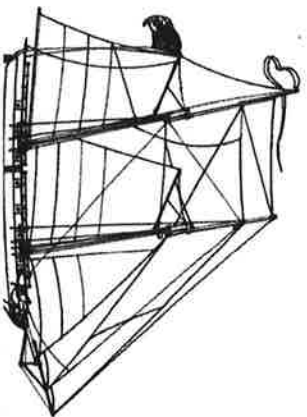


USS SHARK



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## Log of the Revenue Cutter Marion

By John Viele

A topsail schooner mounting six guns and flying a red and white, vertically-striped ensign rounded into the wind and dropped anchor in the harbor of Key West. Crewmen furled the sails and then lowered a boat into the water. Four seamen in blue uniform jackets, white trousers, and broad-brimmed black hats manned the boat and, when the captain had boarded, rowed him ashore.

The date was January 26, 1829 and the schooner was the U.S. Revenue Cutter **Marion** under orders to report to the collector of customs and receive instructions for conducting another of her periodic anti-smuggling patrols in the Keys. Commanded by Captain John Jackson, the **Marion** was 65 feet long and displaced 78 tons. With her large sail area and clipper-shaped hull she was able to out sail almost any vessel she met with. Four 18-pounder carronades and two 4-pounder long guns backed up her authority to enforce U.S. revenue laws. In addition to the captain and two lieutenants, she was manned by a crew of 20 including a boatswain, gunner, carpenter, sailmaker, cook, and steward.

At the custom house, William Pinckney, collector of customs,



*John J. Audubon and his dog. Photo credit: Monroe County Library.*

greeted Capt. Jackson and inquired about his voyage. The captain told him he had lost one of his boats in a gale but that it had been replaced

at Savannah and he would be ready to begin operations as soon as he finished gathering stove wood and filling water tanks. Pinckney told the captain to be on the lookout for

certain wreckers from Indian Key who he suspected were smuggling cargos they salvaged from wrecks.

The **Marion's** log for the period 1829 to 1832 has been preserved on microfilm at the National Archives. During those years the **Marion's** home station was Charleston, but

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