

The 2,000 pound anchor near the flagstaff is thought to be one of the two port bow anchors shot away from the H.M.S. Confiance ( about 143 ft., 1,200 tons, 37 guns ), during the first minutes of the Battle of Plattsburgh Bay, on the morning of 11 September, 1814. Winston Churchill described the American victory as "The Most Decisive Engagement of the War."

The anchor was recovered from 40 feet of water about mid-way between Plattsburgh and Cumberland Head, and a mile north of Crab Isle, in the area of the engagement. Commodore Thomas Macdonough won a signal victory over Captain George Downie, Commander of the British fleet, who was killed in action by the first shot from the flagship, U.S.S. Saratoga.

1968 Bruce Montgomery, Robert Schumacher, and Theodore Cooper, then UVM students, history buffs, divers and sailors, located the anchor about one hundred feet north of yet another anchor. They brought it to the surface with the aid of Garry Langworthy's Sea-Song winches during 1964. The anchor remained at the Shelburne Harbor Marina until 1971, when it was presented to LCYC by the finders, after being offered to Shelburne Museum.

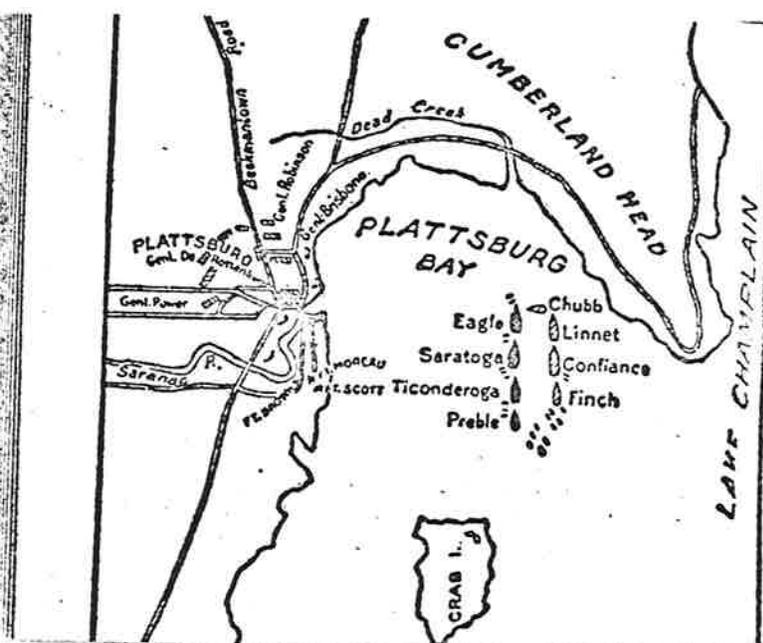
The "After-Action" report of Captain Daniel Pring, second in command of the British fleet after the death of Captain Downie, addressed to Sir James Lucas Yeo, Commodore and Commander-in-Chief, dated 12 September, 1814, aboard U.S.S. Saratoga in Plattsburgh Bay, states: "At 8 the enemy's gunboats and smaller vessels commenced a heavy and galling fire on our line. At 10 minutes after 8 the Confiance (British flagship) having two anchors shot away from her larboard bow(port), and the wind baffling, was obliged to anchor, though not in the situation proposed."

According to Bruce Montgomery, now a Lieutenant in the Coast Guard, this anchor was lying flat on the bottom; had never been imbedded. There was no sign of the missing stock and ring on the lake floor in that area. It thus appears that the stock and ring would have remained suspended from the ship, since the shank or long part of the anchor clearly appears to have been shot away by a cannon ball just below the stock.

While there is no evidence that the anchor could be from one of the other British or American ships, and there is no evidence that any other anchors were shot away, nevertheless, the spot where the anchor was found is thought to be close to the anchorage of the U.S.S. Ticonderoga during the engagement. She was a 17 gun schooner which might, conceivably, have had an anchor this large. However, there is no evidence that she had an anchor shot away, although she may have cut away one or more of her kedging anchors.

Locations of the individual vessels are approximate, and apparently based on sketches from memory, as for example, one which Macdonough drew on an envelope. The logs of the vessels cannot be located to confirm their exact locations.

Thus, both fleets could easily have been a couple of hundred yards west of their sketched locations, which would place the anchor in question very close to the course of the Confiance at the moment she received the first "galling fire" which shot away her two port bow anchors.



BATTLE OF PLATTSBURGH BAY