

Museum tour guides highlight area's role in War of 1812

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Not many people are aware of Frederick's role in the War of 1812, Jennifer Winter said while conducting a tour Saturday at the Roger Brooke Taney House and Museum.

"Few people know Frederick played a dual role in the war," the museum site manager said. "The Frederick militia was called into service, and the town of Frederick itself served as a safe haven for people and property."

Government archives from Washington were brought to Frederick for safekeeping, as was money from banks in Baltimore and Annapolis. Private citizens, including Taney's mother, brought family heirlooms and other valuables to the building at 121 S. Bentz St. to protect them from burning and looting.

While records show Taney owned the building, he never lived there, Winter said. Taney came to Frederick in 1801 and lived in a rental property until he left town in 1823, Winter said.

Saturday's program was held just to pay homage to Frederick's role in the war against the British. Frederick's militia was sent to skirmishes in Bladensburg, Baltimore, North Point and Washington. The battle in Bladensburg occurred in August 1814 while those in North Point and Baltimore took place in September. The one-day program was scheduled to fall between the two, Winter said.

On Saturday, visitors got a glimpse of what life was like in 1814. Tour guides talked about equipment militia members might have used and the role of women while most of the men and teenage boys were at war.

In addition to the main house, the tour includes a separate building that houses a kitchen, smokehouse and slave quarters.

While the nod to Frederick's role in the War of 1812 is only a one-day event, Winter said it will be held again next year.

Asked if a big event is planned to celebrate the bicentennial of the war's local battles in 1814, Winter took a deep breath and then sighed.

"I haven't thought that far ahead."



Photo by Skip Lawrence

Docents Matthew Gabb, left, and Deborah Brower examine a War of 1812-era musket Saturday during an event about Frederick's role in the War of 1812. The event was held at the Roger Brooke Taney House and Museum.