



Mercury, 1807

A god that served as messenger to the other gods and was himself the god of commerce, travel, and thievery. Also, the smallest of the inner planets and the one nearest the sun.

Type/Rig/Class: Topsail schooner?

Builder: ?; Ocracoke, North Carolina

Commissioned: 1807

Decommissioned: 1820

Disposition:

Length:

Beam:

Draft:

Displacement:

Cost:

Performance & Endurance:

Complement:

Armament:

History:

On 6 April 1807 a contract "has been entered into at Ocracoke for a new cutter." It is not known when her construction was completed but she was named *Mercury*. The next available record has her being transferred on 31 January 1809 to New Bern, North Carolina.

After service in the Carolina Sounds, primarily at Ocracoke and New Berne, the schooner became the Navy's third *Mercury* when the Revenue Cutter Service was placed under Navy orders in June 1807. During the War of 1812, *Mercury* continued to operate in the North Carolina Sounds. On 11 July 1813 a British flotilla under Rear Admiral Cockburn arrived off Ocracoke Bar and entered the Sounds, planning to attack New Berne. On 24 July 1813, while under the command of Revenue Captain Wallace, *Mercury* embarked the U.S. Customs agent, Thomas Singleton, with money, bonds, and receipts from the Customs House, and raced away to warn New Berne of the impending attack. British warships pursued the small cutter for "eight or ten miles through the Sound [before] they gave up the chase and returned." Now robbed of surprise, Admiral Cockburn abandoned the projected assault on New Berne.

After hostilities ended, *Mercury* was returned to the Treasury Department and served the Revenue Marine until 1820.

Sources:

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Washington, DC: USGPO.

Donald Canney. *U.S. Coast Guard and Revenue Cutters, 1790-1935*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995.

U.S. Coast Guard. *Record of Movements: Vessels of the United States Coast Guard: 1790 - December 31, 1933*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934; 1989 (reprint).

