



**The Republic's Private Navy: The American
Privateering Business as Practiced by Baltimore in
the War of 1812 (American Maritime Library
Series)**

Jerome R. Garitee

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The escapades of the audacious sea captains who cleared the British blockades of Baltimore during the War of 1812 have become legend, but little has been written of the shore-bound investors and shipbuilders who made their success possible. Jerome Garitee remedies this situation in this carefully researched and fully documented study of all aspects of Baltimore's extensive privateering operations on both land and sea. After tracing the roots and growth of privateering until its history overlaps that of Baltimore, Professor Garitee describes that port's rapid development as an international entrepot in the four decades before the War of 1812. The merchants and mariners who built the port, aided by the shipbuilders whose skill made the famous Baltimore schooners the fastest sailing vessels of their time, became the owners and operators of the private armed ships that successfully defended the city during the war. Professor Garitee demonstrates that, like the mariners themselves, the in-port participants displayed both courage and competence. In addition to analyzing the shipowners' backgrounds and wartime roles, the author describes in detail all the business and legal aspects of the privateering system - from the financing, insuring, equipping, and staffing of the privateers to the complexities of prize distribution through admiralty courts and auctions. This comprehensive study thus enlarges our understanding not only of privateering, but also of the War of 1812 and of the social, political, and economic history of the period.

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