

## **French Privateers on the High Seas**

A bermuda-sloop which was used by the Royal Navy during the 1800s. As early as the 15th century privateering was commonplace and troublesome.

Trade was always controversial subject on the high seas, and countries such as Spain and France employed privateers to capture treasure. They were given letters of marque which empowered them to use hostile actions towards foreign vessels, as though they were at war. They owed their allegiance to the country which hired them and would be prosecuted, even hanged, should they not return with treasure within two years or so. Actually vessels which were captured were subject to condemnation and sale under prize law, with the proceeds divided between the private sponsors. On 22 August 1804 French privateers captured His Majesty's sloop "Lilly. " For this time period, the Royal Navy employed the Bermuda sloop as a cruiser against French privateers, slavers, and smugglers, and also as its standard advice vessels.

A gaff rig, it was constructed with three masts and required large, experienced crews. It carried aboard communications and important persons, and performed reconnaissance duties for the fleets. A rare list of the officers of this captured vessel is included in the collections of "Genealogy Vault." The "Lilly" must have been sold accordingly, and its log containing the list of officers taken. A find such as this is very rare, and is available to members in the "genealogy vault" of Georgia Pioneers