

*Adventures on the American Frontier*

# PIRATES AND PRIVATEERS

Part Six

Silas Talbot,  
Heroic Privateersman



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This book features QR codes that link to audio of the book being narrated so that readers can follow along.

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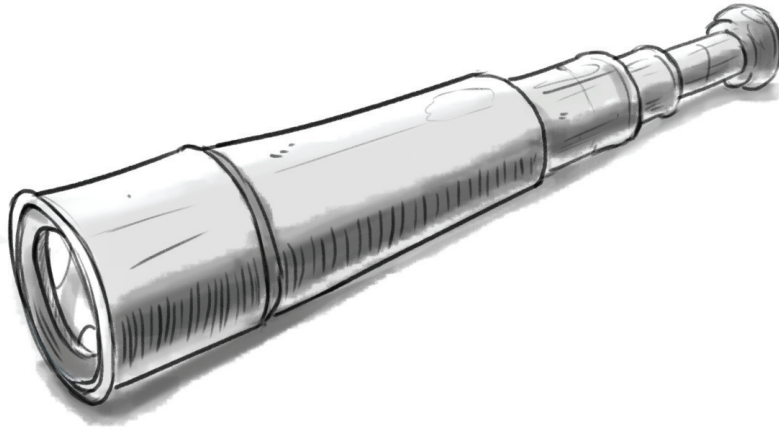
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By the late 1700s, the worst days of the pirates were over. Now and then a pirate ship was seen, but never again did pirates rule the seas as they had in the days of the buccaneers. But each time there was a war, privateers sailed out to attack enemy ships, for the navy was too small yet to do the work on its own.



In America, privateers had a big job to do during the War of Independence, when the colonies were fighting for freedom from England. The United States of America had no navy in its first days. As soon as it could, the government formed a navy, with warships and men to fight the battles at sea. But that took time. Until then, it relied on privateers.

Many men who worked on privateers fought bravely to help their new country. One such hero was a New England boy named Silas Talbot.



“I’m going to be a sailor,” Silas said when he was still a small boy. His home was near the sea, and he loved to watch the ships come in to the docks. He learned to tie a bowline and to coil a rope, and he made friends with the sailors.



When he was twelve, Silas talked a captain into taking him on as a cabin boy. The ship worked the trade along the coast, and Silas learned all he could. After a few years he became a ship's officer.

Silas left the sea when the call came in 1776 for men to fight for the rights of the American colonies. He was made captain of a regiment and ordered to an area around the Hudson River. He was in the army, but his first duty was on a ship.

But Silas wouldn't be sailing out to sea.



His ship was what was called a “fire ship.”

An old ship was sometimes loaded with things that would burn easily. It was set on fire and pushed against an enemy warship in the hope that the burning ship might cause the warship to catch on fire, too.

English ships were trying to work their way up the Hudson River at the same time that English soldiers were trying to take the land along the river. This would divide the New England colonies from those farther south.