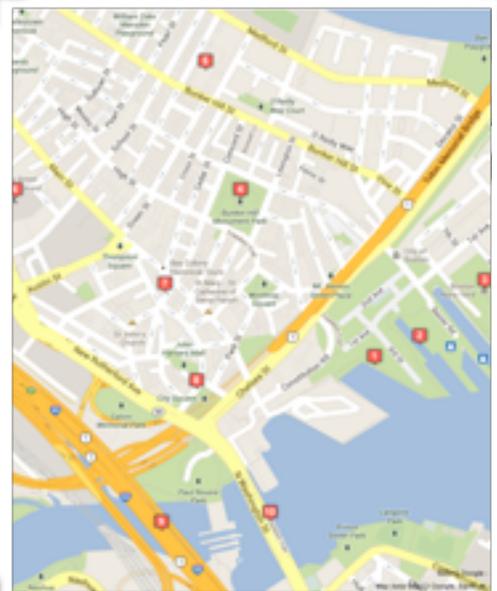


Charlestown



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WELCOME TO CHARLESTOWN!

Native Americans established a settlement on the cape above the Charles River known as Mishawum. When European colonists arrived in 1624, they named the area Charlestown. As the first capital of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the community is the oldest neighborhood in Boston. The founders relocated the capital across the Charles River to access fresh water. Once a separate city, Charlestown was annexed by Boston in 1874. It was the starting point for Paul Revere's famous "midnight ride" and colonial soldiers waited atop a hill until they could "see the whites of their eyes." Boston honors the Battle of Bunker Hill with a monument and a spectacular highway bridge. According to historians, the colonial soldiers actually fortified and defended Breed's Hill, which was closer to the city and its wharves.

Much of Charlestown and its dockyards were destroyed during the battle, but some of its wharves would become the Charlestown Navy Yard and home to the USS Constitution. The oldest commissioned warship in the United States, the wooden vessel is a stop on the Freedom Trail along with the Bunker Hill Monument. Other popular attractions in Charlestown include the Phipps Street Burying Ground, the Bunker Hill Burying Ground and the U.S.S. Cassin Young, a WWII-era destroyer.

The neighborhood is home to 19th century Gothic and Celtic style churches as well as the Training Field that honors Charlestown veterans with plaques and statues. Visitors can experience the community's vibrant Irish community that traces its origin to immigrants who moved to the area when the Potato Famine decimated Ireland in the mid-1800s. Charlestown hosts the nation's oldest semi-pro football team and served as the backdrop for the 2010 Ben Affleck movie "The Town." - CityWalkingGuide

1. USS Constitution

In 1790, President George Washington directed that six man-o'-war be constructed to protect the country's burgeoning maritime industry. Built in



master carpenter Edmund Hartt's shipyard in Boston and

launched in 1797, the U.S.S. Constitution was one of these powerful frigates. George Washington named the warship in honor of the country's founding document. The vessel is more than 200 feet long and over 43 feet wide. This 44-gun vessel was crewed by over 450 sailors and marines who received daily rations that included grog, which was water mixed with rye whiskey. The vessel served with distinction off the Barbary Coast and against French privateers in the Caribbean. Known as "Old Ironsides," she earned this famous moniker during the War of 1812. The Constitution defeated four British warships, including the 38-gun frigate HMS Guerriere, whose cannon balls bounced off the Constitution's 21-inch-thick oak hull. She circumnavigated the world and often served as the flagship of various naval squadrons.

During the 1830s, the ship was in a state of disrepair and scheduled to be scrapped or allowed to sink at the dock. A poem entitled "Old Ironsides" by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. galvanized the government to salvage the ship, which was partially restored again in 1906. Schoolchildren across the nation raised \$154,000 of the \$917,000 to fully restore the vessel in 1927. She was the first warship to use the newly constructed Dry Dock #1 in

1833. The US Naval Academy used the Constitution as a training vessel during the Civil War. Some of the earliest photographs of the ship were taken during this period. She carried valuable artworks to the Paris World Fair of 1878. The Charlestown Navy Yard has served as her homeport since 1934.

Each year, the Constitution is towed into Boston Harbor, where she fires an honorary 21-gun salute. The cruise also enables the Navy to turn the ship around so that she weathers evenly. In 1997, the cruise took place under full sail in celebration of her 200th birthday. The last time that the vessel sailed under her own power was 1881. The Constitution was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966. A fully commissioned US Navy warship, The Constitution is manned by a crew of active duty sailors. In 2004, the Guinness Book of World Records recognized the vessel as the world's oldest commissioned warship still afloat. The special effects engineers who worked on the movie "Master and Commander: Far Side of the World" used the Constitution as a model. Open to the public, the USS Constitution welcomes more than 100,000 visitors each year. She is berthed at Pier 1 of the Charlestown Navy Yard and is a stop on the Freedom Trail.

2. USS Cassin Young

Captain Cassin Young was a US Naval Officer who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during the attack on Pearl Harbor. The captain was in command of the repair ship USS Vestal when explosions blew him into the burning water. He swam back to his ship, saved the severely damaged vessel and rescued

crewmembers from the USS Arizona. Captain Young was later killed in action during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal while in command of the heavy cruiser USS San Francisco. The US Navy named the USS Cassin Young (DD-793), a Fletcher-class destroyer, in his honor.

Christened by the captain's widow, the destroyer was launched by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation in San Pedro, CA on September 12, 1943. The vessel served with distinction in several campaigns during the Second World War. These included raids against Japanese strongholds as well as the invasions of Saipan, Leyte and Iwo Jima. During the Okinawa Campaign, the Cassin Young provided fire support for underwater demolition



teams and defended the invasion force from kamikaze attacks.

Although she shot down numerous enemy aircraft, the Cassin Young was struck by kamikazes on two separate occasions. During the campaign, she also aided in the rescue of sailors from several sunken destroyers. For her actions, the ship was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation. The Cassin Young was the last US warship to be struck by a kamikaze in World War II.

The ship had a small terrier as a mascot that was trained to go below deck during air raids. One of the kamikaze attacks struck the ship where the dog normally waited. The crew thought that the dog had been killed until it emerged from a position on the bridge. It is unknown why the dog remained on deck during this particular attack.

After the Second World War, the Cassin Young participated in several training exercises and an around the world cruise in 1954. One of her overhauls was conducted in the historic Dry Dock #1 in the Charlestown Navy Yard. She served until 1960 when the ship was decommissioned. The Cassin Young remained in the reserve fleet until 1974 when she was loaned to the National Park Service to serve as a museum ship. The Cassin Young arrived in Boston on June 15, 1978 and was opened to the public three years later upon completion of her transition into a floating museum. Operated and maintained by the park service and volunteers, the Cassin Young is berthed just off 55 Constitution Road at Pier 1 near the USS Constitution. Visitors can explore the ship in self-guided or 40-minute, ranger-led tours. The USS Cassin Young was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

3. Charlestown Navy Yard

Although the Charlestown Navy Yard traces its roots to the Revolutionary War, the shipyard was not formally established until Congress authorized the construction of six new warships in 1799. The Charlestown facility, later known as the Boston Navy Yard,



was selected as one of six cities where future warships would be built. The shipyard's Morton's Point location is the site where the British landed on their way to the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Until the War of 1812, the navy yard was used

primarily as a military depot when workers built the 74-gun USS Independence. The massive vessel was America's first warship designed to engage other ships with powerful broadside gunfire. In the ensuing decades, the shipyard was again used mainly as a storage, supply and repair facility.

Renowned Quincy Market architect Alexander Parris designed several buildings on the navy yard, including the granite Greek Revival Ropewalk in 1837. Most of the rope that the US Navy used for the next 137 years was produced in this edifice. One of the most important naval engineering feats of the 19th century was the construction of Dry Dock #1 at the Charlestown Navy Yard. Mr. Parris and Loammi Baldwin Jr., who was America's preeminent civil engineer, designed the maintenance facility. The first ship to use the newly opened dry dock in 1833 was the USS Constitution. The structure, which took six years to build, was used extensively during both world wars as a facility to repair battle-damaged vessels, including the USS Cassin Young. Dry Dock #1 was designated a National Landmark in 1966.

The shipyard has the distinction of being the location where the Merrimack, the ship that the Confederate Navy turned into the ironclad CSS Virginia, was constructed. Ironically, the first ship sunk by an ironclad was the USS Cumberland, which was also constructed at the shipyard. The ironclad was the CSS Virginia. The USS Harford, flagship of Admiral Farragut, and the Monadnock, a Monitor-class ironclad, were also built here in the years leading up to and during the Civil War.

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