

War of 1812

DESTINATIONS



Historic Locations

- ★ **Benedict (Patuxent River)** — The British landed at Benedict with a force of 4,370 and marched north, ultimately burning Washington. Interpretive signage on site.
 - ★ **Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum** — At this site, Commodore Joshua Barney's Chesapeake Flotilla clashed with the British on June 8 – 10 and again on June 26, 1814, in the Battles of St. Leonard Creek. The battles, comprising the largest naval engagement in the history of Maryland, took place where the Patuxent River meets the mouth of St. Leonard Creek. The naval engagement was supported on land by American Army, Marine, and militia units who exchanged hundreds of shots per hour with British forces. Exhibits and interpretation on site: 10515 Mackall Road, St. Leonard, MD; 410-586-8501; www.jeffpat.org
 - ★ **Sotterley Plantation** — Sotterley was a mustering site for militia coming to the aid of the U.S. Chesapeake Flotilla in June 1814. Many slaves escaped from the plantation during that summer to join the British. Visitors can see the existing slave cabin and the beautifully restored Colonial Revival plantation house at Sotterley, 44300 Sotterley Lane, Hollywood, MD; 301-373-2280; www.sotterley.org
 - **Chaptico** — British forces conducted a raid at Chaptico where many houses as well as the wharf and tobacco sheds were destroyed and the Christ Episcopal Church damaged. Rt. 234, St. Mary's County. www.christepiscopalchaptico.org
 - **Leonardtwn** — British troops attacked Leonardtown. Interpretive signage at Leonardtown Wharf Public Park. www.somd.com/leonardtwn
 - **Lower Marlboro** — A British force occupied the town June 15 to June 16, 1814. Historic marker on site, at the end of Rt. 262.
 - **Maxwell Hall** — Local tradition claims that Maxwell Hall served as a temporary headquarters for the British during their march on Washington. Historic marker on site, located near Patuxent, Charles County. www.bmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=28317
 - **St. Leonard*** — Interpretive signage about the St. Leonard Town Site and the First Battle of St. Leonard Creek from June 8 to 10, 1814, and the Second Battle of St. Leonard Creek on June 26, 1814.
 - **Solomons** — This island was called Somervell's Island during War of 1812. www.solomonsmaryland.com
 - **Tudor Hall (Leonardtwn)** — Home of Phillip Key which now houses the St. May's County Historical Society. Interpretive panel and exhibit. www.stmaryshistory.org
 - **Calvert Marine Museum (Solomons)** — The museum displays artifacts recovered from one of the vessels of the U.S. Chesapeake Flotilla scuttled on August 22, 1814, on the Patuxent River, as well as an electric map of the British invasion route up the river. For hours and fees, visit www.calvertmarinemuseum.com
 - **Linden House, Prince Frederick*** — On July 19, 1814, the British burned the Calvert County Courthouse, the jail, and a tobacco warehouse. www.calverthistory.org
 - **Patuxent River Naval Air Museum*** — The museum features an exhibit on the Battle of Cedar Point, the first naval skirmish in Maryland. The museum presents the story of naval aviation research and development at Naval Air Station Patuxent River. For hours visit <http://paxmuseum.com>
- * Interpretive signage coming in 2012

Map Legend

This map shows the extent to which local property owners were impacted by the War of 1812.

- 🔥 Raid or other harassment of citizens by British soldiers
- ⚔️ Skirmish between British and American troops
- 🗺️ Battle between British and American troops
- 🇺🇸 🇬🇧 Mustering sites, camps, look-outs

The following symbols designate locations that are publicly accessible, and where you can go to learn more about the events of 1814:

- ★ Visitor destination 1812 site with interpretation
- Interpretive signage on site, includes highway markers
- 1812 interpretation/not an 1812 historic site
- ❓ Visitor Information Centers

Chesapeake Bay



War of 1812

A BRIEF BACKGROUND

In the early 1800s, the young United States of America was politically independent from Britain, but severely hampered economically by England's insistence on unfavorable trade restrictions with its former colonies. In addition, British troops continued to occupy disputed territory along the Great Lakes and were suspected of backing Native American raids against American settlers on the frontier. Most dramatically, the Royal Navy periodically captured and impressed American sailors into service on the high seas.

The War of 1812 was an armed conflict between the United States and Great Britain that officially began on June 18, 1812, and ended on February 16, 1815, with the American ratification of the Treaty of Ghent. The vote to go to war, 79-49 in the House and 19-13 in the Senate, was the closest vote on any formal declaration of war in American history. Because the United States sought to win the war by conquering Canada, the principal theater of war was located on the Canadian-American border, but the Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf Coast, and the high seas were also important theaters.

What role did Southern Maryland play in the war?

Bounded by the Chesapeake Bay on the east, the Potomac River on the west and penetrated by the Patuxent River in the middle, Southern Maryland provided easy water access for British raiding parties. By attacking the Chesapeake, the British hoped to draw American forces from the Canadian border, but also to bring the war to the capital of the nation. Take a good look at the map. Each of those orange flame



symbols indicates a place in Southern Maryland where the British carried out raids. The crossed sword symbol represents places where skirmishing took place between British and American troops. No other region of Maryland suffered more raids and skirmishes. The cannon symbol represents places where battles took place. In June, off Cedar Point at the mouth of the Patuxent River, the U.S. Chesapeake Flotilla, a mosquito fleet of fifty and seventy-five-foot gumbarges, was forced to retreat within the confines of the river whereupon

the British blockaded the Patuxent. A series of engagements were fought on St. Leonard Creek, a major tributary of the Patuxent River. Known as the First and Second Battle of St. Leonard Creek, this was the largest naval engagement on Maryland waters. At Indian Head on the Potomac River the Americans attempted to harass a British naval squadron.

But the most important event that took place in Southern Maryland during the War of 1812 was a huge naval force of some forty-five vessels that sailed up the Patuxent in August of 1814. This was the largest naval force to ever enter Southern Maryland waters. From these ships over 4,000 troops landed at Benedict, marched overland, defeated the Americans at the Battle of Bladensburg, and captured Washington. This was the first and only time that a foreign power captured our capital.



Photo: David Krankowski

Visit the places where history was made during the War of 1812

Begin your visit to Southern Maryland at any one of the four visitor information centers marked by a question mark on the map. Here you will find maps, brochures, and staff eager to answer questions and offer suggestions for your visit. The following are suggested destinations to visit with War of 1812 connections.

At **Sotterley Plantation**, overlooking the majestic Patuxent River, you may visit the oldest standing



Sotterley Plantation

plantation house in Maryland. Here the British drove off 300 militia, burned a warehouse full of tobacco, and thirty-nine slaves escaped. At **Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum**, you can see the new War of 1812 exhibit about the Battles of St. Leonard Creek. Walking trails provide excellent



Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum

views of the creek and Patuxent River. Additional exhibits about the war can be found at the **Calvert Marine Museum**. Here artifacts recovered from



Calvert Marine Museum

the scuttled U.S. Chesapeake Flotilla are displayed as well as a fiber optic map that illustrates the story of the British invasion of Maryland. At the end of Maryland Route 2 on Solomons Island is an interpretive wayside sign that tells the story of the Battle of Cedar Point, the British blockade of the Patuxent River, and several of the plantations raided at the mouth of the river.

At Leonardtown visit the stately **Tudor Hall**, once owned by Phillip Key, uncle of Francis Scott Key, and now home of the St. Mary's County Historical Society. From there, it is just a short walk or ride to **Leonardtown Wharf Public Park** at the end of Washington Street. One-thousand-five-hundred British troops hoped to capture a large militia force here but found they had fled leaving behind about



Tudor Hall

100 barrels of supplies and forty stands of arms. Legend holds that some of the muskets were "broke to pieces . . . and were only fit to stick frogs with."



Leonardtown Wharf Public Park

At Chaptico visit **Christ Episcopal Church**, built under the supervision of Phillip Key. Several members of the Key family are buried in the Key vault located immediately behind the church. The vault is identified by "defais le foi" and the image



Maxwell Hall

of an eagle perched on a shield holding a key in its beak. During the British raid legend holds that the church suffered damage to its marble floors when horses were reportedly stabled there. A raised wooden floor now covers the original damaged floor. The church organ was also damaged and some grave vaults desecrated. At **Benedict** one can visit the town where over 4,000 British troops landed and camped before marching to Washington. Nearby is **Maxwell Hall**, a restored home said to have been used by the British during their occupation of Benedict. According to local legend, two British soldiers are buried at **Oldfields Chapel**. The gravestone of Henry Canter reminds us of another



Chaptico Christ Church

legend where Henry was able to retrieve his horse from the British by sneaking up near the British encampment at night and whistling for it. At **Lower Marlboro** there is interpretation about the war at the old steamboat dock where you will enjoy excellent views of the Patuxent River. Beautiful views of the Potomac River can be seen at **St. Ignatius Catholic Church-St. Thomas Manor**, situated on a ninety-foot hill at Chapel Point near Port Tobacco. The U.S. Navy established an observation post at this strategic location to observe British ship movements on the Potomac River. Visitors may take a seasonal water taxi to the island where the British sunk wells for water, cut trees to build boats, and harassed the island inhabitants.

Prominent Americans connected to Southern Maryland's war

James Monroe, then Secretary of State, and later President of the United States, served as a scout and reported to Washington on the numbers of British ships assembling at Benedict to begin the invasion of Maryland. Monroe was also present at a skirmish at Woodland Point on the Potomac River in Charles County. **Joshua Barney**, a Marylander,



Joshua Barney

was a distinguished privateer who became commodore of the U.S. Chesapeake Flotilla built to protect the region from the Royal Navy. Barney led the flotilla during the Battles of St. Leonard Creek and also played a conspicuous part in the Battle of Bladensburg. **Oliver Hazard Perry**, hero of the Battle of Lake Erie, who fought under the flag *Don't Give Up the Ship*, commanded the gun battery at Indian Head, mentioned above. **John Stuart Skinner**, a native of Calvert County, served as an agent for the exchange of American prisoners

It can't be expected that I can defend every man's turnip patch.

— Attributed to President Madison in response to a request for troops in the Chesapeake region.

and was present with Francis Scott Key during the bombardment of Fort McHenry. Some credit Skinner as being the first to have Key's famous lyrics printed. **Roger Taney**, another Calvert Countian best known as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, married Key's sister and wrote an account of the writing of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Prominent British officers

James Alexander Gordon was a distinguished officer in the Royal Navy who commanded the British squadron that forced the surrender of Fort Washington and the occupation of Alexandria. He was hailed as "The Last of Nelson's Captains." **Major General Robert Ross** served in the British Army and directed the land troops that marched on Washington. He was later mortally wounded at the Battle of North Point several miles outside Baltimore. For his success at Bladensburg his family was given the honor of a second crest in which an arm is seen grasping the stars and stripes on a broken staff, and the family name was changed to the victory title "Ross-of-Bladensburg." The most hated British officer was the ruthless **Rear Admiral George Cockburn**. He held important commands during the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812 and eventually rose to become Admiral of the Fleet and First Sea Lord. In Southern Maryland he seized shipping, disrupted commerce, and made scores of raids along the tidewater. The nation's leading magazine, *Niles' Weekly Register*, called Cockburn a "Great Bandit" and "The Leader Of A Host Of Barbarians" and branded his troops "water-Winnebagoes," a reference to the militant Native Americans in the Old Northwest.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fairview Information Center
8120 Southern Maryland Boulevard (MD Rt. 4)
Owings (410) 257-5381

Solomons Information Center
14175 Solomons Island Road South (MD Rt. 2)
Solomons (410) 326-6027

Crain Memorial Information Center
12480 Crain Highway (MD Rt. 301)
Newburg, MD 20644
(301) 259-2500 www.charlescounty.org/tourism

St. Mary's County Welcome Center at Charlotte Hall
37575 Charlotte Hall School Road (MD Rt. 5)
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622
301-884-7059 or 800-327-9023

Calvert County Tourism Office
Courthouse Square, 205 Main Street
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
(800) 331-9771 www.co.cal.md.us/visitors

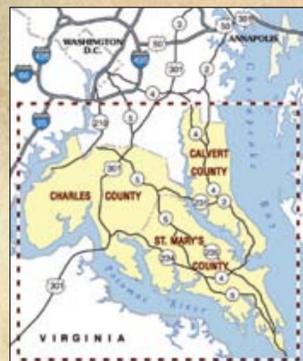
Charles County Tourism Office
200 Baltimore Street, P.O. Box 2150
La Plata, MD 20664
301-259-2500 www.charlescounty.org/tourism

St. Mary's County Tourism Office
23115 Leonard Hall Drive, P.O. Box 653
Leonardtown, MD 20650
www.visitsmarysmc.com

The Calvert Marine Museum
is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
For information call 410-326-2042
or visit www.calvertmarinemuseum.com

Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum is open
Wednesday through Sunday, mid-April through
mid-October, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information call
410-586-8501 or visit www.jefpat.org

Sotterley Plantation, a National Historic Landmark,
is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.,
and Sunday noon to 4 p.m. For information call
301-373-2280 or 800-681-0850
or visit www.sotterley.com



SPONSORS



This map represents a partnership among the three Southern Maryland counties of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's, the Calvert Marine Museum, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, and Sotterley Plantation. The project was funded by a grant from the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium and the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority with matching funds provided by the partners. Dr. Ralph Eshelman provided the text and consulted on the map, and the design is by Design Mason Graphics.

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

War of 1812

TRAVEL MAP AND GUIDE