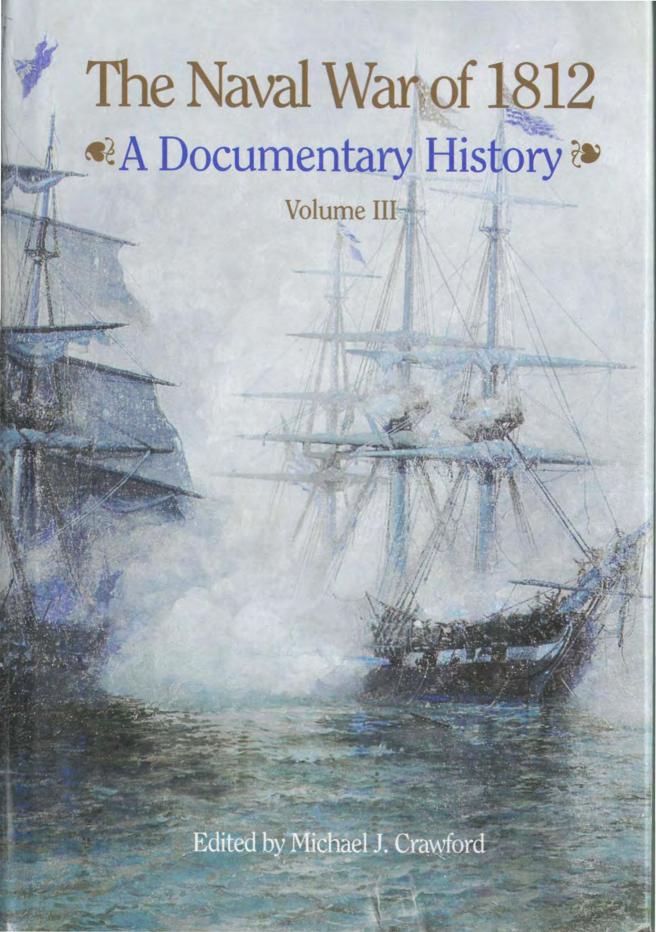
The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History

Volume III 1814–1815 Chesapeake Bay, Northern Lakes, and Pacific Ocean Part 1 of 7

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THE NAVAL WAR OF 1812

A Documentary History



"Macdonough's Victory on Lake Champlain"

THE NAVAL WAR OF 1812

A Documentary History

Volume III 1814–1815

Chesapeake Bay, Northern Lakes, and Pacific Ocean

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Foreword

The history of the United States Navy during the years 1814 and 1815 illustrates many of the principles—tactical, strategic, and logistical—of naval warfare. Perhaps the most valuable principle that the naval history of those years underscores, however, is *moral*: the value of perseverance.

During the final year and some months of the war, the nation reached the limits of its naval resources. The treasury was empty and the nation's credit strained to the breaking point. Ships of the line of the largest class were rising on shipways on the shores of Lake Ontario, even though the shipwrights went unpaid, and even though there was serious doubt that they could be manned. With ten thousand sailors on the muster rolls, the pool of experienced seamen available and willing to enlist had dried up. Policymakers had to choose among priorities: continuing to contend for naval mastery of the northern lakes; protecting ocean harbors and the seacoast; and cruising the high seas. Men could not be found for all these purposes.

At the same time, the war-fighting resources of the enemy expanded rapidly, seemingly almost without bounds. With Napoleon's exile to Elba, peace came temporarily to Europe. The British blockade of the Continent was lifted, freeing ships for the already highly effective blockade of the United States. Thousands of British soldiers, veterans of the Napoleonic campaigns, went home; but thousands of others were transported to America. In Canada, the British, previously on the defensive, now reinforced, marched into U.S. territory in strength. In the Chesapeake, a campaign of hit and run raids transformed into an invasion of the nation's capital and an attack on a major port city. In the Gulf of Mexico, an invading army threatened to capture New Orleans and deny the use of the Mississippi River for the exporting of the agricultural produce of the transappalachian West.

In each of the three theaters of operations treated in the present volume, the Chesapeake Bay, the Northern Lakes, and the Pacific Ocean, a U.S. naval force found itself confronting a superior British naval force. Blockaded in tributaries by a significant British squadron, Commodore Joshua Barney's gunboat flotilla held out for ten weeks, engaging in several pitched battles, until Barney ordered its destruction. Barney's sailors then became foot soldiers and maintained the nation's honor in facing the red-coated foe marching on Washington, when other troops broke and ran at the battle that wits derided as the "Bladensburg Races."

Commodore Thomas Macdonough's Lake Champlain squadron opposed a British squadron possessing significant advantages over his own. The British had a large preponderance of long guns, with the long guns on their flagship alone nearly equaling those of the entire American force. Macdonough's superior seamanship nullified the British advantage, enabling the Americans to throw their heavy short-range carronades into the equation. Still, it was only after enduring one of the deadliest naval battles of the war, that the American sailors were able to claim victory. The sacrifice of American lives and limbs resulted in the retreat of an invading enemy army and led to satisfactory terms at the peace table.

For six weeks, a British navy frigate and sloop of war watched Commodore David Porter's frigate USS Essex in the neutral harbor of Valparaiso, Chile. When Essex finally sailed, a gust of wind blew its topmast overboard, and the American frigate took refuge in a bay near the harbor. There, the British warships stood out of range of Essex's carronades, which were its main armament, and, disregarding the neutrality of the Chilean waters, began a long-distance cannonade of the disabled ship. For two and a half hours the Americans resisted the enemy's superior firepower. At long range, the two British vessels enjoyed an advantage of 273 pounds in weight of metal thrown per broadside compared to Essex's mere 63 pounds. Porter looked for a shift of wind that would enable him to bring Essex's guns into range, or perhaps to take one of the enemy warships by boarding. Essex's flag came down only after the loss of 155 men eliminated any chance of victory. "Contemporary history," wrote Theodore Roosevelt, "does not afford a single instance of so determined a defence against such frightful odds."

In each of these instances, officers and men of the U.S. Navy demonstrated the courage, honor, and commitment that are the core values of the American naval service. They faced the foe without flinching and refused to give up the fight until conquered by overwhelming force. On Lake Champlain, the outcome was unequivocal American victory. In the Chesapeake Bay flotilla and on board USS Essex, stubborn resistance forced the enemy to commit disproportionate resources and held up the application of those resources to other

enemy purposes while the resistance lasted.

The present volume is the culmination of years of intense labor by the able and dedicated Christine F. Hughes, Charles E. Brodine, Jr., and Carolyn M. Stallings, historian-editors of the Early History Branch, and of the skilled editorial leadership of Dr. Michael J. Crawford, branch head. The volume's preface identifies other branch members who contributed their talents to various stages of the process, as well as many additional historians, editors, librarians, archivists, and officials who supported the project in a multitude of ways. All who contributed to this valuable work have my gratitude.

The series reflects the Navy's historical commitment to making its operational record accessible through documentary publications and the Navy's faith that the fuller understanding of its history, facilitated by such publications, benefits both the naval service and the American people. Sharing that commitment and that faith, I commend the study of these documents to all readers interested in the role sea power has played in the evolution of the American nation.

WILLIAM S. DUDLEY Director of Naval History

Preface

In view of the variegated and geographic extent of naval warfare between the forces of the United States of America and those of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland during the years 1814 and 1815, the editors of *The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History* determined that to cover the naval war of those years in an adequate, even if selective, fashion requires two volumes. The volume in hand, then, is the third in a four-volume series of selected contemporary texts documenting the naval aspects of the War of 1812. Volume 1 treats the origins of the conflict, beginning with events in 1805, continuing to the beginning of the war and subsequent events through December 1812; Volume 2 treats the events of the year 1813. Volumes 3 and 4 divide geographically and thematically, rather than chronologically. The present volume treats the events of 1814 and 1815 on the inland waters of North America and on the Pacific Ocean. Volume 4 will treat the same years on the Atlantic Ocean, in the Gulf of Mexico, and on the Indian Ocean, and general themes that do not confine themselves to specific operational theaters.

An introductory essay to each theater provides the overarching context for the documents that follow. Within each theater, we group documents by topic. A head note for each topical section provides more particular context. Under each topic, documents appear in chronological order. The exhaustive, sub-topical index can guide readers to content of relevance to specific interests.

This documentary history is more than a recounting of battles from eyewitness reports. Many documentary works have dealt with the War of 1812, but few have focused solely on naval affairs as this series does. The objective of this work is to display the underpinnings of the U.S. Navy during the war. In this way, we hope to explain its successes and failures at a formative period in its institutional history. While battles are the stuff of war and cannot be ignored, this volume also attempts to explain through documents the concerns of policymakers as well as commanding officers, of ordinary sailors and marines, and of common citizens affected by the conflict. We hope that the documents in this volume will provide glimpses of a U.S. Navy long forgotten or perhaps unknown to a majority of its readers. Specialists will be familiar with much of the material, but its variety should stimulate research in new directions.

In 1978, when this documents project got under way, one could accurately refer to the War of 1812 as one of America's "Forgotten Wars." Such is the umbrella title under which the War of 1812 exhibit in the United States Navy Museum in Washington, D.C., appears, while the subtitle of Donald R. Hickey's general history *The War of 1812* is *A Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989). Since this project's beginning, a remarkable resurgence of interest in the War of 1812 has caused the sobriquet "Forgotten" to become outmoded. During the last score of years, a host of books, general overviews as well as specialized studies, has appeared, and publishers are finding that War of 1812 titles do well on the market. (See Donald R. Hickey, "The War of 1812: Still a Forgotten Conflict?" *Journal of Military History* 65 (July 2001): 741–69, for an overview of scholarly work on the War of 1812 since 1989.) A group of historians, writers, reenactors, archaeologists, and book publishers has joined efforts

through the War of 1812 Consortium, based in Baltimore, Maryland, to promote public awareness of the War of 1812. In 1995 the Consortium took over publication of the Journal of 1800–1840, renaming it The Journal of the War of 1812 and the Era 1800 to 1840. The Consortium's annual National War of 1812 Symposium, first held in 1997, has attracted an increasing number of attendees. The state of Maryland, believing that it can stimulate heritage tourism through a focus on the War of 1812, has received a grant from the National Park Service to study sites relating to the War of 1812 within its borders. War of 1812 era historic ships such as the U.S. Navy's USS Constitution, berthed at Charlestown, Massachusetts, and the state of Pennsylvania's brig Niagara, home ported at Erie, Pennsylvania, educate hundreds of thousands of visitors about the war each year. The frequent citations to the first two volumes in The Naval War of 1812 series that one finds in recent scholarly works suggest that this series has played a positive role in the unmistakable revival of interest in the war.

The efforts of many dedicated individuals, within and outside the Naval Historical Center, have contributed to this documents project over the years. A former director of naval history, Rear Admiral John D. H. Kane, Jr., made the decision to commence the project in keeping with the wishes of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had urged an earlier director, Captain Dudley W. Knox, to print the naval manuscripts of the War of 1812. The first volume of these documents was in distribution when Dr. Ronald Spector became director of naval history. His support of the project was constant and appreciative. Dr. Dean C. Allard, director when the second volume was published, enthusiastically urged completion of this project. The series is close to the heart of the current director, Dr. William S. Dudley, editor of the first two volumes, who continues to advise on the project as series editor. Dr. William J. Morgan, senior historian emeritus of the Naval Historical Center, has lent his wisdom and experience from years as editor of Naval Documents of the American Revolution in offering welcome advice to a younger project.

Of the Early History Branch staff, I am most indebted to our superb War of 1812 editorial team, led by associate editor Christine F. Hughes, and aided by assistant editors Carolyn M. Stallings and Charles E. Brodine, Jr. These are the individuals who did the principal work of selection, transcription, annotation, and writing of head notes for the documents printed in this volume. They also shared the arduous work of copy editing before final submission to the printer, correcting galleys, and page proofs, selecting illustrations, and indexing the volume. Staff historians E. Gordon Bowen-Hassell, Dennis M. Conrad, and Mark L. Hayes contributed their expert knowledge of early American naval history and offered their assistance whenever it was needed. Charlotte Marie Knowles, the branch program assistant, quietly and patiently took care of many details essential to the smooth running of the office, in addition to making many of the initial transcriptions from handwritten copy to typed manuscript.

As usual in publishing a book such as this, many Naval Historical Center employees gave assistance. To Jean Hort, director of the Navy Department Library, Tonya Simpson, the library's interlibrary loan officer, and others on the library staff, we are indebted for efficient service and willing cooperation with the many requests made for obscure works, difficult citations, and liaison with other libraries. Charles Haberlein, Edwin C. Finney, and Jack Green of the Curator Branch's Photographic Section provided advice and information concerning the many possibilities for illustrating the volume.

Many archival institutions and libraries provided us with information and copies of documents and illustrations from their repositories. Most notably included in this category is the Old Military and Civil Records Branch of the National Archives whose naval specialists, Rebecca Livingston and Richard Peuser, were most helpful in the search for obscure documents and in expediting their availability for proofreading. The staff of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress (Frederick Bauman, Ernest Emrich, Jeffrey Flannery, Ahmed Johnson, Patrick Kerwin, Bruce Kirby, and Mary Wolfskill) graciously accommodated our need to see original documents. Barbara DeWolfe, curator of manuscripts at the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, and Jim Cheevers of the Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland, assisted with documents and illustrations in the collections of their institutions. The National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario; the Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, Halifax; the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; the National Maritime Museum of Greenwich, England; and the Public Record Office in London are repositories of large collections of naval documents that we frequently consult. As with all documents obtained from the Public Record Office, unpublished Crown Copyright materials are reproduced in this volume with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, Ontario, was among other helpful institutions.

The members of the Secretary of the Navy's Advisory Subcommittee on Naval History have given us sympathetic support and advice over the years. Also of special assistance to us was John Arnold of Devon, England, whose knowledge of British naval and military records and painstaking research provided us documentation otherwise hard to obtain. We are also indebted to Park Rangers Scott Sumpter Sheads and Vincent Vaise of the Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, Baltimore, Maryland, for their comments on the Battle of Baltimore. In addition, Mr. Sheads and Donald G. Shomette, of Dunkirk, Maryland, generously permitted reproduction of maps from their publications. T. Michael Miller, research historian in the Office of Historic Alexandria (Virginia), provided useful biographical information on that city's residents. Dr. Robert C. Suggs, of Boise, Idaho, a scholar who has written widely on the culture of the Marquesas Islands, reviewed the Pacific Theater documents for the accuracy of tribal and island place names. Paul Lear, the historic site manager at Fort Oswego, New York, provided insight on the British attack on that fort.

I am grateful for help provided the project by student interns: Jim Bartlinski, a graduate student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; James Holton, a graduate student at The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.; and Midshipman Steven A. Sablan, USNR, of the University of Norwich, Vermont.

As editor, I accept full responsibility for any mistakes or errors of fact or misinterpretations found in essays, head notes, or annotations. As in any selection of documents, others may differ with us about what was included or omitted. I believe that those we have selected fairly represent the concerns of the Navy Department during the last years of the War of 1812.

MICHAEL J. CRAWFORD Naval Historical Center Washington Navy Yard Washington, D.C.

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Editorial Method

Selection

There are thousands of naval documents available in the National Archives, Library of Congress, and other repositories, from which we have selected a few hundred as being representative of the War of 1812. Our intention has been to choose documents evocative of topics and persons of that period. With citations and references provided, the interested reader can locate similar classes of documents of the particular period and theater of war in question. The majority of documents selected for publication are of an official nature, addressed to the secretary of the navy by officers in command of ships or naval stations. Added to these are orders from the secretary to his commanders, excerpts from logs and journals, and letters to the Navy Department from private citizens, We have specifically included more British documents in this current volume, compared to the number in previous volumes, in order to balance the perspective presented by American sources.

In most cases, the version printed is the original letter or recipient's copy; it frequently happened, however, that the original never reached its destination. Authors of letters customarily took the precaution of sending at least one and sometimes two copies to ensure arrival of their communication. Where one of these copies, in lieu of the original, is printed, it will be designated as a "copy" in the source note.

The secretary of the navy carried on a vast correspondence with all ranks of officers, for he was the operational chief of the navy as well as its principal administrator. The completest record of the secretary's outgoing correspondence is contained in letter books into which departmental clerks copied each letter, but not its enclosures. In many cases the only extant copy is the official letter book copy. Benjamin Homans, the chief clerk of the Navy Department in 1814 and 1815, signed departmental correspondence in the secretary's absence and during the period between William Jones's resignation and Benjamin W. Crowninshield's official appearance in the Cabinet.

Transcription

Transcriptions adhere as closely as possible to the originals in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and abbreviation. The following exceptions apply. The names of ships are italicized. Complimentary closes are printed immediately at the end of the last paragraph. The only superscripts retained are those used in signatures.

Textual Devices

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The editors use brackets with roman type to supply letters that have been lost in the gutters of bound original documents. They clarify in a footnote or with bracketed italics any word whose spelling is so unclear as to be misleading. The editors use bracketed, italicized terms, [blank], [torn], and [?], for missing or il-

Map 14. Valparaiso Harbor by Morgan I. Wilbur.

legible words. The virgule, /, indicates a line break in addresses, endorsements, and docketings when these are reproduced in source notes.

Placement of Documents

Volume 3 is divided into three theaters: Chesapeake, Northern Lakes, and Pacific. Documents are arranged by theme, usually in chronological order, and cover the period from 1814 through demobilization.

Chapter Essays and Head Notes

An introductory essay precedes each of the theaters, contextualizing the groupings of documents contained therein. The head notes orient the reader and provide the transitional framework for understanding the themes.

Document Layout

The title or rank, first name, middle initial, and last name of originators and recipients of documents precede the documents when known. The bracketed phrases [Extract] and [Enclosure] appear in roman type at the left margin, below the heading to designate an extract, or after the cover letter to designate an enclosure. A document's dateline appears as in the original; the editors supply corrections in bracketed italics. If an address forms part of the salutation, it is retained; however, those found at the end of a document, as well as addresses and endorsements found on the reverse side of a letter, are usually not reproduced. Any significant information contained therein is recorded in the source note.

Source Notes

The first note following the documentary text is unnumbered and gives a description and the source of the document. Lists of abbreviations used to describe the manuscripts, repositories, and collections follow this essay. The source note may also contain biographical information on the signer or the recipient if not previously identified. The editors also use this note for textual clarifications.

Annotations

Numbered footnotes provide essential clarification, explanation, or information about persons, places, or subjects mentioned in the text. The editors refer the reader to the relevant scholarship for further consultation on a particular subject. The prefatory material contains a short title list of references used. The editors furnish a full citation to letters cited by date in the text of a document, if the information is considered relevant to the subject under discussion. When enclosures are not printed, summaries are provided.

Abbreviations Used to Describe Manuscripts

AD	Autograph Document
ADfS	Autograph Draft Signed
AL	Autograph Letter
ALS	Autograph Letter Signed
D	Document
DS	Document Signed
LB	Letter Book
LS	Letter Signed

Repository Symbols and Other Abbreviations

Adm.	Admiralty
AF	Area File
AOR	Letters Sent Conveying Appointments and Orders and Accepting Resignations
BC	Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Officers Below the Rank of Commander
CaOOA	National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
CL	Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy: Captains' Letters
CLS	Confidential Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Nave
CM	Records of General Courts-Martial and Courts of Inquiry of the Navy Department
CNA	Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy to Commandants of Navy Yards and Navy Agents
CSmH	The Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.
DLC	Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
DN-HC	United States, Department of the Navy Naval Historical Center Nava
	Department Library, washington 1) (
DNA	National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.
InU	mulana University, Lilly Library Bloomington Ind
MC	Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanders (Masters Commandant)
MdAN	U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Md.
MdHi	Maryland Historical Society Library, Manuscripts Department, Balti- more, Md.
MHi	Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.
MiU-C	University of Michigan William I. Classes I. I.
MLR	University of Michigan, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich. Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy: Miscellaneous Letters
MLS	Miscellaneous Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy
NBuHi	Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Buffalo, N.Y.
NcD	Duke University, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Durham, N.C.

NHi	The New-York Historical Society, New York, N.Y.
PHi	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.
RG21	Records of District Courts of the United States
RG45	Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library
RG46	Records of the U.S. Senate
RG77	Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers
RG107	Records of the Office of the Secretary of War
RG125	Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Navy)
RG217	Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury
RG233	Records of the U.S. House of Representatives
RHi	Rhode Island Historical Society, Manuscript Collection, Providence, R.I.
R.N.	Royal Navy
SNL	Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy to Officers
UKENL	
UkLNMM	National Maritime Museum, London
UkLPR	Public Record Office, London
Vi	Library of Virginia, Archives Research Service, Richmond, Va.
WO	War Office

Short Titles

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