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## History returns to Hancock's 1812 re-enactments a highlight of historic park's season

By RICK HUTZELL Editor

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The Shantymen will sing and the cannon will roar.

If you only go once to Hancock's Resolution in Pasadena this year, today and tomorrow are the days to do it.

The 18th-century farmhouse, north county's only historic park, will host War of 1812 re-enactors who will provide a glimpse into the life of the average sailor and soldier in one of America's least remembered wars.

This weekend marks the fifth year the Friends of Hancock's Resolution's have provided the public with their best local opportunity to understand the impact of the War of 1812 on the Chesapeake Bay region.

The re-enactment, performed by members of The Ship's Company, depicts the events of Aug. 24, 1814, when British troops captured the Lion of Baltimore in Bodkin Creek.

Jim Morrison, head of the Friends of Hancock's Resolution, said the big change this year is a new spot for the activities, closer to the site where researchers believe the Lion was burned to the waterline and sank.

"It as a good view of Main Creek on the Bodkin... a spot that has a better view of where the action took place," he said.

Most people recognize the War of 1812 as the conflict that resulted in the "Star Spangled Banner" after the British tried to take Baltimore with a bombardment of Fort McHenry and by landing troops across the Patapsco River at North Point.

But the little known piece of history that unfolded within sight of Hancock's Resolution during the Chesapeake Bay campaign is worth learning about for anyone who enjoys learning about local history.

According to research by Kim Nelson, a British Royal Marine lieutenant aboard the HMS Menelaus recorded that his ship's captain burned "a fine schooner named the Lion of Baltimore on that date.

The Lion was one of a group of privateers that had been sailing out of Baltimore and Massachusetts to harass the British merchant fleet as far away as the coast of Ireland. The Chasseur, later renamed the Pride of Baltimore, was the most famous of the ships.

Local historians believe the Lion raided 15 to 20 British ships before returning to its home port that summer, seizing a fortune in goods and adding to general pain-in-the-rear nature of the war for Britain.

On the way home, it ran afoul of the Royal Navy coming up the Chesapeake Bay. The British campaign was a direct retaliation for a similar American campaign in Canada.

The Lion tried to hide in Bodkin Creek, but its tall masts were spotted by the Menelaus near Kent Island.

Trapped, the American crew stripped its sails and abandoned ship before fleeing to Baltimore, some believe

coming ashore at Hancock's Resolution. It had the only road to the city nearby.

Given the other events of that summer, and the fact that the War of 1812 gets lost between the Revolution and the Civil War in most history classes, it's not surprising that the Lion has been forgotten by most people.

Nelson's research has inspired ongoing expeditions by underwater archaeologists searching for the Lion's remains, both of which have yet to find the ship.

As we approach the anniversary of the war, the Lion and Hancock's Resolution have yet to be included the National Park Service's Star-Spangled Banner Trail, a string of historic sites connected to the conflict at Francis Scott Key's witness to it.

The trail includes the British advance and withdrawal on the Patuxent River; British diversionary feints; the British land march to Washington, D.C.; the battle of North Point and defense of Hampstead Hill; and the approach up the Patapsco and defense of Fort McHenry.

Built in 1785, Hancock's Resolution was the family home of the Hancock family for more than 150 years. Now it's part of the Anne Arundel County Parks system.

Family lore maintains the farm was used as a militia signaling station during the war, perhaps the reason the Lion sought refuge there. This weekend, re-enactors will offer naval and artillery demonstrations. Visitors will have a chance to talk with the soldiers and observe what their lives were like. Visitors also will be able to explore the original stone house, outbuildings, family graveyard and heirloom gardens.

This weekend may be the high point of events during the year at Hancock's Resolution, but there are plenty of reasons to visit in the weeks ahead.

Sept. 6 - The whole family is invited to partake in the events at Hancock Extended Family Day.

Sept. 20, two Eastern Shore residents of American Indian descent will give presentations at Hancock's Resolution about local tribes. Archaeological work at the farm has found evidence of a 3,000-year-old Indian campsite.

Hancock's Resolution will finish the year with a string of activities in October, including Fall Festival and Craft Day on Oct. 4.

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