

**Burlington, Vermont
War of 1812
Military Cantonment and
Soldiers' Burial Ground**



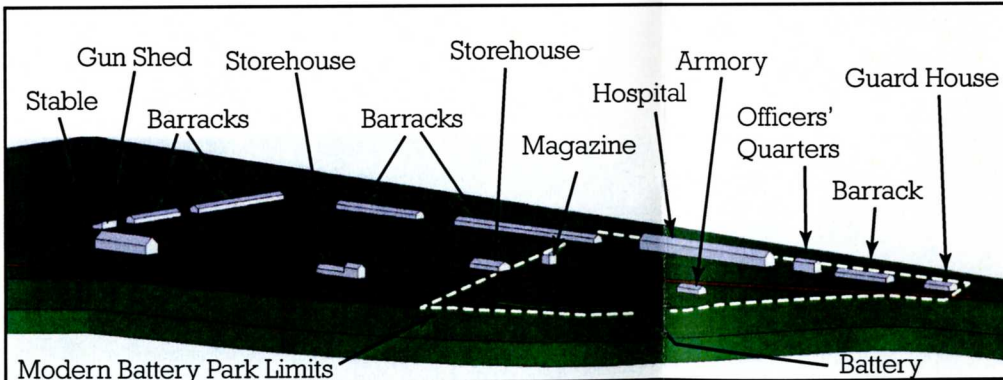
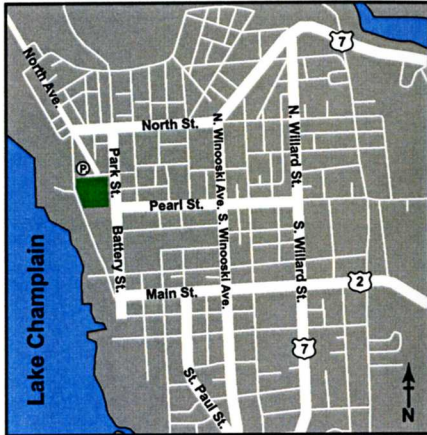
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The War of 1812

The War of 1812 was a nearly three-year long conflict between Great Britain and the United States. It was fought from the Great Lakes to the coast of Maine, from the St. Lawrence River to the Gulf of Mexico, and on the seas of the world. The conflict had its roots in a variety of grievances held by the Americans against the British. Among these were the taking of sailors from American ships to serve in the Royal Navy, trade restrictions imposed by the British to prevent goods from reaching France, with whom Britain was at war, and British support for Native American groups that were resisting American expansion westward. An estimated 10,000 American lives were lost as a result of the war. Located on the strategic north-south water route between the St. Lawrence River and the Hudson River, Lake Champlain became an important theater of the conflict. Among the communities along the lake that were drawn into an active role in the war was the small village of Burlington, VT.



The Burlington Cantonment

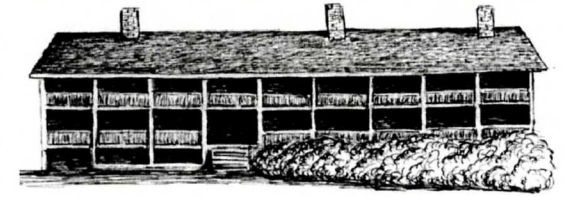
The U.S. Army occupied the bluff overlooking Lake Champlain in Burlington from June of 1812 to June of 1815, in the vicinity of today's Battery Park. The site began as a camp for the 11th U.S. Infantry, a regiment composed of men from Vermont and New Hampshire. By the spring of 1813, the site had acquired a more permanent nature and included at least fourteen structures. This post served principally as a winter quarters, a supply depot, and a general hospital. It also served as a base for raids into southern Quebec and a place of detention for court martialled soldiers, civilians suspected of smuggling or spying, and some British and Canadian prisoners of war. After the war, the property was acquired by the Champlain Glass Company. When the company failed, the land was developed into the urban landscape seen today, with the exception of Battery Park, which was deeded to Burlington in 1840.

The Soldiers

The number of soldiers (regulars and Vermont militia) stationed at Burlington fluctuated from a few hundred to over 4,000. About 30 regular regiments (including infantry, artillery, and dragoons) had contact with Burlington during the war. These men came primarily from the northeastern states, especially Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and

10 Dollars Reward.
DESERTED from the Barracks at Burlington, on the 11th May inst. JOHN FISK, an enlisted Soldier, born in Stodard, New-Hampshire; aged twenty two years: five feet eight and half inches high, light complexion, light eyes, light hair, and by profession a farmer - has lately resided in Cavendish, Vt.
Whoever will apprehend said deserter, and return him to the barracks in Burlington, or to any Military Post in the United States, shall receive the above reward, and all necessary charges.
RICHARD BEAN,
Lt. & Qr. Mast. 11th Reg. U.S. Inf.
Burlington, May 12, 1813. n23

Vermont. However, men from Rhode Island, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, and South Carolina were also stationed in Burlington. The soldiers ranged in age from at least 12 to 57 (the youngest being musicians or waiters) and came from all walks of life including farmers, shoemakers, sailors, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, school teachers, joiners, coopers, rope makers, tailors, potters, bakers, cabinet makers, merchants, and laborers.



The General Hospital

The largest structure in the Burlington cantonment was the general hospital. The two story building measured 300 by 20 feet and had a cellar and a front veranda. A corps of army surgeons, surgeon's mates, apothecaries, cooks, guards, and ward masters staffed the hospital throughout the war. They mainly treated ailments common to 19th century armies such as typhoid, dysentery, and measles. However, the hospital also handled injuries sustained in accidents or in battles such as Chateaugay, Que. (October 26, 1813), Lacolle Mills, Que. (March 30, 1814), and Plattsburg, NY (September 11, 1814). Although the building had a capacity of 300, the number of patients would occasionally exceed this space and the neighboring barracks had to be pressed into service. There were over 900 patients in Burlington at one time in 1814. Military records indicate that more than 550 U.S. regulars died in Burlington during the war along with an unknown number of state militiamen, prisoners of war, and civilian camp followers. The period of highest mortality occurred during an epidemic of pneumonia (probably influenza) in the winter of 1812-1813.

Murray's Raid

Early in the summer of 1813, Commodore Thomas Macdonough was hastily repairing and refitting the navy's lake fleet at Burlington. To protect the ships, a thirteen gun sand and sod earthwork called Churchill's Battery was built on the edge of the bluff. On August 2, 1813, shortly after the completion of the battery, two sloops and a row galley that were part of a large British raiding force under the joint command of Lt. Col. John Murray and Captain Daniel Pring arrived in the bay. A 20-30 minute artillery duel ensued. Although no casualties resulted from this engagement, cannonballs from the attack have been occasionally found along the bluff and waterfront.

Archaeology

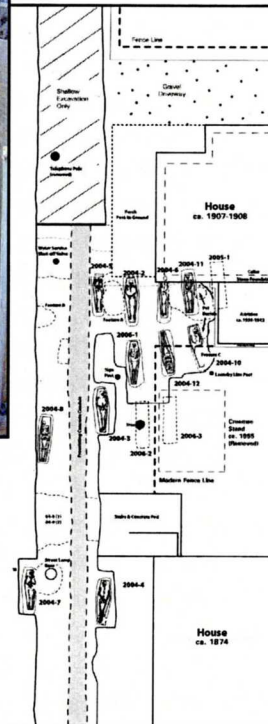
Between 2002 and 2006, twenty burials were identified and recovered by UVM archaeologists during community development projects in an area

located just north of the cantonment site.



War of 1812 Soldiers' Burial Ground
Burlington, Vermont (VT-CH-961)
Archaeological Excavations 2004-2006
Site Plan

0 1 2 3 4 5
Meters
0 5 10 15
Feet



The ages of the men (ranging from their teens to their 40s), the manner of burial, and the artifacts recovered from the graves confirm their association with the War of 1812. The burials provide a unique window on life and death during the time period. The analysis of the human remains revealed the health status of the soldiers just prior to their deaths, including cases of major tooth loss, previous injuries, occupational stresses (e.g. heavy lifting), and trauma. All of the individuals encountered so far were interred in separate graves and in tapered hexagonal wooden coffins. However, there is a wide variation from burial to burial concerning the type and number of artifacts included. For example, while some men were laid in plain coffins others had makeshift 'pillows,' one of which was made of a gun sling and a leather hat cockade. Also, while some were buried only in long shirts or sheets, one soldier was buried wearing his trousers and vest. At the time of the man's death, the left front pocket of the vest contained two pocket knives, a thimble, and three musket cartridges.

Artifacts



Musket Balls & Buck Shot



Artillery Button



Pocket Knife



Gun Sling



General Service Button



Leather Hat Cockade