Kent News.

VOL. 89 — CHESTERTOWN, MD., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1929 — NO. 26

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References — Merchants and Mechanics First National Bank and A. N. C., Box 925. j14-6t

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

John D. Urie, Attorney
vs.
Minnie B. Phillips

Pursuant to an order of the Circuit Court for Kent County, in Equity, passed in the aforesaid cause on the 5th day of October, 1929, notice is hereby given to all judgment creditors, lienors and assignees of Minnie B. Phillips, mortgagor, and all persons claiming an interest in the Equity of redemption in the above cause to file their claims with the vouchers thereof with the undersigned on or before the 24th day of December, 1929.

o19-4t S. SCOTT BECK, Auditor.

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JOHN H. NEWNAM HARVESTS BUMPER CROP OF TOMATOES

A good tomato yield for this year, recently reported by the Extension service, is that of John H. Newnam, of Church Hill, whose 5-acre patch this season produced forty-eight tons or a production of nine and three-fifths tons per acre.

On a contract price of 25 cents this acreage shows a gross return of $144 per acre, said to be one of the outstanding returns of Queen Anne's County in 1929.

Plants for the five acres were produced in the open and set in the field early in June, says Mr. Newnam in discussing his plans for next year, "I expect to use cloth covered cold frames in future and get my plants into the field in May."

GOOD AND BAD LOBBYISTS

With approaching senatorial investigation of Washngton lobbies ought to be productive of a good deal of good; but, while it is going on, the general public ought to bear one or two facts in mind.

First of all, lobbying, in itself, is no crime. Any citizen has a right to go to Washington and intercede for or against any legislation what ever; and so has any organized group of citizens.

The thing that is wrong is for a lobbyist to misrepresent himself; to pretend that he is a disinterested patriot, for instance, when he is really an agent for a firm of shipbuilders. That, together with the use of improper methods of persuasion, is the chief thing the public must guard against.

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Pens and Pencils, Rulers, Composition Books, Tablets, Note Books, Ink, Loose Leaf Note Books, Fillers. Brief Cases, Book Bags, Pencil Boxes, Automatic Pencils and everything the kiddies need for school.

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Due to the Prevailing High Money Market

It was necessary that the last issue of Federal Land Bank bonds should bear a higher rate of interest than issues immediately preceding.

Therefore the FEDERAL LAND BANK hereby gives notice that on and after May 1, and until further notice, all loans made by the Kent and Queen Anne's National Farm Loan Association shall bear interest at the rate of 5¼ per cent per annum instead of 5 per cent as heretofore.

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Lambert Wickes, of Kent Was A Great U. S. Hero

He was of near Rock Hall, Md., Showed The Way to John Paul Jones—First American to Raid the Channel—A Thrilling Event in Kent Historical Annals.

(Louis H. Bolander, in Sunday Sun)

(Continued from last week)

While he was engaged in fitting out the Reprisal for sea an honor came to him that must have greatly pleased him. For on October 10th, 1776, Congress established a list of officers for the Continental naval service and Wickes was named eleventh on the list of captains. Heretofore he had commanded a naval vessel and acted under orders of the Marine Committee, but had no particular standing as a naval officer. But from now on he was to be considered a regular commissioned officer in the Continental Navy, with only ten men ranking him, some of them his worm friends. The following week he was inducted into the Masonic order; the lodge he joined in Philadelphia still is active, and the secretary still has on file an account of his induction into membership. It is unlikely that during the weeks of September and October, when he was busily engaged in fitting out his ship, that he had time to visit his brothers and sisters in Kent county. It is certain that he never had an opportunity to visit Maryland afterward.

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On the 24th he was ordered to receive on board the great Benjamin Franklin Congress was pinning its hopes of final victory on an alliance with France, and Franklin was the only American alive capable of securing it. So to Franklin the task of securing French aid was intrusted, and to Captain Wickes and his Reprisal was intrusted the perilous task of carrying Franklin safely through the cordon of British cruisers and thence across the Atlantic. Had Wickes allowed himself to be captured or had the little Reprisal been wrecked, the French alliance would hardly have been consummated and the revolution crushed.

No banquet was given either Franklin or Wickes on their departure and few men knew that on the quiet of the late evening of October 26th the Reprisal had started on her momentous voyage. Such secrecy was necessary, as British spies were everywhere, and if news of their voyage got about word of it might get to the British cruisers off the Delaware Capes. His distinguished passenger worried him not a little, for the customary ship's diet of salt beef and sea biscuit would hardly do to set before his guest three times a day. So when his orders came to him, two days before, that Franklin was to be his passenger he sent his steward ashore with instructions to purchase a number of live chickens, to vary the worthy doctor's diet. His steward obeyed his orders to the letter and secured the chickens, but he neglected to find out how old they were. When they were cooked they proved to be very tough, and as Franklin's teeth were very bad, the poor captain's well-meant intention to improve the bill of fare ended in failure.

On the voyage he drilled his men daily at the guns, so as to be ready for a possible enemy. Hostile ships were sighted several times and the men called to the guns. But, happily, no Britisher gave chase. The speed and efficiency with which the men worked the guns was noted by the observant Franklin, who wrote back to Philadelphia that he believed it "equal to anything of the kind in the best ships of the King's fleet." The Reprisal arrived at Nantes November 29th, the first American naval vessel to sail in European waters or to touch at a European port, and Wickes was the first American naval officer to bear his country's flag to foreign lands.

Just before reaching the French coast he captured two British brigantines, rickly laden, and sent them into Juiberon Bay, where they were sold secretly to French merchants. The crews of the two vessels he held as prisoners, hoping to effect an exchange of prisoners with them, thereby releasing some of his fellow-Americans, starving in those two dreaded English prisons, Forton and Mill.

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Not losing a moment on landing the venerable Franklin at Nantes, he started out to refit his ship for another cruise he expected to strike terror to the hearts of British shipping interests. On about January 5th of the next year, 1777, he was ready. His course took him into the Bay of Biscay, along the coast of Spain and probably into the mouth of the English Channel. In two weeks' time he captured four British ships and sent them to France. They were sold for about $24,000 and the money turned over to Franklin and his fellow-commissioners. On the fifth day of February he encountered a large armed merchant ship, known as the Liston Packet. Her captain put up a plucky fight and gave up only after Wickes himself led a boarding party on his decks and demanded his surrender at the sword's point.

He reached Port Louis, on the French coast, on February 14th, happy in the success of his cruise, but found himself at once in trouble with the port authorities. The British Government, through its Ambassador at Paris, Lord Stormont, complained bitterly of the destruction he had wrought on British commerce. He demanded his surrender at once and the restitution of the captured vessels and their cargoes. France had not, as yet, declared war on England and as a neutral nation, had, of course, no right to let Wickes use her ports as refuge from which he might prey on their vessels. Much less had France a right to let her citizens buy his prizes. One can't blame Lord Stormont for his indignant protests, but the fairness of his case was no comfort for Lambert Wickes.

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After the Reprisal had been in port but a few days word came from the commandant of the port that he must put to sea in just twenty-four hours. Outside were British cruisers waiting for him. If he disobeyed the commandant's order he and his men would be interned and his ship lost to him. If he put to sea he faced almost certain capture. And if he did succeed in evading the British he would have no place to go for the Reprisal was not victualed nor equipped for the long voyage back to Philadelphia.

But neither the British nor the French reckoned on the shrewd brain and ready wit of this wily American seaman. The law of nations, he knew gave any belligerent vessel in a neutral port, in a dangerously leaky condition, the right to repair its leaks before putting to sea. So he replied straightway to the French commandant that the Reprisal was leaking badly. The commandant was from Missouri. Very well, let him send an inspecting committee on board the next day and he would show him how badly he needed repairs. It was agreed.

That night his crew worked like mad, pumping water into the hold. by morning the water had risen alarmingly. When the inspecting committee, with the commandant at their head, came aboard, they readily agreed that it would be inhuman to send the ship to sea in such a condition. Wickes took them into his cabin, where he set out some excellent wine taken from one of his prizes. Healths were drunk all around; papers were signed permitting him to careen his ship and repair her bottom at leisure, and the Frenchmen went ashore voting Wickes the finest fellow in the world.

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His repair job took a long time, and not until after he was joined by the Lexington, now under command of Capt. Henry Johnston, and the Dolphin, under Capt. Samuel Nicholson, was he ready for sea. It would be interesting to follow Wickes and his brother captains on their further adventures and their numerous troubles with British spies and American traitors, did space permit.

But finally, on May 28, 1777, they weighed anchor together for a cruise against the British coast with Wickes in command. This was the first American naval expedition ever undertaken in British seas and Lambert Wickes the first American naval officer to command such an expedition. More than two years elapsed before John Paul Jones made his famous cruise in the Bon Homme Richard. They sailed north along the west coast of Ireland, until they doubled its northern headlands, and thence sailed southward through the Irish Channel. On this voyage they captured eighteen British ships, eight of which they sent to France as prizes, seven they sank, two they freed as of no value and one they gave to the fast-growing crowd of prisoners to carry them back to Whitehaven. Word of their raid in the Irish Sea was spread by these released prisoners and men-of-war were soon hot in pursuit. The only course left was to make for the comparative safety of the neutral French coast. A British 74 sighted them and gave chase. Johnston and Nicholson out-sailed him, but Wickes escaped him only after throwing all his guns overboard. He reached St. Malo, on the Brittany coast, late at night June 27.

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For the following two months he was the center of a diplomatic storm. Stormont again insisted that he be given up to the British. But the French King and his Minister or Foreign Affairs, Vergennes, had the American cause at heart and rejoiced secretly that Wickes had the courage to beard the British lion in his own den. Morever, Wickes had a powerful and wise friend at Paris in the person of Franklin. So he was allowed to stay, but he was given to understand that his commerce-raiding must stop. On September 14 he received orders from Franklin to sail for home, and glad he was to go. He started at once with a crew of 130 men. He had refitted his beloved Reprisal with sixteen new six-pounders and twenty swivels, but no enemy on the whole voyage gave him opportunity to use them. As he neared the Banks of Newfoundland a terrible storm broke and the Reprisal went down with all hands but the cook, who saved himself by clinging to a spar for three days, when a passing American vessel rescued him. Captain Wickes went down with his ship.

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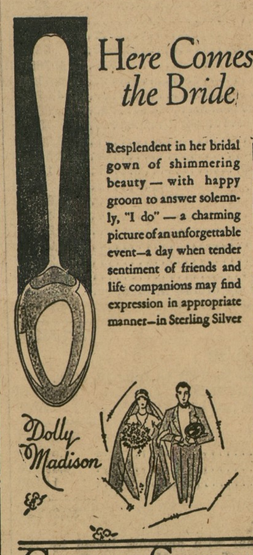
Thus perished a brave man, a bold, skillful officer and seaman, capable of formulating daring plans and carrying them out successfully. Yet with all his success he remained modest and retiring. Not one of his letters ever mention expectation or desire for greater rank or for promotion over other men. In his brief period of service he captured no less than twenty-eight ships and hundreds of prisoners. More than one of these prisoners testified under oath to his generous, manly conduct toward them and not one of them ever complained of a brutal or unkind act on his part. He was the confidant and friend of men like Franklin, who knew him better than almost anyone, said of him when he heard of his death: "He was a gallant officer and a very worthy man."



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