



## War of 1812 Minutes

**The War of 1812** was a military conflict fought between the forces of the United States of America and those of the British Empire. The Americans declared war in 1812 for a number of reasons, including trade restrictions, impressment of American merchant sailors into the Royal Navy, British support of American Indian tribes against American expansion, and the humiliation of American honor.

**Declaration of War** on June 1, 1812, President James Madison sent a message to the Congress, recounting American grievances against Great Britain, though not specifically calling for a declaration of war. After Madison's message, the House of Representatives quickly voted (79 to 49) a declaration of war, and the Senate agreed by 19 to 13. The conflict formally began on June 18, 1812 when Madison signed the measure into law. This was the first time that the United States had declared war on another nation, and the Congressional vote would prove to be the closest vote to declare war in American history. None of the 39 Federalists in Congress voted in favor of the war; critics of war subsequently referred to it as "Mr. Madison's War."

**What was the first battle in the War of 1812?** On August 16, 1812, the first battle of the war took place at Fort Detroit, in the Michigan Territory. British forces bombarded an American detachment led by General William Hull. After British cannon damaged the interior of the fort, Hull surrendered.

**"The Star-Spangled Banner"** is the national anthem of the United States of America. The lyrics come from "Defence of Fort McHenry", a poem written in 1814 by the 35-year-old lawyer and amateur poet, Francis Scott Key, after witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry by the British Royal Navy ships in Chesapeake Bay during the Battle of Fort McHenry in the War of 1812. The poem was set to the tune of a popular British drinking song, "To Anacreon in Heaven". It became the official National Anthem of the United States, by a congressional resolution, on March 3, 1931.

**President James Madison** 4th President of the United States (1809-1817) His nickname was "Father of the Constitution." Madison was President for the Second War of Independence, more commonly known as the War of 1812. Madison had little enthusiasm for the war, but his hand was forced by the "**War Hawks**" in his own party. England and France were at war, and neither respected the neutrality of U.S. shipping. In

addition, English war ships seized American sailors and forced them into service. Seeing that Britain was a principal threat to the United States, on June 1, 1812, President Madison urged Congress to declare war. On June 18, Madison signed the declaration of war. Despite the unpopularity of the war, by the end of the War of 1812, it was regarded as a great success and set off an outburst of national patriotism.

**Dolley Madison**, Dolley Payne Todd Madison (May 20, 1768 – July 12, 1849) was the spouse of the fourth President of the United States, James Madison, and was First Lady of the United States from 1809 to 1817. Dolley's formidable social skills were a huge asset during the War of 1812 when she gave innumerable parties to keep up morale. But she is credited with an even more significant achievement. Immediately before the invading British burned the White House, Dolley saved the original priceless full-length portrait of George Washington, which was painted by American Painter, Gilbert Stuart in 1796. Because of Dolley Madison, this original portrait of George Washington still hangs in the White House today.

**The Burning of Washington**, On August 24, 1814, after defeating the Americans at the Battle of Bladensburg, a British force led by Major General Robert Ross occupied Washington, D.C. and set fire to many public buildings. The facilities of the U.S. government, including the White House and U.S. Capitol, were largely destroyed. The British commander's orders to burn only public buildings and strict discipline among the British troops are credited with preserving the city's private buildings. This was the only time since the Revolutionary War that a foreign power captured and occupied the United States capital.

**The Treaty of Ghent**, signed on December 24, 1814, in Ghent, Belgium, was the peace treaty that ended the War of 1812 between the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The treaty largely restored relations between the two nations to *status quo ante bellum*. Due to the era's slow speed of communication, it took weeks for news of the peace treaty to reach the United States, well after the Battle of New Orleans had begun.

**Andrew Jackson**, was the seventh President of the United States (1829–1837) and was the commander of the American forces at the Battle of New Orleans (1815). Jackson's service in the War of 1812 against the British was conspicuous for bravery and success. Renowned for his toughness, he was nicknamed "**Old Hickory**". When British forces threatened New Orleans, Jackson took command of the defenses, including militia from several western states and territories. He was a strict officer but was popular with his troops. It was said he was "tough as old hickory" wood on the battlefield, which gave him his nickname. In the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815, Jackson's 5,000 soldiers won a victory over 7,500 British. At the end of the day, the British had 2,037 casualties: 291 dead (including three senior generals), 1,262 wounded, and 484 captured or missing. The Americans had 71 casualties: 13 dead, 39 wounded, and 19 missing. The war, and especially this victory, made Jackson a national hero.

**The Battle of New Orleans**, took place on January 8, 1815 and was the final major battle of the War of 1812. American forces, commanded by Major General Andrew Jackson, defeated an invading British Army intent on seizing New Orleans and the vast territory the United States had acquired with the Louisiana Purchase. The Treaty of Ghent had been signed on December 24, 1814, but news of the peace would not reach the combatants until February. The battle is widely regarded as the greatest American land victory of the war.

**Dartmoor Prison (HM Prison Dartmoor)** is a Category C men's prison, located in Princetown, high on Dartmoor in the English county of Devon. Originally built between 1806 and 1809 by local labour, to hold prisoners of the Napoleonic Wars, it was also used to hold American prisoners from the War of 1812. Although the war ended with the Treaty of Ghent in December 1814, many American prisoners of war still remained in Dartmoor. On April 6, 1815, 7 of them were killed and 31 wounded when guards opened fire at the behest of the allegedly drunk British officer in charge, who thought that they were attempting to escape. A memorial to the 271 American POWs (mostly seamen) who are buried in the prison grounds has been erected.

**Daniel D. Thompkins**, Daniel D. Tompkins was Vice President of the United States and Governor of the State of New York during the War of 1812. During the War of 1812, Tompkins proved to be one of the most effective war governors. He played an important role in reorganizing the state militia and promoted the formation of a standing state military force based on select conscription. Tompkins was elected Vice President of the United States, on the ticket with James Monroe in 1816, and was reelected in 1820, serving from March 4, 1817, to March 4, 1825.

**Two NY City Streets Named for War of 1812 Heroes:** Allen Street, 1st Avenue below Houston, is named for Captain William Henry Allen, a naval hero of the War of 1812. Commanding the brig *Argus*, he captured 20 British ships before being killed by cannon fire.

Pike Street, the continuation of Allen below Division, is named for Zebulon Pike, the namesake of Pike's Peak. He was also a War of 1812 hero--killed by an ammunition explosion while attacking Toronto in 1813.

**Uncle Sam-** is a national personification of the United States and sometimes more specifically of the American government, with the first usage of the term dating from the War of 1812. In the year 1812, a large quantity of provisions for the army was purchased at Troy, N.Y., by Elbert Anderson, a government contractor. The goods were inspected by two brothers, Ebenezer and Samuel Wilson. The last named was invariably known among the workmen as "Uncle Sam." The packages were marked E.A.-U.S. On being asked the meaning of these initials, a workman jokingly replied that he didn't know unless they meant Elbert Anderson and Uncle Sam. So, the title became current among the workmen, soldiers, and people, and the United States Government is now known affectionately as "Uncle Sam".

**What are Three Great War of 1812 icons?** -- The Star Spangled Banner, "Old Ironsides," and Uncle Sam – all date from The War of 1812.

**USS *Constitution*** is a wooden-hulled, three-masted heavy frigate of the United States Navy. Named by President George Washington after the Constitution of the United States of America, she is the world's oldest floating commissioned naval vessel. *Constitution* is most famous for her actions during the War of 1812 against Great Britain, when she captured numerous merchant ships and defeated five British warships. This earned her the nickname of "**Old Ironsides.**" Retired from active service in 1881, she served as a receiving ship until designated a museum ship in 1907. In 1931, she started a three year 90-port tour of the nation, and in 1997, she finally sailed again under her own power for her 200th birthday. \* *The flagpole out front of U.S.D. 1812 National Headquarters, is a topgallant mast from the U.S.S. Constitution, which was given to the National Society in 1933.*

**Significant Flagpole at U.S.D. of 1812 National Headquarters**, the flagpole out front of the National Society United States Daughters of 1812 headquarters, in Washington D.C., is a topgallant mast from the U.S.S. Constitution; was given to the National Society in 1933, following the reconditioning of the famed "*Old Ironsides.*" Before it could be installed on the front lawn, twenty feet of its original length had to be cut off to be in compliance with District of Columbia height regulations.

The **USS *Niagara***, commonly referred to as the **US Brig *Niagara*** or the **Flagship *Niagara***, is a wooden-hulled, two-masted brig that served as the relief flagship for Oliver Hazard Perry in the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.

**Battle of Lake Erie** - September 10, 1813, saw one of the biggest naval battles of the war as nine vessels of the United States Navy defeated and captured six vessels of the Royal Navy, thus ensuring American control of the lake for the remainder of the war. This in turn allowed the Americans to recover Detroit and win the Battle of the Thames to break the Indian confederation of Tecumseh. After the battle, Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry notably sent a message to General William Henry Harrison stating "***We have met the enemy and they are ours.***" Also notable is that Perry, forced to surrender his initial ship, the *Lawrence*, and carried his personal flag bearing the motto "***Don't Give up the Ship***" to the *Niagara* where he proceeded to win the battle. Today, the *Niagara* can be seen at the Erie Maritime Museum. It is one of the last two ships remaining from the War of 1812.

**The Niagara Campaign** was the final campaign launched by the United States to invade Canada during the War of 1812. It occurred in 1814.

The American forces were commanded by General Jacob Brown and General Winfield Scott. The U.S. forces began the campaign with the Capture of Fort Erie on the Niagara Peninsula. Next they decisively defeated the British at the Battle of Chippawa.

At the Battle of Lundy's Lane both sides claimed victory, but because the U.S. forces had suffered so many casualties they pulled back to Fort Erie. Following their return to the

fort, the British under Gordon Drummond attempted to capture the fort and the Siege of Fort Erie followed. The Americans were able to hold out and the British eventually lifted the siege after suffering severe losses. After a small engagement at Cook's Mills, American forces commanded by General George Izard abandoned Fort Erie and returned to the U.S. side.

**Battle of Queenston Heights** - The Battle of Queenston Heights was the first major battle in the War of 1812, taking place on October 13, 1812. Before daybreak, American troops began crossing the Niagara River from the village of Lewiston. Several boats were swept downstream by the current, while the others were greeted with heavy musket fire from the shores and cannon fire from the Heights. The British General Isaac Brock – known as *The Hero of Upper Canada* – was notably killed in the fighting. A small American force managed to make their way up the escarpment and capture the British cannon, giving them temporary control of the battlefield. As fighting continued, British reinforcements arrived while the American militia refused to cross the river. This advantage enabled the British to retake the Heights and ultimately force the Americans to surrender.

**The Battle of Lundy's Lane**, (also known as the **Battle of Niagara Falls**) was a battle of the War of 1812, which took place on 25 July 1814, in present-day Niagara Falls, Ontario. It was one of the bloodiest battles of the war, and one of the deadliest battles ever fought on Canadian soil.

**The Battle of Plattsburgh**, September 6-11, 1814, also known as the **Battle of Lake Champlain**, ended the final invasion of the northern states during the War of 1812.

**Battle of Sackets Harbor**- In an attempt to destroy the American shipyard, a British-Canadian force launched an attack on May 29, 1813. At that time the majority of the American forces were across Lake Ontario attacking Fort George. The remaining Americans drove off the enemy, but their narrow victory was marred by a fire that destroyed their military stores. During the remainder of the war, Sackets Harbor was an active station where naval ships were constructed and supplied. In December 1814, the Treaty of Ghent officially ended the War of 1812, and the Lake Ontario fleet was placed in storage at Shiphouse Point.

**The First Battle of Sackets Harbor** was fought on July 19, 1812, between the United States and Great Britain. The American forces repelled a British naval attack on their town.

**The Second Battle of Sackets Harbor** or simply the **Battle of Sackets Harbor**, took place on 29 May 1813, during the War of 1812. A British force was transported across Lake Ontario and attempted to capture the town, which was the principal dockyard and

base for the American naval squadron on the lake. They were repulsed by American regulars and militia.

**The Battle of Big Sandy Creek:** was fought in northwestern New York on May 29–30, 1814, during the War of 1812. The battle was an American victory in which American militia and Oneida Indians launched a surprise attack on British soldiers who were chasing them inland from Lake Ontario.

**THE GREAT CABLE CARRY:** This famous event of the war of 1812 was the carrying of supplies over wilderness roads after the battle of Big Sandy Creek. In late May, of 1814, the Americans attempted to transfer supplies from Oswego to Sackets Harbor. Due to the blockade of the harbor by British lake patrols, the American supply boats had to stop at Big Sandy Creek. The following day the British dispatched patrol boats up the creek and were caught in an ambush by the Americans and Oneida Indians. Supplies and British prisoners were marched to Sackets Harbor with the exception of a 5 ton cable (*the cable was made of hemp; was six-hundred feet long, six inches thick, twenty-two inches around, and weighed nine-thousand six-hundred pounds*) intended to complete the warship "Superior". Local militia carried the cable on their shoulders for three days through the wilderness to Sackets Harbor. Where the cable was lowered at the end of each day, is marked with three commemorative bronze markers erected by the United States Daughters of 1812. Some say that the number of men who carried the cable at the beginning was less than a hundred, but along the way others joined while some dropped out after tiring. The cable was taken from McKee's Landing (where the battle took place) on Big Sandy, through Ellisburg and Belleville to Robert's corners, and then the men carrying the cable rested overnight. The next morning the cable was taken through Smithville and then on to Sackets Harbor, arriving in the afternoon after the twenty mile trip.

Some say the cable was used for the anchor, while others say it was used for rigging. The *Superior* was launched under the command of Lieutenant **John R. Elton** and saw much action until the end of the war.

**How Many U.S. troops were engaged in the War of 1812?** 7,000 (at start of war) and 35,800 (at war's end) •Rangers: 3,049 •Militia: 458,463.

**How Many American Battle Deaths?** 2,260 died in action, and 4,505 were wounded.

**Winfield Scott** (June 13, 1786 – May 29, 1866) was a United States Army general, and unsuccessful presidential candidate of the Whig Party in 1852. Known as "Old Fuss and Feathers" and the "Grand Old Man of the Army," he served on active duty as a general longer than any other man in American history and many historians rate him the best American commander of his time. Over the course of his forty-seven-year career, he commanded forces as a Lieutenant Colonel in the War of 1812, *primarily on the Niagara Campaign*. He took command of an American landing party during the Battle of Queenston Heights (Ontario, Canada) on October 13, 1812. The Army promoted Scott to

colonel in March of 1813. Scott planned and led the capture of Fort George, Ontario, Canada, beside the Niagara River. As a Brigadier General, Scott commanded the 1st Brigade, proving largely instrumental in decisive American successes at the Battle of Chippawa in July of 1814. The Army brevetted Brigadier General Winfield Scott as major general in July of 1814, for his valor. Nevertheless, the severity of his wounds prevented Major General Scott from returning to active duty for the remainder of the War of 1812. In addition to the War of 1812, Scott also commanded forces during the Mexican-American War, the Black Hawk War, the Second Seminole War, and, briefly, in the American Civil War. In 1856, Scott received a brevet promotion to the rank of lieutenant general, becoming the first American since George Washington to hold that rank.

He served as Commanding General of the United States Army for twenty years, longer than any other holder of the office.

**Major George Armistead**, (April 10, 1780 – April 25, 1818) was an American military officer who served as the commander of Fort McHenry during the Battle of Baltimore in the War of 1812.

**General Jacob Brown**, (9 May 1775 – 24 February 1828) was an American army officer in the War of 1812. His successes on the northern border during the war made him a hero. In 1821 he was appointed commanding general of the U.S. Army and held that post until his death.

**Erastus Whitney** was a farmer, from Henderson, NY, and was one of the 140 men who took part in the carrying of a five ton 600 foot long cable to outfit a ship in Sackets Harbor. This was a turning point in the Battle of Big Sandy, in the War of 1812. Whitney served with the 55th regiment of the NY Militia.

**Oliver Hungerford**, a Watertown businessman and Congressman, helped provide supplies for soldiers and sailors, during the War of 1812. Later he served as a quartermaster in the 12th Infantry Division, and later became involved in banking, and was a railroad pioneer.

**Fort McHenry**, in Baltimore, Maryland, is a star shaped fort best known for its role in the War of 1812 when it successfully defended Baltimore Harbor from an attack by the British navy in the Chesapeake Bay. It was during this bombardment of the fort that Francis Scott Key was inspired to write "The Star-Spangled Banner", the poem that would eventually be set to the tune of the "To Anacreon in Heaven", to become the national anthem of the United States.

**Old Fort Niagara**, is a fortification originally built to protect the interests of New France in North America. It is located in Youngstown, New York, on the eastern bank of the Niagara River at its mouth, on Lake Ontario. The fort played a significant part in the French and Indian War, and fell to the British in a nineteen day siege in July 1759, called the Battle of Fort Niagara. The fort remained in British hands for the next thirty-seven

years. Fort Niagara served as the Loyalist base in New York during the American Revolutionary War and was ceded to the United States after the Treaty of Paris ended the American War of Independence in 1783. The British captured Fort Niagara, once again, during the War of 1812, on the night of December 18, 1813. British forces relinquished the Fort back to the United States with the Treaty of Ghent. It has remained in US custody ever since.

**Who was Betsy Doyle?** Betsy Doyle was a heroine of the War of 1812, who remained at Fort Niagara during the war and played an integral role in the struggles that took place there. During a prolonged duel with British forces, Doyle carried red-hot cannonballs to guns on the roof of the French Castle. A year later, she donned a soldier's uniform and stood guard through the night. She instantly became a local celebrity for her acts of bravery. Although the fort was ultimately captured, she and her children were able to escape. In 2012, War of 1812 Heroine, Betsy Doyle, was selected to be recognized and inducted as a Woman of Distinction in New York State.

**Fort Oswego**, was an important frontier post for British traders in the 18th century. A trading post was established in 1722 with a log palisade, and New York governor William Burnet ordered a fort built at the site in 1727. The log palisade fort established a British presence on the Great Lakes. During the French and Indian War, this fort was captured and destroyed by the French in 1756. The site is now included in the city of Oswego, New York. The site was used for shore batteries in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 (when it was subjected to a British raid), but was never again fortified. Revolutionary War references to Fort Oswego are actually referring to Fort Ontario. The original site is commemorated at West First and Lake Street in Oswego, New York. Fort George was located in what is now Montcalm Park. Fort Ontario was maintained irregularly throughout the 19th and 20th Century as a military base and is currently open as a state historic site.

**Blockhouse #1 in Central Park, (The Great Hill)** with the possibility of a British attack so close to New York City, New Yorkers went into action and a call went out for fortifications to be built. A chain of major batteries were installed in upper Manhattan: Fort Clinton, Fort Fish, a battery at McGown's Pass, Nutter's Battery, and Blockhouse Number One were in what would later become Central Park. None of the batteries, fortunately, ever saw combat. The Treaty of Ghent was signed on Christmas Eve 1814, which ended the War of 1812, and the forts were abandoned almost overnight.

**What year was the Village of Lewiston, NY, burned down?** December 19, 1813, during the War of 1812, when British troops and their unrestrained native [Mohawk] allies were on the rampage and looking for retribution after the Americans had torched Niagara-on-the-Lake [Newark], 10 days earlier.

**Who were the Tuscarora Heroes?** Following the Capture of Fort Niagara on December 18, 1813, the village of Lewiston, NY, was attacked by the British. This happened at 6 o'clock in the morning, on December 19, as Lewiston citizens fled as fast as they could, many in their night clothes and running in the snow and mud, leaving bloody footprints

on their exodus out of town. At the moment when Lewiston citizens had lost hope and thought they would all become victims of a bloody massacre, the local Tuscarora natives intervened and temporarily halted the British attack, buying precious moments for the Lewiston survivors to escape. The confrontation is noted as a rare moment in American history when Native Americans rescued white settlers from a foreign attack.

**Burning of Buffalo and Black Rock** -After destroying much of the Niagara Frontier, the British troops were finally halted in their southbound march as Americans set fire to a bridge over Tonawanda Creek. The British returned to the Canadian side of the Niagara and marched south, carrying their boats around Niagara Falls. The British crossed the Niagara in the early hours of December 30, 1813, landing approximately 2 miles downstream of Black Rock, They pressed onward, forcing the retreat of the Americans whom they pursued all the way to Buffalo. Once in Buffalo, the British and Indians burned nearly all of the buildings and destroyed the navy yard and several ships. They then moved back to Black Rock and torched the town before crossing back in to Canada.

**The Arsenal in Onondaga County:** Erected in 1810 by New York State; on a hill half a mile east of Onondaga Valley, it was filled with stores and ammunition sent there by the secretary of war. On its roof were two huge wooden cannons which indicated the purpose of the building.

During the war of 1812 Nicholas Mickles was commissioned by the government to cast shot and shells for the army and navy. These munitions of war were stored at the old arsenal and later sent to Sackets Harbor and Oswego to be put into use. It was abandoned in 1815 after the war of 1812 ended, but was used by the State was during the Civil War when Brig. Gen. John A. Green of the National Guard, stored a quantity of State arms there.

Today, the site is in ruins, and the only relics of the War of 1812 remaining in Onondaga County are two graves and a monument at the top of West Seneca Turnpike Hill. One grave is that of Capt. Benjamin Branch of the U.S. Light Artillery, who died Oct. 14, 1813 in Onondaga Hollow, and the other grave is for Capt. Henry Crouch who died in the spring of 1814. Sadly, frosts of winter, driving rains of spring and fall and suns of summer annually take their toll on the arsenal. Each year the ruins grow smaller.