

4. The Waterfront



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Burlington's shoreline has undergone many changes since the War of 1812. For example, the area at the intersection of Battery Street and Maple Street once lay at the

water's edge and the town's first wharf stood just to the west. On August 2, 1813, when a small British naval force fired on Burlington, the Americans positioned two scows, each armed with a 12-pound cannon, near this wharf. In 1886, while workmen were digging a trench for a sewer line in this vicinity they turned up "an ancient and corroded cannon ball" that was "buried about ten feet beneath the surface." Later in the war, in September of 1814, a few hundred sick and wounded soldiers evacuated from Plattsburgh N.Y. arrived in Burlington at this



wharf. In the 19th century, railroad and lumber companies used fill and cribwork to create all of the land that now lies west of this intersection.

5. Army & Navy Bakery Sites

Brothers Nathaniel (1774-1858) and Henry (1781-1860) Mayo, natives of Massachusetts, moved to Burlington from Orwell, VT, in the early



1800s. At the beginning of the War of 1812, they received a government contract to supply fresh bread to the army stationed at Burlington and for the Lake Champlain naval fleet. They operated one bakery on the south side of Maple Street between Battery Street and South Champlain Street and

another in the basement of a two story brick store on the west side of lower Battery Street between King Street and Maple Street.



6. The Pomeroy House



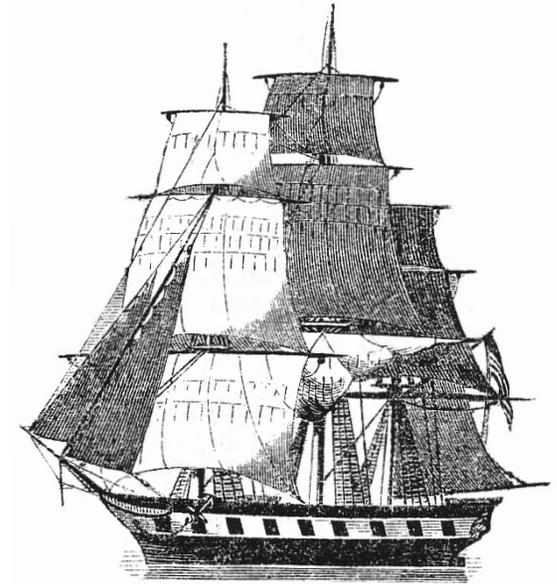
Dr. John Pomeroy built this brick building on the east side of Battery Street ca. 1797. Pomeroy, a Massachusetts native born in 1764, moved to Burlington in 1792 by way of Cambridge, VT. In Burlington, Dr. Pomeroy helped to establish the University of Vermont's medical school in 1801 and became an officer of the Vermont Medical Society. During the War of 1812, Dr. Pomeroy occasionally assisted the army surgeons at the cantonment, especially during the influenza epidemic of the winter of 1812-1813, in which several soldiers died each day. In this work, Pomeroy was joined by his 24-year old son, Cassius, a recently licensed physician. Cassius Pomeroy died in the epidemic in March of 1813. For his father, it was "a shock, the traces of which years did not erase." Dr. John Pomeroy, however, continued his work and lived at this house until his own death in 1844.

7. John P. Wiswall's House Site

Sometimes the relationship between soldiers and civilians in Burlington became contentious. The most serious incident occurred at the southwest corner of Battery Street and College Street, the former site of John Parker Wiswall's residence. Wiswall (ca.1771-1828), a merchant from Albany, NY, moved here with his family early in 1813. Wiswall was "outspoken in his opinions," by which he "made himself obnoxious to the soldiers." Some even suspected him of being a spy and of meeting British agents on Juniper Island out in the bay. On the night of May 16, 1814, several soldiers attacked Wiswall's house. Wiswall resisted with deadly force and at least one soldier, Pvt. John Hill of Pennsylvania, a member of the 22nd Infantry, died of a gunshot wound that he sustained in the fight. The next evening, the soldiers returned and burned Wiswall's house down. The family fled to Cambridge, VT, and eventually returned to NY.



Burlington, Vermont War of 1812 Sites: Battery Street Area



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Introduction

Burlington, Vermont, played an important role in the War of 1812, a three year long conflict between Great Britain and the United States. The town served as a supply depot, a naval repair station, winter encampment, and hospital site. The number of American troops stationed at Burlington fluctuated from a few hundred to over 4,000. A number of sites near Burlington's Waterfront were directly involved with the events of the time.

1. Thomas Macdonough's H.Q.



Many of the highest ranking American officers and some paroled British officers sent to Burlington during the War of 1812 lived in hotels or private

homes around the town rather than at the military cantonment (see #3). One building occupied by an American officer still stands at the southwest corner of Pine Street and Main Street. Although this building has been extensively modified, it is one of the few in Burlington remaining from the War of 1812 era. Samuel Hitchcock (1755-1813), a prominent attorney and judge, built this residence ca. 1806. It reportedly served as the temporary residence of Commodore Thomas Macdonough U.S.N. in the spring and summer of 1813 while he was repairing some damaged ships and refitting a number of merchant vessels into warships for the American lake fleet in Burlington Bay. Local tradition

holds that a 24-pound cannon ball fired from a British ship struck this building during the brief attack on the town on August 2, 1813.

Thomas Macdonough would eventually gain fame for his victory at the Battle of Plattsburgh on September 11, 1814.



Com. Thomas Macdonough
(1783-1825)

Lossing 1868

The Battery Street Sites



2. Chandonette's Tavern Site



During the War of 1812, some enterprising citizens quickly built or converted a number of structures along Battery Street, then known as Water Street, into "cheap boarding houses, taverns and rum-shops" to accommodate the rapid influx of newcomers. In the latter part of the war, Margaret Chandonette, formerly of Paris, France, owned the tavern located on the northeast corner of Battery Street and Main Street. It was "a square, framed house, two-stories high, painted white and surmounted by a gambrel roof" and "continually crowded with the soldiers and camp followers, who spent their time in drinking and carousing."

The presence of the military in Burlington also provided economic opportunities for many other local businessmen and craftsmen including tailors, boot makers, blacksmiths, book sellers and coopers.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY,
TEN Journeymen Coopers, to
work at trimming on Go-
vernment provisions in this place.
Generous wages will be given.
ALSO,
Wanted Five Thousand Hoop
Poles, for which cash will be
paid.
C. SEVERANCE.
Burlington, April 8.

3. Battery Park



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Today's Battery Park represents only a small portion of the extensive military cantonment established in Burlington during the War of 1812.

On ground first cleared in June of 1812 by the men of 11th U.S. Infantry, the cantonment eventually featured several barracks, a powder magazine, a guard house, a gun shed, an armory, stables, storehouses, and a hospital. In 1813, Lt. Sylvester Churchill of the 3rd U.S. Artillery, formerly of Woodstock, VT, supervised the construction of a thirteen cannon emplacement on the edge of the bluff overlooking Burlington Bay. This fortification was built of sand and sod blocks, the latter taken from yards about the town. On August 2, 1813, a small British naval force engaged the battery and the lower part of the town in a cannonade that lasted about a half hour, with no significant casualties reported on either side.

At or near the Battery the U.S. Army executed at least three soldiers for desertion; including Peter Bailey, Zalmon Lord, and John Cummings.

After the army left Burlington in 1815, a portion of the cantonment was leased to the town for a poor house, while other buildings were looted for their construction materials. In the 1820s, the Champlain Glass Company occupied some of the buildings, while others were offered for sale. A few houses still standing in Burlington are believed to have been built from the cantonment's remnants. However, at least the powder magazine and possibly part of the hospital remained on site as late as 1838. The U.S. government finalized the sale of the land in 1831. In 1840, public-spirited individuals donated Battery Park to Burlington. Churchill's Battery was partially leveled in 1853 when the area was transformed into recreational space. It was completely leveled in 1938, when the WPA built the low wall at the western edge of the park.