

Pigtails

Many sailors, including officers, wore their hair in a pigtail. They were usually tied with tape of strips of cloth.



Some pigtails worn by sailors reached to their waist.

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

I had to get a false pigtail, my hair being too short to tie.

Lieutenant John George

I hope you have followed my wishes and wear your hair thin and short. The nasty custom of tying hair in a pigtail is as bad as drinking your rum out of a chamber pot. I now wear no hair on my head than is longer than the hair of your eyebrows.

Aaron Thomas

The Captain, a well read man as well as a clever seaman, took it into his head one day that he would like to see the midshipmen (young officers) work their day's-work whilst he watched them from the quarter deck. They did so, but only three or four out of twelve or thirteen could accomplish this successfully, so calling those to him who had failed, he told them how poor they were. Suddenly, he took his penknife out of his pocket and cut off their pigtails close to their heads above the tie. Giving them to their owners, he told them to put them into their pockets and keep them there until such time as they could do a proper day's-work, when they might wear them again.

Jeffrey Raigersfeld,