

James Bard

United States, 1815–1897

Steamboat “Cayuga,” 1849

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Purchase, 1924.113

James Bard devoted a long and productive career to creating portraits of the steamboats that plied the Hudson River and coastal waters. These vessels offered travelers the combined benefits of comfort and high speed as they brought tourists to historic sites and to destinations known for beautiful scenery. Bard’s attention to detail and proportion in his ship portraits was so precise that shipbuilders reputedly swore that they could use his paintings to make design plans for these luxurious “floating palaces.”

Carlton Theodore Chapman

United States, 1860–1925

The East River, 1904

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Mrs. Carlton T. Chapman, 1938.425

The Brooklyn Bridge, completed in 1883, anchors Chapman’s view of the East River as it connects Manhattan and Brooklyn. The soaring Gothic-style arches that support the remarkably engineered structure nod to Old World aesthetics, while the activity on the river foregrounds New York’s modern maritime energy. The artist’s fluid paint handling enlivens the panorama of the busy harbor. Indeed, his visible brushwork animates the river’s surface, simulating the effects of tides and wakes.

Samuel Colman

United States, 1832–1920

The Narrows and Fort Lafayette, Ships Coming into Port, 1868

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, The Watson Fund, 1976.2

In Colman's sweeping view of the channel at the mouth of New York Harbor, the massive walls of Fort Lafayette, which had housed Confederate prisoners during the Civil War, dominates the center of the painting. Despite the painful memories that this infamous prison would have stirred in 1868, the mood of the work is tranquil. Colman bathes his vista in the golden glow of afternoon sun and populates the image with calm vignettes, including two artists observing the scene from the Brooklyn waterside, a fishing party moored off the shore, and majestic merchant vessels drifting in the far left distance.

Attributed to John Cleveley the Elder

England, circa 1712–1777

View of a Seaport, circa 1760

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of John MacGregor, 1855.1

Cleveley was a British marine painter whose view of a small port city is thought to depict Harwich in Essex, on the east coast of England. He carefully rendered a detailed harbor view, shipyard, and sailing vessels within a convincing atmosphere of coastal weather conditions. Such concerns for topographical precision as well as an expansive and naturalistic marine vista manifest the British appropriation of 17th-century Dutch painting styles.

Jasper Francis Cropsey

United States, 1823–1900

A Sketch of Castle Garden, 1851

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Thomas Jefferson Bryan Fund, 1977.76

Cropsey, who was trained as an architect, made a careful drawing of Castle Garden in 1851, keenly observing the intricacies of the structure and the site. He used that study for a series of works that exploited the picturesque possibilities of the old fort, built during the War of 1812 and later converted to a theater. This fluidly painted oil sketch is small but expansive, showing the harbor busy with maritime traffic below a dramatic sky. Cropsey presented this work to Jenny Lind, the Swedish soprano who made her American debut at Castle Garden in 1850.

Jasper Francis Cropsey

United States, 1823–1900

Castle Garden, New York, 1859

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Thomas Jefferson Bryan Fund, 1972.13

Cropsey returned to the Castle Garden subject throughout the 1850s, continuing to base his work on the initial sketch of 1851. In this later, larger painting, he shows the theater beneath a cloudy night sky with a full moon illuminating the dark waters that are still thronged with boats. He dramatically pairs the cold moonlight with the contrasting glow of lanterns, lending an aura of Romantic mystery to the looming mass of the fortress-turned-cultural-institution and its surrounding walkways.

Attributed to Johann Heinrich Jenny

Switzerland, 1786–1854

Foot of Cortlandt Street, 1818–19

Oil on panel

New-York Historical Society, Gift of the members of the Board of Trustees, 1948.576

Jenny catalogues the bustling waterfront at this historic port in great social and topographical detail. On September 7, 1807, Robert Fulton embarked from this spot on the first successful voyage of the steam-driven *Clermont*. The imposing Northern Hotel, a newly opened stagecoach and steamboat hotel, casts a broad shadow across the busy thoroughfare. The Cortlandt Street Ferry, with its prominent smokestack, docks in the river. Jenny populates the waterfront with diverse groups of people, including workers, children, and fashionable couples.

Andrew Melrose

United States, 1836–1901

New York Harbor and the Battery, 1885

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, James B. Wilbur Fund, 1939.585

Melrose combines landscape and genre imagery in this portrayal of New York's lively Battery Park and the busy port beyond. By 1885, Castle Garden, a former fort-turned-theater (and also depicted in nearby paintings by Jasper Francis Cropsey), had become a prominent immigration center. The foreground promenade provides a sunny stage for fashionable New Yorkers as well as recent arrivals still carrying their bundles and boxes, highlighting the coastal environment as a space of social intersections.

Edward Moran

United States (born England), 1829–1901

New York Harbor, circa 1880

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Purchase, 1935.71

In this view, looking north toward the Battery at the tip of Manhattan Island, Moran captures the bustle of the harbor. Steamships, tugboats, fishing trawlers, and pleasure boats compete for space in the crowded waters. The tugboat in the middleground sends a black plume of industrial smoke into the sky, creating a marked contrast with the more picturesque sailboats at left. Restless waters churn in the immediate foreground, demonstrating the painter's acclaimed skill in depicting the mass and motion of these ever-changing reflective surfaces.



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Arthur Quartley

United States (born France), 1839–1886

An April Day, New York, 1881

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, X.720

Quartley, an artist of great promise, died in 1886 after a short career of little more than a decade. When he exhibited this large and ambitious painting in 1881, critics lauded its lively brushwork and silver and gray tonalities. One commentator offered an eloquent tribute, writing, “the fickle sky, the force and sweep of the wind, and the swollen sea, admirably express the feeling of a characteristic *April Day*.”

Thomas Birch

United States (born England), 1779–1851

Marine View, 1835

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of The New York Gallery of the Fine Arts, 1858.13

Birch deftly fused marine and maritime genres, combining a precise treatment of atmospheric conditions and marine vistas with an attention to nautical detail. In his elegant *Marine View*, he demonstrates these skills. The sweeping seascape extends convincingly towards the horizon beneath Birch’s nuanced treatment of the clouds in the sky. In the foreground, he populates the rocky beach with a variety of distinct mariners and their paraphernalia.

Thomas Birch

United States (born England), 1779–1851

New York Harbor, 1831

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Mrs. Ethel McCullough Scott, John G. McCullough, and Mrs. Edith McCullough Heaphy, 1971.118

In a work that combines marine and maritime genres, Birch presents an expansive view of a beautifully realized waterway with flags flying, sails filled with wind, and whitecaps cresting. As with his *Marine View*, which hangs nearby, in *New York Harbor* Birch reserves more than half the painting for a depiction of the sky. Here, however, the painter offers a specific topography to go along with his treatment of the atmosphere and nautical vignettes. Indeed, many recognizable landmarks of New York's port rise in the distant background, demonstrating the painter's precision in capturing the coastal environment.

James Bard

United States, 1815–1897

Schooner "Lewis R. Mackey," 1854

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of George A. Zabriskie, 1947.66

Bard's delightful painting shows a typical Hudson River schooner sailing with flags and pennants flying—and in the company of sporting dolphins—on the wide expanse of Haverstraw Bay. This vessel was likely not a pleasure craft but a working boat that carried cargo to New York from the brickworks at Haverstraw. The scene reminds viewers that the Hudson River served many industries in the region and was then, as now, an important commercial waterway.

Thomas Birch

United States (born England), 1779–1851

Escape of the U.S. Frigate “Constitution,” 1838

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Bequest of
Matilda Wolfe Bruce, 1908.5

Birch applied Anglo-Dutch marine traditions in his spirited portrayals of successful American naval engagements, such as this rendering of the daring escape of the USS *Constitution* from the British fleet early in the War of 1812. With skillful seamanship, the *Constitution’s* Captain Isaac Hull kept the frigate ahead of the British for two days, even—as Birch shows—towing his ship when the breeze died down, before he eventually was able to escape.

After Thomas Birch

United States (born England), 1779–1851

Capture of HMS “Macedonian” by the U.S. Frigate “United States,” circa 1813

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Naval History
Society Collection, 1925.112

On October 25, 1812, the *United States*, commanded by Captain Stephen Decatur, captured the British frigate *Macedonian* after a 90-minute battle several hundred miles west of the Canary Islands. The victory marked a significant moment in American naval history, and was a cause for patriotic celebration and commemoration. This painting, based on a print by the noted marine artist Thomas Birch, appeared in the months immediately following the battle, demonstrating how quickly the scene became a recognizable motif in American visual culture.

William Joy

England, 1803–1867

After Dominic Serres, the Elder

England (born France), 1722–1793

Forcing the Hudson River Passage,

October 9, 1776, circa 1835

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of the Travelers Insurance Company, 1951.69

The British artist Joy painted this copy of Dominic Serres' representation of one of the most dramatic images of naval combat during the Revolutionary War. Three British frigates, HMS *Tartar*, *Roebuck*, and *Phoenix*, accompanied by several smaller vessels, sail boldly through the American defenses in the channel, gaining control of the Hudson River. The date of this painting, which Joy executed more than 50 years after the original naval encounter, demonstrates the continuing resonance that the battle had for English audiences.

James Guy Evans

United States (born England), 1810–1860

U.S. Ships of the Line "Delaware" and "North Carolina" and Frigates "Brandywine" and "Constellation," circa 1835–60

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of an Anonymous Donor, X.160

This splendid painting commemorates American military power and national identity in a brilliantly colored and precisely detailed maritime pageant that records four warships under full sail. The two ships of the line—the *Delaware*, identifiable by the distinctive figurehead of the Delaware Chief Tamemund, and the *North Carolina*—each mounted 74 guns. Joining them, the *Brandywine* and *Constellation* were frigates carrying 36 and 44 guns, respectively. The artist inscribed the names of the vessels and the Navy's motto, "Don't give up the ship," at the bottom of the painting.

Andrew Meyer

United States, active circa 1883

Review of the U.S. Fleet in New York Harbor, 1893

Oil on linen

New-York Historical Society, Thomas Jefferson Bryan Fund, 1986.17

Andy Meyer, an amateur artist, painted this lively, vernacular portrayal of New York's harbor during a ceremonial naval pageant on the occasion of the opening ceremonies of the 1893 Columbian Exposition. American President Grover Cleveland, aboard the USS *Dolphin*, reviewed the maritime parade of 35 warships carrying more than 10,000 officers, seamen, and marines from some 20 nations. The viewer's perspective offers a panorama of the vessels sailing in double columns before the Statue of Liberty, which France had presented to the United States in 1886.

Rembrandt Peale

United States, 1778–1860

Stephen Decatur, circa 1815–20

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Thomas Jefferson Bryan, 1867.309

The War of 1812 expanded the American portrait pantheon and a new group of heroes joined those of the previous generation. Rembrandt Peale, whose father, Charles Willson Peale had portrayed the founding fathers, painted a series of early-19th-century naval heroes including Commodore Stephen Decatur (1779–1820). Peale's bust-length portrait presents the Commodore before a stormy sky rich with dramatic clouds that evoke the smoke and turbulence of battle. Gazing into the distance and resplendent in his dress uniform, Decatur appears as both a dashing figure and as a commanding martial presence.

Victor de Grailly

France, 1804–1889

View from Hyde Park on the Hudson River,
circa 1845

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Purchase, 1923.5

Hyde Park, north of Poughkeepsie, draws its name from one of the riverside estates originally dedicated in honor of Sir Edward Hyde, a royal governor of New York in the early-18th century. De Grailly's picturesque composition, also based on *American Scenery*, emphasizes the breadth of the river and the park-like promenade in the foreground. This view suppresses any sense of the Hudson's role as a commercial artery and instead recalls Hyde Park's long history as an elegant preserve for the country houses of New York's oldest elite families.

Maurice Frederick Hendrick De Haas

United States (born Belgium), 1832–1895

Tropical Sunset at Sea, circa 1862

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, The Robert L. Stuart Collection, the gift of his widow Mrs. Mary Stuart, S-109

De Haas's luminous marine painting portrays a small steam vessel guiding a splendid ship into harbor. The tall ship is dramatically silhouetted against a spectacular sunset. Red, orange, and yellow glint off of the foreground water, as De Haas plays with the effects of light and shadow against the sea. At the tall ship's bow, the golden-toned reflection of the sunset provides the viewer a path into the depth of the image and the vast expanse of the ocean beyond.

Robert Havell, Jr.

United States (born England), 1793–1878

View of the Hudson River from Tarrytown Heights, circa 1842

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Harry Peck Havell, 1946.179

Havell, an English artist who immigrated to the United States and settled on the banks of the Hudson River, portrays the seacrafts and steamboats that populate the Tappan Zee—an area where the river grows wide. While the busy waterway carried maritime traffic of all kinds, the Hudson's banks provided magnificent views for cottages and villas, signaling the rapid development of the upper Hudson as a suburb of New York City.

John Frederick Kensett

United States, 1816–1872

Pulpit Rock, Nahant (Nahant Rock and Seashore), 1859

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, The Robert L. Stuart Collection, the gift of his widow Mrs. Mary Stuart, S-84

As one of the first major landscape painters to develop a strong interest in painting coastal terrain, Kensett portrayed sites along the New England and New Jersey seaboard. Pulpit Rock was a prominent landmark at a fashionable seaside resort near Boston and a site for the scientific investigations of the famed Harvard geologist Louis Agassiz. Agassiz documented ancient volcanic and glacial activity in the gigantic rock ledges that formed America's coast—findings that challenged biblical accounts of the creation of the world.

John Frederick Kensett

United States, 1816–1872

Sunset on the Coast (Seashore), 1861

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, The Robert L. Stuart Collection, the gift of his widow Mrs. Mary Stuart, S-42

Kensett's *Sunset on the Coast* is similar in composition to his nearby *Pulpit Rock*, but, as the title suggests, is not site-specific. Instead, it depicts an unidentified and isolated coastline, unpopulated except for a solitary waterfowl. Distant sails on the horizon do nothing to dispel the sense of solitude on the remote shore that bathes in the glow of the setting sun. As breaking waves beat on the sands and rock ledges loom, the site becomes a setting for Romantic meditation on matters both spiritual and geological.

Junius Brutus Stearns

United States, 1810–1885

Fishing in a Catboat in Great South Bay, 1871

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of C. Otto von Kienbusch, 1964.21

Stearns' image of a fishing expedition skillfully combines several distinct categories of painting—portraiture, sporting pictures, and genre scenes of everyday life. His treatment of the light and atmospheric effects of open water offer a delightful background for the maritime social narrative. Costume distinguishes the mariner who pilots the catboat from the more fashionable day-trippers. The gently humorous episode—note the seasick passenger—evokes the popularity of seaside leisure in the latter decades of the 19th century.



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Francis Augustus Silva

United States, 1835–1886

New York Harbor, 1880

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of the
Pintard Fellows, 1975.29

Silva explored the waterways in and around New York Harbor to find the subjects for his luminous seascapes. In his hands, the busy port becomes a Romantic vista. The water glows with the reflection of the sunset's pink and orange radiance. On the left, sails, masts, pilings, and docks seem to stretch as far as the eye can see, indicating the expanse of the waterfront and the unseen city beyond. Open waters at the right fade away into evening mists as the horizon becomes an indistinct barrier between land and sea.



BLUE

Francis Augustus Silva

United States, 1835–1886

Off City Island, New York, 1870

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Thomas Jefferson Bryan
Fund, 1975.22

Silva was a self-taught but gifted marine painter who excelled at capturing atmospheric effects. In his picturesque seascapes, he often exploited the great expanse of open water and the fleeting effects of weather at different times of the day. In this work, the artist suffuses the entire environment in a warm glow that mutes all maritime energies. The almost-still waters of the quiet channel mirror the languid folds of the calm ship's sails while the reflection of the boat shimmers softly against the harbor surface.

Adventure and Enterprise: The Romantic Seascape & the Maritime Portrait

BLUE

Thomas Birch

United States (born England), 1779–1851

Ship in a Storm, 1841

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Mrs. Louis A. Gillet, 1945.451

American's best-known early marine painter, Birch moved easily from battle subjects and harbor views to dramatic seascapes such as *Ship in a Storm*. Here, the unseen crew struggles to maintain control of its brig in the rough sea that breaks in huge waves against boulders and the hidden ledges of the shore. The darker grays of Birch's palette contrast with the bright white sea foam, adding an ominous energy to the composition.

Blue

Unidentified Artist

Yacht "America," 1851

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Henry O. Havemeyer, 1949.47

As steam-powered ships came to dominate maritime commerce (and warfare), speed under sail became prized more as part of sporting competition than as a means for commercial gain. This spirited ship portrait captures one of the era's most famous racing yachts, the *America*, which won the British Royal Yacht Squadron's trophy, later known as the America's Cup.

Maurice Frederick Hendrick De Haas

United States (born Belgium), 1832–1895

Wreck on the Isle of Jersey, circa 1862

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, The Robert L. Stuart Collection, the gift of his widow Mrs. Mary Stuart, S-89

The Dutch-trained De Haas was a former mariner who infused his paintings with memories drawn from first-hand experience. While this scene may not refer to a specific historical event, it captures the drama and tension of a shipwreck—the most dreaded of maritime disasters. Storm clouds and rough seas seem to merge into a boiling mass of vapors and waves. Errant beams of light break through the clouds to highlight the sails and foaming waves in the foreground, dramatically illuminating the tragic scene playing out below.



5

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Thomas Hicks

United States, 1823–1890

Elisha Kent Kane, M.D., 1858

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of several ladies of New York, 1859.1

In the 1850s Elisha Kent Kane (1820–1857), a Philadelphia naval surgeon, joined two American Arctic expeditions searching for the British exploring party of Sir John Franklin, which had disappeared in 1845. Kent's bestselling memoirs about those perilous expeditions made him a popular celebrity and his premature death was widely mourned. This memorial portrait shows Kane as a thoughtful figure seated before a twilit ocean view. The anchored ship and the globe refer to his far-flung voyages, while the table covered with books, charts, and documents signifies Kane's role as official historian of the expeditions.

Alexis-Joseph Pérignon

France, 1806–1882

James Gordon Bennett, Jr., 1867

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Mrs. Arthur S. Grossman, 1957.80

James Gordon Bennett Jr. (1841–1918), an avid yachter and Vice Commodore of the New York Yacht Club, became the publisher of the *New York Herald* in 1867. Pérignon's portrait shows the elegant young man in his naval uniform (he had served during the Civil War), seated on his yacht *Henrietta* and in front of an expanse of sea and sky. Flamboyant and eccentric, Bennett enjoyed a successful and, at times, notorious career as an international newspaper publisher while pursuing his lifelong passion for sailing.

Unidentified Artist

Preserved Fish, circa 1830

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of the Tradesmen's Bank of New York, 1900.4

True to his name, Preserved Fish (1766–1846) found his career on the sea. By age 21, he had been master of his own whaling ship and soon after established a successful whale-oil business in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He later became a leading merchant in New York City. In this attractive portrait, the gray-haired Fish sits in a handsomely furnished chamber surrounded by the implements of his trade, including a telescope and marine chart. The vista through the window of two ships pursuing a spouting whale alludes to the original source of Fish's wealth.



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Attributed to Lamqua

China, 1801–1860

Hevlyn Benson, circa 1840–45

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Hevlyn D. Benson, 1933.2

Lively international commerce in Canton, China, created a market for Asian artists to provide foreign mariners with images of themselves and their vessels. In this example, Hevlyn Benson (1805–1858) sits before an inlet, where his ship the Morrison anchors in the harbor. The artist is thought to be Lamqua, a prolific Chinese painter who worked in the Western style of the British ex-patriot portraitist George Chinnery; the elaborate frame is also of Chinese production.

Richard Morrell Staigg

England, 1817–1881

The Sailor's Grave, circa 1862

Oil on board

New-York Historical Society, The Robert L. Stuart Collection, the gift of his widow Mrs. Mary Stuart, S-38

The Sailor's Grave presents the aftermath of loss at sea. The storm has passed and a mood of quiet melancholy pervades this modestly scaled but poignant figure painting. Two young girls on the seashore mourn at a seaside grave as the waves that were likely responsible for their loss roll in behind them. The work is a touching reminder of the tragic consequences of disaster at sea. The title evokes a popular poem of the 1820s, reminding viewers of the rich seafaring literature that parallels this genre of maritime painting.

Wesley Webber

United States, 1841–1914

Sinking of the “Ville du Havre,” November 22, 1873, circa 1874

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Purchase, 1938.437

Webber’s painting graphically details a famous disaster in which the *Ville du Havre* collided with the Scottish iron clipper *Loch Earn* (the dark silhouette at left) and sank in 12 minutes. The painter uses flames from the stacks of the doomed ship to cast a dramatic and lurid glow over the crowds of passengers struggling amid the wreckage. The tragedy led to the death of 226 people, while only 87 others survived.

John Wollaston

United States (born England), circa 1710–1775

Captain John Waddell, circa 1750

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of
Edmund B. Southwick, 1891.2

Captain John Waddell (1714–1762) gazes confidently out of his dignified portrait, painted by the London-trained artist John Wollaston—an artist who worked primarily for New York’s wealthy merchants. Bewigged and elegantly dressed, Waddell gestures toward a large globe, calling our attention to the far-flung voyages of the ships he had built and owned. His right index finger points to the Eastern Seaboard of North America where he made his home in New York, and where he founded a merchant dynasty in the thriving colonial outpost.

Unidentified Artist

David Abeel, circa 1795–1800

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Gift of George Abeel,
1896.53

David Abeel (1763–1840) had served as a midshipman on the frigate *Alliance* during the Revolutionary War and later became captain of a merchant vessel. Abeel is shown before a view of the open sea, wearing the dark blue coat with gold buttons typical of a ship's officer. He holds a type of compass in his right hand while he unrolls a chart with his left—appearing as if the artist interrupted him while he was plotting a course.

Unidentified Artist

Captain David Bush, 1812

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Bequest of Irving S. Olds,
1963.48

Although painted by an unidentified artist, this image of Captain David Bush, who served in the War of 1812, includes many of the standard features of portrait painting in the period. The sitter is posed in a three-quarters view and set before an open window. The seascape vista as well as the nautical objects signal Bush's participation in maritime activities.

CASE



William Porter's Sons

United States, 1843–1902

Lantern, 1877

Brass, glass

New-York Historical Society, James B. Wilbur Fund, 1941.821

This ship's lantern is said to be from the steamboat *Saratoga* (1877–1919). The inscription on the glass shade, "A Parsell, Steamer Saratoga," suggests that the lantern was intended as a presentation piece to be awarded to a ship's officer upon retirement or transfer.



CASE



Spencer Browning & Rust

England, 1784–1840

Spyglass, circa 1800–10

Brass, wood, glass

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Mrs. Bayard Verplanck, 1956.165

The small, handheld telescope, known as a spyglass or glass, has long been an indispensable nautical instrument used to survey ocean expanses and the heavens alike. Not surprisingly, this implement appears as an attribute in many mariners' portraits, including several on display here.



CASE



Cary & Co.

England, 1850–1870

Octant, 1850–70

Oak, brass, ebony, ivory

New-York Historical Society, Gift of George A. Zabriskie, 1939.504a

The octant is a navigational instrument used to measure the degree of altitude of heavenly bodies as a way to help calculate a ship's longitude. An image thought to represent Jenny Lind (1820–1887), the internationally famous Swedish opera singer known as the "Swedish Nightingale," decorates this octant's handsome oak case.



Francis X. Koehler

United States (born Germany), 1818–1886

State Department Lifesaving Medal, 1862

Bronze

New-York Historical Society, Gift of the Naval History Society,
1925, 2008.42.368

Beginning in the 1850s, the United States Mint struck medals to recognize those who saved the lives of shipwreck victims as part of a broader campaign to improve maritime safety practices. Francis Koehler's miniature rescue drama on this lifesaving medal reveals the artist's talents as a die cutter and engraver, seen in the work's precise detail.

Louis St. Gaudens

United States, 1854–1913

Joseph Francis Lifesaving Medallion, 1890

Bronze

New-York Historical Society, Gift of the Naval History Society,
1925, 2008.42.370

This medallion, modeled after the Congressional Gold Medal that was awarded to Joseph Francis in 1890, recognizes achievements in life-saving equipment. The scene portrays a shipwreck where Francis' most famous invention, the metallic life-car, transports passengers and crew to safety from a stranded vessel foundering offshore.

Unidentified Maker

Whale's Tooth, Scrimshaw, 1840-60

Ivory, black ink

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Colonial Henry O. Havemeyer, 1981.33

Whale's Tooth, Scrimshaw, 1820-80

Ivory, black ink

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Colonial Henry O. Havemeyer, 1981.31

Scrimshaws are decorative and practical objects that whalers and other seafarers carved from the jawbones or teeth of whales and walrus tusks. Decorations were often based on images from popular prints such as those showing the War of 1812 battle between the *Constitution* and the *Guerriere*, engraved on the surface of a whale's tooth.

On the other tooth, the artist detailed a view of the practice and perils of whale hunting. One whale is dead, marked with a "waif" flag identifying the carcass for later pick-up. Another whale capsizes a vessel.

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Unidentified Maker

Snuffbox, 1816

Brass, tin

New-York Historical Society, Gift of Bernard Cone, 1937.66

Snuffbox, 1812–30

Papier-mâché, paint

New-York Historical Society, Z.1851ab

Snuffboxes, which first became fashionable in the 17th century, were used to carry snuff (a ground-up form of tobacco that was inhaled) and were often finely decorated by skilled craftsmen. Many snuffboxes made for the American market during and after the War of 1812 featured portraits of naval officers and images of American naval victories. As seen here, this imagery was often based upon popular prints.

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Simon Chaudron

United States (born France), 1758–1846

Presentation soup tureen, 1816

Silver

New-York Historical Society, The Eugene H. Pool Collection of Captain James Lawrence, Gift of Dr. Eugene H. Pool, 1942.544a,b

This large and elaborate tureen, adorned with the classical goddess Athena as the cover finial and cast foliate handles with Neptune-mask terminals, was presented posthumously by citizens of Philadelphia to Captain James Lawrence (1781–1813) for his heroism. In the midst of an illustrious career, Lawrence died in battle during the War of 1812 while commanding the *Chesapeake* against HMS *Shannon*. His supposed last words, “Don’t give up the ship,” were immortalized as the Navy’s motto, and are inscribed on James Guy Evans’ painting nearby.



PMA Voices • Diana Greenwold
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Attributed to Reuben Moulthrop

United States, 1763–1814

Mrs. Daniel Truman and Child, circa 1798–1810

Oil on canvas

New-York Historical Society, Purchase, 1952.29

Mrs. Truman and her daughter embody the domestic side of maritime life. The artist shows the pair at their home on Fair Street in New Haven, Connecticut. The open door affords the viewer a glimpse of the exterior world, where Mr. Daniel Truman, a ship's captain, is likely the figure standing at the garden gate. While he looks out to the distant view of the harbor and several ships at anchor, the two female sitters are ensconced within the home, suggesting boundaries of the early-19th-century domestic sphere.