

The successful defense against British during War of 1812 inspired Francis Scott Key to write *The Star-Spangled Banner*.
Photo: Maryland Office of Tourism, Film and Arts

STAR-SPANGLED EXPERIENCE

Plan now to commemorate the War of 1812 in Maryland by attending signature events and visiting historic sites with your groups.

By Matt Poe



The War of 1812, which lasted from 1812 to 1815, established the United States of America as a truly independent country with world standing. Before the war, Great Britain harassed the new country, from blocking trade to conscripting American citizens into its army.

Much of the war was fought in Maryland, near and on the Chesapeake Bay. Sites and museums throughout the area provide groups with firsthand experience of the war and how it affected the history of the United States. Also, the state is planning a bicentennial commemoration of the war that groups that groups can experience.

SIGNATURE BICENTENNIAL EVENTS

The U.S. Navy is planning a major naval event in Baltimore's Inner Harbor in June 2012 to commemorate the role of the Navy during the war. The event will consist of naval vessels, tall ships, and air shows. Up to fifty grey hulls and tall ships from the U.S., British, Canadian, and other navies of the world are expected to visit for a weeklong event in June 13 through 20, 2012, to mark the two hundredth anniversary of the U.S. declaration of war against Great Britain and kick off the Navy's and Maryland's bicentennial.

A series of major water and land-based events in the upper and mid-Chesapeake region, called Terror

in the Chesapeake, will take place in spring 2013 to commemorate the launch of the British invasion of the Chesapeake and the events leading up to the burning of Washington and the writing of the Star-Spangled Banner.

The national Star-Spangled Spectacular, a series of major water and land-based events in the Chesapeake region, will take place September 2014 to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the penning of the Star-Spangled Banner, and the events that gave the nation two of its most important icons—the flag and the anthem.

WAR OF 1812 SITE SAMPLER

Maryland has numerous sites related to the war, but groups must visit Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine to see where Baltimore defended the nation in 1814 and where the Star-Spangled Banner flew to inspire Francis Scott Key's poem that would later become our national anthem. At the Maryland Historical Society, see Key's original manuscript of "The Star-Spangled Banner." The Flag House and Star-Spangled Banner Museum is the 1793 home of Mary Pickersgill and the site where she made the thirty-foot by forty-two-foot Star-Spangled Banner that flew over Fort McHenry.

Hear tales of privateers who confounded the British

at the Fells Point Visitor Center. *Pride of Baltimore II* is a reproduction of an 1812-era clipper privateer. Due to the success of clipper privateers attacking British merchant ships during the War, the Baltimore-built ships earned the city the reputation as a “nest of pirates.”

For a more complete picture of the war, follow The Star-Spangled Banner Trail, which passes by sites related to the War of 1812 along a one hundred-mile route between Baltimore and Solomons.

Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in Southern Maryland is found along the trail. It is the site where British ships, boats, and rocket barges fought against the war barges of the Chesapeake Flotilla during the battle. The archaeology and history museum is located on scenic 560-acre historic property overlooking Patuxent River.

DISCOVER MORE HISTORY

For history lovers, Maryland has a wealth of treasures. Historic St. Mary’s City—where Maryland began—is one of the best-preserved English settlements from the seventeenth century. Annapolis—the longtime capital of the state and home of the U.S. Naval Academy—has the country’s most extensive collection of eighteenth-century buildings still in use.

Maryland’s Civil War Trails trace the paths that Union and Confederate troops followed on their way to Antietam and Gettysburg. The trails also link to Civil War sites around Baltimore and the route that John Wilkes Booth took during his attempted escape after assassinating President Lincoln, including the Surratt House Museum in Prince George’s County. The National Museum of Civil War Medicine is in Frederick and the Clara Barton National Historic Site is in Montgomery County.

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture and The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum (both in Baltimore), the Banneker-Douglass Museum in Annapolis and a driving tour of significant sites related to Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman’s life on the Eastern Shore offer varied perspectives on Maryland’s African-American heritage. Sotterley Plantation in St. Mary’s County is the state’s only remaining Tidewater Plantation that is open to the public.

With the two hundredth anniversary of the War of 1812 approaching, it’s the perfect time to bring your groups to Maryland and experience the history of the state. 📖

Sources: *Maryland Office of Tourism, Star-Spangled*
200

MARYLAND WAR OF 1812 CONTACTS

Maryland Office of Tourism
866-639-3526,
www.visitmaryland.org

Star-Spangled 200
www.starspangled200.org

Fort McHenry National
Monument and Historic
Shrine
410-962-4290 extension 243,
www.nps.gov/fomc

Maryland Historical Society
410-685-3750 extension 334,
www.mdhs.org

Flag House and Star-Spangled
Banner Museum
410-837-1793,
www.flaghouse.org

Fells Point Visitor Center
410-675-6751,
www.fellspoint.us

Pride of Baltimore II
888-557-7433,
www.marylandpride.org

Star-Spangled Banner Trail
866-772-1812,
[www.starspangledtrails.org/
trail-15.html](http://www.starspangledtrails.org/trail-15.html)

Jefferson Patterson Park
and Museum
410-586-8501, www.jefspat.org

St. Mary’s City
240-895-4979, 240-895-4980,
www.stmaryscity.org/Group.html

Annapolis
410-626-2597, 410-626-2598,
www.visitannapolis.org

Surratt House Museum
301-868-1121, www.sunratt.org

National Museum of Civil
War Medicine
301-695-1864,
www.civilwarmed.org

Clara Barton National
Historic Site
301-320-1410,
www.nps.gov/clba

Reginald F. Lewis Museum of
Maryland African American
History and Culture
443-263-1800, [www.
africanamericanculture.org](http://www.africanamericanculture.org)

The National Great Blacks in
Wax Museum
410-563-3404,
www.ngbiwm.com

Banneker-Douglass Museum
410-216-6180,
www.bdmuseum.com

Sotterley Plantation
800-681-0850, www.sotterley.org

INSIDE INFORMATION

There will be many activities taking place in the coming years. With fifty floating vessels on the Inner Harbor, one of the biggest will be the two hundredth anniversary of the Naval Declaration of War. It will be very similar to Operation Sail, the Tall Ships event held a number of years ago. This weeklong event, scheduled for June 2010, will provide a great opportunity for groups.

—Rich Gilbert, *Maryland Office of Tourism*

At the National Museum of Civil War Medicine (NMCWM), docents encourage participation through question and answer periods and hands-on activities. Each tour will be targeted for the interest level of the touring group, from grade school through college level, or from the casual visitor to the hardcore Civil War enthusiast.

—Robert Burton, *National Museum of Civil War Medicine*