

A brief timeline

The war of 1812 was fought between the US and Great Britain from June 1812 to the spring of 1815.

Great Britain took over U. S. ships and impressed American sailors.

President James Madison cut off trade with Britain, but the British continued to take over American ships.

Madison thought that war was the only way to make the British stop and respect the American rights.

In June 1812 the “War Hawks” convinced Congress to declare war on the British

April 1813 U. S. took control of the Great Lakes and burned York. (The British retaliated by burning Washington, D. C.)

On October 5, 1813 the US met a combined British and Indian force at Thames, a river north of Lake Erie. The battle of Thames was a victory for the U.S. Tecumseh was killed at this battle.

In August 1814 the British marched to Washington D.C. and set it on fire. Washington burned while the president and the US government were at Virginia. The British burned the president's house as well.

The treaty that ended the war was The Treaty of Ghent in 1814.

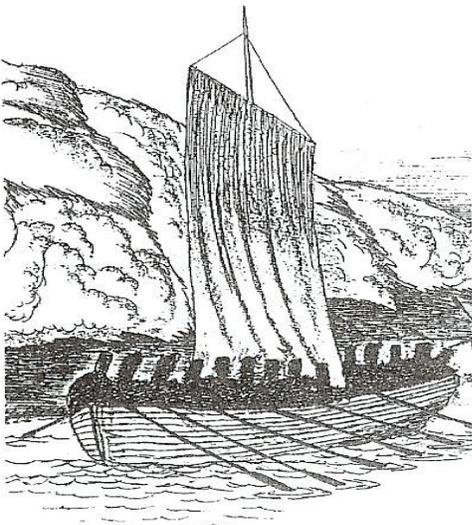
January 1815: The last battle was the battle of New Orleans in which 2,000 British were killed or wounded and only about 8 Americans were killed, 13 wounded.

This account is taken from the History of Oswego County, New York 1877

When the War of 1812 broke out, the people of Sandy Creek, being on the immediate frontier, were kept in a continual tremor. From the lake-shore they could see the enemy's vessels sweeping over the adjoining waters, now driving the American craft into their harbors, now in turn pursued by Chauncey's increased fleet. Mrs. Robbins recounts the exciting scene which occurred one summer Sabbath, when the people had gathered at Mr. Hinman's to hear the gospel preached by some wayfaring minister. Suddenly a messenger came galloping up, crying out, "The British have landed and designating the point assailed. Immediately all was confusion, men hurrying away to get their arms, children crying, and women shuddering with terror at the thought of the Indians, whose presence was always taken for granted when British troops appeared at that time.

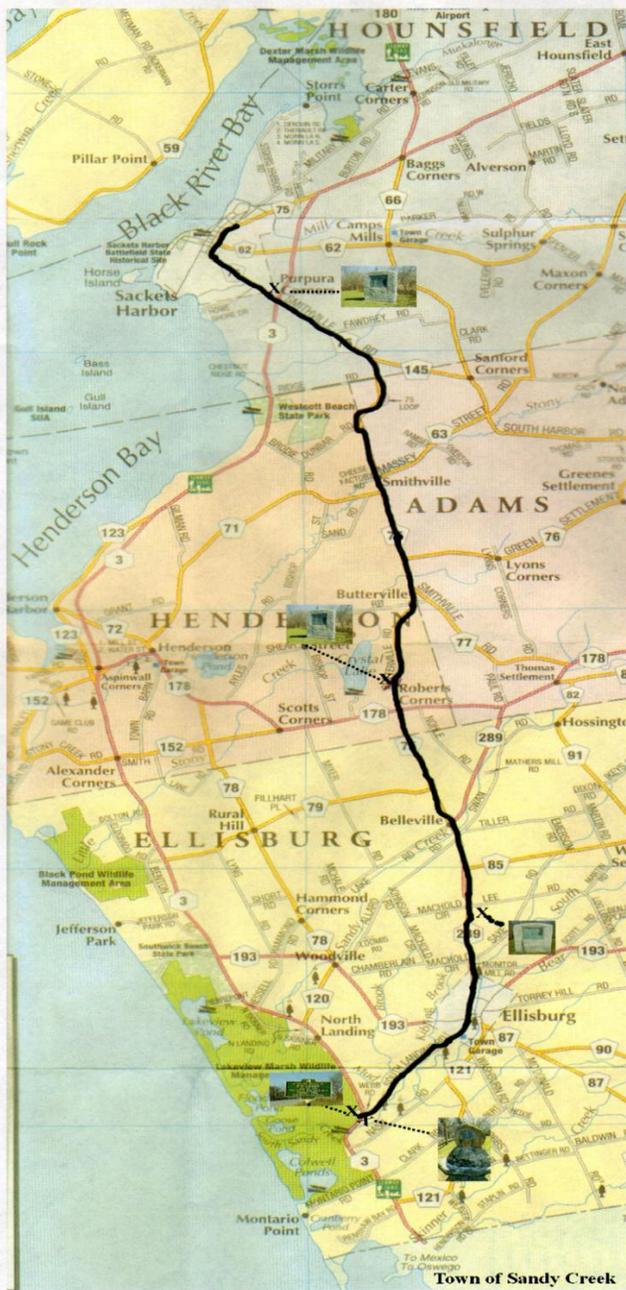
Again and again the militia was called out to repel an attack on Sackets Harbor. There was probably not a man in town of sufficient age that did not perform considerable military service during the two and a half years that the war lasted. Smith Dunlap was captain of the militia company from that section; Nicholas Gurley was lieutenant, Samuel Dunlap ensign and Reuben Hadley orderly sergeant.

Late in April 1814, Colonel Mitchell, with a small body of infantry, came marching along the Old Salt Road on their way to defend Oswego from a threatened attack. A few days later came the news that the defense had been unsuccessful and Oswego had been captured. For a while rumors flew thick and fast. On the 29th of May the dwellers in the western part of the town saw the curious spectacle of a body of Oneida Indians, in their war paint and feathers, and accompanied by a few soldiers, marching along the shore of Little Sandy Pond, while those who looked out upon the lake described nearly twenty large and heavy-laden boats, carrying the American flag and impelled northward by hundreds of stalwart oarsmen. It was Woolsey's flotilla, bearing cannon and stores for Commodore Chauncey's new ship, "Superior," as related in the general history.



The next morning messengers came hurrying through the country; informing everyone that Woolsey had run up big Sandy Creek, in Ellisburg, that the British were about to follow, and urging all to come to the rescue. The militia were speedily mustered and hastened to the scene of the expected conflict, but none of them arrived the thunder of cannon which startled the whole town from the shore of the lake to the slopes of the Boylston hills, and in the northern part the rattle of small arms could be distinctly heard. The militia, on their arrival, found that every man of the assailing force had been killed or captured. There was no fighting to be done, but some of the Sandy creek men took part in the celebrated feat of carrying to Sackets Harbor on their shoulders the great cable of the "Superior" weighing nearly five tons. When the vessel had been equipped and sent to Sea the British Commander was willing to take a retired position,

and the Americans along the lake felt less anxiety about a hostile incursion.



The **Cable Trail** is marked by special monuments erected in 1932 by the New York State Chapter of the Daughters of 1812 and the State of New York. Each of the three large granite monuments with a special bronze plaque was placed near the site where the men camped each night. A Battle of Big Sandy was erected in 1926.

The trail runs north from the battle site at the South Landing, past the site of the house used as a hospital for the wounded British, and goes through Ellisburg, Bellville, Roberts Corners, Buttrville and Smithville, crossing Route 3 at Purpura Corners to enter the village limits of Sackets Harbor. The Cable Trail markers are located between Ellisburg and Bellville on Route 289, between Roberts Corners and Buttrville on County Route 75 and just west of Route 3, also on Route 75.



War of 1812 Veterans

**Erastus Chappell
Peter Coon
B. Covey
William Cunningham
John A. Dunlap
Smith Dunlap
Samuel Hadley
Isaac Harvey
Philip Helmer
Elias Howe
Newell Howe
Oliver Hunter
Silas Lyman
Isaac Mosier
James T. Murphy
Pliny Nash
Seth Porter
_ Remington
Jonathan Snyder
Joseph Tucker
James Upton
Benjamin Weser
Isaac Weser
Chris Wodell**

The U.S.S. Constitution from the War of 1812

A dramatic incident of the war was the burning of the White House and other government buildings in Washington by the British in 1814. The words of the American national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," were written during this war and refer to one of its battles. In a sea battle Captain James Lawrence, wounded and facing defeat, ordered his men, "Don't give up the ship." Two of the war's military heroes became United States Presidents Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison.



Dolly Payne Madison



Dolly Payne Madison (1768-1849)

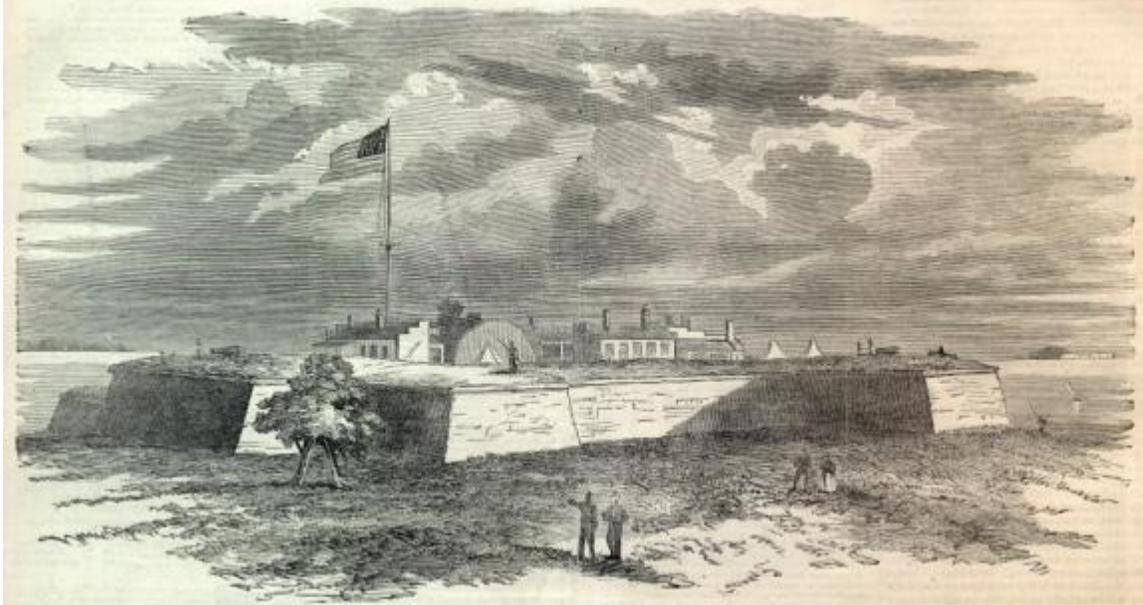
President James Madison's wife, Dolly Payne Madison, was a native of North Carolina.

In Washington, DC, as the British were entering the city from the opposite direction, she delayed her departure from the Executive Mansion long enough to collect the presidential silver and executive papers, and to cut a portrait of George Washington from its frame. She tossed these into the foot of the carriage in which she and the president escaped before the British burned the residence. Later, the blackened walls were painted white and the mansion became known as the White House.



Star-Spangled Banner at the time of the war of 1812

Mary Pickersgill, a Baltimore flag maker, stitched it from a combination of dyed English wool bunting and white cotton. The ensign was originally 30 by 42 feet and was to hang at Fort McHenry which guarded the water entrance to the city. Raised over Fort McHenry on the morning of September 14, 1814, to signal American victory over the British in the Battle of Baltimore; the sight inspired Francis Scott Key to write the Star Spangled Banner. (ref: Smithsonian Museum).



Fort McHenry as it was depicted in *Harper's Weekly* on the 13th of July, 1861. Image from the Library of Congress

DEFENCE OF FORT M'HENRY

Francis Scott Key & Larry Hosford

**Oh! Say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh! Say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?**



Joseph McKee, one of Ellisburg's earliest settlers, turned his frame residence over for the hospitalization of wounded British soldiers. The dead were buried in a knoll to the rear of the house and a short distance back from the north bank of the south branch of Big Sandy where the engagement took place.

The history of this house dates back to 1797 when it was a part of Oneida County and William Constable, the land baron, sold 3,000 acres to Robert Browne and Thomas Eddy who sold two adjoining parcels to Joseph McKee in 1806. McKee built the house in 1820 and gave the house and six acres to Laura Otis for life use, after which it was to go to her heirs by Avery Brown, her first husband. Ownership of the house changed hands until Mr. and Mrs. Otis bought it in 1942.



Cable Carriers

Charles Alton
Jabez Baldwin
Edmund Barnard
Daniel Bealls
Asa Carpenter
Fred Canough
Daniel Caulkins
Roswell Davis
Christopher Edmonds
Harmonius Ehle
Benjamin Grenell
Nicholas P. Gurley
Samuel Goodrich
Cyrus Hall
Charles Hollister
Chester Howard
Ebenezer Howe

John Hughes
Henry Knapp
Silas Lyman
Horace McKee
Isaac Mosier
Moses Morey
Captain John Otis
Henry Shaver
Jonathan Snyder
Truman Steele
William Streeter
Joel Thomas
Caleb Tift
John Tuttle
Jacob Widrig
Benjamin Weser
Christopher Wodell

The cable was carried to Sackets Harbor by 200 men to supply the new ship "Superior" to defend against the British. The cable weighed nearly 5 tons!

Battle of Big Sandy

The British controlled the waters of eastern Lake Ontario toward the end of the War of 1812, thus preventing our ships from sailing out of the harbors. Toward the end of May 1814, the British attempted a landing along the banks of Big Sandy Creek. Apparently forearmed with knowledge of the impending attack, our soldiers and some friendly Oneida Indians concealed barges loaded with supplies for ships at Sackets Harbor, in the willows along the stream. When the cannon in the British lead boat failed to fire, the British were overpowered by our ambush and soon waved a white flag of surrender.

At Sackets Harbor the Americans were building a new warship called *The Superior* that could carry 500 men. This area was thriving due to wartime activities, but the British controlled the waters. In an attempt to transport supplies from Oswego to Sackets Harbor via Lake Ontario, the Americans were forced inland by the threat of British attack. This meant that the *Superior's* anchor chain, a huge cable eight inches in diameter, six hundred feet long and weighing over four tons, had to be carried in some other way. This presented a major problem since it was too heavy to be carried by carts alone. It was decided that 200 of the strongest men would carry the rope on their shoulders. They lined up according to height and marched behind the oxen-drawn cart. Even though they carried in relays, many dropped along the way from exhaustion. And although the rope was made from hemp, many men bore scars on their shoulders for the rest of their lives. This procession must have looked like a slow-moving centipede. In the three days it took to travel the twenty miles to Sackets Harbor, the men's luck held out when they were able to avoid a British contingent, led by Sir James Yeo, which had come ashore. On their arrival at Sackets Harbor the brave volunteers were greeted by waving flags, fife and drum corps, townspeople and militiamen grateful for the supplies to carry on their battle.

Today the Cable Trail is marked with boulders bearing plaques showing the hauling of the cable. See the map on page 2.

British account of the affair at Sandy Bay.

It is with extreme regret we have to acquaint the public with the unfortunate result of a gallant enterprise by the boats of our squadron on Lake Ontario, under the command of Capts. Popham and Spilsbury of the Royal Navy, against a flotilla of the enemy's craft laden with Naval stores, which had got into Sandy Creek on its way from Oswego to Sackets Harbor. On the morning of the 20th ult. a large boat with two 24 pounders and a 19 and a half inch cable for the enemy's new ship was captured by our squadron, having sailed from Oswego the evening before with fifteen others. Captains Popham and Spilsbury, with two gun boats and some smaller craft, having on board about 200 seamen and marines, entered the creek on the morning of the 21st, where the enemy's flotilla were shortly after discovered. Parties were landed on each side of the creek and proceeded together with the boats, without opposition, to within about a quarter of a mile from the enemy, when suddenly a considerable force, consisting of 150 riflemen, nearly 200 Indians and a numerous body of militia and cavalry attacked and soon overpowered our small party whose gallant resistance to such numbers proving unavailing, a surrender became indispensable to save our brave men from certain death. Our loss on the occasion was 19 killed and 50 wounded. Mr. Hoan, master's mate of the Montreal, is among the killed and Lts. Cox and Kagh, of the marines are severely wounded. The boats also fell into the hands of the enemy.