

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK  
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Form 10-300  
 (Rev. 6-72)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
 (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM  
 LANDMARKS

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maryland
COUNTY: Baltimore (City)
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: Constellation
AND/OR HISTORIC: United States Frigate Constellation

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Pier 4, Constellation Dock			
CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 3rd	
STATE: Maryland	CODE: 24	COUNTY: Baltimore	CODE: 510

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Constellation Restoration Committee; Mr. Donald F. Stewart	STATE: Maryland
STREET AND NUMBER: Pier 4, Constellation Dock	
CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore	
STATE: Maryland	CODE: 24

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Registry of Deeds; Baltimore City Courthouse	COUNTY: Baltimore
STREET AND NUMBER: St. Paul and Lexington Streets	
CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore	
STATE: Maryland	CODE: 24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey	STATE: D.C.	20240	CODE: 11
DATE OF SURVEY: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress/Annex			
STREET AND NUMBER: Division of Prints and Photographs			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington			
ENTRY NUMBER			
DATE			

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The United States Frigate Constellation was considered the "most beautiful and perfect ship in her class in the world."<sup>1</sup> Completed in 1797, the Constellation contained three masts and thirty-six guns. According to the original draft plans, she was 163 feet 3 inches in length between perpendiculars, 167 feet 7 inches on the gun deck, and 136 feet in length on the keel for tonnage. The original and lowest waterline was 3 feet 3 inches above base with other water levels spaced at exact 3 foot intervals.

The present vessel is the result of 150 years of alterations and renovations. As a consequence of the engagement with the French frigate La Vengeance, in which the Constellation lost her mast, February 1-2, 1800, she reported for refitting at Norfolk. From 1805 to 1812, she was laid up in dry dock at Washington Navy Yard. In 1812, she was rebuilt with 12 inches added to her beam. Again from 1845 to 1853, the Constellation was docked in ordinary at Norfolk.

Between 1853 and 1855, major renovations were accomplished at Gasport Navy Yard. Here the Constellation was lengthened 12 feet and rebuilt as a sloop-of-war or corvette. These additions lead to the present controversy as to the Constellation's integrity. Franklin D. Roosevelt, while Under Secretary of the Navy, expressed the attitude which makes this controversy moot. Roosevelt stated that, "The spirit and soul of the Constellation is still on board; may she always be a living inspiration to the nation."<sup>2</sup>

The Constellation is presently undergoing massive restoration with the intent of demonstrating to visitors the actual lifestyle of sailors during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Upon boarding the ship, one is immediately impressed with its size. This level is the spar (open top) deck, named for the heavy spars which tower overhead. Located aft is a twenty-four pounder carronade, a short range cannon used to destroy an enemy ship's rigging. The binnacle, which houses the compass and the helm are located astern. Toward the forward part of this deck is located the main hatch; just forward of the main hatch is located the belfry. The forward part of this deck is called the forcastle.

The second level or Gun Deck contained 26 eighteen pounder cannons. There are two of the original cannons present. Plans are to have replicas placed at the gun ports. Towards the front of this deck is located the ships galley with a large fireplace. It was here that all hot meals were prepared. Located midship is the bilge pump. Originally manual, it is used to raise water from below where it can drain out through the scupper holes

<sup>1</sup>Philadelphia Saturday Inquirer, 10 July 1845, in Howard I. Chapelle, The Constellation Question, P. 87.

<sup>2</sup>Roosevelt notes quoted in Charles Scarlett, Jr., Leon Polland, et al, "Yankee Race Horse; The U.S.S. Constellation," Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. 56, No. 1, March, 1961, p. 29.

(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) September 7, 1797

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education           | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering         | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry            | losophy                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention           | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          | itarian                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The U.S. Frigate Constellation, launched at Baltimore on September 7, 1797, is one of the two surviving vessels of the original United States Navy. Like the Constitution, the other survivor of the Republic's first naval force, the Constellation saw long and gallant service during the age of the fighting sail. Nicknamed the "Yankee Racehorse," because of her speed, she played an outstanding role in the undeclared Naval War with France, under Captain Thomas Truxtun, "Father of the United States Navy;" fought in two wars against the Barbary Pirates, carried the United States Flag into Chinese waters on the voyage that saw the genesis of the "Open Door Policy," and served in both home waters and foreign stations throughout the Civil War. A training ship in World War I, the Constellation was commissioned as relief flag ship of the Atlantic Fleet in World War II by then President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In this role she ended a career spanning the century and a half that paralleled the nation's formation and rise to world power.

History\*

The Constellation was the first of six frigates built in conformity with a resolution of Congress approved on March 27, 1794, precipitated by the preying upon our shipping by the Barbary States. Built at Samuel and Joseph Sterrett's shipyard in Baltimore, with David Stodder, builder and Captain Thomas Truxtun, last in seniority of the six captains named to command the new frigates, in command of the operation. The Constellation was launched on September 7, 1797, commissioned and put to sea on June 24, 1798.

President Washington was determined that the nation should have a standing navy and not one of expedience only. Going against the wishes of the majority of Congress, and with the view of a permanent navy, he ordered that new ships be built rather than be purchased for temporary use against the corsairs. The conflict with the Barbary States ended before the ships were constructed; this reopened the controversy. At last a partial victory was won when Congress authorized the construction of three vessels.

\*Statement of Significance taken from the Special Report "The U.S. Frigate Constellation" by Charles W. Snell, Landmark Files, Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Chapelle, Howard I, The Constellation Question, (Washington, 1970).  
 Chapelle, Howard I, Truxtun of the Constellation: The Life of Commodore Thomas Truxtun, U.S. Navy, 1755-1822 (Baltimore, 1956).  
 Scarlette, Charles, Jr., Pollard, Leon, Schneid, John and Steward, Donald, "Yankee Race Horse" The U.S.S. Constellation, Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. 56, No. 1, March 1961.  
 "U.S. Frigate Constellation," compiled by the Office of Naval Records and Library, Ships' Histories Section, Navy Department, Mimeographed report, restencilled: December, 1950.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

UTM 18.361000.434956

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **2 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Joseph Scott Mendinghall, Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **National Park Service, Historic Sites Survey**      DATE: **2/25/75**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1100 L Street NW.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington**      STATE: **D.C.**      CODE: **11**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
 (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) Designated: **May 23, 1963**      Date

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: **Cornelius Heine**      Date **9-5-75**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register      Date

**W. A. ...**      Date **9/25/75**

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation      Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Maryland	
COUNTY	Baltimore (City)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE

(Number all entries)

7. Description: (1)

Constellation

located on either side of the gun deck. Located at the rear of this level is the captain's quarters called the "Great Cabin Area." Separated from the open area of the gun deck by double bulk heads is a large dining room. In the second section of the captain's quarters is the center room or salon with a transom seat which runs along the stern. Off to either side of the captain's quarters is a stateroom; one used as a library/bathroom and the other as a bedroom.

There are two other levels below the gun deck. The birth was used as sleeping quarters for the crew and the aft ladder was used by midshipmen. There are quarters for the officers toward the rear. Finally there is the orlop deck which was used as the storage area. Ballast was placed on each side of the ship for stabilization. Gunpowder was also stored on this level.

Boundary Information and Justification

The Constellation has recently been given a permanent home at pier 4. The dock located at the south end of South Street at Pratt has likewise been named Constellation Dock. Pratt Street is located on the north and Calvert Street runs along the west side of the Basin. The boundary is described as follows: Beginning at the point of juncture of Constellation Dock (Pier) and the north shore of the Basin, proceed in a southerly direction along the west edge of the pier to its southernmost side, thence proceed in a westerly direction across the basin to the edge of the shore on the Calvert Street side, thence proceed north, thence east along the shoreline to the point of origin.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Maryland	
COUNTY Baltimore (City)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. Statement of Significance: (1)

Constellation

These new ships bore names selected by the President, they were the Constitution, built at Boston, the United States, built at Philadelphia and the Constellation--named for the union of the American Flag, representing a new constellation, built in Baltimore.

After much acrimony among the several officers responsible, including Truxtun, her future commander, the Constellation was launched with stirring ceremony on September 7, 1797 four months after the launching of the United States at Philadelphia, but more than a month before the Constitution at Boston.

The Constellation under Truxtun won two striking victories in the West Indies. The first came on February 9, 1799, when the new frigate defeated and captured the French frigate L'Insurgente and the second on the night of February 1-2, 1800, when she engaged the heavier French frigate LaVengeance and forced her to run into the port of Curacao in a sinking condition. The Constellation lost her main mast in the conflict but was the clearcut victor. For his victories in these early battles, Truxtun was awarded a gold medal.

In March, 1802, Murray sailed for Gibraltar to join the Mediterranean Squadron in the renewed war against the Barbary Pirates who had, as expected, broken the peace of a few years earlier. With peace restored in the Mediterranean, the Constellation was again called upon in the second struggle with Britain in 1812. Bottled up in the Chesapeake Bay, the Constellation was instrumental in thwarting an attempted British landing on Craney Island in Hampton Roads on June 22, 1813.

In 1815 the Constellation returned to the Mediterranean in the squadron under Stephen Decatur. She took part in the final subjugation of the Barbary Powers, fighting what was to be her last ship to ship action against the Algerian frigate Mashuda. In the ensuing years, save for periods of refitting or laying up in ordinary, the Constellation served on various foreign stations, off South America, in the Pacific, the Mediterranean and the West Indies. She cruised to the Orient as the flagship of Commodore Lawrence Kearney, assigned to command the East India Squadron ordered to protect American interest in China against Great Britain's domination. In the course of negotiations Kearney secured for the United States commercial privileges similar to those recently granted to England. Thanks in great part to the activities of Kearney the most favored nation doctrine was adopted by the Chinese, and was subsequently embodied in the first American treaty with China in 1844.

En route home in 1843, the vessel called at the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) to protest the island's forced cession to England. The American commander entertained King Kamehameha III aboard the Constellation and lent the threat of American guns to support Hawaiian independence. Britain finally refused the cession and a month later the Constellation left the Islands.

(Continued)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Maryland	
COUNTY Baltimore (City)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. Statement of Significance: (2)

Constellation

Recommissioned in 1859, after extensive alterations, she was ordered to the mouth of Africa's Congo River to operate against the flourishing slave trade there. The Civil War broke out while the Constellation was on station off West Africa. On May 21, 1861, her officers and crew unaware of the conflict between the North and South, the warship captured the slaver Triton out of Charleston--this proved to be one of the first captures of the war.

The Constellation's final years were rather uneventful, although she served the Navy well as training and gunnery-practice ship. Finally, in World War II, the Constellation was placed in full commission as relief flag ship of the Atlantic Fleet. After the war she was demasted and destined to be scrapped. The old warship was saved by concerned citizen groups and Congress authorized the Navy to return her to Baltimore where she could be restored and preserved at her place of origin.