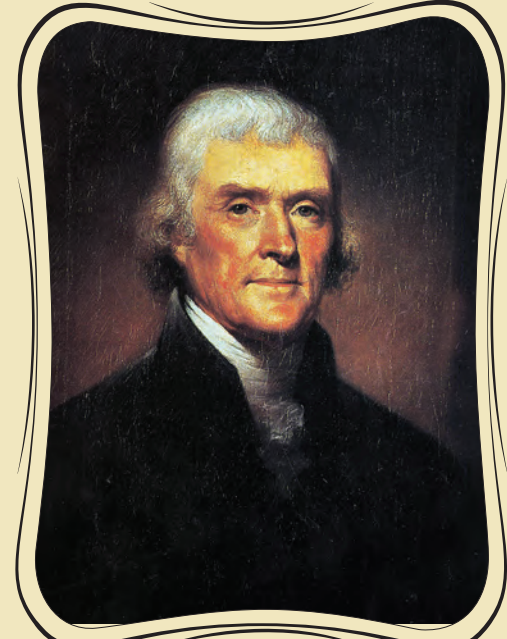
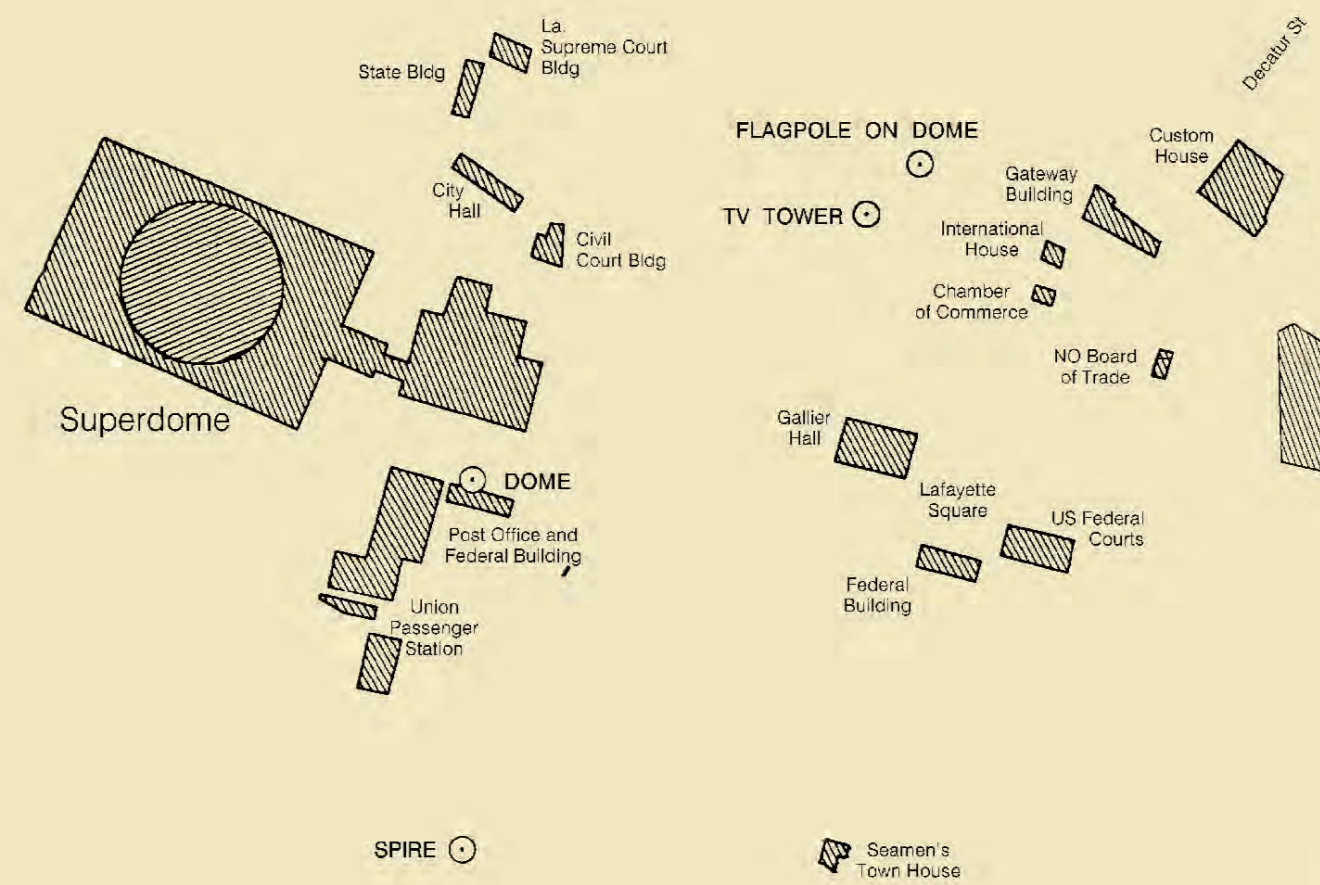


United States - Gulf Coast  
LOUISIANA  
NEW ORLEANS HARBOR



*Our Flag Was Still There*



President Thomas Jefferson.  
(Library of Congress)

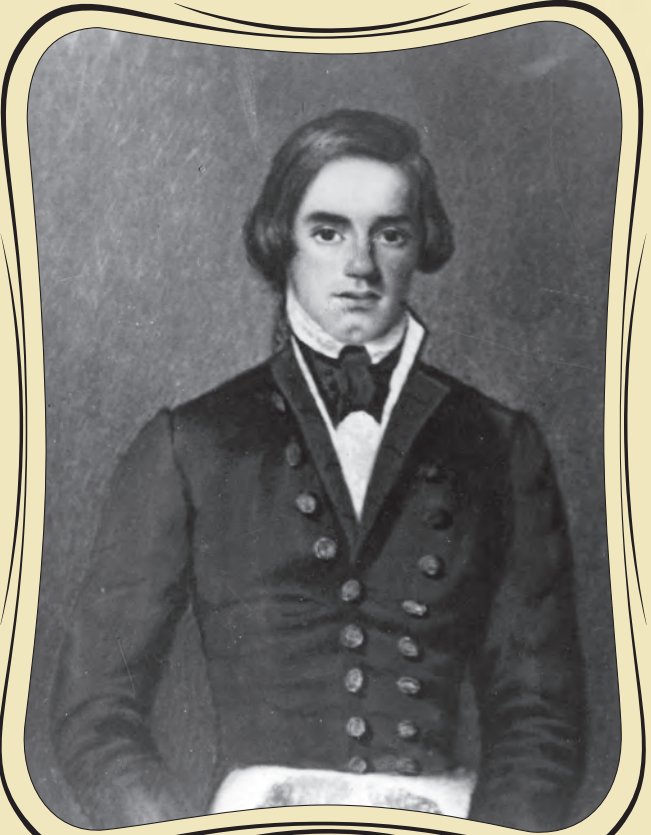
President Thomas Jefferson signed legislation establishing the U.S. Coast Survey in 1807, tasking it with creating charts of the nation's coastal waters so America's young shipping industry could thrive. Today, America's coastal waters remain as central to the nation's prosperity as they were 200

years ago, and mariners continue to trust the accuracy and precision of the nation's navigational charts, still provided by NOAA's Office of Coast Survey.



New Orleans, the U.S. Navy, and the War of 1812

Despite the crucial importance of the Mississippi River for exporting American produce, the Department of the Navy largely neglected the U.S. naval station at New Orleans during the first two years of the War of 1812. Captain John Shaw considered the dozen gunboats and three brigs under his command in 1812 inadequate to protect the city from a potential British assault, but the most he could get from the Secretary of the Navy was permission to build a floating battery to help defend the Mississippi Delta's major channel. Hurricanes, Indians, pirates, and the Spanish concerned the station more than the British - until the anticipated British attack finally became reality late in 1814.



Lieutenant Thomas ap Catesby Jones, shown here in a midshipman's uniform, commanded the American flotilla in the Battle of Lake Borgne that delayed the British invasion on land. (Naval History & Heritage Command)

In the meantime, the naval station participated in two significant armed actions. In April 1813, Shaw sent naval forces to escort troop transports and blockade Mobile Bay during the U.S. Army's successful campaign to capture Mobile, in Spanish West Florida. In September 1814, forces from the New Orleans station, now under the command of Master Commandant Daniel T. Patterson, attacked and broke up the base used by pirates and smugglers in Baratavia Bay, on the southern coast of Louisiana.

From the beginning of the war, the British recognized the importance of New Orleans, but they weren't ready to launch an operation until late in 1814. They chose to land troops at Bayou Bienvenue at the west end of Lake Borgne, 15 miles from New Orleans. Because of the shallowness of the lake, they had to anchor their fleet 60 miles away from the landing place and transport the troops in boats of shallow draft. Before debarking any troops, however, they had to defeat the American gunboat flotilla defending the lake's passage. On December 12, the launches, barges, and pinnaces of the British fleet rowed into Lake Borgne in search of the American gunboats. The battle, fought on the 14<sup>th</sup>, ended in the capture of five

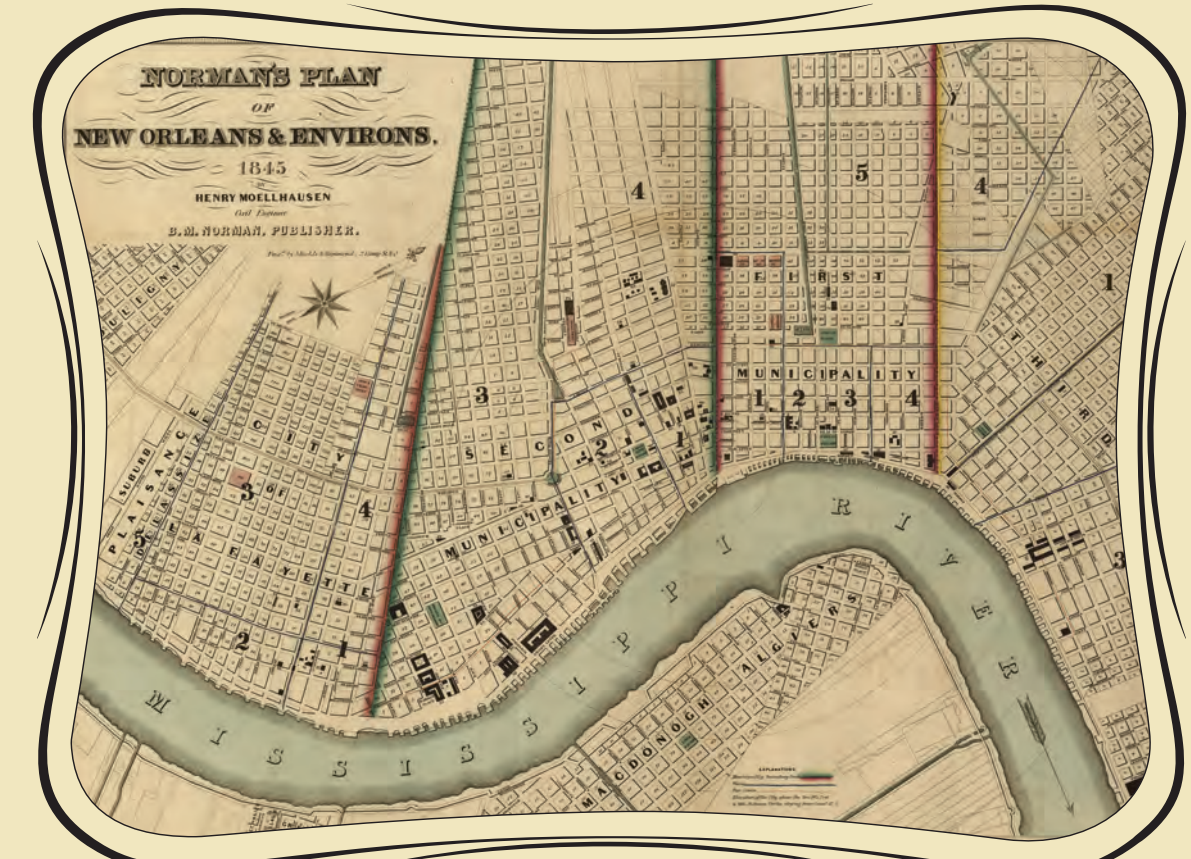
American gunboats and a sloop, and the burning of a schooner to prevent its capture. Despite this initial victory for the British, the battle served to delay the invasion, giving the American land forces more time to prepare a defense.

On the morning of December 23, the British landed and advanced to within seven miles of the city of New Orleans, on a road that paralleled the Mississippi River. That night, American troops under General Andrew Jackson, supported by the U.S. Navy schooner *Carolina* and the ship *Louisiana* in the river, attacked the enemy force. The Americans then retreated two miles and set up a defensive line behind a shallow canal. The British destroyed *Carolina* with heated shot fired from a shore battery and forced *Louisiana* to retire. Sailors and Marines under Patterson fought in Jackson's lines on the eastern side of the Mississippi River, and manned a battery on the western side that flanked the British forces attacking the main American lines.

On January 8, a British frontal assault against the American forces met an unwavering defense. That defense inflicted disproportionate British casualties and saved the city.



The Battle of Lake Borgne ended in the capture of five American gunboats in December 1814. (U.S. Naval Academy Museum)



Norman's plan of New Orleans & Environs, 1845. (Library of Congress)



The Battle of New Orleans with Andrew Jackson. (Library of Congress)



The Battle of New Orleans was the last major battle in the War of 1812. (Navy Art Collection, Naval History & Heritage Command)