

Fort McHenry

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine
Maryland



The Guns that Saved Baltimore in 1814

Library Field Guide No. 3

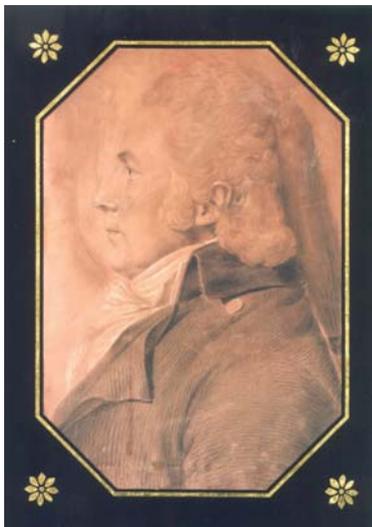
How big were the guns that defended Baltimore and are there any left?

The answer is they were very big. The largest were 36-pounder (weight of iron ball) French naval guns weighing 10,000 lbs, each gun requiring 21 men. The original guns have not survived.

To provide a visual answer to these questions the National Park Service constructed a full-scale exhibit, one-third of the original 240-foot Upper Water Battery that saved Baltimore during the War of 1812 - complete with cannons. A grant from the NPS Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, provided funds for the exhibit. By utilizing GPS satellite technology, an 1819 map and the surviving walls of the Star Fort, the site was rediscovered.

Captain George Stiles, 1st Marine Artillery of the Union

Captain George Stiles
(1760-1819) later became
Mayor of Baltimore.
(Courtesy, Stiles descendant)



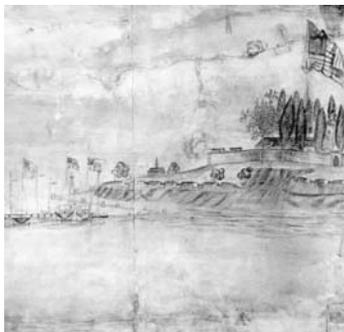
In 1808, Baltimore Captain George Stiles organized a naval militia corps of 200 mariners called "The First Marine Artillery of the Union."

In 1813, they constructed two earthen gun batteries with gun decks long the shore, known as the Marine Batteries. These batteries contained thirty-six French naval guns. In September 1814, Stiles' command was replaced by the U.S. Chesapeake Flotilla, an amphibious naval corps who had earlier defended southern tidewater Maryland and the U.S. Capitol.

In 1829, these batteries were removed and a larger Civil War earthen battery was built, seen today. In 1830, the great French guns were sold at public auction.

An Exhibit: The Marine Battery at Fort McHenry (Completion date: Fall 2005)

Untitled watercolor, ca.
1815.
(Courtesy, Maryland Historical
Society)



The Leige Foundry that created the original French guns in 1786 produced the cannon exhibited at Fort McHenry.

The original guns 18-, and 36-Pdrs were from the French warship *L'Eole* after the ship was nearly destroyed in an Atlantic storm in 1806. Taken to Baltimore she was dismantled and her guns were in 1813 loaned to Fort McHenry for its defense.

Facts: 36-Pdr French Gun Exhibit

Tube wgt:	10,000 lbs.
Carriage wgt:	1,600 lbs
Shot wgt:	36 lbs
Crew:	21 men
Date Cast:	1809, Leige, Belgium
Model:	1786

