springfield Republican*, August, 1911.

¹⁶ Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Vol. 1, Series 3, p. 29.

rock a cradle with a foot, shell peas with her hands and at the same time bolster some student's flagging zeal for Greek. Such was the captain's influence towards self-improvement.

This biographical sketch consisting of material unearthed from many sources, still leaves some questions unanswered. Among these are: What were his personal experiences in the Revolutionary battles? What were the events and circumstances calling forth the hand-written invitation from General Washington for the young lieutenant to dine with him? Is the tradition true that that British surgeon of *Swiftsure*, who cared for him to Lisbon, was a prisoner of war at Fort Warren in the War of 1812, and that Captain Gamaliel visited him with reading matter and delicacies? For this, it is told, he was attacked by the press for "giving aid and comfort to the enemy." Regrettably we have not found the answers.

Captain Gamaliel Bradford died on March 7, 1824, and usually at this point the tale is told, but in this instance it is not the end. Another chapter is added through the gracious custom of the Navy in naming destroyers and escorts for certain men who in the past have fired some effective shots or spread some sails that added prestige to their country. This practice again lays before the public names that should not be forgotten and deeds that should not be lost.

It so happened that in 1935 President Roosevelt was authorized by Congress to assemble and publish all available data of the little publicized Quasi-War with France. This work was undertaken by Captain Dudley W. Knox, U.S.N. (Ret.), then in charge of History and Records. While prosecuting the assignment this distinguished historian learned

that some pertinent material existed in Duxbury, Massachusetts. As he perused the logbooks and letters of the ships *Mary* and *Industry* he became sufficiently impressed to give the space of several pages, and the reproductions of two paintings, to the actions fought by Gamaliel Bradford.

This is an example of one of history's most pleasant functions. In it there is an analogy to the salvage hunters of the coasts, dragging the bottom for the anchors and chains of forgotten ships. The historian on his part with grapnels out, as it were, sweeps the depths of the past, bringing to the light of the printed page the exploits, achievements and anecdotes of men long passed to their rewards.

Not long after these volumes appeared a powerful destroyer (DD 545) slid down the ways at San Diego and on June 18, 1943, was commissioned. She bore the name of Bradford for Captain Gamaliel.

After the war the Navy Department, in a summary of this vessel's services, stated that she had earned twelve battle stars in the Asiatic-Pacific theater. Furthermore she was awarded a Naval Unit Commendation in which Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal said:

For outstanding heroism in action as a Fighter Director Ship on a radar picket station during the Okinawa campaign, May 14 to June 16, 1945. A natural and frequent target for heavy Japanese aerial attack while occupying advanced and isolated stations, the *U.S.S. Bradford* defeated all efforts of enemy kamikase and dive-bombing planes to destroy her. Vigilant and ready for battle she sent out early air warnings, provided fighter direction and, with her own gun fire, downed five hostile planes, routed many more and rendered valiant service in preventing the Japanese from striking in force the Naval forces off Okinawa beach-head. A gallant fighting ship, the *Bradford*, her officers and her men withstood the stress and perils of vital radar picket duty,

achieving a distinctive combat record which attests the teamwork, courage and skill of her entire company and enhances the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

So it was, after a lapse of over one hundred years and through a fortuitous upwelling from the depths of hidden his-

tory, the name of Gamaliel Bradford was again on the sea, his ship to be found repeatedly in the front line of battle, her guns shotted with a firepower beyond his imagination and winning a distinction of which he had never dreamed.