



The Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail connects the places, people and events that led to the birth of the National Anthem. The 290-mile Trail stretches over beautiful rolling farmland, charming historic towns, and populated urban areas, following scenic rivers and the treasured Chesapeake Bay in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. During the War of 1812, this region was a center of a desperate struggle between the young United States and the empire of Great Britain. Riverbanks where people now fish once echoed with the sounds of cannon fire. Today, a trip along the Trail offers countless learning and recreation opportunities for Bay residents and visitors.

Forging a New American Identity

The successes and failures of the War of 1812 helped forge a new American identity. British depredations in the Chesapeake and American battlefield defeats highlighted the need for a more professional military. Dolley Madison redefined the role of the First Lady, and Francis Scott Key's poem "Defense of Fort M'Henry," later renamed "The Star-Spangled Banner," reflected American's new-found devotion to the flag. Although the war ended without a clear-cut victory for either side, the United States gained international recognition as an independent nation.

Francis Scott Key, in the aftermath of the 25-hour British bombardment of Fort M'Henry, penned a poem inspired by his view of the fort's enormous American flag. In the weeks, months and years that followed, his words captured the imagination and pride of a growing nation, and in 1931 became our National Anthem.



Retracing Footsteps and Flotillas

The Trail traces four major events that figured prominently in the development of the National Anthem, as it traverses landscapes and places that provide amazing opportunities to connect with a formative period in American history. These events include the British advance and withdrawal on the Patuxent, the British campaign for Washington, the Battle of Baltimore, and various diversionary raids and feints around the Chesapeake. The Trail will also interpret events that occurred in other places around the Bay, including the flight of the Madisons, the rescue of documents including the Declaration of Independence, and the American movement toward Baltimore.

Water portions of the Trail follow the Chesapeake Bay and its many rivers, linking towns and sites from Point Lookout to Alexandria, Solomons to the District of Columbia, and Tangier Island to Havre de Grace. Travel by land follows existing roads through southern Maryland to Bladensburg and Washington, and from the North Point peninsula to Baltimore.



A Contemporary Rediscovery

You can rediscover the past along the newly designated Trail even as coordination and planning of the Trail is underway. Visit sites in the Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Network -- such as water trails, parks, museums, and wildlife refuges -- to learn about and access the Bay. Envision the Battle of Baltimore at Fort M'Henry National Monument and Historic Shrine, or gaze at the recently restored Star-Spangled Banner at the National Museum of American History. Spend the day picnicking and exploring at Jefferson Patterson Park, or float along the Patuxent River past Mount Calvert and Lower Marlboro. Cruise Maryland's Star-Spangled Banner Byway from Solomons to Baltimore, bicycle through the Patapsco Neck peninsula, or venture out to Caulk's Field or Tangier Island on the Eastern Shore.



Share your Thoughts!

Trail planning and implementation is a multi-year, collaborative effort that involves hundreds of places around the Bay in preserving and telling the Trail's stories. The National Park Service is developing a management plan that defines how visitors and residents can access and experience the Trail, and identifies the roles and responsibilities of public and private partners in making the Trail a success.

During public meetings and events at sites around the Chesapeake Bay, and online through the Trail website, you can share your thoughts on how Trail resources and stories should be preserved and experienced. You can also contact us at:

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Annapolis, MD 21403
410-267-5700
STSP_Information@nps.gov
www.nps.gov/stsp



Pride of Baltimore II (Pride of Baltimore, Inc.)

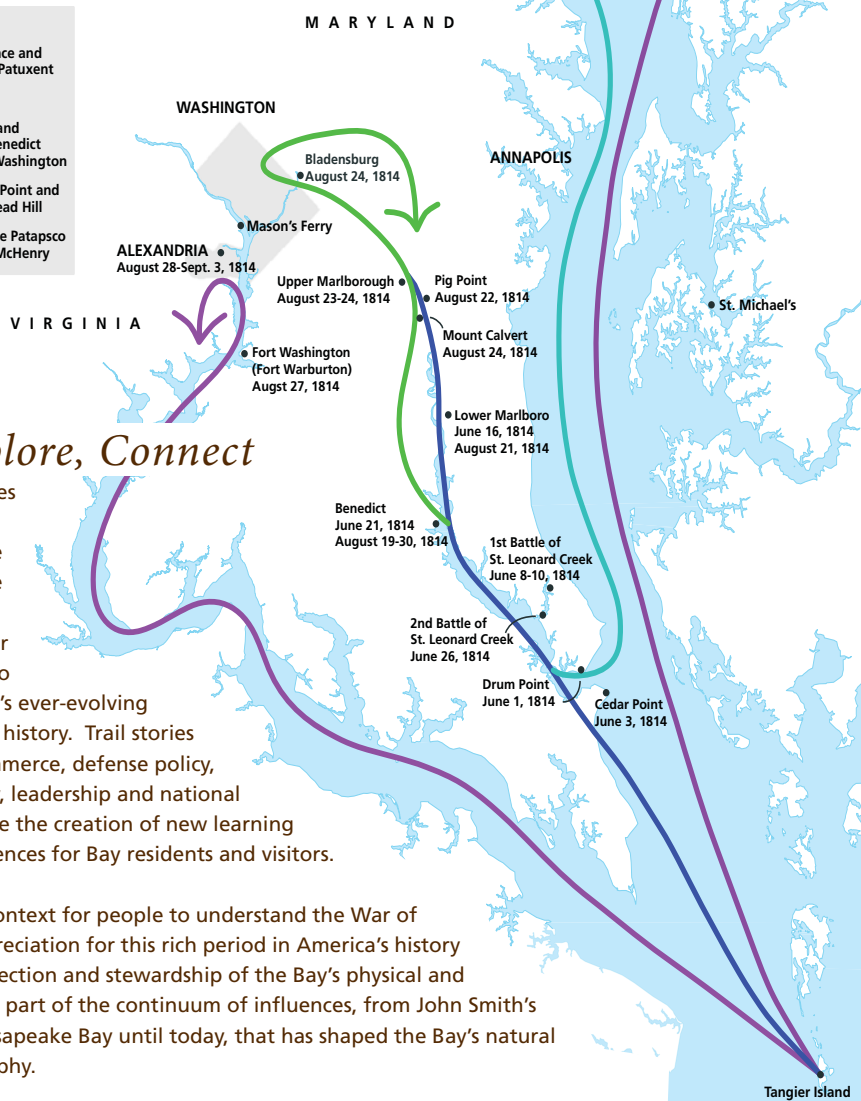


“Oh say can you see by the dawn’s early light

What so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru 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?”

LEGEND

- British Water Advance and Withdrawal on the Patuxent
- Diversionary Feints
- British Land March and Withdrawal from Benedict to Bladensburg to Washington
- The Battle of North Point and Defense of Hampstead Hill
- The Approach up the Patapsco and Defense of Ft. McHenry



Learn, Explore, Connect

At hundreds of places throughout the Chesapeake Bay, the Trail will explore the causes, events, and outcomes of the War of 1812 in relation to the magnificent Bay’s ever-evolving natural and cultural history. Trail stories -- of patriotism, commerce, defense policy, civilian roles, slavery, leadership and national identity -- will inspire the creation of new learning and outdoor experiences for Bay residents and visitors.

Providing a broad context for people to understand the War of 1812 can foster appreciation for this rich period in America’s history and encourage protection and stewardship of the Bay’s physical and historical landscape, part of the continuum of influences, from John Smith’s voyages up the Chesapeake Bay until today, that has shaped the Bay’s natural and cultural geography.

Find up-to-date information on Trail activities at www.nps.gov/stsp

The Trail is jointly administered by Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine and the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office, in close coordination with hundreds of governmental and non-governmental partners throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.



Get your National Park Service Passport Stamped Here!

You can collect Star-Spangled Banner Trail stamps at these locations along the Trail:

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine

Baltimore, MD

National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office

Annapolis, MD

Fort Washington Park

Fort Washington, MD

Tangier History Museum and Interpretive Cultural Center

Tangier, VA

White House Visitor Center

Washington, DC

A Vision for the Trail

The Star-Spangled Banner Trail will enhance visitor and resident access to significant places that played a role in the War of 1812, and provide a richer context for these places to interpret their stories and strengthen geographic and thematic connections. Trail stories and experiences provided through museums, historic sites, parks and refuges, and along bicycle and water trails and scenic byways will inspire people to reflect on this turbulent time and the people and events that led to the writing of the Star-Spangled Banner.

Explore online!

A sampling of organizations throughout the Trail that currently provide War of 1812 learning and recreation opportunities:

Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network
www.baygateways.net

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine
www.nps.gov/fomc

Jefferson-Patterson Park and Museum
www.jefpat.org

Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission
www.starspangled200.org

Maryland Historical Society
www.mdhs.org

National Museum of American History
www.americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner

Star-Spangled Banner Flag House
www.flaghouse.org



NPS/Fort McHenry