

MARYLAND  
BYWAYS

Star-Spangled Banner

13



Follow a scenic, 100-mile trail that returns you to the waning days of the War of 1812, also known as “America’s Second War of Independence.” As fighting continued throughout the summer of 1814 (just a few months prior to the war’s conclusion), Maryland’s brave defenders not only stood strong against British invaders up and down the Chesapeake Bay, but also inspired the poem that would become our National Anthem.

More information about key sites along this route is available in a brochure entitled, “Star-Spangled Banner Trail: War of 1812 Chesapeake Campaign” are available by calling 1.866.772.1812. Many of these destinations are also part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network,

meaning you have easy access to numerous bay-based recreational opportunities just beyond the historical landmarks.

This byway follows a northerly course, tracing the chronology of the Chesapeake Campaign as British troops made their way along the bay, leading up to the perilous fight in Baltimore made famous by Francis Scott Key’s “Star-Spangled Banner.”

**Solomons to Benedict – MD 2/4, MD 264, Grays Road, MD 506, Sixes Road, MD 231**

The War of 1812 had been raging for less than a year when British Navy ships blockaded the Chesapeake Bay. Capt. Joshua Barney, a hero of the American Revolution, came out of retirement to suggest that the U.S.



Navy respond with a fleet of lightly armed, shallow-draft barges that would be faster and more maneuverable than enemy vessels. Barney was subsequently promoted to commodore and, by May 1814, took charge of his new “Chesapeake Flotilla.”

In Solomons, which is a marina-rimmed fishing village with fine seafood dining and a number of intriguing attractions, the Calvert Marine Museum has exhibits that feature war artifacts and trace troop



movements as Barney fought futilely against a larger and more heavily armed British force. Also, stop by the Solomons Regional Information Center, a Chesapeake Bay Gateways site, for more history of the area and details about other places to visit.

Near Lusby, where you can hunt for fossils at Calvert Cliffs State Park or go fishing at Flag Ponds Nature Park, follow a branch south on MD 265 to Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum. This archaeology and history center tells of two battles that occurred in June 1814 and almost resulted in the capture of Barney's flotilla. Each September, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum hosts a War of 1812 Tavern Night celebration, as well as a commemorative "Battle of St. Leonard Creek" re-enactment, which includes demon-

strations of crafts and trades of the period. For a closer observation of the region's unique environment, take a hike along a boardwalk through the Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Sanctuary, located along MD 506 near Prince Frederick. The town itself was burned by British raiders.

By July 1814, Royal Marines occupied Chaptico, Leonardtown and other Southern Maryland locations, raiding private homes and confiscating tobacco, flour and firearms. The following month found more than 4,000 enemy troops probing deeper along the Patuxent River, seeking a suitable landing spot for an invasion of Washington, D.C. They chose Benedict, a riverside town known as much for its fishing, sailing and seafood restaurants as its War of 1812 history.



### **Benedict to Baltimore – MD 381, MD 382, US 301, MD 4, I-495, MD 202 , I-295 Ostend & Hanover sts, & Fort Ave**

With Washington, D.C. as their goal, British forces occupied the tobacco port town of Lower Marlboro and linked their Army and Navy for the first time in nearby Upper Marlboro. Today, treat yourself to a spectacular view of the Patuxent River from the Mount Calvert Historical and Archaeological Park, and then enjoy a variety of recreational and cultural opportunities



around town. Next, tour Croom Airport, the first African-American owned and operated airport on the eastern seaboard. Upper Marlboro is also popular among equestrians who ride on miles of trails in local parks and attend events at the Prince George's Equestrian Center/Show Place Arena.

An ambitious sidetrack east not only takes you to the Roots & Tides byway (page 121) but allows you to hear more War of 1812 tales at sites in Annapolis and across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge on Maryland's Eastern Shore. St. Michaels, for instance, has been known as "The Town that Fooled the British" ever since a summer night in 1813 when, to misdirect a British naval bombardment, residents supposedly extinguished all of

their lights and hung lanterns in trees north of town.

Other relevant destinations are found just to the west, at places like Fort Washington. But the main line of this byway heads north into Bladensburg, where a waterfront park provides nice views of the narrow, Anacostia River bridge that British forces crossed to attack American defenses during the Battle of Bladensburg, August 24, 1814. Having scuttled their Chesapeake Flotilla to join the land-based troops, Commodore Barney and his men fought a brave but futile rear-guard action. In the battle's aftermath, Rosalie Stier Calvert, known as the "Mistress of Riversdale", volunteered slaves to bury the dead, and then collected weapons and other items. This Federal-period plantation home now offers docent-guided tours.



British forces soon entered Washington, D.C., unopposed, burned many of the public buildings, and then returned to the town of Benedict to re-embark their ships. Your route, however, follows the Baltimore Washington Parkway (MD 295), planned in the 1920s as part of the federal government's parkway system for Washington, D.C. The parkway exemplifies the aesthetic and design principles of this important phase of American transportation history. Follow MD 295 up past College Park, Greenbelt and Beltsville. Cultural outlets in these areas range from performing arts venues and an agricultural research center to space flight and aviation museums.

America's "Second War of Independence" lit up Baltimore in September 1814. Expecting to cruise with little resistance into the city's harbor, a British fleet was instead frustrated by Lt. Col. George Armistead and his men inside Fort McHenry. Their courage was witnessed by Francis Scott Key, a Maryland lawyer who had been detained on board a cartel vessel after facilitating an American prisoner's release. By the rockets' red glare, Key watched bombs burst all along the shoreline. But when the smoke cleared and British ships pulled back,

a large American flag – measuring 42 feet by 30 feet – still fluttered over the fort's ramparts. At sunset on most days, visitors to the Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine can hear the playing of Key's "Star-Spangled Banner" while participating in a ceremonial flag lowering. The hand-penned version of Key's poem is displayed at the Maryland Historical Society. Also in Baltimore, the home of Fort McHenry flagmaker Mary Pickersgill has been preserved as the Flag House & Star-Spangled Banner Museum.



At this point, follow the National Historic Seaport byway (page 97) to investigate 19th-century trades and lifestyles. Visit the Fells Point Maritime Museum to learn about privateer clipper ships that operated during the war, and then see the Inner Harbor-based *Pride of Baltimore II*, a re-creation of an 1812-era Baltimore Clipper.

Just outside the city, during the early hours of September 12, 1814, the overland Battle for Baltimore began with the landing of 4,500 British troops at what is now North Point State Park. After defeating the Americans at North Point, the British marched to Baltimore but failed to outflank city defenses at Hampstead Hill and withdrew back to North Point to re-board their ships and depart unvictorious down the Chesapeake Bay.

The Star-Spangled Banner byway ends here, but in the town of Frederick you can discover more about Francis Scott Key and visit the cemetery where he is buried. The Historic National Road byway (page 7) extends to Frederick from Baltimore.

**OLD LINE LORE:** *British Major General Robert Ross, impressed by the heroics of Commodore Joshua Barney's troops while other American forces hastily retreated during the Battle of Bladensburg, not only set the injured commodore free but also pardoned all of Barney's "Bluecoats." During the Battle of North Point about three weeks later, Ross was mortally wounded by a sharpshooter – one of Commodore Barney's pardoned soldiers.*



#### Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Sanctuary

2880 Grays Road  
Prince Frederick, 20678  
410-535-3400

#### Bladensburg Waterfront Park Anacostia River

4601 Annapolis Road  
Bladensburg, 20710  
301-779-0371  
<http://www.pgparcs.com/places/nature/bladensburg.html>

#### Calvert Marine Museum

14150 Solomons Island Rd  
Solomons, 20688  
410-326-2042  
[www.calvertmarinemuseum.com](http://www.calvertmarinemuseum.com)

#### Flag House & Star-Spangled Banner Museum

844 E. Pratt St  
Baltimore, 21202  
410-837-1793  
[www.flaghouse.org](http://www.flaghouse.org)

#### Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine

2400 E Fort Ave  
Baltimore, 21250-5393  
410-962-4290  
[www.nps.gov/fomc](http://www.nps.gov/fomc)

#### Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum

10515 Mackall Rd  
St. Leonard, 20685  
410-586-8500  
[www.jefpat.org](http://www.jefpat.org)



**Maryland Historical Society  
Museum**

201 W. Monument St  
Baltimore, 21201-4674  
**410-685-3750**  
[www.mdhs.org](http://www.mdhs.org)

**Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary**

11704 Fenno Road  
Upper Marlboro, 20772  
**301-888-1410**  
[www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/merkle.html](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/merkle.html)

**Mount Calvert Historical &  
Archaeological Park**

16302 Mount Calvert Rd, Upper  
Marlboro, 20772  
**301-627-1286**

**North Point State Park**

c/o Gunpowder Falls State Park  
2813 Jerusalem Road  
P.O. Box 480  
Kingsville, 21087  
**410-592-2897**  
[www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/central/northpoint.html](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/central/northpoint.html)

**Patuxent River Park**

16000 Croom Airport Road  
Upper Marlboro, 20772  
**301-627-6074**  
[www.pgparcs.com/places/parks/patuxent.html](http://www.pgparcs.com/places/parks/patuxent.html)

***Pride of Baltimore II***

Inner Harbor (when in port)  
Baltimore, 21202  
**410-539-1151**  
[www.marylandspride.org](http://www.marylandspride.org)

**Riversdale**

4811 Riverdale Rd  
Riverdale 20737  
**301-864-0420**  
[www.pgparcs.com](http://www.pgparcs.com)