

Capt. John D. Henley

(25 Feb 1781 – 23 May 1835)

Source: Wikipedia

Captain John Dandridge Henley (25 February 1781 - 23 May 1835) was an officer of the United States Navy who served in the First Barbary War and the War of 1812.

Henley was born 25 February 1781 at Williamsburg, Virginia, the son of Leonard and Elizabeth Dandridge Henley and the nephew of Martha Dandridge Custis Washington. He was commissioned Midshipman on 14 October 1799, at the age of 18.

During offensive operations against Tripoli in 1804, he served in Gunboat No. 6, commanded by Lieutenant John Trippe. In a stirring attack 3 August against a larger enemy warship, the two officers with only nine other men boarded and took the enemy ship in hand-to-hand fighting, although outnumbered three to one. Midshipman Henley also took part in several other attacks in the months that followed as Commodore Edward Preble's squadron carried out aggressive and successful operations against the Tripolitan pirates that made them ready to end their aggression.

Later in his career, during the War of 1812, Henley commanded schooner Carolina during the Battle of New Orleans. After the gallant delaying action by Lt. Thomas ap Catesby Jones at Lake Borgne, Carolina and other ships harassed the British with naval gunfire while protecting General Andrew Jackson's flank on the Mississippi River. Though his ship was destroyed, Henley contributed importantly to the large role the small squadron played in this last great victory of the war.

Rising to the rank of Captain 5 March 1817, early in 1819 Henley commanded U.S. man-of-war Congress to China, the first U.S. warship to visit that country. He continued to serve with distinction until 23 May 1835 when he died on board Vandalia at Havana, Cuba.