

Somers- Deck Log, 26 November - 1 December 1842

Related Source: [Somers, brig](#)

The surviving text of the brig's log, as transcribed by Acting Master Matthew Calbraith Perry during the court of inquiry, reads as follows:

Saturday Nov'r 26th 1842

From 4 to 6 P M moderate breezes and clear. Inspected the crew at Quarters. It having been discovered that Mid'n Spencer had been tampering with some of the crew of this vessel for the purpose of creating a mutiny on board, he was questioned in the presence of the officer, in regard thereto and confessing that he had done so in joke, he was ordered into double irons by Commander Mackenzie. At 4.36 set sky sails and Starboard Royal Studding sails.

Sunday Nov. 27th 1842

From 8 to mid mod. breezes and pleasant, set aloft top gallant and royal yaw, set the sails, also the main top gallant steering sail and fore royal, confined Sam'l Cromwell, Boatswain's mate, and Elisha Small seaman, in double irons by order of the Commander.

Tuesday, Nov 29th 1842

From 8 to Meridian moderate breezes and pleasant, at 9 inspected the crew at quarters, put Charles A. Wilson Sail Makers mate, Dan'l McKenly Landsman, Benj'n Green, O.S. (app) and Alex'r McKie (app) in double irons, on suspicion of being concerned in the mutinous attempts of acting Midshipman P. Spencer.

Wednesday Nov 30th 1842

From 8 to Meridian brisk trades and pleasant, at 9 inspected the cre at quarters, at 11-30 Armed the petty officers with a pistol and cutlass each. Commander Mackenzie having called on all the Ward Room and steerage officers, excepting the acting Midshipmen the day before to inquire into the guilt of acting Mid'n P. Spencer, Bo. Mate Sam'l Cromwell, and Seaman Elisha Small of the crime of being concerned in a mutiny and as to the best mode of disposing of them if guilty under the existing circumstances. The officers gave it as their opinion that they were decidedly guilty and that the safety of the vessel required that they should be immediately put to death, Commander Mackenzie entirely concurring in their opinion ordered preparations to be made for hanging them at the yard arm. Expended 40 fathoms of 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ in rope for whips 40 fathoms of signal hawlyard stuff for down-hands and three 7 in tail blocks, the crew employed in stretching the rope and fitting the tail blocks, at 12 handed up the main sail, save two whips on the starboard main yard arm, and one on the larboard.

Thursday December 1st 1842

Commences with mod't breezes and pleasant at 1-45 called all hands to witness punishment, Mustered the after guard at the outer starboard whip, and the main top men at the starboard inner one and all the fore castle foretopmen and idlers at the larboard one with orders to clap on with both hands, the officers

and petty officers were stationed about the vessel with both hands to see the orders executed, bent the starboard outer whip on to Acting Midshipmen Philip Spencer, the inner one on to Seaman Elisha Small, and the larboard one on to Boatswain's Mate Sam'l Cromwell, at 2-15, fired a weather gun, and run the prisoners up to the yard arm and hoisted the ensign and pendant. The crew were now called aft and addressed by the commander as to the crimes and punishment of the prisoners, after which all hands were called to cheer ship, and three hearty cheers given to the American flag. At 2-30 piped down and piped to dinner, at 3-30 called the watch, lowered the corpses of the deceased into the gangways where they were received by their respective messmates, to be lain out for burial. From 4 to 8 mod't trades and pleasant. At 6-30 called all hands to bury the dead, lighted all battle lanterns and spare lanterns in the ship and after the Commanders reading the funeral service committed the bodies of Act. Mid'n P. Spencer, Boatswain's Mate Sam'l Cromwell and Seaman Elisha Small to the deep.

I certify that the above is true copy of the log of the U.S. brig *Somers* relating to the mutinous attempt of Act'g Mid'n Philip Spencer, Boatswain's Mate Sam'l Cromwell and Seaman Elisha Small.