

# Unique Perspectives on the War of 1812

Research by a Scottish-born Canadian Wintering in Florida  
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Conventional wisdom states that the War of 1812 can be viewed from at least four different and very diverse perspectives - American, British, Canadian, and Native participants.

- For Canadians, the War of 1812 was all about defending against blatant American invasions.
- For Americans, it was about standing up to Britain and setting the stage for western and northern expansion
- For the British, it was an annoying sideshow to the Napoleonic Wars raging in Europe.
- For Native Americans, it was a desperate struggle for freedom and independence as they fought to defend their homelands.

In reality this over-simplifies the perspectives.

- Predominantly Federalist New England and New York had a very different perspective than the Southern and Western states
- Upper and Lower Canada and the Maritime colonies had very different perspectives

Canadians and Americans have used the War of 1812 as a source for nation-building narratives, centered on their stories of the war. But all four groups fought and remembered their own War of 1812.

4,000 combat deaths over 2.5 years

## Personal Connections to the War of 1812

- The US invasion of York (Toronto) on April 27, 1813 occurred one quarter mile from where I lived for six years in the late 1970s and a couple of miles from where we moor our sailboat on Lake Ontario
- I owned property in Collingwood several miles from the Nancy Island Historic Site (Battle of the Nottawasaga)
- My wife Diane and I have circumnavigated the shores of Lake Ontario, the Thousand Islands and the lower Niagara on our sailboat each of the past six summers visiting various battle sites. We have also driven to a number of other sites.

## Family Connections to the War of 1812

- Several of Diane's Mennonite ancestors were pressed into service as Drivers for the British Army and participated in the retreat up the Thames River on Oct. 5, 1813. Several years later they received compensation for their lost wagons.
- One of our daughters and her family live in Fonthill, Ontario just off Lundy's Lane near the Battle of the Beaverdams site. One of our son's lives near St. David's in Niagara-on-the-Lake.
- A sister lived in Stoney Creek quite near to that battleground

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When these Mennonites immigrated north to Waterloo Township, Upper Canada from Pennsylvania in 1799 they were guaranteed the right to refuse to bear arms or serve in the Militia by the Upper Canada Militia Act of 1797.

I have found reparation claims made by them to recover the cost of their wagons lost at the Battle of Moraviantown. They escaped on their horses as the US forces were about to overtake the retreating army.

The Battle of Beaverdams was the conflict which Laura Secord trekked overland to the DeCew House and mill to warn the British of the impending attack

## How many of these ten battles do you recognize the names of?

- Battle of Fort York (Toronto) - 1813
- Capture of Fort George (Newark) - 1813
- Siege of Fort Meigs / the Miami - 1813
- Battle of Lake Erie (Put-in-Bay) - 1813
- Battle of the Thames (Moraviantown) - 1813
- Capture and Siege of Fort Erie - 1814
- Battle of Chippawa - 1814
- Battle of Baltimore / Fort McHenry - 1814
- Battle of Plattsburgh - 1814
- Battle of New Orleans - 1814

All were won by the Americans (in blue)

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These are all battles which involved more than 2,500 combatants

## How many of these ten battles do you recognize the names of?

- Battle of Fort Detroit - 1812
- Battle of Queenston Heights - 1812
- Second Battle of the River Raisin (Frenchtown) - 1813
- Battle of Crysler's Farm - 1813
- Battles of Stoney Creek and Forty Creek - 1813
- Battle of Chateauguay - 1813
- Battle of Lacolle Mills - 1814
- Battle of Lundy's Lane - 1814
- Capitulation of Maine - 1814
- Battle of Bladensburg - 1814

All were won by the British / Canadians (in red)

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Again, all battles with over 2,500 combatants

Red vs. Blue coding

Have not included the burning of Washington on this list as there was virtually no resistance after Bladensburg

I've done similar analysis for actions involving 1,000 to 2,500 men and those with fewer and have determined very similar patterns.

# Propaganda vs. History

## Books about the war and post war propaganda:

- Not as prolific as the Revolutionary War or Civil War
- Lots of politically based propaganda in the 18<sup>th</sup> century

## Influential Authors and Illustrators:

- US –Benson Lossing, Henry Adams, Teddy Roosevelt, Donald Hickey, Alan Taylor, John K. Mahon, J. C. A. Stagg, Troy Bickham
- British – William M. James, Jon Latimer, Andrew Lambert
- Canadian – J. McKay Hitsman, Pierre Berton, Donald E. Graves, Robert Malcomson, George F.G. Stanley, Gilbert Collins, Peter Rindlisbacher, John R. Grodzinski, Wesley B. Turner

## PBS and CBC documentaries

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Sandman Books on Burnt Store Road has 8 shelves (roughly 200 books) about the Civil War but not a single book on the War of 1812 – actually they did have one, but I bought it

One book on the War of 1812 which I read did contain a 55 page “Selected Bibliography”

Illustrators – Lossing and Rindlisbacher

Brian Arthur – How Britain Won the War of 1812: The Royal Navy's Blockades of the United States, 1812-1815

Fiction - Patrick O’Brien – The Fortune of War, the sixth of the 20 books in the Aubrey-Maturin series is set during the War of 1812 and contains lightly fictionalized accounts of the Java vs. Constitution battle and the Shannon vs. Chesapeake battle as well as some context about conditions in Boston at the time.

## Many Different Spins on the War

- Taken from the view of the different country protagonists or from a global perspective
- The war in different theaters
- Battle specific and even ship specific treatises
- Biographies of military and political leaders
- Maritime vs. Land based actions
- Myths of the war
- Privateers in the war
- The war from the perspective of women and blacks

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Protagonists – American, British, Canadian, Indians

Ship specific – Two of my favorites books describe the cruises of the USS Essex and the HMS Nancy

Harrison, Perry, Jackson, Brock and Tecumseh

Blacks – 25% of Perry's sailors; 900 slaves dug the defenses at Bayou Bienvenue; at least 200 free African-Americans served with Jackson at New Orleans and many of the British soldiers were blacks from the Caribbean; a company of the British army at the defense of Queenston Heights were African-Canadians

Women – a small percentage of men in the US Army were allowed to bring their wives with them. They served as cooks and seamstresses. If their husbands died in action they had to leave within 6 months unless they remarried. One woman is reported to have re-married 4 times. One book made a persuasive claim that the war and the propaganda which followed it set back women's rights by 50 years in the USA

## The Protagonists

- Britain – population 9 million
- France – population 27 million
- USA – population 7.2 million
  - Kentucky and Tennessee – 668,000
  - Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan – 61,000
  - New England – 1,472,000
  - NY & NJ – 1,204,000
  - Ohio 231,000
  - Pennsylvania – 810,000
  - The South – 2,219,000
  - Virginia – 877,000

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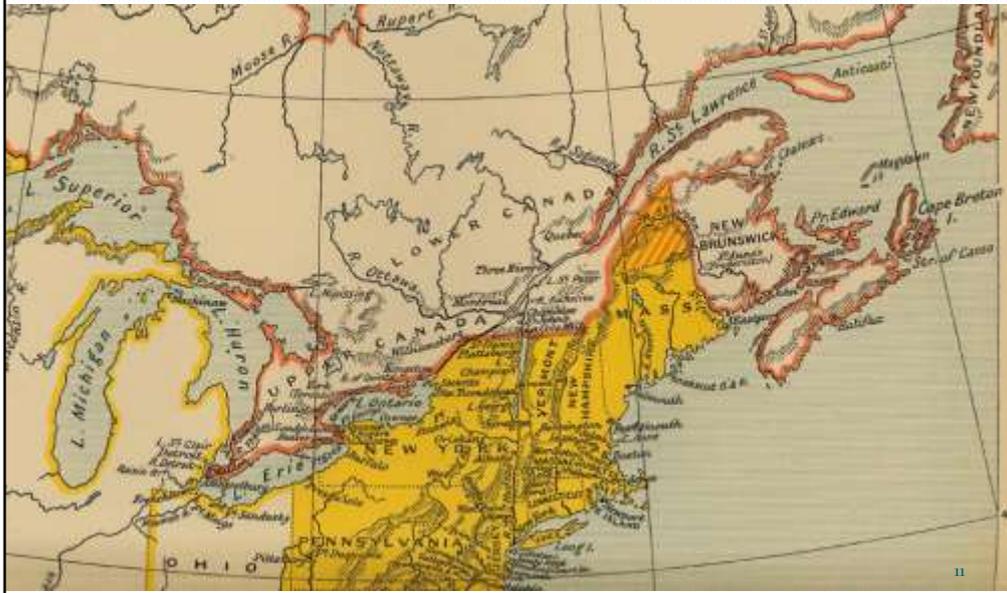
Britain - not counting Ireland or British colonies



## The Protagonists

- British North America – about 677,000 (1/10th of America)
  - Atlantic colonies – approx. 300,000
  - Lower Canada (Quebec) – 300,000
  - Upper Canada (Ontario) – 77,000
- Native Americans – unknown

## Seven British North America Colonies - 1812



Six linked colonies + NFLD – UC, LC, NS, NB, PEI, Cape Breton and Newfoundland

The disputed shaded area of Northern Massachusetts (Maine) was ultimately split down the middle

Discuss the rivers systems:

-St. Lawrence River

-Niagara River

-Detroit and St. Clair Lake and River

-Old fur trading route of the Ottawa, Mattawa, and French Rivers – 1967

-St. John River and St. Croix River

-Lake Champlain

-Hudson, Mohawk and Oswego Rivers

## The Theaters of the War

- The Old Northwest – so named in relation to the Ohio River (includes Cleveland and Detroit areas)
- Niagara River Frontier and Southwest Ontario
- Lake Ontario
- St. Lawrence River , Richelieu River and Lake Champlain
- Maritime Canada and New England
- Atlantic coast south of New England and the Chesapeake
- Florida and the Gulf Coast
- Blue Water

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Old Northwest – In my discussion I will include the shores and rivers running into Lakes Erie and Huron, the western territories and current day Southwestern Ontario (Thames and Grand River Valleys)

Niagara Frontier – At least 19 significant actions during the 2.5 years of the war

## Logistics

- Pittsburgh, a major industrialized town at the time, was 127 miles from Presqu'isle on Lake Erie
- Sackett's Harbor, Niagara and Plattsburgh could be provisioned by way of the Hudson River system
- London, England to Halifax is 3,000 miles and another 1,500 miles to Sault Ste. Marie and Mackinac
- Pre-war British North America traded heavily with the USA, and continued to do so throughout the war
- Importance of the St. Lawrence River as a supply route
- The Blockade of the Eastern Seaboard

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Failure of the USA to fortify Ogdensburg.

Should have given all of their early attention to Lower Canada

The US economy was paralyzed by 1814

## Terminology

- Modern actions and analysis – Tactical, Operational, Strategic
- I will use the simpler and more traditional – Tactical vs. Strategic
- Armed Engagements
  - Operation – may or may not involve actual combat
  - Engagements - Skirmishes vs. Battles
  - Raids
  - Massacres
- Military Ranks

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How many ex-military members here?

Terminology per Donald Hickey

## Relative Military Strength in 1812

### USA

- US Militia- about 700,000
- US Regular Army - 7,000

### Canada

- British Regulars- 7,000
- Canadian Militia - 25,000?
- Indians - unknown

### Worldwide

- British Army - 300,00
- British Navy - 140,000

Desertion rates on all sides were high (13% in the US)

## What caused the war?

1. Impressment of British subjects off of US ships
2. British embargo of French ports during the Napoleonic Wars and American restrictive trade practice
3. Perceived British alliance with Native Americans who stood in the way of western settlement
4. Early indications of the US doctrine of Manifest Destiny as applied to Canada (later codified by Monroe)

War was declared by America on June 18, 1812

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It was a bizarre war

-Britain felt strongly on the Impressment issue because they had a big desertion issue in the Royal Navy and huge problems manning their ships in the fight with France. They felt it within their rights to re-capture those who had sought refuge on American ships, a blow to American pride

-Jefferson and Madison had created many of the US trade issues by promulgating a restrictive trade practice that had driven the US economy into the ground by 1812

- Britain had already in 1812 provided relief for many of the trade issues, but not impressment

## Initial Sentiment - USA

- Henry Clay in 1810 stated that:

*“the militia of Kentucky are alone competent to place Montreal and Upper Canada at our feet.”*

In some respects he was justified in thinking this as there were more men enrolled in the Kentucky State Militia than there were under arms in both the British Army and all militias combined in Canada

- Thomas Jefferson stated in 1812 just after the declaration of war :

*“the acquisition of Canada this year, as far as the neighborhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching and will give us experience for the attack of Halifax the next, and the final expulsion of England from the American continent.”*

He assumed, quite wrongly, that the residents of Canada would welcome the Americans with open arms

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Clay and the western War Hawks were driven by their conflicts with Native Americans over western land and a covetous view of Canada

-Republican Thomas Wilson of Pennsylvania stated that the conquest of Canada was neither “ a motive to commence the war or a primary object, but instead “an inevitable consequence” – sounds a bit disingenuous to me

## Initial Sentiment - USA

- Annexation Proclamation, July 1812 , General William Hull at Detroit

*“Raise not your hands against your brethern, many of your fathers fought for the freedom and Independence we now enjoy. Being children therefore of the same family with us, and heirs to the same Heritage, the arrival of an army of Friends must be hailed by you with a cordial welcome. **You will be emancipated from Tyranny and oppression and restored to the dignified status of freemen.**”*

- Proclamation, November 17, 1812, Brigadier General Alexander Smyth at Niagara

*“You will enter a country that is to be one of the United States. **You will arrive among a people who are to become your fellow citizens.** It is not against them that we come to make war. It is against that Government which holds them as vassals.”*

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Annexation declarations both approved by Madison

## Initial Sentiment – US Opposition

- George Sullivan, 12th Congress, 1811 (New Hampshire Federalist):

*“The intention to wage war and invade Canada has been long since openly avowed....Let us not be deceived. A war of invasion may invite a retort of invasion. When we visit the peaceable, and, to us, innocent colonies of Great Britain with the horrors of war can we be assured that our own coast will not be visited with like horrors.”*

- Baltimore Riots

First blood of the war was shed just days after the June 18 declaration during attacks on members of the “free press” of America who opposed the war – Alexander Contee Hanson

- New England merchants, and Niagara and St. Lawrence River Frontier settlers were mostly opposed to the war initially

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-the publisher of the *Federal Republican* newspaper in Baltimore, Alexander Contee Hanson, was critical of the war declaration. Hanson viewed Baltimore’s Democrat-Republicans as “mostly European rabble out to pervert the true principles of the Constitution.” He embraced a straightforward goal—“attack the administration in any and every way;” show that the Jeffersonians had sold out to France and were supporting Napoleon.

-A mob took the verbal bait, attacked, and destroyed Hanson’s office. When the paper reopened, defenders fired into another mob and killed two. After surrendering, Hanson and his supporters were hauled from jail and beaten. Revolutionary War veterans Henry “Light-Horse Harry” Lee, father of five-year-old Robert E. Lee, and James Lingan both received crippling injuries; Lingan died from his wounds.

## Initial Sentiment – State Opposition

- The Governors of Mass., RI and CT refused initially to comply with the requisition for Militia
- The Maryland House of Delegates applauded the position of the New England Governors but the Maryland Senate supported the war declaration
- The Legislature of New Jersey denounced the war declaration as:

*“inexpedient, ill-timed and most impolitic, sacrificing at once countless blessings”*

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-It was mostly opposed in New England

## Initial Sentiment–Britain, Canada & Indians

- Britain felt aggrieved at America's action while it was in a life and death struggle with Napoleon
- Upper Canada was populated largely by former Americans, either Loyalists who had migrated north after the Revolutionary War or economic migrants seeking free land - loyalties were divided at best
- Lower Canada was still predominantly French Canadian and many felt this was not their war
- Maritime provinces feared the impact on their thriving trade with New England
- Many Indians embraced the war as a way to fight back against American expansion in the west and avenge Tippecanoe

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-Britain – stabbed in the back

-Few north of the border called themselves Canadians

-One popular Canadian author has made a strong case that if America had not declared war in 1812, there was a strong chance that these American immigrants, consisting over 2/3 of all Upper Canadians at the time may have peaceably joined the USA in due course – the war changed that forever, which is why it is often described as one of the most important determinants of the Canadian nationalist pride.

-In a survey of Canadians, asking them about the most important determinants of our unique culture, Universal Healthcare was #1 and the

-There was at least one group of settlers who actively fought with the Americans on Canadian soil during the war. These were the Canadian Volunteers raised by Joseph Willcocks and led by [Abraham Markle](#) and [Benajah Mallory](#). They had a disconcerting effect on the settlers of Niagara but most of the leaders were eventually captured, tried for treason, and hanged. Willcocks was an Irish born newspaper editor and politician

## The Indian “Problem”

- Tremendous tension between settlers and Indians along the Maumee, Wabash and Tippecanoe
- Battles at Fort Wayne, Little Turtle (Fort Recovery) and Fallen Timbers (1790-1794)
- Indian confederacy forms under The Prophet and Tecumseh to push back against land deals
- British NA Indian Department considered a thorn in their sides by Americans on the frontier
- Indiana land purchase of 1809 by Harrison was contested by many tribes
- Harrison’s disastrous Nov 7, 1811 attack on Tippecanoe

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Shawnee Brothers – conflict with the Miami

## US Government Indian Policy

- 1803 Letter from President Thomas Jefferson to Indiana Territory Governor William H. Harrison:

*“When they withdraw themselves to the culture of a small piece of land, they will perceive how useless to them are the extensive forests, and will be willing to pare them off ... in exchange for necessaries for their farms and families. To promote this ... we shall push our trading houses, and be glad to see the good and influential individuals among them in debt, because we observe that when these debts go beyond what individuals can pay, they become willing to lop them off by a cession of lands ...”*

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Shawnee Brothers – conflict with the Miami

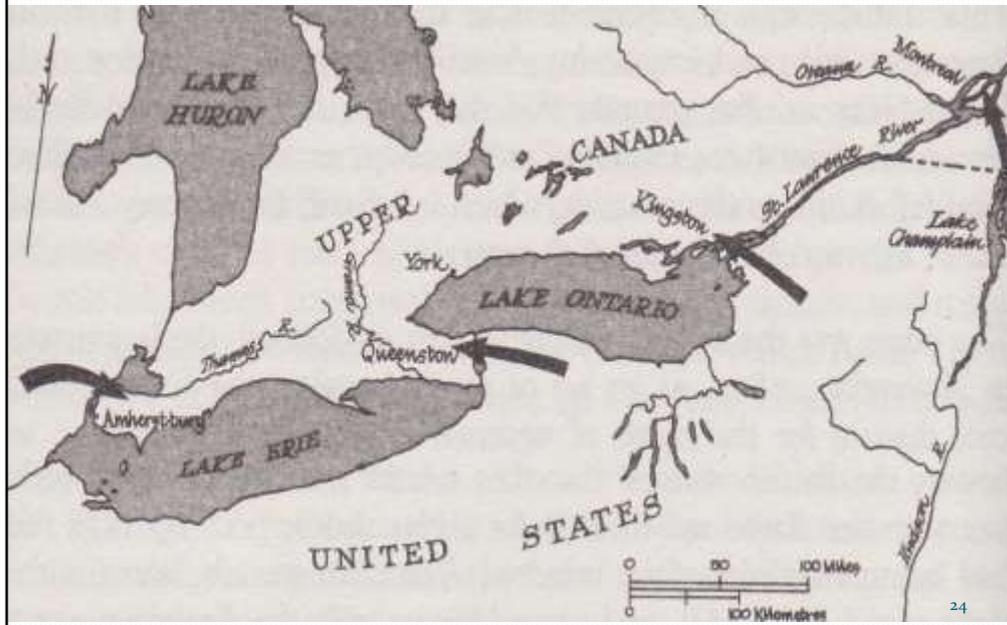
Conflict over the 1809 land purchase – Harrison was badly in debt after building a mansion in Vincennes and stood to gain financially by the sale of these lands. Would also allow more settlers which would allow Indiana to qualify for statehood

Jefferson's Indian Policy

President Thomas Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Indiana Territory, 1803

You will receive from the Secretary of War ... from time to time information and instructions as to our Indian affairs. These communications being for the public records, are restrained always to particular objects and occasions; but this letter being unofficial and private, I may with safety give you a more extensive view of our policy respecting the Indians, that you may the better comprehend the parts dealt out to you in detail through the official channel, and observing the system of which they make a part, conduct yourself in unison with it in cases where you are obliged to act without instruction. Our system is to live in perpetual peace with the Indians, to cultivate an affectionate attachment from them, by everything just and liberal which we can do for them within the bounds of reason, and by giving them effectual protection against wrongs from our own people. The decrease of game rendering their subsistence by hunting insufficient, we wish to draw them to agriculture, to spinning and weaving. The latter branches they take up with great readiness, because they fall to the women, who gain by quitting the labors of the field for, those which are exercised within doors. When they withdraw themselves to the culture of a small piece of land, they will perceive how useless to them are their extensive forests, and will be willing to pare them off from time to time in exchange for necessaries for their farms and families. To promote this disposition to exchange lands, which they have to spare and we want, for necessaries, which we have to spare and they want, we shall push our trading uses, and be glad to see the good and influential individuals among them run in debt, because we observe that when these debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop them off by a cession of lands. At our trading houses, too, we mean to sell so low as merely to repay us cost and charges, so as neither to lessen or enlarge our capital. This is what private traders cannot do, for they must gain; they will consequently retire from the competition, and we shall thus get clear of this pest without giving offence or umbrage to the Indians. In this way our settlements will gradually circumscribe and approach the Indians, and they will in time either incorporate with us as citizens or the United States, or remove beyond the Mississippi. The former is certainly the termination of their history most happy for themselves; but, in the whole course of this, it is essential to cultivate their love. As to their fear, we presume that our strength and their weakness is now so visible that they must see we have only to shut our hand to crush them, and that all our liberalities to them proceed from motives of pure humanity only. Should any tribe be foolhardy enough to take up the hatchet at any time, the seizing the whole country of that tribe, and driving them across the Mississippi, as the only condition of peace, would be an example to others, and a furtherance of our final consolidation.

## America's Failed Invasion Strategy - 1812



General William Hull assembled a force of about 2,000 men and led them to Detroit. They invaded Canada at Amherstburg but then withdrew. General Isaac Brock began a bombardment of Fort Detroit then bluffed General Hull into surrendering

General Stephen Van Rensselaer prepared an October 11 assault on Queenston Heights - unsuccessful due to bad planning, militia recalcitrance and Indian support to the British

General Henry Dearborn marched with at least 6,000 troops in November from Albany to Plattsburgh, New York, on the shore of Lake Champlain. Their goal was to capture Montreal. After several poorly executed sorties across the border which were rebuffed, the invasion was abandoned. Again there were issues with the Vermont militia not wanting to cross the border

Brigadier General [Alexander Smyth](#) on November 30 and again on December 1 tried and failed to get his invasion force of 3,000 men assembled and into boats to cross the Niagara River at Fort Erie to invade Upper Canada, following which he cancelled the entire operation

All four US generals were roundly criticized for their handling of their campaigns, any one of which could have spelled an early end to the war.

Support from Tecumseh and the Indian alliances were significant factors at Detroit and Queenston

## Early American Naval Success - 1812

- Aug. 13, 1812 – USS Essex (46) defeats HMS Alert (20)
- Aug. 19, 1812 – USS Constitution (44) defeats HMS Guerriere (38)
- Oct 8, 1812 – British brigs Detroit & Caledonia captured in Niagara River by a 120 man American boarding party
- Oct 18, 1812 – USS Wasp (137 men) defeats HMS Frolic (110 men) **but the British 12 ship convoy escapes and both ships were recaptured by the HMS Poictiers several days later**
- Oct 25, 1812 – USS Constitution (56) defeats HMS Macedonia (42)
- Dec 29, 1812 – USS Constitution (54) defeats HMS Java (48)
- Feb 24, 1813 – USS Hornet (20 x 32 lb) defeats HMS Peacock (20 x 24 lb.)

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Tremendous naval, political and psychological victories for the Americans

In every case the heavier, better armed and more completely manned ship was victorious

Java was so badly damaged that she had to be burned and sunk

Hornet carried 32 pound guns while Peacock had 24 pounders

Similarly, these Frigates and a virtual navy of American privateers did very well capturing merchant prizes

# USS Constitution vs. HMS Java

December 29, 1812



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## Naval Engagements - 1813

- June 1, 1813 – HMS Shannon captures USS Chesapeake off Boston
- June 13, 1813 – USS Growler (sloop) and USS Eagle captured in the Richelieu River
- Aug 10, 1813 – USS Julia and USS Growler (schooner) captured in Lake Ontario
- August 14, 1813 – HMS Pelican (16) defeats USS Argus (20) - in Irish Sea – Pelican had 32 lb. guns
- Sept 5, 1813 - USS Enterprise (16) defeats HMS Boxer (14)
- Sept 10, 1813 – Battle of Lake Erie – Decisive US victory involving the capture of the entire British Lake Erie fleet
- Sept 28, 1813 - The Lake Ontario Burlington Races – inconclusive but strategic British victory

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### No major US Frigate actions

**Viper (1806) versus HMS Narcissus (January 17, 1813)**: The pursuit and capture of the American brig *Viper*, while it was trying to return to New Orleans after it had become separated from its companion ship. After springing a serious leak, the *Viper* was captured by the British frigate *Narcissus*.

**Attack on HMS Junon (June 20, 1813)**: An attack initiated by a flotilla of American gunboats in the Elizabeth River below Norfolk, Virginia, on the British frigate *Junon*, which was anchored in shallow water near Hampton Roads. The captain of the *Junon* managed to get his ship underway and fought off the Americans for an hour and a half before breaking off the action and withdrawing.

**Delaware flotilla versus HMS Martin (July 29, 1813)**: An attack by the Delaware flotilla, consisting of eight gunboats and two blockships, on the British sloop *Martin*, which ran aground on a shoal near Cape May while engaged in blockade duty off the mouth of the Delaware River. The Americans broke off the action after about two hours after losing one gunboat. The *Martin* sustained only minor damage and was subsequently refloated.

**President (1800) versus HMS Highflyer (September 23, 1813)**: An action off the coast of New England during which the American frigate *President* captured the British schooner *Highflyer*.

**Vixen (1813) versus HMS Belvidera (1809) (December 25, 1813)**: The capture of the American schooner *Vixen* (1813) off Delaware after a two-hour pursuit by the British frigate *Belvidera*. The *Vixen* (1813) had only recently been purchased by the US Navy, and was on its way to New Castle, Delaware, to be outfitted with guns, equipment and a crew.

## Naval Engagements – 1814 & 1815

- Mar 28, 1814 – HMS Phoebe captures USS Essex
- Aug 12, 1814 – USS Somers and USS Ohio captured in Niagara River
- Aug 13, 1813 – HMS Nancy blown up at Nottawasaga
- Aug 12, 1814 – USS Somers and USS Ohio captured in the Niagara River
- Sept 4 & 6, 1814 – USS Tigress & USS Scorpion captured in Lake Huron
- Sept 11, 1814 – Battle of Lake Plattsburgh – Decisive US victory
- Jan 15, 1815 – Capture of USS President off New York after being damaged by HMS Endymion
- Feb 20, 1815 – USS Constitution (54) captures the two much smaller ships HMS Levant and HMS Cyane (Levant was recaptured by the British)

The British Blockade of the Atlantic coast in 1814 & 1815 kept American warships and merchant shipping bottled up in port and greatly reduced the threat from the Frigates and Privateers

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Other Actions:

**Constitution versus HMS Pictou (1813) (February 14, 1814)**: The capture and scuttling by the American frigate *Constitution* of the British schooner *Pictou* between Barbados and Surinam.

**Frolic (1813) versus HMS Orpheus and HMS Shelburne (1813) (April 20, 1814)**: The capture of the American sloop *Frolic* off the coast of Cuba by the British frigate *Orpheus* and sloop *Shelburne* after a six-hour pursuit. The British renamed the *Frolic* the *Florida* and pressed it into service.

**USS Peacock (1813) versus HMS Epervier (April 29, 1814)**: A forty-five-minute battle off Cape Canaveral, Florida, in which the American sloop *Peacock* captured the British brig-sloop *Epervier*.

**Rattlesnake (1813) versus HMS Leander (1813) (June 22, 1814)**: The capture of the American brig *Rattlesnake* by the British 50-gun fourth-rate *Leander (1813)* near Sable Island off Nova Scotia. In an attempt to escape pursuit by the *Leander*, the *Rattlesnake* jettisoned its last two guns, its other guns having been jettisoned earlier in an attempt to escape a British frigate that was pursuing it.

**Wasp versus HMS Reindeer (June 28, 1814)**: A battle in the mouth of the English Channel which resulted in the capture and destruction of the British sloop *Reindeer* by the American sloop *Wasp (1813)*.

**Siren versus HMS Medway (July 12, 1814)**: The capture, after an eleven-hour pursuit, of the American brig-sloop *Siren* by the British 74-gun third-rate *Medway* off the coast of South Africa.

**Wasp (1813) versus HMS Avon (September 1, 1814)**: A battle off the coast of England in which the American sloop *Wasp (1813)* defeated the British sloop *Avon*, but was prevented from taking the ship as prize by the arrival of other British warships. However, the *Avon* sank before it could be secured by the British reinforcements.

## Role of Privateers (Sea Militia)

- Privateers vs. Letters of Marque vs. Pirates
- 1,100 Commissions issued by Congress (another source says 550)
- Captured 1,400 British ships (1/3 retained, 1/6 destroyed, 1/2 recaptured by British) – net loss 1.25% of British shipping - most in the first 18 months of the war before the blockade became effective
- Well armed but true advantage in an engagement was often their manpower
- British Privateers took about 400 prizes and the blockading fleet took 1,500 more merchant ships
- Canadians out of NS and NB were very successful with 40 ships active, 3 of which took 80 prizes
- Baratarian pirates

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Letters of Marque carried cargo

Baratarian pirates of Louisiana – Jean La Fitte

America (22) of Salem took 26 prizes; other successful ships were Chasseur of Salem and True-Blooded Yankee which sailed from France

Often motivated as much by Profit as Patriotism

Most prizes were captured without a fight, particularly early in the war

Liverpool Packet (5), Sir John Sherbrooke (18) and Retaliation (5) took 80 prizes

War of 1812 was a Huge commercial boom for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick

Drove up cost of doing business and hence put political pressure on governments

## Keys to Naval Success – Shipbuilding

### Frigates & Gunboats:

- Six large American Frigates designed by Joshua Humphreys
- 150 gunboats built as part of Jefferson's economy blitz

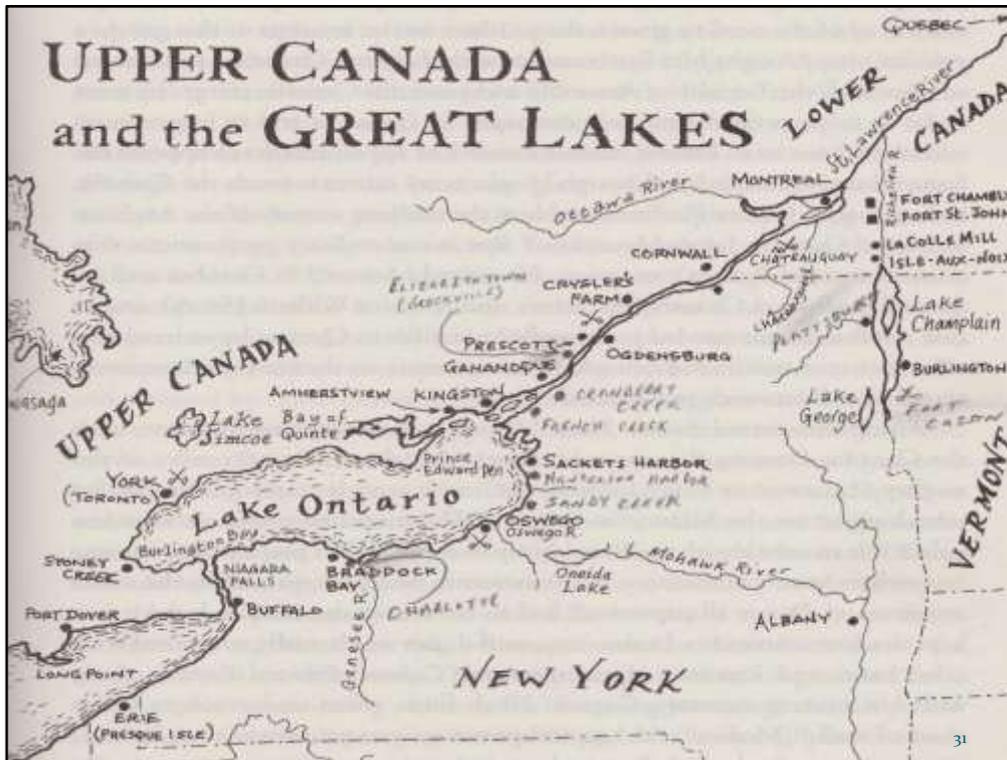
### Inland Lake Shipbuilding:

- American naval successes at Put-in-Bay and Plattsburgh resulted from the ship-building enterprises set up in Erie, PA and Vincennes, Vermont
- Also critical to the stalemate on Lake Ontario was the ship-building center at Sackett's Harbor, NY
- The British were not idle and had active shipyards at Amherstburg, Kingston and Île aux Noix

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Frigate design was approved by George Washington in 1794. The 6 frigates were built in 6 different shipyards to stimulate different states and were all completed by 1800. Designed to be larger than any other British or French Frigates but fast enough to escape from larger Ships of the Line

Before the war ended Admiral Yeo had commissioned the 112-gun [St. Lawrence](#), a three-decker man-of-war, and two more were being built. This was the biggest ship in the Royal Navy at the time



September 21, 1812 – Raid on Gananoque

November 20, 1812 – First Battle of Lacolle River

February 7, 1813 – Raid on Elizabethtown

February 22, 1813 – Battle of Ogdensburg

October 26, 1813 – Battle of Chateaugay

November 11, 2013 – Battle of Crysler's Farm

March 30, 1814 – Second Battle of Lacolle Mills

September 11, 1814 – Battle of Plattsburgh

May 14-16, 1814 - [The Raid on Port Dover and the north shore of Lake Erie](#)

Aug 13, 1814 - [The Battle on the Nottawasaga](#)

## Defense of Lower Canada

- September 21, 1812 – Raid on Gananoque
- November 20, 1812 – First Battle of Lacolle River
- February 7, 1813 – Raid on Elizabethtown
- February 22, 1813 – Battle of Ogdensburg
- October 26, 1813 – Battle of Chateauguay
- November 11, 2013 – Battle of Crysler's Farm
- March 30, 1814 – Second Battle of Lacolle Mills

32

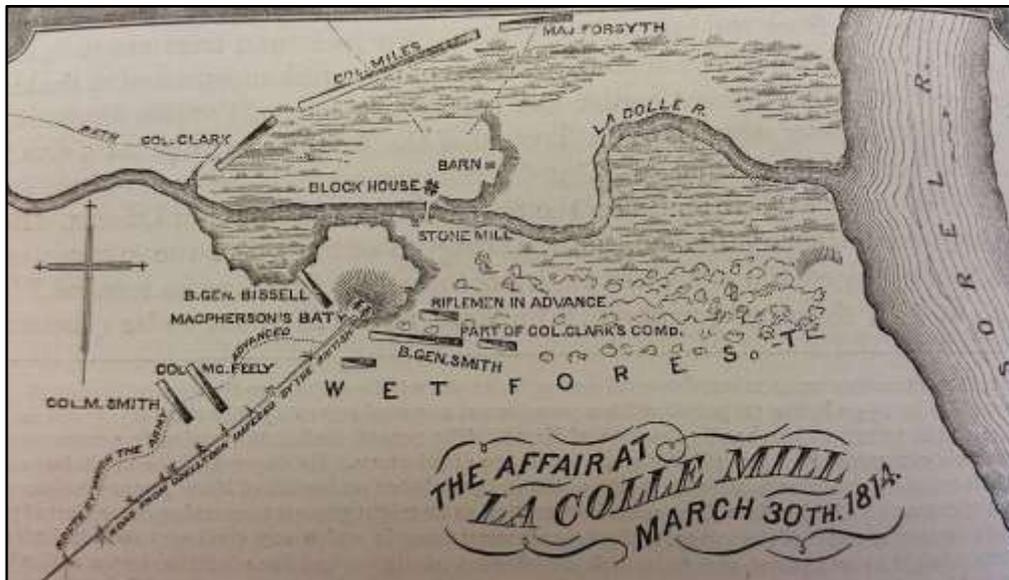
Gananoque and Elizabethtown were successful hit and run raids by Captain Benjamin Forsyth's and his company of the US Rifle Regiment

First Lacolle River – Dearborn had 6,000 men available but was turned back by 500 Canadians

Ogdensburg helped reduce cross border raids

Chateauguay – 2,600 Americans were turned back by 1,300 Canadians with no British regulars present

Crysler's farm – Over 3,000 Americans were defeated by 900 Canadians with minimal support from British regulars

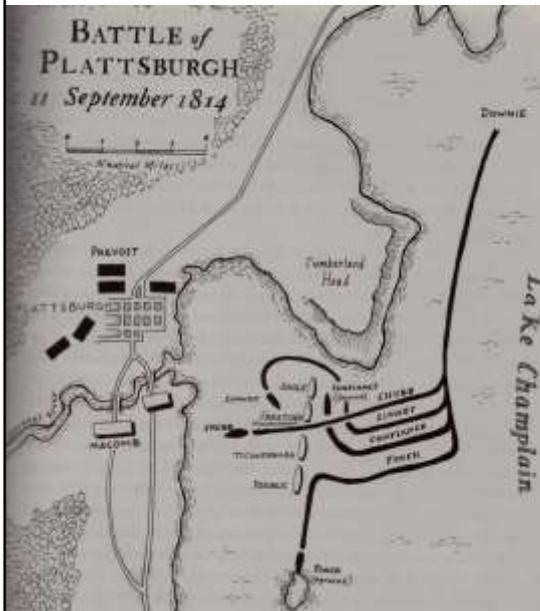


Maj Gen James Wilkinson had 4,000 American troops at the 2<sup>nd</sup> battle of LaColle Mills. They were turned back by Maj. Richard Hancock and 500 men barricaded in a mill

33

Casualties were 267 to 61

# Battle of Plattsburg



	British	American
Number of ships	4	4
Number of guns	77	78
Long gun weight	1122	708
Carronade weight	180	1116
Total cannon ball weight	1302	1824

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Brilliant American victory – Downie was killed in the first volley as were many other officers.

Commodore Thomas Macdonough anchored his ships across the bay and then used anchor chains to spin his ship around to allow for a fresh broadside

The huge British Army contingent of 5,000 had only minimal involvement and then retreated when the naval battle was lost – Prevost was severely criticized but died before a court martial could be heard

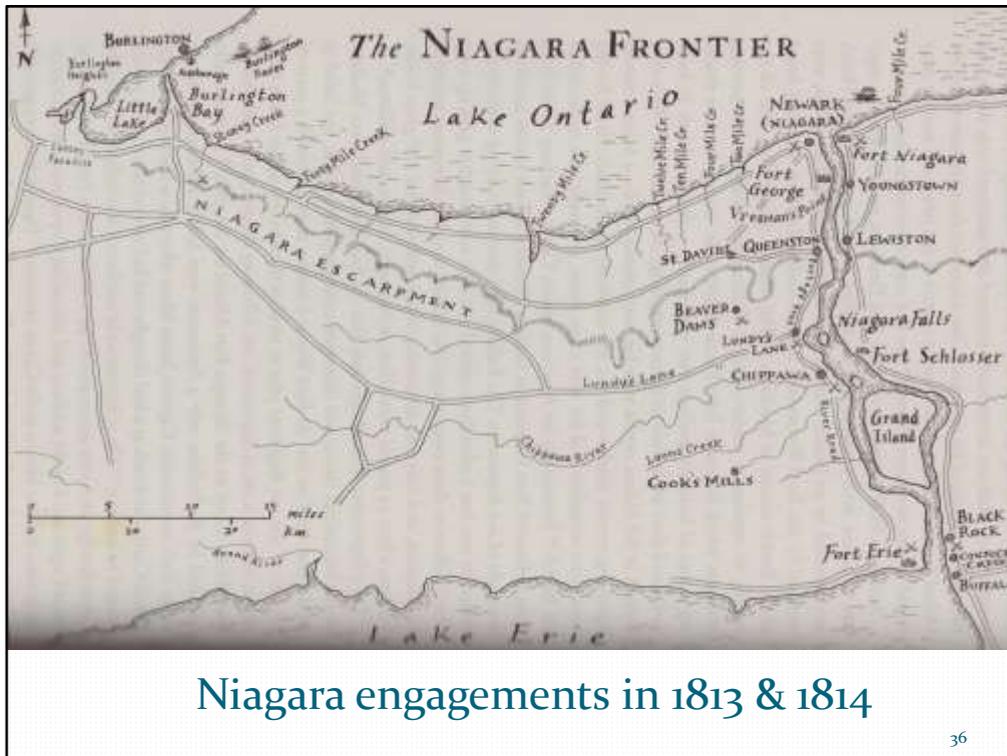
Americans - Brig Gen [Alexander Macomb](#) and [Master Commandant Thomas Macdonough](#) – 3,000 men

[Lt. Gen. George Prevost](#) and Capt. [George Downie](#) – 5,000 men

## Keys to Success at Plattsburgh

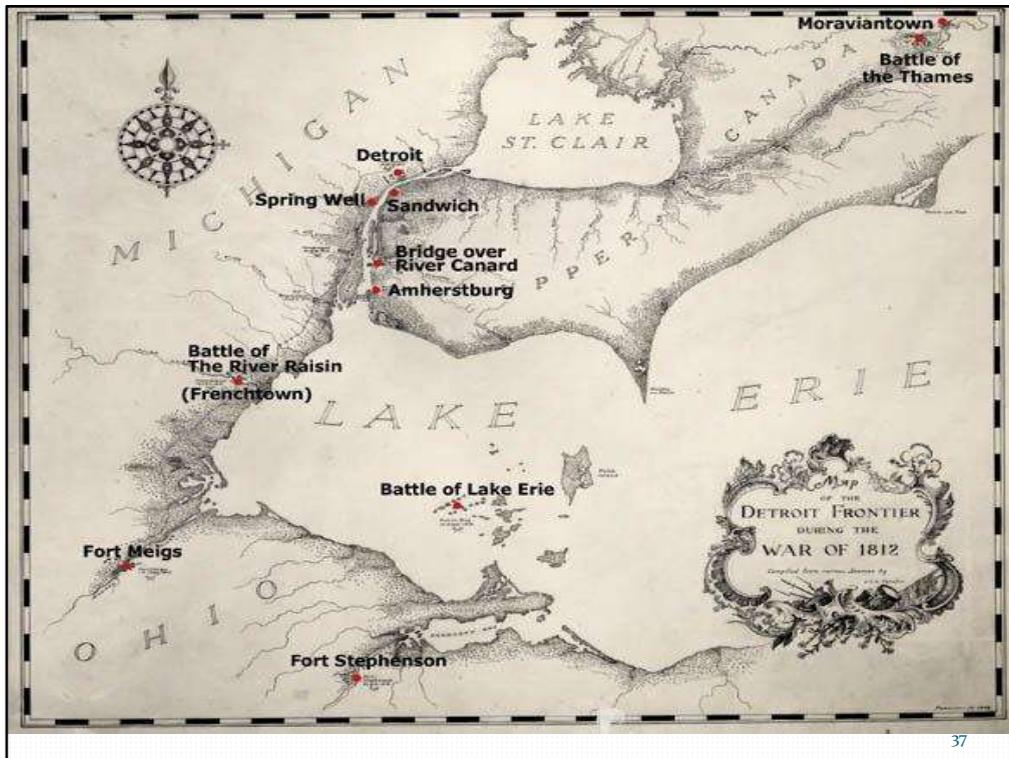
- The defense of the shipyard at Vergennes in May 1814 (Otter Creek) saved the Lake Champlain fleet
- HMS Confiance's was incomplete at the time she was ordered by Sir George Prevost to sail south to engage at Plattsburgh
- The American's had significantly heavier cannons and were anchored in a defensive position
- Captain George Downie and several of his key officers were killed or injured early in the battle
- Commodore Thomas Macdonough executed a brilliant strategy of using anchors to wear (spin) his ship to bring undamaged cannon into the battle

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**Chronology:**

- Oct 13, 1812 – Unsuccessful US attack on Queenston Heights
- Nov 28, 1812 – Battle of Frenchman’s Creek – limited US tactical gains followed by a return to their side of river
- May 25-27, 1813 – US capture of Fort George at Newark
- June 6-10, 1813 – US defeat at Stoney Creek and Forty Creek
- June 24, 1813 – Unsuccessful US attack at Beaverdams
- July 5, 1813 – Successful British raid on Fort Schlosser
- Dec 13, 1813 – US burning of Newark
- Dec 18-19, 1813 – Successful British attack on Fort Niagara in Youngstown, NY
- Dec 20-30, 2013 – British burning of all towns on US side of Niagara River including Buffalo
- July 3, 1814 – Successful US capture of Fort Erie
- July 5, 1814 – Battle of Chippawa – generally conceded to be a US victory due to British withdrawal after an unsuccessful attack
- July 18, 1814 – US burning of St. David’s
- July 25, 1814 – Battle of Lundy’s Lane – Considered a British victory by many but may have been a tactical draw but part of a huge British strategic victory as it stopped the American advance
- Aug 3, 1814 – Battle of Conjocta Creek – Unsuccessful British attack across the river
- Aug 12, 1814 – British capture of the USS Somers and USS Ohio in the Niagara River
- Aug 4-21, 1814 – Unsuccessful British siege of Fort Erie, though the Americans did blow up the fort and retreat to the US side in November
- Oct 21, 2014 – Battle of Cook’s Mills – Americans were successful in burning a mill and its flour after engaging with local militia





	British	American
Number of ships	6	9
Number of guns	64	54
Long gun weight	567	192
Carronade weight	408	1248
Total cannon ball weight	975	1440

## Keys to Success at Put-in-Bay

- Admiral Barclay's failure to continuously blockade Erie allowed the newly built American fleet to be launched. He left it unattended for 4 days in late July
- the Americans captured, at the Battle of Fort York, all of the cannons and other marine supplies intended for the HMS Detroit which was being built at Amherstburg
- The Detroit, though slightly larger than the Niagara or Lawrence, had to be armed with long cannons scavenged from the fortifications of Fort Amherstburg. These weapons did not have flintlocks
- This initially worked to its advantage but was disastrous when the wind changed and the fleets converged and all of the British commanders were injured or killed by the carronades
- Lawrence held back and was unscathed early in the battle, which ironically was the ultimate key to success in the battle.

Master Commandant Jesse Elliott

Return of the Victors at Put-in-Bay, Lake Erie  
September 10, 1813

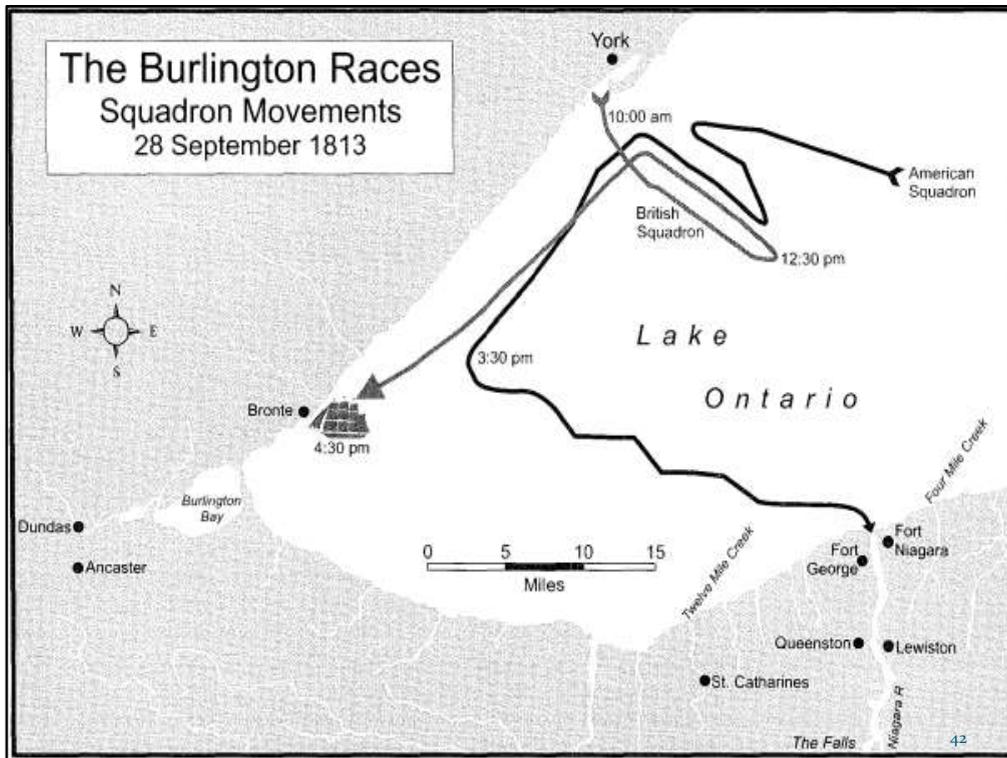


## Battle of the Thames at Moraviantown

- After the Battle of Put-in-Bay the badly disheartened and starving British at Detroit began a long retreat up the Thames River toward the center of Upper Canada
- On Oct 6, 1813 800 British soldiers and 500 Indians under General Proctor and Tecumseh were overtaken by 3,500 troops under Harrison, 1,000 of them Kentucky cavalry, at Moraviantown and surrendered after a single defensive fusillade
- The Indians fought bravely and Tecumseh was killed

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Master Commandant Jesse Elliott



Based on the recovered log of Commodore Sir James Yeo's British flagship HMS Wolfe. Contemporaneous accounts indicate that Commodore Isaac Chauncey's flagship USS Pike sustained much greater damage and casualties than the British and that Chauncey broke off the battle to return to Niagara for repairs.

By preserving his fleet he ensured that Britain continued to control Lake Ontario.

## The Old Northwest



Nov 7, 1811 - The Battle of Tippecanoe 1811

July 17, 1812 - Capture of Fort Mackinac

Aug 4, 1812 - The Battle of Brownstown

Aug 9, 1812 - The Battle of Maguaga

Aug. 15, 1812 - Fort Dearborn

Aug 16, 1812 - The Battle of Detroit

Sept 3, 1812 - Pigeon Roost Massacre

Sept 4-15, 1812 - Siege of Fort Harrison

Sept 13 & 15, 1812 - Attack at the Narrows

Sept 4-12, 1812 - Seige of Fort Wayne

Dec 18-21, 1812 - Battle of the Mississinewa

Jan 18, 1813 - First Battle of the River Raisin or Frenchtown

Jan 22, 1813 - Second Battle of the River Raisin or Frenchtown and the subsequent Massacre

April 26 to May 9, 1813 - The Seige of Fort Meigs and Battle of the Miami

August 2, 1813 - The Battle of Fort Stephenson

Sept 10, 1813 - The Battle of Lake Erie

Oct 5, 1813 - The Battle of the Thames

March 4, 1814 - The Battle of Longwoods

May 14-16, 1814 - The Raid on Port Dover and the north shore of Lake Erie

July 17-20, 1814 - The Battle of Prairie du Chien

July 19, 1814 - Battle of Rock Island Rapids (Campbell Island)

July 26 - Aug 4, 1814 - Capture of Fort Mackinac

Aug 13, 1814 - The Battle on the Nottawasaga

Aug 16, 1814 - Raid on Port Talbot

Sept 4 & 6, 1814 - Capture of the Tigress and Scorpion

Sept 4-5, 1814 - Battle of Credit Island

Nov 6, 1814 - Battle of Malcolm's Mills

April 3, 1813 – Raid on Rappahannock, VA

May 3, 1813 – Raid on Havre de Grace

June 22, 1813 – Battle of Craney Island

June 25-26, 1813 – British occupation of Hampton, VA

May 30, 1814 – Skirmish at Pogoteague Creek, VA

August 24, 1814 – Battle of Bladensburg / Washington / Alexandria

Sept 13-14, 1814 – Battle of Baltimore / Fort McHenry



April 3, 1813 – Raid on Rappahannock, VA

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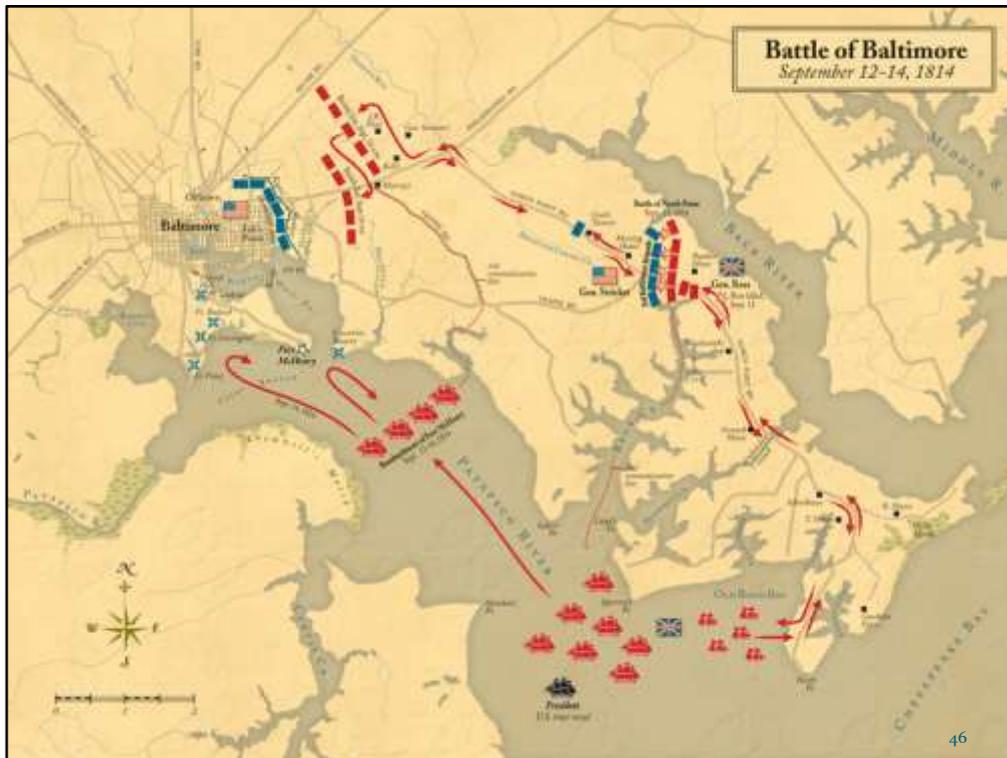
Sept 13-14, 1814 – Battle of Baltimore / Fort McHenry

## Bladensburg, Washington and Alexandria

- August 24 to 29, 1814
- First 4,000 British regulars defeated 1,000 American regulars and 7,000 poorly trained militia at what became known as the “Bladensburg Races”
- They then marched unopposed on Washington and finding no one who would surrender and facing sporadic gunfire, they burned the city’s public buildings and dock yard
- At Alexandria the British seized 14 merchant ships and huge quantities of supplies

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Washington buildings destroyed – Garrison, Capitol Building, Presidential Mansion (White House), Library of Congress, Supreme Court, War Department, State Department, Treasury and the Naval Ship Yard – a rainstorm the next day doused the flames. The National Intelligencer newspaper was taken apart brick by brick and the presses destroyed.



Brilliant American defense of Baltimore – one of the reasons the British were so successful at Bladensburg, Washington and Alexandria was that the Americans had assumed that Baltimore was the initial target and had massed their forces there

British over-ran the defenses at North Point, but crucially, General Robert Ross was killed, depriving the British of their best commander

When the British formed up in front of Baltimore they quickly realized that they had no chance against the well fortified positions defending the city

## Fort McHenry and Baltimore

- September 12-14, 1814
- Unsuccessful British bombardment of Fort McHenry by 19 ships from long distance – virtually none of the British balls actually reached the fort, nor did the McHenry guns reach the fleet
- 22 sunken ships chained together blocked the entrance to Baltimore harbor
- British landed close to 5,000 men who faced 11,000 Americans behind barricades

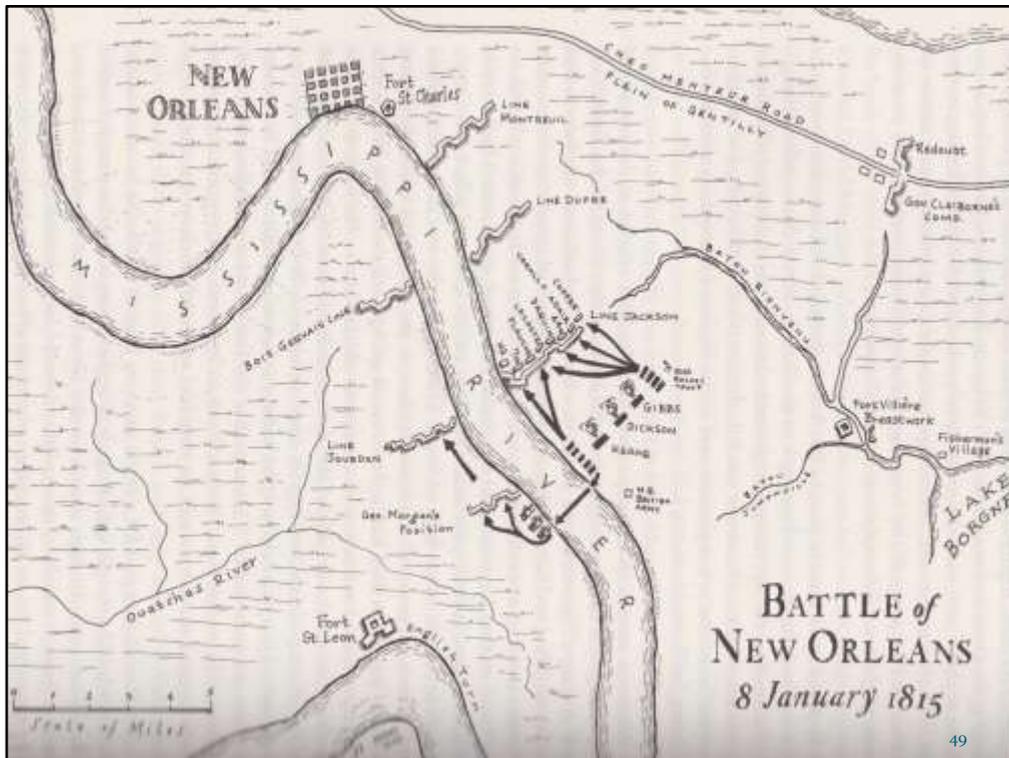
# Battle of New Orleans

This was a brilliant victory for Andrew Jackson!

- Myths
  - Kentucky and Tennessee sharpshooters
    - Most of the British casualties were mowed down in front of the well protected dug-in batteries of heavy guns which were shooting grape and round shot. The defenses were dug by 1,000 slaves. The British showed little cowardice, attacking in waves for five straight hours, followed by an orderly retreat (1)
    - The 2,250 Tennessee and Kentucky militia reinforcements were described at the time as “the worst provided body of men, perhaps, that ever went 1,500 miles from home to help a sister state.” Only 1/3 were armed.
    - The only significant British success was on the west bank of the Mississippi where Thornton drove off the Kentucky militia who ran away. Jackson was very critical of this militia force (2).
  - Role of Jean LaFitte and his Pirates
    - Jean was not present and his 100 followers who were there had minimal impact (3)

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- 1) Arsene Lacarriere Latour, Jackson’s Chief engineer, deemed it “my indispensable duty to do justice to the intrepid bravery displayed in that attack by the British troops, especially by the Officers”. Many historians have concluded that the role of the frontier rifles manufactured in Pennsylvania and used by militiamen has been greatly exaggerated as part of the political rhetoric which followed the war.
- 2) Kentuckians “ingloriously fled, driving after them, by their example, the remainder of the forces”
- 3) Lafitte was offered a chance to work for the British and if he had they would have had a much better chance of success attacking through Lake Barataria. Most serious historians are baffled at why the National Park Service named the group of parks which encompass the battleground the *Jean LaFitte National Historical Park and Preserve*
- 4) If the British had attacked on Dec 23 when they had a 3 to 1 numerical advantage they might have prevailed. Instead they waited two weeks until defenses were dug in



## US Situation in 1814

- Nantucket Island made a declaration of neutrality
- Congress met on September 19, 1814 in the only remaining public building in Washington – the Post & Patent Office – and were told that banks would no longer lend to them
- In October 1814 Monroe announced that conscription would have to begin
- In November the new Treasury Secretary A.J. Dallas announced that there was no money to pay debt interest and that taxes would have to rise
- Hartford Convention – Dec 15, 1814 to Jan 5, 1815

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So, given all of these great naval and land victories, what was the status of the USA in late 1814

-Hartford Convention (Massachusetts - 12, Conn – 7, RI – 4, NH – 2 (U), Vermont – 1 (U) almost set in motion secessionist movement

-A greatly divided nation – I guess ever it will be

## Negotiations For Peace

- Discussions about possible peace began not long after the war began
- Formal negotiations began in Ghent in Aug 1814
- Britain initially wanted an Indian “Buffer State” below the Great Lakes and a large portion of Maine which they occupied
- After reversals on Lake Erie and Champlain the British settled for “status quo ante bellum” on December 24, 1814
- Ratified by the US Senate on February 17, 1815



## The Treaty of Ghent

- The issue of impressment was not addressed, but became a moot point with the end of hostilities with France
- 10 million acres of land captured by the British in Maine and the West were returned and the few Americans still in Upper Canada withdrew
- Florida lands were returned to Spain
- No Indian “Buffer State” was created and they became the true “Losers” of the war
- Britain paid for slaves who had escaped to their ships and prisoners were exchanged

## Atrocities, Massacres and Other Depredations

- 1811-1812 - Various Indian attacks and American reprisals in the west – massacres on both sides
- April 27, 1813 – American destruction of the legislature and public buildings in York, the Capital of Upper Canada, including looting by soldiers
- May 3, 1813 – British naval looting and burning of Havre de Grace, Maryland
- June 25-26, 1813 – British naval attack on Hampton, VA
- Dec 13, 1813 - American burning of all of the homes in Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake) in a snow storm
- Dec 20-30, 1813 – British retaliatory burning of almost all towns on the American side of the Niagara River
- May 14-16, 1814 – American burning of Port Dover and other north side of Lake Erie towns
- June 18, 1814 – American burning of St. David's in Niagara
- August 9-13, 1814 – British shelling of Stonington, CT
- August 24, 1814 – British burning of the public buildings of Washington, DC

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Newark - Brig. Gen. George McClure was dismissed from the Army for his actions

St. David's – Lt. Col. Isaac W Stone of Rochester was dismissed from the Army for his actions

## Casualties of the war

- American – 15,000 of which only 2,260 were in battle
- British and Canadian – 8,600 of which 1,160 were in battle
- Indians – unknown
- In comparison, 3.5 million died in the Napoleonic Wars

## Political Repercussions - USA

- Involvement in the war and a fair dose of fake news helped the reputations of:
  - 5 future Presidents (James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor)
  - at least one unsuccessful presidential contender (Winfield Scott).
  - 3 vice presidents (D.D. Tompkins, J.C. Calhoun, R.M. Johnson), several governors and dozens of other politicians
- The war spelled the end of the Federalist Party

## Political Repercussions

- Canada - Reinforced influence of the “Family Compact” in Upper Canada and instilled a new sense of confidence which eventually led to Confederation in 1867.
- Britain - Totally over-shadowed and ignored due to the elation over the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo
- Indian Nations - Spelled the end of the Indian confederacy in the area below the Great Lakes and set the stage for their eventual removal

## War of 1812 in popular culture:

- “Star Spangled Banner” – lawyer Francis Scott Key after viewing the shelling of Fort McHenry and the flag flying
- “Uncle Sam”
- “Don’t Give Up the Ship” – dying command of James Lawrence while commanding the USS Chesapeake in 1813. Ironically, he did give up the ship. Best known for Perry’s use of a flag containing those words at Battle of Lake Erie and its ongoing part in US Navy lore.
- “Battle of New Orleans” – song and myth
- Laura Secord (Battle of Beaver Dams) & Billy Green the Scout (Battle of Stony Creek)

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In Canada there is a cottage industry around songs about the war such as entire CD by Mike Ford and two great songs by Stan Rogers

"The Battle of New Orleans", remained in first place on the country music singles chart for ten weeks, and atop the popular music chart for six weeks in 1959. The song won the 1960 [Grammy Award](#) for [Song of the Year](#).

Written by Jimmy Driftwood (born as James Corbitt Morris in 1907) and performed by Johnny Horton. He also wrote Tennessee Stud

## Star Spangled Banner



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**30 x 42 feet**

**If there were 18 states in the Union during the War of 1812, why did the Star Spangled Banner only have 15 stars and 15 stripes?**

On June 14, 1777 the Second Continental Congress at Philadelphia representing the thirteen colonies passed the following resolution:

*“Resolved, That the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation.”*

Eighteen years later the U.S. Flag Act of January 13, 1794 was signed by President George Washington altering the flag design with the admission of Vermont (1791) and Kentucky (1792) into the Union providing for fifteen stripes as well as fifteen stars.

*“An Act making an alteration in the Flag of the United States Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled, That from and after the first day of May, Anno Domini, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five, the flag of the United States, be fifteen stripes alternate red and white. That the Union be fifteen stars, white in the blue field.”*

These were followed with the admission of Tennessee (1796), Ohio (1803) and Louisiana (1812). By June 18, 1812 with a declaration of War with England, a total of eighteen states were then in the Union.

This act is responsible for the original star-spangled banner that was at Fort McHenry having the 15 stars and 15 stripes that is preserved today (since 1907) at the Smithsonian’s Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. A replica of this flag is flown by the National Park Service at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine in Baltimore, Maryland, by Presidential Proclamation, day and night.

On April 4, 1818, the Flag Act of 1818 signed by President James Monroe provided, with what is still honored today:

*An Act to establish the flag of the United States. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress Assembled, That from and after the fourth day of July next, the flag of the United States be thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white: that the union be twenty stars, white in a blue field.*

*And be it further enacted, that on the admission of every new state into the Union, one star be added to the union of the flag; and that such addition shall take effect of the fourth day of July then next succeeding such admission.*

## Uncle Sam



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The origin of the term Uncle Sam, though disputed, is usually associated with a businessman from [Troy, New York](#), Samuel Wilson, known affectionately as “Uncle Sam” Wilson. The barrels of beef that he supplied the army during the [War of 1812](#) were stamped “U.S.” to indicate government property. That identification is said to have led to the widespread use of the nickname Uncle Sam for the United States, and a resolution passed by [Congress](#) in 1961 recognized Wilson as the namesake of the national symbol. Uncle Sam and his predecessors Brother Jonathan and Yankee Doodle were used interchangeably to represent the United States by American cartoonists from the early 1830s to 1861.

# Laura Secord



61

Chocolatier company formed in 1913 adopted her image and name – now a nationwide chain of chocolate shops. Battle of Beaverdams

## Selection of Memorials to the War of 1812 - USA



Chalmette, Louisiana memorial  
to the Battle of New Orleans  
- 100 feet tall



Perry's Victory & International  
Peace Memorial - 352 feet above  
the surface of Lake Erie



Battle Monument and  
Lady of Baltimore - 47 feet tall

62

Perry – World's most massive Doric Column – go big or go home!!

## Selection of Memorials to the War of 1812 - Canada



Brock's Monument  
185 feet tall sitting atop  
The Niagara  
Escarpment -400 ft  
above the river



Ottawa War of 1812 Memorial -  
Seven bronze figures each 6  
feet tall



Crysler's Farm  
Memorial



Battle of Stony  
Creek Monument



USS Constitution Today  
207 feet long

USS Niagara Today  
110 feet long



## Even Lost Battles Get Their Monuments



Chippawa Battlefield,  
Ontario



Battle of Bladensburg,  
Maryland

## Selection of Memorials to the War of 1812 - Canada



Forged Peace,  
Amherstburg, Ont



Peace Arch,  
Surrey, BC

## My Favorite Memorial



Lewes, Delaware

## So, Who Won the War?

- I think we can all agree that the Indians were the big losers
- Americans initiated the war but achieved none of their stated objectives, other than perhaps seeing the end of the Indian confederacy, which likely would have happened anyway
- The effective Atlantic Blockade had killed international trade and customs revenues and America was bankrupt entering 1815.
- USS Chesapeake, President and Essex had been captured, another under construction in Washington was burned and the remainder of the Frigates were no match for the larger British ships being redeployed from Europe

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Assessing this depends to some degree on your point of perspective  
- In both Canada and the USA the war is viewed in David & Goliath terms. For America it was the fledgling nation against the global might of Great Britain. For Canadians it was the tiny British NA colonies scattered across the wilderness against the bully tactics of the much larger and aggressive USA

## So, Who Won the War?

- Britain was turned back in their invasions at Put-in-Bay, Plattsburgh, Baltimore and New Orleans, but ...
  - they still had tens of thousands of troops available to defend Canada
  - they controlled Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence and the Atlantic seaboard and occupied Maine and the West
  - They had just won their war with France freeing up their entire army and naval resources
- America was turned back in their invasions of Canada at Queenston Heights, Stoney Creek, Chateauguay, Chrysler's Farm, Lacolle Mills and Lundy's Lane and had withdrawn from Southwestern Ontario after over-taking and defeating the retreating army at Moraviantown

## So, Who Won the War?

- As demonstrated earlier in the presentation, battles won and lost balanced out throughout the war
- with a few exceptions, the invading army generally lost and the defending army generally won most battles
- Both the USA and Canada have taken great pride, perhaps sometimes misplaced, in their performance and this has been a great boon to their nation building
- In both Canada and the USA the victorious battles are glorified and the defeats are played down, or totally ignored, thereby reinforcing the myths of overall victory

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Exceptions:

British invasions – Mackinac, Detroit, Fort Niagara, Ogdensburg, Bladensburg

US invasions – York, Thames, Fort Erie

I believe it was that great American philosopher Bing Crosby who sang, with the Andrews Sisters, Johnny Mercer's lyrics:

“You got to Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the positive,  
E-lim-in-ate the negative”  
And latch on to the affirmative  
Don't mess with Mister In-Between

## January 2012 survey of Canadian and American Attitudes to the War

- An Ipsos Reid poll conducted for the Historical Dominion Institute sampled over 1,000 adults in each country
- One of the world's oddest conflicts, if only because both sides are confident they won
- Most Americans believe they won the war but see it primarily as the war that produced their national anthem (33%); while 36% said it had no long term impact at all

71

Canadians and Americans have vastly divergent attitudes towards the border war that broke out in 1812 and bumbled along for three years.

For a third of Americans, the key outcome of the war was their national anthem. Francis Scott Key wrote the words to the Star-Spangled Banner after watching a British naval bombardment of Baltimore's Fort McHenry in September 1814. A plurality of 36 per cent saw no significant outcome at all.

## January 2012 survey of Canadian and American Attitudes to the War

- Canadians see it as a war which saved them from American assimilation
- Given a list of things which might define Canadian identity:
  - 53 per cent of respondents picked universal health care,
  - but winning the War of 1812 and squelching the American invasion was ranked second, with 25 per cent support

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When the Canadians were asked what would be their great concern had the war gone the other way, 60 per cent said they wouldn't want to share the American political system.

"We agree that we do not want to be under the same politics and government system as they have in the States and we take pride in that," said Jeremy Diamond, director of development and programs for the Historica Institute

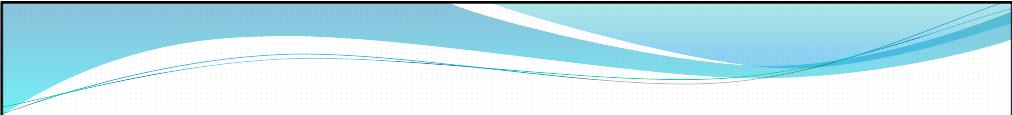
54 per cent of Canadians felt the most significant outcome was that the invaders were turned back. During the course of the war, the Americans repeatedly tried to invade and were repeatedly repulsed, by often-outnumbered mixes of British redcoats, Canadian militia and aboriginal allies.

Given a list of things which might define Canadian identity, 53 per cent of respondents picked universal health care, but winning the War of 1812 and squelching the American invasion was ranked

second, with 25 per cent support.

Another 18 per cent of the Canadian respondents said they didn't want American gun laws.

And six per cent said they didn't want to share citizenship with Snooki and her cohorts from *Jersey Shore*.



“Status quo ante bellum”