



Carlyle House to Be Part of the New Star-Spangled Banner Geotrail

National Park Service's Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail

Fairfax, VA (January 26, 2010) – Carlyle House Historic Park is pleased to announce a partnership with the National Park Service's Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, Geocaching.com, and Alexandria as the City's official geocache site for the new Star-Spangled Banner GeoTrail (www.nps.gov/stsp/index.htm), slated to open this winter.

Geocaching, pronounced geo-cashing, is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world with the use of GPS devices. The basic idea is to locate hidden containers (called geocaches) outdoors, and then share your experiences online. Once you have found a geocache, you must sign the logbook in the container and return the geocache to its original location. Afterward, share your geocaching stories and photos online at www.geocaching.com.

The Star-Spangled Banner GeoTrail commemorates the dramatic chain of events, people and places that led to the birth of our National Anthem. The story of the Anthem was shaped by events in the Chesapeake region during the War of 1812. From early 1813 until early 1815, the Chesapeake Bay and surrounding shores were the center of fierce struggles between Great Britain and the United States. From the burning of the White House to the surrender and occupation of Alexandria and the Battle for Baltimore and "the rockets' red glare" at Fort McHenry, it's all here for the geocaching community to enjoy in the Chesapeake region.

Carlyle House is connected to the War of 1812, not only as the result of Alexandria's occupation by His Majesty's Royal Navy in August 1814, but also through Colonel John Carlyle's thirty-six year old grandson, namesake, and heir: John Carlyle Herbert. It was the result of his Uncle George William Carlyle's untimely death at the Battle of Eutaw Springs in 1781 that Herbert inherited his grandfather's Alexandria estate. Herbert took part in the ill-fated Battle of Bladensburg (August 24, 1814), serving as captain of the Bladensburg Troop of Horse. In addition to Herbert's service during the war, his parents William and Sarah (John Carlyle's daughter) lived at Carlyle House during the conflict and were witness to the town's capitulation and occupation by the British. William Herbert served on the committee that surrendered Alexandria to Captain Gordon of the Royal Navy.

The elder Herbert had been appointed by Alexandria's mayor, Charles Simms, to serve on the town's Committee of Vigilance in July 1814. The purpose of the committee was to procure information of the approaches of the enemy, as well as to obtain assistance and advice from the Federal government regarding which measures might be proper to pursue for the protection and defense of Alexandria. William's brother Thomas Herbert served concurrently as president of Alexandria's Common Council and the town's Committee of Vigilance.

In addition to the Carlyle House, the Spangled Banner GeoTrail will feature 30 to 35 sites throughout Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia. While some details are still being worked out, the incentive for finding a given number of geocache sites (perhaps 20) on the GeoTrail will be a newly-minted "trackable" geocoin commemorating the story of Our National Anthem.

For more information contact Carlyle House Historic Park at (703) 549-2997.