



ACTIVITY

Flogging in the Navy

Flogging, a form of severe corporal punishment, was implemented on board vessels in the United States Navy through the first half of the 19th century. It was a punishment usually reserved for the most serious offenses, though it was occasionally used more indiscriminately by some captains. Lesser punishments included extra chores and a reduced diet of bread and water. These quotes describe flogging from two different perspectives. With older students, debate and discuss the history of corporal punishment.

Quotes about Discipline and Flogging

Captain Isaac Hull, July 12, 1810

“I have now one of the best ships in our Navy and a crew of 430 men, which you will think a large family, it’s true; but being a good housekeeper I manage them with tolerable ease. I however scold sometimes and now and then get angry.”

Seaman James Durand, 1805

“I have seen a man hauled up and made to receive eighteen lashes for a crime no more serious than spitting on the quarter deck. Such outrages on human nature ought not to be permitted by a government which boasts of liberty. No monarch in the world is more absolute than the Captain of a Man-of-war. The situation of a sailor, exposed as he is to the vicissitudes of life, to the inclemencies of the seasons, to the fury of storms and tempests, is sufficiently arduous without its being rendered more so by the cruelties of his fellow beings.”

