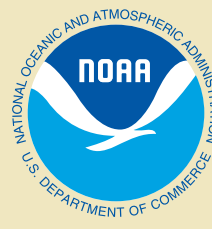


Our Flag Was Still There



United States – East Coast NEW YORK – NEW JERSEY HUDSON AND EAST RIVERS Governors Island to 67th Street

New York City, the U.S. Navy, and the War of 1812

Because of its importance as a hub of international commerce, New York City served several crucial roles in support of the United States' naval effort in the War of 1812: as a source of supplies, manpower, and local defense; as a base for warships and privateers; and as a magnet for – and drain on – enemy resources.

The New York Navy Yard furnished naval supplies, equipment, and cannons to arm the U.S. fleets on lakes Champlain, Ontario, and Erie. Its shipwrights built and fitted out warships on the lakes, and sailors from the New York Navy Yard manned those ships. Privateers swarmed out of the port of New York into the Atlantic

Ocean to prey on British seaborne commerce and sent their captured prize ships back to be sold in the city's markets. New York Harbor was the homeport of a flotilla of gunboats for the city's defense, as well as the base for several of the Navy's seagoing warships. The U.S. frigate *President*, which was one of the Navy's original six frigates and had been built, launched, and christened in a New York shipyard, was preeminent among the warships operating out of New York during the war.

Recognizing the crucial roles New York played in the U.S. economy and war effort, the Royal Navy blockaded the city, attempting to prevent trade as well as the sailing of American privateers and ships of war. The blockade forced the U.S. frigate *United States*, which broke out of New York by way of Hell Gate, to take refuge in New London, Connecticut, and remain there for the balance of the war. The blockading squadron captured *President* after the American frigate had broken its rudder running onto a shoal during an escape attempt. The Royal Navy's blockade was not always successful, however. In early 1815, for instance, the sloops of war *Hornet* and *Peacock* escaped from New York, the former going on to capture the British sloop of war *Penguin* and the latter the British East India Company brig *Nautilus*.

Just as the war was drawing to a close in 1815, New Yorkers witnessed the launching of the U.S. Navy's first steam-powered warship, the floating battery *Demologos* or *Fulton I*, designed by Robert Fulton for the defense of New York Harbor. Not long after, the city hailed the arrival of USS *Constitution* as the frigate returned to America after its spectacular victory over two enemy ships, *Cyane* and *Levant*, in a single engagement.



Captain Isaac Chauncey commanded the New York Navy Yard during the first months of the War of 1812. (Naval History & Heritage Command)

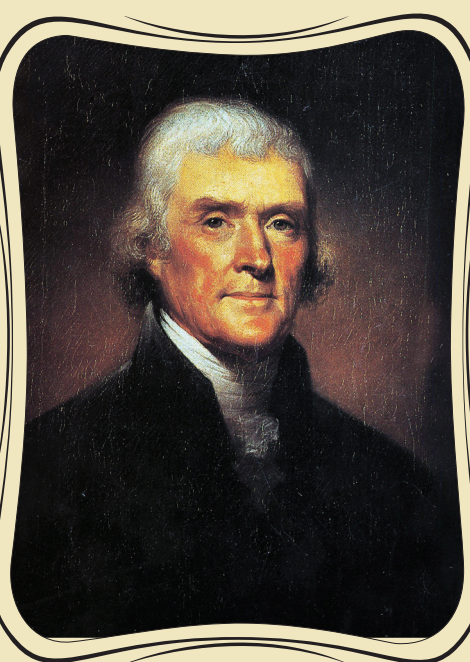


The New York Navy Yard supplied the American fleet on Lake Champlain. The American victory there on September 11, 1814, was a turning point in the war. (The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA)



USS *President* captured by a British squadron while attempting to escape New York Harbor, January 15, 1815. (Navy Art Collection, Naval History & Heritage Command)

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.



President Thomas Jefferson. (Library of Congress)



USS *Constitution* defeated HMS *Cyane* and *Levant* on February 20, 1815. (Naval History & Heritage Command)