


Resolute desk

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 President [Barack Obama](#) sitting at the Resolute desk in 2009.

The **Resolute desk** is a large, nineteenth-century [partners' desk](#) often chosen by [presidents](#) of the [United States](#) for use in the [White House Oval Office](#) as the [Oval Office desk](#). It was a gift from [Queen Victoria](#) to President [Rutherford B. Hayes](#) in 1880 and was built from the timbers of the British Arctic Exploration ship [Resolute](#). Many presidents since Hayes have used the desk at various locations in the White House, but it was [Jackie Kennedy](#) who first brought the desk into the Oval Office in 1961 for President [John F. Kennedy](#). It was removed from the White House for only one time, and this was after the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, when President Johnson allowed the desk to go on a traveling exhibition with the Kennedy Presidential Library. After this it was on display in the [Smithsonian Institution](#). [President Jimmy Carter](#) brought the desk back to the Oval Office, where President [Ronald Reagan](#), President [Bill Clinton](#), President [George W. Bush](#) and now President [Barack Obama](#) have used it in this, its most famous location.

The relationship between Britain and America was at a breaking point when Buddington salvaged *Resolute*. They were on the brink of their third war. President [Franklin Pierce](#) addressed Congress to say he had ceased to have diplomatic relations with Britain. He closed the British embassies and sent the ambassadors home. Tensions continued to mount. Suddenly one of the most vocal war-mongers, Senator [James Murray Mason](#), from Virginia, proposed a bill in Congress for the government to buy *Resolute*, refurbish her, and sail her back to Britain as a present. The bill passed, authorizing more than \$40,000 for the work, and President Pierce signed it into law. The *Resolute* was sent to the [Brooklyn Navy Yard](#), where she underwent a complete refit, and Commander Henry Hartstene USN, sailed her back to Britain, arriving at [Spithead](#) on December 12, 1856. After *Resolute* was towed to [Cowes](#) so that the Queen and Prince Albert could tour her, Captain Harstene presented the ship to Queen Victoria as a gesture of peace and good-will on December 17, 1856. Soon the talk of war ceased, and the gift of *Resolute* was seen as instrumental in the easing of these tensions. [Henry Grinnell](#), a New York merchant and

shipowner who had grown up in New Bedford, had supported the purchase of *Resolute* to be used as the gift, and both he and [Lady Franklin](#) had hoped the Navy would use the ship for a new search for Sir John Franklin's expedition. However, by 1856 the Royal Navy was no longer willing to spend money on what they now believed would be a fruitless search. It was impossible to believe that any of the Franklin men could still be alive eleven years after they entered the Arctic. Belcher's abandonment of four seaworthy ships was the last straw. Nor was the Navy willing to let Lady Franklin use the *Resolute* for a privately funded search. Britain could not risk losing *Resolute* after the important role the ship had played in smoothing the turbulent waters between her and America. *Resolute* stayed in home waters until she was taken to the breaker's dock at [Chatham Dockyard](#) in 1879.

Hartstene vs Harstine

Of the several possible ways to spell the name of the island, **Hartstene** and **Harstine** are the most used and most popular. Both have been used nearly interchangeably in many published references including [Wikipedia](#), and (<http://www.co.mason.wa.us/>). Alternate spellings of the name include Hartstene, Harsteen, Harstein, Harstene, Hartstein and Harstine. In 1997 [Washington State Legislative](#) action resulted in the name officially becoming **Harstine Island**^[4]





Henry J. Hartstene

HARTSTENE, Henry J., naval officer, born in North Carolina; died in Paris, France, 31 March, 1868. He entered the United States navy as midshipman in 1828, and became a lieutenant, 23 February, 1840. in 1838 he was attached to the Wilkes exploring expedition, but did not proceed farther with it than Calioa, and in 1851 he was attached to the coast survey, and afterward commanded the steamer "Illinois." In 1855 he was made a commander, and was sent to the arctic regions in search of Dr. Kane and his party, whom he rescued and brought to New York. In 1856 he was ordered to convey to England the British exploring bark "Resolute," which, after having been abandoned in the arctic ice, had been rescued by Captain Buddington, a New London whaler, and purchased by congress as a present to the British government. He was afterward employed in taking soundings for the Atlantic telegraph cable. At the beginning of the civil war he resigned, entered the Confederate navy, and in the summer of 1862 became insane.