Journal of the War of 1812
An International Journal Dedicated to the Last Anglo-American War, 1812-1815

Articles of Interest:

The Little Belt Affair
Grog: A Sailor's Elixir, Part III

Visit 1812: Tippecanoe Battlefield

Impressment as a Cause of War!

Features: Rhode Island; Defense of Norfolk; Pre-War Chronology; News of Interest; and More...

Winter 2009-10
Vol. 12, No. 4

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The Journal of the War of 1812

Volume XII, No. 4, WINTER 2009

An International Journal Dedicated
to the Last Anglo-American War,
1812-1815

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**NEXT ISSUE:** Spanish-American Relations and the War of 1812

**COVER PHOTO:** Impressment. Classic print from an old sea story.
EDITOR'S QUOIN

The “Real” Cause of the War

Any discussion on the causes of war between nation states and actors varies with the nationality of the discussants and the era in which the discussion occurs.

This is no less so regarding the War of 1812. Today, the two belligerents are said to have developed “a special relationship” among the nations of the world. Further, the adjoining territory along which the most severest of the fighting took place contains the longest, unfortified peaceful border between nation states in the world. So, why war?

Consider three enduring facts. First, the global political conditions at the beginning of the 21st century look very different than those confronting nations at the beginning of the 19th. Second, despite shouts to the contrary, scholarship follows the flag. Third, as Winston Churchill, or someone of his ilk, famously said: “There are no permanent allies; just permanent interests.”

During the upcoming bicentennial period and for many years afterward, the Canadians will decry the fact that “they” (U.S) started it; and “we” beat them soundly. They have to hold to that position. How else to justify the millions being spent to lure the defeated from the TVs, Twitters, and Facebooks to tourist sites north of the border?

The Americans, mired in an “it's our fault; we're sorry; we're getting better; and here, you can have our treasure” syndrome, will promptly forget the War in 2015, only to look for some other event to apologize for. This syndrome will last an indeterminate period only to be soundly defeated once America is soundly defeated.

This is history by psychological analysis. After all, it took 500 years for Christopher Columbus to become an environmental disaster and a destroyer of culture. It took 1,000 years for Charlemagne to become the great Dark Ages educator. And it only took 1,500 years for Attila the Hun to become a folk hero. How can the War of 1812 stand in the fluid path of interpretive history? An analysis:

Forget the maritime causes of the War. President Madison just mentioned those causes in his “War Message” because that's what Congress wanted to hear. Armed searches of neutral vessels on the high seas? Pish-tosh! Impressment? The concept of nationality and citizenship was always in flux! Ship seizures? They were owned by capitalists, weren't they? Just the cost of doing business!

Forget the desire for Canadian land as a cause. In 1812, only the truly ill-informed could not have known that agriculture and trade would thrive west of the Mississippi, rather than west of the Lake of the Woods. Eastern Canada had fewer access to markets and a shorter growing season. New England politicians had the better view here. Fisheries, agriculture, and trade. Who needed the West, or their ill-conceived desires?

Forget, too, the Indian deprecations. How could any intelligent man actually believe that 15,000 to 20,000 Indian warriors could turn back the 100,000s, possibly more than 2 million settlers, streaming across the mountains to the Mississippi and beyond. Localized conflict and regional leaders could stem that problem. Oh, and pay the Indians off; its worked before. And, whatever you do, keep someone like Andrew Jackson out of the corridors of power. Did we not go back to two decades of bland leaders after the Jackson presidency? Bland is good for a growing America.

So we, dear readers, are left with “national honor.” It's the last refuge of a scoundrel. We pride the young men of the American Revolution as the “best and brightest” the Enlightenment could produce. Pride was the true cause of the war. Sort of reminds you of another crowd. The “best and brightest” of the 20th Century that brought us Vietnam and Iraq. Sort of...

For now, your thoughts on the “real” causes of the War of 1812?
NEWS OF COMMON INTEREST

Notices of Interest to the War of 1812 Community

As Thanksgiving Day came and went in 2009, greetings were spread all around in the War of 1812 world. Our British cousins sent greetings with the sentiment that we deserved a Happy Thanksgiving to perk us up from having lost the last Anglo-American War. After all they “burned the rebel's White House” and “prevailed in the end.” This from Egan Orion writing for The Inquirer, published by Incisive Media Limited, London. Greetings to all were also expressed by HumanEvents.com, the “Headquarters of the Conservative Underground.” They stood firmly for the position that the United States won the war. Why else would President James Madison issue his post-war Thanksgiving Proclamations. And the beat goes on!

Perrysburg, Ohio: Another 21st Century fiscal dilemma. The “evil” land developer buys land adjacent to a revered historical site. He attempts to rezone for a high density development, is turned down by local civil authorities, and sues. The City, to settle a lawsuit, buys the land at twice what the developer paid for it and resells the land to the managers of the historic site, losing $150,000 on the deal. This “by-line” could be any city in the country. Well, it appears that Fort Meigs will soon own an adjacent six acres of green space. The Site Manager, Rick Finch, is pleased. From an article published November 18, 2009, by Bridget Tharp, toledoblade.com.

New York City, New York: Long before the familiar contours and boundaries of New York’s Central Park came to life, U.S. Major General Joseph Swift oversaw the construction of mutually supporting blockhouses on the land in an effort to thwart any British incursion from the north against New York City in 1814. Four blockhouses were built within the present area of the Park. The ruins of only one remain. Millions of people have seen it; now you are one of the few who know it dates from the War of 1812. From a posting on the NiagaraFallsReview.com by Kathleen Powell, November 22, 2009.

Charlestown, Massachusetts: A keen eye, diligent research and sometimes casual observation could detect that the USS Constitution indeed has changed appearance over its 212-year history. The current three-year rehabilitation project which ends in 2010 will bring Old Ironsides closer to its 1812 look since modern restoration began in 1927. This phase supports the structural integrity work completed in 1990s that saw the ship sail under its own power for the first time in 116 years. The bulwarks (the railings around the deck) have been lowered and the “waists” at the center of the ship opened (The waists are that part of the upper deck between the forecastle and the quarter-deck). Who knows, the Royal Navy seamen aboard the HMS Guerrière may even recognize her next year. When the
bicentennial celebrations are over the venerable ship will return to dry dock. Restoration is a continuing mission of the Naval History and Heritage Command Detachment Boston, tasked with her care. By Phil Primack, Boston Globe, November 15, 2009.

**Burlington, Vermont:** Using a grant from the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program, University of Vermont archaeologists working with Burlington's Community and Economic Development Office, are on the hunt for the War of 1812 hospital which supported the troops stationed in Burlington during the War of 1812. Approximately 5,000 troops were in the village and the hospital is described as large enough to house about 300 patients. At Battery Park, on November 24, 2009, they found one hand-wrought nail. Be patient! The Burlington Free Press summarized eleven past War of 1812-related discoveries in the Burlington area since 1955. Matt Ryan, Burlington Free Press, November 25, 2009.

![Historic Marker at Battery Park, Burlington, Vermont](https://example.com/historicmarker.png)

**Vancouver, British Columbia:** It is possible that the numbers of native warriors that died during the War of 1812 exceeded the deaths of British, Canadian and American soldiers combined. Although no firm figure is available, the key role played by Canada's First Nations may have been overlooked in the past. The bicentennial celebrations may provide an opportunity to mark the contributions and sacrifices of the indigenous nations. Look for more efforts by the Assembly of First Nations to prompt and by Parks Canada to respond to efforts that would tell the full and authentic story of the War of 1812 as a Canadian nation-building event. By Randy Boswell, Canwest News Service, November 17, 2009.

**Bicentennial Planning**

**Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada:** The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation has announced a $1 million grant for major improvement to the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site here. The funds are one-quarter those needed to complete the project scheduled to open 2012. Plans include an 1812 gallery. This grant dwarfs last years' $59,000 specifically earmarked for the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812. As additional grants and funds become available, the Discovery Center will rise and the Old Stone House preserved to enable the telling and re-telling of this community's unique history. By Angela Pezzotti for SooNews.ca, November 20, 2009.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23
STATE PROFILE: RHODE ISLAND  
DURING THE WAR OF 1812

Life in Rhode Island proved very nerve-wracking during the War of 1812. The smallest state in the Union was decidedly anti-war and solidly within in the Federalist's orbit. In 1811 the Federalists had elected William Jones (1753-1822) over James Fenner (1771-1846), a Republican, and won a majority in the state legislature.

The gubernatorial rematch in 1812 confirmed the anti-war sentiment based mostly on the local effects of the renewed embargo legislation and commercial restrictions. By June 1812, the Federalist were petitioning for peace and prosperity. “Mourning Cloths” were hung upon news of the war; then the British came. The view of an off-shore British frigate at peace was quite different from the view of that same frigate after June 1812.

Anti-war or no, a Governor's responsibility is to protect the state. The General Government in Washington had withdrawn the pre-war garrisons from Fort Adams and Fort Wolcott and refused state appeals for their return.

Fort Adams, on Brenton Point, and Fort Wolcott, on Goat Island, Newport Harbor, had each been active since the French emergency in 1798. But, the army would not be coming back, so the Governor was forced to call militia forces to fill the voids.

The strength of the defenses at Newport was particularly troubling. Although many U.S. coastal forts were rebuilt or enhanced during the construction fury following the Chesapeake-Leopard Affair, neither Fort Adams nor Fort Wolcott were strengthened to second system fortification standards. Official congressional reports used terms like “unfinished” or “in a state of ruin” to describe the Newport harbor area fortifications.

An occasional British frigate turned into three off Point Judith, about 35 miles south of Providence, in the fall of 1812. Panic; but no attack. British Admiral Sir Henry Hotham (1777-1833) commanded the blockading force. By Spring 1813, his squadrons occupied Block Island, approximately 13 miles off the coast, and regularly cruised off Newport.

Governor Jones ordered the distribution of arms and ammunition to local militia in case of British attack. Full time militia detachments at Fort Adams kept watch. Particularly active in the state was Colonel Benjamin Fry and the Artillery Company of Newport.

Citizens of Newport organized nightly patrols, and local banks sent their money to the interior towns for safekeeping. In the end, Newport was never the object of a British attack, but Narragansett Bay was the site of several ship burnings by the British blockading fleet.

Antiwar Declaration of Independence signer and Newport customs collector, William Ellery (1727-1820), maintained that the extent of illegal intercourse between Rhode Islanders and the blockading British fleet assured the peace. By 1814 most were unsure of that bromide.

Warren, Newport and Providence citizens each demanded defensive measures. The state agreement with the General Government to raise a 550-man corps failed when only 150 responded to the call. The required troops were again drafted from the state militia, with four companies ordered to Newport and five more sent to Stonington, Connecticut, during their emergency in August of 1814. The stout American defense there offered some tonic to the authorities in Rhode Island.

By late 1814 local Committees of Defense were raising funds, coordinating local volunteers for military defensive construction projects, and waiting...

Rhode Island, too, was not without its' military stand-outs. Oliver Hazard Perry (1785-1819) was a native. So too, the Governor's nephew, Naval Captain William Henry Allen (1784-1813), lost during the USS Argus and the HMS Pelican ship duel.

With the exception of Block Island, the British never landed in Rhode Island. All rejoiced at the coming of peace. Nonetheless, Rhode Island Federalists remained in control of the State until 1817. The less-charitable say Rhode Island after the War slipped into a decades-long slumber and remains the nation's smallest state.

Reference:

Peterson, Edward. History of Rhode Island and Newport (1853), among many others. - Editor.
Tippecanoe Battlefield Park, in Tippecanoe County near Lafayette, Indiana, is a 96-acre site on which the 16-acre battlefield is located. On December 7, 1811, before the Declaration of War between the United States and Great Britain, the inevitable clash between William Henry Harrison (1773-1841), the Territorial Governor of Indiana, and the Shawnee Indian Chief, Tecumseh (c1769-1813), came to a head. The battle was a clash of cultures, a political turning point in the decades-old war for the Old Northwest, and a draw.

John Tipton (1786-1839) was a veteran of the battle and in 1829 acquired the land on which the battle was fought. On November 7, 1836, he deeded the property to the State of Indiana as a memorial. For many years the site was used for political rallies, some quite large. On May 29, 1840, more than 30,000 people turned out during William Henry Harrison's rally in support of his candidacy for President of the United States.

By the 1850s the park, now adjacent to the Louisville, New Albany, & Salem Railroad land, was still attracting visitors. The Railroad sold part of its holdings to the Northwest Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church who built a useful and accommodating refreshment stand and later used the property for the Battle Ground Collegiate Institute and for a Methodist youth camp.

In 1892 attention was directed towards the need for a more permanent monument. Patriotic organizations in the area organized the Tippecanoe Monument Association and spent 15 years on the effort. When an agreement was reached on funding from both the state and federal authorities, McDonnell & Sons, a Buffalo, New York, firm was granted a $24,500 contract to erect a suitable memorial.

The large 85-foot tall signature marble obelisk monument at the park was dedicated on November 7, 1908, 97 years after the battle. At the Centennial on December 7, 1911, the main feature of the day was a re-enactment of the battle with R.O.T.C. Cadets from Purdue University and members of the Red Men's Lodge playing their respective roles.

The site was designated as a National Historic Landmark on October 9, 1960. At the Sesquicentennial in 1961 congressional delegations highlighted the list of attendees with the members of the 151st Infantry Division of the
Indiana National Guard and another generation from the Red Men's League fulfilling reenactment roles. The battleground was added to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) on October 15, 1966 (NRHP Reference #:66000013). However, by 1971 the Methodist youth camp was abandoned. The Battlefield Monument was ceded to the Tippecanoe County Park Board in 1972.

Local residents acquired the Methodist property upon its closure, and created a museum in the camp's lodge. This ad hoc citizen's group merged with the Tippecanoe County Historical Association (TCHA) in 1990 which then took over operation of the museum. The museum was extensively renovated in 1995.

Today, Tippecanoe Battlefield Park is operated by the Tippecanoe County Park Board. The Battlefield Museum which also has a gift shop is operated by the Association. Call TCHA for museum operating hours and admission prices at 765.567.2147 or 765.476.8411. School programs available.

In addition to the Museum and the well-maintained grounds with numerous markers noting the locations where many of the casualties fell, there are several scenic trails for hiking including the Trailhead to the Wabash Heritage Trail, the Leona Brier Educational Center, and the Wah-ba-shik-a Nature Center. The Nature Center is open 10-5 daily from mid-April through early November.

There is also an historic heated and air-conditioned 80-seat Chapel for weddings, meetings, and/or religious services. The Harrisonville Cemetery, a restored pioneer cemetery, is located next to the Chapel in the north end of the park. Other amenities include a 40-seat picnic shelter with electricity and a swimming pool operated by the Town of Battle Ground, Indiana.

Contact numbers for each of the Park's services differ. For information about and/or reservations at the Chapel and picnic shelter, call the Tippecanoe County Parks Department Office at 765.463.2306. The Park Manager is at 765.567-6218. The Wabash Heritage Trail Manager is at 765.567-6218. The Tippecanoe County Historical Association (the Museum Managers) can be reached at 765.567.2147.

The Park is located on State Route (S.R.) 225, off the S.R. 43 exit along Interstate I-65. The mailing address is Tippecanoe Battlefield Park, 200 Battle Ground Avenue, Battle Ground, IN 47920. Visit Tippecanoe Battlefield Park.
The Little Belt Affair:
Psychologically Moving toward War
By Harold W. Youmans

Editor: As the nation entered the later part of the 1805-1812 prewar period, a slow, but perceptible, change in public sentiment took hold. There was a widespread opinion that war with Great Britain, which had been tempered by Jefferson following the Chesapeake-Leopard Affair, was inevitable. The sentiment began to rise in 1810 and James Madison was either unable or unwilling to temporize. The Little Belt Affair stood in the center of the road to war.

Harold W. Youmans (Colonel, U.S. Army, Retired) is an historian and Editor of the Journal of the War of 1812. He has written and lectured on the War for more than 20 years and presents occasional pieces for the Journal on relevant topics of interest. His recently completed study on Fort Preble, Portland, Maine, has appeared in the latest issue of the Journal of America's Military Past. While not engaged in these pursuits, he is a civil hearing officer and special magistrate in Florida.

There was a change in the political winds, along with a perceptible increase in the number of impressment incidents. There were persistent rumors of whispered instructions.

South, down the Chesapeake and through the Capes, races one of the original super frigates of the United States. The USS President, mounting 58 guns, Captain John Rogers (1772-1838) commanding, is looking for the HMS Guerriere, a British frigate of 38 guns, James R. Dacres, commanding. It seems that a fortnight earlier, on May 1, 1811, just 18 miles off New York, near Sandy Hook, New Jersey, John Diggio, a citizen of Maine and the master apprentice aboard the Spitfire, a American merchant sloop, had been removed and impressed by the British frigate. Americans, if not fully followed by its leadership, have had enough. The General Government orders the great frigates out to protect American commerce.

Thirty-nine-year old Rodgers was visiting his family in Havre de Grace while the President was in harbor at Annapolis, Maryland, near the future Fort Severn and, later, the Naval Academy. What special instructions Secretary of the Navy, Paul Hamilton (1762-1816), had added to Rodgers' year-old directives to “protect American commerce” is still uncertain, but there was no uncertainty about the on-board posture presented by the American frigate as it cleared anchorage, on May 12th. An extra quantity of shot and wads is on deck. The ship, a favorite among the Navy for her speed and appearance, runs, not like the Chesapeake loaded with goods, but clear ... for action.

Predictability, the Richmond Enquirer is ready and seeking vengeance for the British slights of the past decade, including the Chesapeake and the Vixen. Ready too, it seems, is the entire seaboard, sensing a change in America's prospects.

Launched on April 10, 1800, six years after her Congressional authorization, the USS President was built by William Doughty and Christian Bergh at New York. She had a gun deck length of
175 feet, a 43.75-foot beam and a 14-foot hold. She was big. The ship had served in both the Quasi-War with France under Captain Thomas Truxtun (1755-1822) and against the Barbary Pirates in the Mediterranean Sea under Commodore Richard Dale (1756-1826). Since 1809 her station was on the American coast. Rodgers, a Maryland native, had been in the naval service since its 1798 inception. Now a Captain, he had also seen service in the Quasi-War and along the Barbary Coast, where for a time he was Commodore of the U.S. Mediterranean Squadron. The ship and her commander were united in 1809.

Rodgers hails an incoming brig and takes a report that the Guerrière was off Cape Henry. This is untrue, in the event, for the British ship's log places her on that day off Cape Roman, South Carolina. The 14\(^{th}\) and 15\(^{th}\) pass without spotting the British frigate. On the 16\(^{th}\), lookouts spot a sail to the south under a full spread of canvas. Rodgers drives the President after the sighting.

The HMS Little Belt began her life at sea as the Danish 22-gun let fregat (light frigate or corvette) Lillebælt. She was taken by the British on September 7, 1807, attempting to flee the Battle of Copenhagen. Following British custom, her name was “anglicized” and she was placed in service as a sixth-rate sloop of war. Following service off Africa, she was assigned to the North American Station at Halifax.

The Royal Navy since the time of Charles I (1600-1649) classed their ships by “rate.” The first rate ships were in 1811 the ships-of-the-line with a crew of over 800 and with 110-112 guns. The HMS Little Belt, the sixth rater, had a crew of about 120-140 men and was listed variously has having between 18 and 22 guns.

Arthur Batt Bingham (1784–1830) was commissioned in the Royal Navy in 1804 and proves his mettle before French forces while aboard the HMS Néréide (40 guns) assigned to the Cape of Good Hope Station. At Reunion in August 1808, he commanded the shore party that attacked the garrison and captured the French governor. Later, he led the action to capture the French frigate Caroline. In 1809 he was given command of the HMS Caledon. Since December 1810 Bingham had commanded the HMS Little Belt.

On April 19, 1811, Captain Bingham was instructed by Bermuda-based Rear-Admiral Herbert Sawyer (1783-1833) to locate and deliver instructions to Captain Samuel Pechell (1785-1849) then on the HMS Guerrière, at sea between Charlestown and New York. Failing that she was to cruise the Atlantic coast, protecting British shipping and seeking out enemy vessels. At the time the Little Belt mounted 18 carronades, 32-pounders and two nine-pounders, with a crew of 121 officers and men. The 460-ton Little Belt was cautioned that Britain-American relations are

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strained and overt clashes are to be avoided.

So, on May 16, 1811, two vessels, each in search of another, find each other, and fire.

The incident is shrouded in mystery still. American and British accounts of the encounter differ sharply and through the haze of history are unlikely to be resolved, ever. Was the encounter motivated by an act of vengeance for the *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair four years earlier? Was it the impressment off the *Spitfire*? How, exactly, did Rodgers intend to secure the release of any impressed seamen without a fight from a Royal Navy ship of war? And of the most popular query: who fired first?

Rodgers thinks the ship he has chased since noon is the *Guerrière*. The British sources aboard the *Little Belt* claim that they spotted the *President* about an hour earlier. Who had the better trained or functioning lookout watch?

For the remainder of the day and into the evening, each ship maneuvers relative to the other. By 1:30 pm the ships are about ten miles apart. Captain Bingham hoists unanswered recognition signals and spots the American ensign and the Commodore's pennant. He knows the ship to be American. Bingham, thereafter, continues to run south toward the area off Cape Hatteras. He wears the ship three times, believing the American is trying to maneuver into a position to rake his own ship. Rodgers pursues, knowing it is not the *Guerrière*, but still seeking a conversation with her and a positive identity. By 3:30 pm he makes out the stern of his quarry. The angle of his view from his spyglass suggests a much larger ship that it proved to be.

At this latitude and season, nightfall is about 7:10 pm. According to British sources, Bingham “hoisted colors” to identify his ship, hoping to forestall a night attack at 6:30 pm. Bingham also takes the precaution to double-shot his guns. American sources indicate that the “hoist” occurs only after 7:15 pm when it is too dark to identify the ship.

The *Little Belt* comes about. The ships are about 70 to 100 yards apart; close enough to hail one another. Standard naval custom and politeness dictated that a secondary means of identification could be ascertained with a hail and exchange with the one who hails deserving the first reply.

“What ship is that?” is the standard hail through the speaking trumpet. It may have been that both Captains nearly simultaneously hail the other. Each claim the right to the first reply. With no reply, both hail again. Neither hears clearly anything the other may have said, but from the clear diction of the opposing hailer Rodgers knows the ship is British.

And then, the shot. Each claims the other shot first. The Americans say that the *Little Belt*’s first shot hit the *President*’s 100-foot tall mainmast and shattered a boy’s arm. Lieutenant Alexander J. Dallas, on the *President*’s forecastle, touches of one of his guns in return. Bingham claims there was no initial single shot exchange. Rodgers, Bingham says, had ordered and shot a full broadside into his ship.

Rodgers, initially hesitant, but now offended by the lack of an answer and the shot, gives the order to fire. Single guns and broadsides, some sloppy, are exchanged. Rodgers says the battle was all of 15 minutes. Bingham says it went on for 45 minutes, indicating there were silent gaps

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in the encounter followed by renewed American fire. In the light of the gun flashes Rodgers can
tell from her lower profile and lighter broadside that the opponent is not a frigate. During a
pause, at least one later author says a plea was heard from the smaller ship: “Stop, for God's
sake! We are sinking.”

In the end, casualties on the Little Belt are severe, given the length of time of the exchange.
Further, whichever side did fire first, it is clearly a mis-match. The President is perhaps three
times the size (1,576 tons to 460 tons) with almost three times the armament of the Little Belt (58
guns to 20 guns).

Each ship moves off. The Little Belt suffers eleven dead, including Midshipman Samuel
Woodward, and 21 injured, including her Acting Master and Boatswain; some sources say more.
Her rigging is in tatters, making it impossible to bring her guns to bear. She also loses her after-
sail. During the night she undertakes the serious work of repairing the damages and stopping
leaks. By dawn the topgallant-masts are on deck and the rigging partially repaired.

In the morning, Rogers finds the prey to have been the small British sixth-rater. He sends
Lieutenant John Orde Creighton in a launch to ascertain her name, assess the damage to the ship,
and offer of aid and assistance, including access to an American port. Bingham contends that he
had on board all the necessaries to repair the damage.

Rodgers, who had been President of Commodore James Barron's (1758-1851) court-martial after
the Chesapeake-Leopard Affair, must have been tempted that morning to muster the Little Belt's
crew for inspection duplicating the actions of HMS Leopard four years earlier after the firing into
the unready USS Chesapeake. But he resists the temptation, and, content in the knowledge that
she would not sink, he pulls away from the British ship.

After refusing the proffered American help, the Little Belt limps back to Halifax, Nova Scotia.
She is further damaged in a gale on the way, is paid off shortly after the battle, and sold at

Captain Bingham suffers no such fate. The Admiralty did not, as is the custom, conduct a court-
martial inquiry against Bingham; they promote him to Post-Captain on February 1, 1812.
Nonetheless, Bingham, his two lieutenants, boatswain, purser and surgeon provide details at an
informal inquiry May 28 at Halifax. These accounts of the encounter appear in the London
Gazette, August 3, 1811. The Duke of Clarence (the future King George IV) takes an interest in
him. He continues his naval service with three more command assignments and dies in a
drowning incident in 1830.

The contemporary British publication, the London Naval Chronicle, repeats initial commentary
and reports the sworn statements of two seamen who claim to have been aboard the President at
the time of the incident and subsequently desert American arms. One claims that a gun in the
President's second division accidentally fired first. His testimony on close examination is
subsequently discredited because of a false identification of the alleged gunnery officer.

The President had but one ship's boy injured during the incident. She sails to New York harbor.
Rodgers asks for an inquiry and on May 28, a pleased Secretary of the Navy declines. In August,
however, Rodgers becomes part of an inquiry headed by Stephen Decatur, (1779-1820), not an unqualified admirer. It was meant by the Madison administration not to fully inquire, but to silence the anti-war Federalist sniping whose newspaper organs gloated over the British claim that the President had fired first. After listening for twelve days to more than 50 witnesses each claiming that the Little Belt had fired the first shot, the inquiry found that Rodgers' conduct was not only blameless, it was also praiseworthy.

Later, during the War of 1812, despite the blockade, the President succeeds in having three war cruises. She was the flagship of the squadron that sailed from New York fully manned for sea on June 21, 1812, immediately after the declaration of war. The first shot of the war may have been from the President on the HMS Belvidera (36 guns, Richard Byron, commanding) on the 23rd. The President went on to see service in the English Channel. She took the HMS Highflyer (8 guns, Wm. Hutchinson, commanding) off Nantucket on September 8, 1813. In January 1815, between the signing of the Treaty of Ghent and its ratification, now under Decatur, she was damaged escaping the blockade off New York. Nevertheless she engaged the HMS Endymion (40 guns, Henry Hope, commanding) and was captured by the accompanying British squadron. In route to Bermuda, the President was struck by a gale which completely destroyed the masts. Taken into British service as the HMS President she was sent to dry dock and inspected. Being too damaged for an effective repair, she was broken up at Portsmouth, England, dockyard in 1817.

The encounter certainly enhances America's diplomatic hand. The Secretary of the Navy is delighted with the outcome. Augustus J. Foster (1780-1848), the new British ambassador in Washington, poses in righteous indignation. James Monroe (1758-1831), the Secretary of State, like a man who has found he filled that inside strait, assumes an icy cold demeanor toward the British and simply repeats American demands regarding impressment and commercial molestation.

Newspaper comment on either side of the Atlantic, including for the opposition Federalist press in America, was predictable. Both the Morning Chronicle and the Gazette in London discounted the American claims that the Little Belt had fired first and demanded revenge. The Baltimore Niles Register fully supported the veracity of both Rodgers and his officers and the American crew's bravery. In Baltimore, Captain Bingham was an “unknown” presenting “scandalous” testimony.

From the clash of arms the two nations continued their clash of principal. Under President James Madison (1751-1836), inaugurated in March 1809, it became painfully clear that the policy of economic coercion epitomized by the Embargo and Non-Importation Acts were not going to alter British behavior toward neutrals and non-belligerents during her death struggle with France. Slowly, the tide of opinion in the United States began to change from resentment and anger to a determinism which ultimately would lead to war.

So, too, was the Navy's perception of itself changing. Preble's Boys, those young officers tutored and trained by Commodore Edward Preble (1761-1807) in the Mediterranean were coming of age. They commanded the few ships available and were gaining confidence and experience. The crews were honing their skills and improving, especially, their gunnery. No war is a
cakewalk for the sailors of that age, but confidence, added to discipline and training, was about to give them a better than equal chance during a ship duel. And they knew it.

The British military and naval establishment was also evolving, although in the midst of their war with Napoleon, their evolution was much slower. In 1820, British thought on this unequal contest was summed up by Sir Howard Douglas (1776-1861) in his Treatise on Naval Gunnery (noted by Theodore Roosevelt in his Naval War of 1812 (1882)). Taking on a superior enemy at sea is full of honor, but unless the smaller ship can have a considerable impact on the fighting strength of the superior, what's the value of the sacrifice? Nonetheless, during the War of 1812 the Royal Navy was, perhaps, too full ... of honor!

The Register summed it up: Who would say that Britain would allow any ships of another nation to hover over Portsmouth or Dover, impress British seamen, murder British subjects in the mouth of British ports, and capture at will British ships in honest transit into and out of the country?

Impressment, spiking in 1811, had to stop and if the diplomatic effort or commercial retaliation would not work, perhaps the biting sting of the USS President could. It was no idle chance that Rodgers was sent after the Guerrière. He was sent on a revenge mission to demand the release of the seamen. At least that was the popular sentiment. The Little Belt Affair, says Professor Bradford Perkins, help breed the psychological setting for war.

USS President vs. HMS Little Belt
May 16, 1811
Courtesy: U.S. Navy
WAR OF 1812 PRE-WAR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHRONOLOGY

While it is difficult for historians to agree as to the length of the “pre-war” period of the War of 1812, this chronology picks up from the time of the renewal of general European warfare in 1803 and ends upon the Declaration of War in June, 1812.

Events in 1804:
Feb 16: Lieutenant Stephen Decatur recaptured and burned USS Philadelphia in Tripoli Harbor
May 14: Lewis and Clark Expedition left St. Louis for the West; returns in 1806

Events in 1805:
Mar 04: Jefferson inaugurated for second term
Apr 26-29: U.S. Marine forces attack and capture Derna in Tripoli
Dec 09: Ninth U.S. Congress controlled by Democratic-Republicans

Events in 1806:
Jan 25: Sec/State Madison delivers report to Congress on British commercial interference
Mar 29: Construction of Cumberland Road approved
Apr 18: U.S. passed Non-Importation Act
May 16: Britain lays blockade, Brest to Elbe River
Nov 21: French Berlin Decree lays paper blockade of British Isles

Events in 1807:
Jan 07: G.B. Order in Council prohibits coasting trade of France and her allies by neutrals
Jan 22: Jefferson reveals details of Burr Conspiracy
Jun 22: Chesapeake-Leopard affair
Jul 02: U.S. ports closed to armed British ships
Nov 11: G.B. Order in Council lays paper blockade of Trieste to Copenhagen
Dec 17: French Milan Decree further restricts neutral trade
Dec 22: U.S. Embargo Act prohibits foreign destined shipping from U.S. Ports
Dec 31: Pinkney-Monroe trade treaty, U.S. and G.B., not ratified

Events in 1808:
Apr 17: French Bayonne Decree orders seizure of U.S. ships in Continental ports
Jul 12: The Missouri Gazette becomes first U.S. newspaper published west of Mississippi River
Dec 07: James Madison elected President

Events in 1809:
Jan 09: U.S. Enforcement Act, to enforce Embargo Act of 1807
Feb 20: Olmstead Case (nullification) decided
Mar 01: U.S. Embargo Act repealed
Mar 01: U.S. Non-Intercourse Act prohibits trade with G.B. and France
Apr 01: Inauguration of James Madison
Apr 19: Erskine Agreement, U.S. and G.B.
Apr 19: U.S. renews trade with G.B.
Aug 09: U.S. reverts to Non-Intercourse Act with G.B.
Sep 30: Treaty of Fort Wayne between U.S. and Delaware and Potawatomi Indians

Events in 1810:
Mar 23: French Rambouillet Decree orders seizure and sale of all U.S. ships in French ports
May 01: U.S. Macon's Bill No. 2, renews trade with G.B. and France; if one removes offensive decrees then U.S. will restore Non-Intercourse against the other
Jul 10: Unions defeated; N.Y.C. Cordwainers Strike declared conspiracy
Aug 05: French Cadore letter allegedly revokes Milan and Berlin Decrees
Aug 05: French Trianon Decree condemns all U.S. ships in French ports
Sep 26: U.S. settlers in Spanish West Florida rebel
Oct 27: U.S. annexes West Florida; adds to Territory of Orleans

Events in 1811:
Feb 20: U.S. Congress refused to renew Bank of the United States charter; affects future war funding
Mar 02: U.S. revives Non-Intercourse Act against G.B.
May 16: U.S. Frigate President encounters British Ship Little Belt
Nov 04: U.S. Twelfth (War Hawk) Congress convenes
Nov 07: Battle of Tippecanoe (Indiana Territory)

Events in 1812:
Apr 10: Madison empowered to raise 100,000 troops in case of war with G.B.
Jun 01: President James Madison delivers War Message to Congress
Jun 04: U.S. House of Representatives votes for war
Jun 17: U.S. Senate votes for War
Jun 18: United States declares war on Great Britain
Jun 23: G.B. repeals Orders in Council
A Sailor's Favorite Elixir
The Spirit Ration Grog and the United States Navy, 1794-1862
Part III: The Effect of Grog Experience on Today's Navy
By Petty Officer Eric Brown
Mass Communications Specialist 1st Class,
USS Constitution

Editor: In this, the concluding part of his extensive study, Petty Officer Eric Brown explains how the Grog experiences influenced the performance at sea during both the Age of Sail and, today, in the U.S. Navy.

Unfortunately, the surgeon’s logs rarely recorded the causes of accidents and ailments aboard Navy ships two centuries ago. They generally just listed prescriptions and treatments for incapacitated Sailors. A couple of telling exceptions do appear in day book kept by Surgeon Amos A. Evans, aboard the USS Constitution in 1812.

On April 22, a patient named Richards “complains of sickness at stomach & flying pains – pulse feeble skin cold – Has been intoxicated for some days.” A few months later, on July 12, a man named Fails “was intoxicated yesterday & has been vomiting all night.” Of the 309 recorded deaths aboard “Old Ironsides,” only 27 have been directly attributed to combat. Some of the remaining numbers were “undoubtedly” the result of Sailors’ alcoholic mishaps and misadventures. 48

As was discussed earlier, punishment aboard Navy ships was frequent, and frequently heavy-handed. Before finding themselves on the wrong end of a cat-o’-nine-tails for drunkenness, USS Constitution seamen were usually confined for as much as two weeks before justice was meted out. Chaplain [George] Jones, who served aboard in the late 1820s, remembered drunkards being subjected to “confinement in the brig or coal hole, either in single or double irons: perhaps gagged in the bargain: then usually a dozen [lashes] before all hands.” 49

The opinions expressed herein are the author's and are not necessarily those of the U. S. Navy. This article is exempt from any copyright claim of the Journal of the War of 1812.

49. Langley, Social Reform, 146.

Journal of the War of 1812, Volume 12, No. 4, Page 15.
Perhaps it should be obvious that modern definitions of “drunkenness” and “intoxication” don’t necessarily match those of the Navy 200 years ago. By today’s standards, those seamen were clearly drunk most of their waking hours. This researcher believes that in that era in order to be considered drunk enough for punishment or hospitalization a mariner would have to be at least approaching the throes of alcohol psychosis (characterized by delusions, hallucinations and paranoia) or comatose.50

Ultimately the negative consequences of the spirit ration cumulatively eroded the ships’ – as well as the Navy’s – mission readiness. Today’s Navy certainly understands the impact of drinking, even by Sailors in an off-duty status, and discusses the implications in a current instruction, “…alcohol abuse is a severe detriment to combat readiness in terms of performance, reliability, judgment and time lost. It undermines health, safety, discipline, and loyalty.”51

Although these words were published by the Navy in 1999, the underlying idea – Sailors should use alcohol in moderation, if not abstain from it altogether – can be traced back more than 230 years to 1772, when Dr. Benjamin Rush, who was later the Physician General to the Military Hospitals of the United States, began publishing works revolving around those themes.52

It took America three decades to catch up with Rush’s calls for action. Excessive drinking across the land was reaching epic proportions and led to an anti-alcohol counterculture: the Temperance Movement. “Between the end of the War of 1812 and the Civil War, the spirit of reform captured the nation. ... Sparked and reinforced by the growth of organized religion, thousands of American men and women attempted to alleviate the various evils of society… [and] organized societies dedicated to particular reforms. They raised funds, distributed literature, prayed, exhorted, and lobbied to bring about changes in society. From the point of view of the Navy, the most influential of these groups was the American Seamen’s Friend Society.”53

This organization had its beginnings in January, 1826 in New York, and ran the first of many articles against the grog ration in the Sailor’s Magazine in November, 1828. “In the eyes of the humanitarian reformers the daily ration of a half pint of whisky, or grog, produced a desire for additional intoxicants. ... The sailor often went to great lengths to satisfy this desire, and drunkenness was the cause of most of the flogging. Thus if the spirit ration was eliminated and temperance was promoted, better health and better discipline would result. Better conditions of service would attract a higher type of recruit, and harsh discipline would be less necessary.” Getting and keeping the government out of the liquor business became a significant target for the temperance groups.54

Those who opposed the crusading efforts of maritime temperance groups cited a variety of

50. Merck Manual of Health and Aging, “Psychosis,”
51. OPNAVINST 5350.4C, 2.
52. Langley, Social Reform, 215.
53. Ibid., 39.
54. Ibid., 54-55, 209, 217.

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reasons for maintaining the spirit ration, such as the rights of individuals, naval tradition, economic gains made by American grain farmers to produce whiskey, and the view that drinking Sailors were healthy Sailors.\textsuperscript{55}

Across the nation temperance groups grew at an explosive rate. In 1829, there were 1,000 groups with membership of 100,000. Two years later, there were 200,000 members and 19 state societies. By 1834, there were 5,000 societies with membership totaling more than a million.\textsuperscript{56}

A few years after Americans’ record-breaking alcohol consumption per capita peaked in 1830, “from 362 representatives of the maritime industry in New England came a long memorial urging Congress to discontinue the spirit ration in the Navy. They argued that the evidence showed that the greatest amount of insubordination and mutinies at sea could be traced to the daily ration of liquor furnished to seamen. This ration had been successfully eliminated in the armies of Great Britain and the United States, as well as from most of the American merchant service.”\textsuperscript{57}

In 1831, the Navy began compensating Sailors who did not drink their spirit ration with 6 cents a day. In 1847 this amount was lowered to 3 cents and then raised to 4 cents a day the following year. In 1842 the maritime-oriented temperance groups scored a partial victory when Congress passed a law reducing the daily 8 oz. spirit ration half that. The legislation went on to prohibit Sailors under 21 from drinking it at all.\textsuperscript{58}

It wasn’t until the Civil War was well underway that grog tubs on naval vessels finally ran dry. On July 14, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln finally signed a law ending the practice. However, in reality, both the letter and spirit of the law were circumvented when “wine messes” sprang up aboard ships for the enjoyment of naval officers in 1893. These private floating drinking clubs were permanently prohibited by the Navy in 1914. The British Navy, who started it all and passed thr grog tradition on to the United States, stopped serving grog to their sailors in only 1970.\textsuperscript{59}

Throughout the Age of Sail, the U.S. Navy was highly adept at fighting and winning battles at sea, and grew accordingly, in terms of numbers and types of ships, budgets, manpower, technological capabilities and infrastructure. Despite these outward successes, the institution was not always good to its Sailors. To quote Melville again, that Navy was where “the sons of adversity meet the children of calamity, and the children of calamity meet the offspring of sin.” Only the most disgruntled and ignorant would describe today’s Navy in such terms. Although far from perfect, the Navy is at the forefront of equal opportunity, fair treatment and advancing the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 240.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 229.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 153.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 265-266.; Naval Historical Center, “Alcohol in the Navy, 1794-1935.” Also Isil, Loose Cannon, 46.
\end{itemize}
Bridging the gap between these two extremes is the myth of the Drunken Sailor. This archetypical figure, who still roams liberty ports wherever the Navy goes, can clearly trace his lineage to those seamen gathered around the grog tub 200 years ago. Although excessive drinking ashore— and in the public eye— was certainly nothing new even back then, \textit{USS Constitution’s} Fifth Lieutenant John Dale felt it was worth writing about in November, 1844, a couple of years after the Navy’s grog ration was halved. “At sea, sailors are the most obedient, respectable, and apparently happy of all laboring classes,” he noted. “But is it a sad truth that no sooner do they come within the sphere of spirituous liquors, then all their good resolutions give way before the besetting demon of strong drink. And in a Frigate crew there are always enough who are sure to make themselves far worse than brutes.”\textsuperscript{61}

In that regard, not much has changed. The authors of a 2007 study on the drinking patterns of young enlisted U.S. Sailors state “pervasive and longstanding cultural tradition of drinking is the default activity for enlisted personnel to pursue when there is no other perceived attractive recreational alternative…” and “…heavy alcohol consumption rates are higher in the young adult enlisted population than among civilians of the same age…. “ Traditions and rituals around alcohol consumption and life at sea have gone hand in hand for centuries. So too has the easy availability of alcohol starting with the daily grog ration on board ships in the 18th and 19th centuries right up to contemporary times where the multiple bars in port and on deployment liberty support normative patterns of heavy and binge drinking.”\textsuperscript{62}

What has dramatically changed is the Navy’s policy on alcohol use and abuse within its ranks since the demise of the Age of Sail, which coincided with the abolishment of those troublesome twins, the spirit ration and flogging. For example, in 1972 the Navy opened its doors for the first Alcohol Rehabilitation Center. In 1995, the Secretary of the Navy launched the alcohol deglamorizing “Right Spirit Campaign,” which boasts “a reduction of incidents from a high of 6,815 in 1996 to 4,164 in 2000. DWI arrests were reduced from 1,795 in 1996 to 920 in 2000.”\textsuperscript{63}

Fewer Sailors today are staggering around in the shoes of the larger-than-life Drunken Sailor. In the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, probably the only official use of grog in the Navy takes place aboard \textit{USS Constitution}, when her crew members toast the ship’s October 21, 1797 “birthday” every year. During the celebration, the Sailors are provided with small servings, made with liquor of a much lower proof than what their professional ancestors were accustomed to drinking.

\textsuperscript{60} Fowler, \textit{Jack Tars}, 126.
\textsuperscript{61} John B. Dale, \textit{Journal} (1844), courtesy \textit{USS Constitution} Museum.

\textbf{Journal of the War of 1812, Volume 12, No. 4, Page 18.}
WAR LEADER PROFILE
FELIX GRUNDY
1777-1840

The responsibility for the War of 1812 rested with “James Madison, Felix Grundy, and the Devil.”

Grundy was a lightening rod. His powerful arguments in support of the War Hawk cause, his excellent advocacy skills honed in hundreds of courtrooms on the frontier, where he had lost three brothers to Indian attacks, and his position as spokesman for Tennessee and the Republicans, assured that he would not grace the Thanksgiving tables in Boston or Hartford.

Born in western Virginia, he held many public offices in Kentucky and Tennessee on both sides of the Bench, when by 1811 he was elected to represent Nashville, Tennessee, in the 12th United States Congress. In Congress he was soon allied with Henry Clay (1777-1852) and John C. Calhoun (1782-1850), other War Hawks, who some say stampeded the United States into war primarily to support western economic interests.

Grundy grated New England sensibilities and pleased his fellow westerners. He never tried to temper a political attack on his enemies: New England politicians supported the undermining of Jefferson’s economic coercion policies (and that was a wrong-headed position!). Many stood in outright opposition to the War even after it was declared (and that was wrong-headed, too). But his vehemence was the highest over the issue of taxes to support the conduct of the war. On this issue alone, his political enemies were guilty of “moral treason.”

While it was true that he personally saw the Embargo as a half-measure and defensive tactics against the Indians unproductive, he nonetheless insisted that a war was necessary, challenging all who held a different view, including Republican John Randolph of Roanoke (1773-1833).

He viciously bristled with indignation. National action was required to prevent the loss of self-respect at home, the loss America’s respectability abroad, and the loss of a viable economic future on the North American continent. When other War Hawks failed to carry the day in congressional debates, Grundy came forward as the most vocal and effective of Madison's policy advocates on the War.

Reelected to the 13th United States Congress, seemingly at the height of his power, he resigned to return to Tennessee in 1814. In later years he continued to serve in the public arena returning to the Congress as a U.S. Senator in 1829. He was appointed 13th Attorney General of the United States in 1839 by President Martin Van Buren (1782-1862), a position he held when he died on December 19, 1840.

NOTE: His influence was more than superficially apparent. Grundy was a friend and a mentor to future President James K. Polk (1795-1849), an ardent expansionist and supporter of Manifest Destiny in the decades after the War of 1812. The President that presided over the acquisition of the greater part of western United States even purchased the Grundy’s home called "Grundy Place," changed the name to "Polk Place," and lived there until he died after his presidency. The buildings were demolished in 1901.

Reference:
There was a time in this country when citizens, some quite ordinary in appointment, could write the President of the United States and receive a personal reply. At times these exchanges of letters were continuous and covered topics of national importance. After the attack on the *USS Chesapeake* by the *HMS Leopard*, on June 22, 1807, William Tatham (1752-1819) exchanged such a series of letters with Thomas Jefferson. Long buried in the National Archives but glimpsed in 1936 within the pages of the *William and Mary Quarterly*, this series is remarkable not only for their existence, but also for the quality and quantity of “intelligence” information that was directly available to the country's Chief Executive. Who is to say that the enhancements to the seacoast fortification along the entire length of the country were not influenced by this series of letters on the Defense of Norfolk in 1807?

Norfolk, July 1, 1807,

*Dr. Sir:* Official communications will have been made to you, from this place, touching proceedings respecting a Flag of Truce which arrived here last Friday, & was immediately ordered off. As I just carted my boat from the North Landing (of which I gave you a description in my last) & arrived here at the very moment the Flag vessel was sent away, I determined on following her down to observe her motions, with three other persons with me; and I saw her safe in Lynnhaven Bay that Evening, morning, I found her at anchor near the three double Deckers, which you will find described in the sketch annexed. I returned from Lynnhaven Bay last Evening, but have nothing to report that indicates and inclination (in these ships) to disturb the quiet of this country; unless landing for water (or some similar occasion) on Cape Henry, which I thought they intended to do yesterday morning should be deemed such.

I have been near them every day since Friday last, & have seen numbers of our vessels pass near them without molestation: their tenders have generally weighed Anchor, early every morning, by signals; and on Sunday morning one of them looked into the little Inlet where I ran into a safe port through the breakers, with the help of throwing out my ballast, I was out of

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*The Tatham-Jefferson Correspondence on the Defense of Norfolk (1807)*

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their reach before they came close in shore; & have, therefore, no means of ascertaining whether they expected to catch me at anchor in the Inlet (for I out sailed their Hampton boat); or whether they casually visited that spot, in their daily practice of coasting along the shore.

I have sketched my idea (herewith) of Gun-Boat Cuts from London Bridge to Doziers Bridge &c; having examined the premises sufficiently to confirm me in my former opinion of the advantage & utility of this operation.

I cannot now touch the subject of fortifying the whole entrance of the Chesapeake, & thereby covering the interim from New York to Georgia, in a great degree. All I can hint of it is that it contemplates a combination of Fortifications, Gun-boats, Beacons, Floating Batteries, Large Ships of War, Chevauz de Frize (Editor: a defensive barrier; an example, would be a weighted boom across a river to restrict access upstream) &c. &c, -- and has for its object the keeping of a maritime enemy certainly out of our ports, by a concentration of force at our principal Inlet. I will not undertake to assert that I may not be mistaken; but as to the Period for such an effort, & the expediency of such great expense. Certainly however, the gun boat system may be greatly aided by the communications I have proposed; and I have not a Doubt of that, a survey of this part of the County would be fully justified.

I write you in great haste: -- Captain Decatur's appointment to the Command of the Chesapeake, which was announced last night, has silenced the Din of arms; & the People are quiet till your orders shall set them loose again.

I have the honor to be,

Dr. Sir, with great respect
Your obt H servt

Wm Tatham

T. Jefferson - -
President of the U. States
&c&c&c.

William Tatham, son of a minister, immigrated at age 17 from England in 1769 and was well familiar with the Virginia and North Carolina coastlines. He was a businessman and an entrepreneur engaged in development and canal projects in this area throughout his life. Jefferson answered this letter and requested the writer to keep him informed. Tatham wrote to the President almost every day up to August 1, 1807, and less frequently thereafter. He has asked for payment for his services and late that month, Jefferson asked that further letters from Tatham, including any claims for payment, be directed to the Secretary of the Navy.

Editor: This letter and biographic information was taken from a pamphlet: The Defense of Norfolk in 1807, edited by Norma Lois Paterson for the Norfolk County Historical Society of Chesapeake, Virginia, in 1970. It relies in part on the William and Mary Quarterly (W&MQ) article, “Letters of William Tatham,” edited by Elizabeth Gregory McPherson (See: W&MQ, 2nd Series, XVI (July, 1936), pp. 363-367). Both of these references are in the Editor's library.
1811: The Last Year of Peace

Like the militiamen behind the hasty defense thrown up at Tippecanoe or the naval gunner aboard the USS President off Cape Henry in 1811, during times of personal and national crisis, it is hard to grasp the events having true significance. The run-up to war is not always apparent and political and military events are not always the most important. Here are some of the events occurring during the last year of peace. Which of these events were more important than the Battle of Tippecanoe or the Little Belt Affair?

Scottish anatomist Charles Bell (1774-1842) writes his New Idea of the Anatomy of the Brain.

British engineer Sir John Rennie (1794-1874) completes the Waterloo Bridge in London.

Italian savant Amadeo Avogadro (1776-1856) states his hypothesis on the composition of gases.

German historian Berthold Niebuhr (1776-1831) writes his Roman History.

American abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) is born on June 4th.

Large numbers of Welsh Protestants leave the Anglican Church during “the Great Schism”.

German composer Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827) writes his piano sonata, 'Les Adieux'.

English novelist Jane Austen (1775-1817) writes her Sense and Sensibility.

The population of Great Britain reaches 12.5 million: a 2.1 million increase since 1801.

Hungarian composer Franz Liszt (1811-1886) is born on October 22nd.

English King George III is declared insane; the Prince Regent assumes limited 12-month powers.

Russian settlers land at Bodega Bay in California and establish Fort Ross.

Both Venezuela and Paraguay declare their independence from Spain.

Austria declares itself bankrupt.

Mehemet Ali, founder of modern Egypt, massacres the Mamluks at Cairo.

American millionaire John Jacob Astor plants a trading post at Astoria on the Pacific Coast.

The British, under the Duke of Wellington, are fighting the French in Iberia.

And, oh yes, the United States elects the “War Hawk” Congress.
(FROM PAGE 4) Columbus, Ohio: In what was described as a rare moment when legislators rise above politics, the Ohio Senate concurred with House amendments and sent legislation to the Governor Ted Strickland creating Ohio's War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission last Fall. Good news for Ohio. Funding of the events and celebrations remain a political concern. Historians welcome this “bipartisanship.” A thorough discussion of the present and future budget battles in Ohio is found in William Hershey’s Dayton Daily News article, published November 21, 2009.

St. Catherine's, Ontario, Canada: The James A. Gibson Library at Brock University in St. Catherine's recently received a supporting grant to assure the safety and preservation of a significant War of 1812 archive. The Niagara Collection housed within the University Library’s Special Collection Department will benefit from a $160,000 grant supporting a $382,000 project to preserve the material. The Canadian Heritage and Official Languages Ministry announced the grant. Renovations will not only preserve what the University owns but will provide space to collect and preserve additional resources of high research value. The project should be completed by late February 2010. By The Niagara Review, November 25, 2009.

Norfolk County, Ontario, Canada: If you have an extra $1 million or so and want to fund War of 1812 bicentennial events, the Curator of the Port Dover Harbour Museum is looking for you. His plea and announcement went out through the News Centre at CD98.9 Radio, last fall.

Honoring the Veterans of the War

Milwaukee County, Wisconsin: Researchers seeking to identify, mark, and preserve historical grave sites have run into legal roadblocks in Milwaukee. It seems that burials at state or county owned cemeteries are covered by privacy provisions of either state or federal law and are closed to non-relative based inquiries. This appears so even if the death and burial took place more than a century ago. Researcher Tom Ludka sought access to records from a mental hospital cemetery at which the last burial was recorded in 1914. He was denied. Lawyers are involved. This could take a while. By Tom Tolan of The Journal Sentinel, November 29, 2009.

Lansingburgh, New York: Another town; another neglected cemetery with grave sites of veterans of the War of 1812. This time a New York State Senator, Roy McDonald, R-Saratoga, meets with a local historical society to assess the prospects of preserving and protecting the Lansingburg Old Village Cemetery. There are plans for historic marker restoration, land clearing and new fencing, and perhaps partnering with the State Department of Parks, Restoration and Historic Preservation as well as “adopt-a-grave” programs to raise necessary funds. The Journal will revisit this effort to keep the readers informed. From an article by Tom Caprood at the Troy Record, November 21, 2009.

South Kingston, Rhode Island: About two miles north of old U.S. Highway 1 in South Kingston, look for the War Memorial on School Street. There you will find the names of the men who fought in this nation's wars, including the War of 1812, up to its placement in 1932. But don't be so sure that all who fought from this area are on the Memorial. Just ask Priscella Toursey Chappell, featured in a South County Independent news article last November. She is seeking to confirm that her relative, who actually fought for the country but was omitted from the Memorial, secures his place in history. By Arline A. Flemming, for the Independent.
Huntsville, Alabama: In another “mystery from history” story, Ms. Linda Nelson, with the Limestone County Historical Society is working to bring reverent order out of the chaos caused by neglect at the Old New Garden Cemetery near here. The site is one of 270 public and private cemeteries in the county and badly needs work. William Levesque, a Methodist preacher and War of 1812 veteran is known to rest here. Besides the clean-up and monument restoration, the Society has convinced the County to protect the site with an earthen berm from oncoming traffic and lobbied for the installation of a signal to further slow and divert the passing traffic which in the past have driven into and through the cemetery grounds. By Erica Jacobson, The Huntsville Times, November 25, 2009.

PRE-WAR NATURAL DISASTER AT NEW MADRID

On December 16, 1811, the frontiers of the United States literally “rocked.” Twice on that day and later in succeeding months the Mississippi River Valley experienced what has been described as the most intense inter-plate earthquake in the Valley, ever. The New Madrid Earthquake was strongly felt over 50,000 square miles and moderately felt in more than 1 million square miles from its epicenter in Missouri.

Effects were more than dramatic. The great Mississippi River changed its course and according to some witnesses may have flowed for a time northward. Other rivers became land-locked lakes. The earthquake rang church bells as far away as New York City, Boston, Massachusetts and York (Toronto) Ontario. Sidewalks cracked in Washington, D.C.

An aftershock almost equal to the first occurred January 23, 1812. A second major shock came February 7th, destroying the village at New Madrid. At St. Louis, many of the few existing homes were severely damaged. Toppled chimneys were common. Territorial Governor William Clark, of Lewis and Clark fame, may have dispatched the first request to Washington for federal disaster assistance for the relief of residents of the area.

The New Madrid Seismic Zone is still active. There has been more than 4,000 earthquakes in the area since 1974. In 1811 the lack of infrastructure throughout the Mississippi Valley and the sparse population saved the nation from the worst of the severe effects of this pre-war disaster.
WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

PRE-WAR ERA OF THE WAR OF 1812

Find each of the following CAPITAL-LETTERED words by reading the letters in the diagram forward, backward, up, down and diagonally, but always in a straight line. Each of the following words are found in this diagram.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARBARY (Coast)</th>
<th>BERLINDECREE</th>
<th>CADORE (Letter)</th>
<th>CHESAPEAKE (USS)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Derna (Tripoli)</td>
<td>EMBARGOACT</td>
<td>HARRISON (W.H.)</td>
<td>JEFFERSON (Thomas)</td>
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<td>MACONSBILL</td>
<td>MADISON (James)</td>
<td>MILAN (Decree)</td>
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<td>President (USS)</td>
<td>RODGERS (John)</td>
<td>TIPPECANOE</td>
<td>WARHAWKS</td>
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Journal of the War of 1812, Volume 12, No. 4, Page 25.
RETROSPECTIVE:
A DIFFERENT KIND OF
BOOK REVIEW

“1812” The Story of the War of 1812 in Song and Story by Francesca Falk Miller. Chicago, IL: Walter D. Bauman, Publisher, 1935. 159pp. - by Harold W. Youmans

Staring out from my bookshelves in the home library is a curious little book containing hundreds of poems attributed to the author (for no other authorship is credited or referenced). Research on the origins of this book reveals that it was written and published for and in concert with the National Society, United States Daughters of 1812 (USD) in 1935. In seventeen chapters the author provides verse of varying lengths on the full range of the American historical experience running up to and during the War of 1812.

Here is a sample dedicated to Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's “Little Fleet”

“A LITTLE FLEET”

A fleet of wooden vessels
On a lake of azure blue,
With polka-dotted islands
In a green and gold tattoo.

A fleet of nine brave frigates
From native timber built,
Abreast Sandusky's shoreline
In sweeping beauty split.

The timber green is vigorous,
The sails are white and fair,
And Perry – Commodore and chief –
Beholds it – waiting there!

And like another little fleet,
In far-off glorious day,
He knows the gallant wooden ships
Will go – their famous way!

(The other “little fleet” is described as the one John Paul Jones (1747-1792) drove to Flamborough Head in the North Sea during the American Revolution, there to take on two British frigates with vessels described then as half-rotten old hulks.)

“1812” was dedicated to Captain Jehiel Dayton and Jonathan Brewster each of whom served in the War of 1812. Captain Dayton commanded a volunteer artillery company in Colonel Pliny Adam's Regiment of New York Militia and was probably at Plattsburg in September 1814. The service record of Jonathan Brewster has not been identified.

In the 1930's the National Society, USD, was headed by Mrs. John Francis Weinmann, to whom much of the credit for this book is given. This hereditary society remains fully active today and has participating chapters in 41 states with its headquarters, museum and library in Washington, D.C.

Francesca Falk Miller (1888-1969) was a poet and playwright of note whose works included one-act plays on historical themes, particularly Abraham Lincoln, and the various Christmas sagas. She was a longtime associate of the National League of American Pen Women. For a time, too, she was associated with Rouben Mamoulan (1897-1987), the stage producer who first brought Porgy and Bess (1935), Oklahoma! (1943), and many other plays to the American theater.

Several of her works are within the Rouben Mamoulan Collection at the Library of Congress. One of her books was found in Harry S. Truman's study at Independence, Missouri, while his collection was integrated into the Truman Presidential Library.

The Library of Congress lists at least eighteen published works by Ms. Miller, including this one (LCCN: 35018987). The Online Computer Library Center's (OCLCs) WorldCat shows that 43 libraries hold this 1935 book. Finding the book may be difficult. While the Library of Congress catalogs this book under “United States – History – War of 1812 – Poetry,” the OCLC lists the book only under the Subject Descriptor: “Autographs.” Incidentally the Editor's copy is autographed by Ms. Miller.

Undoubtedly the most famous poem from the War of 1812 is lawyer Francis Scott Key's Star-Spangled Banner.
War of 1812 Events Calendar
March – May 2010

March 20 – 21:
The Twentieth Annual War of 1812 in the West Symposium, General Daniel Bissell House, St. Louis, Mo. For more information contact David Bennett at 816.582.0280 or email at ebclemson@aol.com

April 10:
The U.S. Daughters of 1812 will host their annual meeting at Washington, DC. Details pending.

April 17 – 18:
Yesteryear's Essentials: Material Culture for the War of 1812 Reenacting Conference. Fort Meigs, Ohio, 29100 W. River Road, Perrysburg, Ohio, 419.874.4121 or 1-800.283.8916.

April 20 – May 1:
The Second Annual War of 1812 Symposium, Freight House Restaurant, Ogdensburg, NY. Or more information contact Douglas R. Cubbison at whitestar1864@hotmail.com or Michael Whittaker at fort1749@yahoo.com

May 1 – 2:
Battle on Longwoods, presented by the Upper Thames Military Reenactors Society. A traveling adventure near London, Ontario, Canada. Contact the Society at www.royal-scots.com

May 8 – 9:
Battle of Oswego at Fort Ontario State Historic Site, 1 East 4th Street, Oswego, NY. For more information call the Park at 315.343.4711.

May 14 – 15:
Drums at the Rapids: Miniature War Gaming Conference. Fort Meigs, Ohio, 29100 W. River Road, Perrysburg, Ohio, 419.874.4121 or 1-800.283.8916.

May 29 – 30:
First Siege 1813. Highlight: “The 1813 Patrol.” Fort Meigs, Ohio, 29100 W. River Road, Perrysburg, Ohio, 419.874.4121 or 1-800.283.8916.

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The Journal of the War of 1812 will list your event free of charge. For a listing, contact the Editor at: the1812archive@gmail.com

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March 1 for the Spring Issue
June 1 for the Summer Issue
September 1 for the Fall Issue

Embargo was a military term. According to William Duane (1760-1835), in his Military Dictionary published at Philadelphia in 1810, Embargo was simply: A prohibition for any ships to leave a port; generally enforced on the rupture of any two or more nations, or by law. The 1807 Embargo was 'by law,' The 1812 Embargo was announced under the 'Rules of War.'
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Next Issue of the *Journal of the War of 1812*:

Spanish-American Relations and the War of 1812

U. S. Marine Captain John Williams died fighting in Spanish East Florida. Where is his grave site?

Also next Quarter: Details of the West Florida Rebellion

Send your questions on Spanish-American Relations to the Editor at the1812archive@gmail.com