

The Canadian Nautical Research Society
Société canadienne pour la recherche nautique

Canadian charitable organization 11921 9525 RR0001



www.cnrs-scrn.org

CONFERENCE CHAIR 2012

Paul Adamthwaite, PhD

The Victory

205, Main Street, Picton, Ontario, CANADA
K0K 2T0

tel: (613) 476 1177

e-mail: paul.cnrs@navalmarinearchive.com

The War of 1812: Differing Perspectives

Picton, Ontario — 15-19 May 2012

Programme

Tuesday, 15 May 17:00–21:00 **Reception** and Registration

at the NAVAL MARINE ARCHIVE
– *The Canadian Collection*

Day 1: Wednesday, 16 May 08:00–08:45 Coffee, etc

at the NAVAL MARINE ARCHIVE 08:45–09:00 President's Welcome
– *The Canadian Collection*

09:00–12:00 Chair: Dr Faye Kert

Speakers:

Note: Abstracts of all papers will be found below, starting on page 3; they are arranged alphabetically by speaker's name.

Peter Rindlisbacher: "A Few Good Paintings: Contemporary Marine Art on the Great Lakes from the War of 1812"

Alexander Craig: "Britons, Strike Home! Amphibious warfare during the War of 1812."

Christopher McKee: "Wandering Bodies: A Tale of One Burying Ground, Two Cemeteries, and the U.S. Navy's Search for Appropriate Burial for Its Career Enlisted Dead."

12:00–13:30 Lunch (local establishments making special arrangements will be recommended)

Day 1: (cont.)

13:30–16:30 Chair: Dr Roger Sarty

Speakers:

Note: Abstracts of all papers will be found below, starting on page 3; they are arranged alphabetically by speaker's name.

James Walton: "'The Forgotten Bitter Truth:' The War of 1812 and the Foundation of an American Naval Myth"

John Grodzinski: The fallout of the Plattsburgh Expedition and the charges laid against Sir George Provost by the Royal Navy.

Robert Davison: "The War of 1812: The Laboratory of Sea Power."

Day 2: Thursday, 17 May

Excursions, visits to local wineries, lighthouses, museums, details to follow.

at the NAVAL MARINE ARCHIVE
– *The Canadian Collection*

10:00–13:00

Book fair: Dundurn Press, John Lord's Books (Stouffville), Grenadier Books (Port Perry), Starlight Books (Newmarket), Naval Marine Archive, etc ...

at the Waring House Inn

18:00–19:00

Social gathering prior to ...

19:00–

Banquet and Awards Ceremony.**Day 3: Friday, 18 May**

08:00–09:00

Coffee, etc

at the Waring House Conference
Centre

09:00–12:00

Chair: Dr Alec Douglas

Speakers:

Note: Abstracts of all papers will be found below, starting on this page; they are arranged alphabetically by speaker's name.

Michael McAllister: "A Very Pretty Object: The Socially Constructed Landscape of Burlington Heights 1780-1815."

Natalie Anderson: "British Ballads and Yankee Ditties: The Musical War of 1812."

Victor Suthren: "Every Inch A Sailor: The Napoleonic Sailor in Fiction."

12:00–14:00

Luncheon at the Waring House; guest speaker Steve Campbell, publisher of *The County Magazine*.

14:00–17:00

Chair: Professor emeritus James Pritchard

Speakers:

Faye Kert: "On the whole, I'd rather be in Philadelphia: Paintings, Prize and Precedent in the War of 1812."

Jane Errington: "In the Midst of War: Keeping Hearth and Home, 1812-1815."

Walter Lewis: "The Treaty of Ghent and the Great Lakes Region."

Day 4: Saturday, 19 May 08:00–09:00 Coffee, etc

at the NAVAL MARINE ARCHIVE 09:00–11:30 Chair: Dr Richard Gimblett
– *The Canadian Collection* Speakers:

Sarah Gibson: "The Indian Act of 1830, an analysis of Indian-Crown Relations in the aftermath of the War of 1812"

Roy Wright: "Communications on the St Lawrence and the Lakes: Indigenous Boating and Water Ways in Fur Trade and in War."

Victor Suthren: "Conjuring The Past: The Navy's Colonial Sailor Program."

11:30–12:30 Light luncheon and refreshments

12:30– **Annual General Meeting** of the Canadian Nautical Research Society – Société canadienne pour la recherche nautique

Speakers and papers – abstracts :

Natalie Anderson,
“British Ballads and Yankee Ditties: The Musical War of 1812.”

During the War of 1812, ballads chronicling naval battles circulated on both sides through oral transmission, broadsides, and anthologies. In addition to their entertainment function, these songs spread information about the conflict and served propagandistic purposes of glorifying victories, demonizing the enemy, reinforcing national pride, promoting recruitment, and fostering public support of the conflict. The texts were sometimes parodies, drawing heavily from themes and poetic structures of pre-existing ballads, and certain popular melodies, most notably "Yankee Doodle," "Anacreon in Heaven," and "Brandy-O," were continuously recycled for settings of different texts; as a result of these highly derivative compositional processes, the ballads accumulated complex networks of associations. The songs not only have musical and literary value in providing insight into ballad culture in Britain and North America during the early nineteenth-century, but also have historical import by revealing contemporary perceptions of the conflict.

In this paper, I will draw comparisons between the music, text, audience, function, and modes of dissemination of the patriotic war ballads of the British Empire and the United States. On the American side, I will discuss "Star-Spangled Banner," "Battle of Plattsburgh," "Decatur and the Navy," "Yankee Thunders," "Constitution and Guerriere," and "Perry's Victory"; on the British side, I will look at "Come all ye bold Canadians," "Shannon and Chesapeake," "Battle of Shannon and Chesapeake," "Rival Frigates," and "Endymion's Triumph." In general, I will demonstrate the relationship between these ballads and the society in which they were created and consumed, showing how the songs were not only passive reflections of contemporary events and attitudes, but also active agents in the collective consciousness that affected the public's knowledge and opinion of the war.

Alexander Craig,

“Britons, Strike Home! Amphibious warfare during the War of 1812.”

This paper describes the British Admiralty's formation of battalions of marines, incorporating their own artillery and rocket units; the use of these "specialized units" in North America, thereby reducing the military pressure on the British territories of Upper and Lower Canada; the restrictions they imposed on the United States Navy and U.S. privateers in home waters; and their active presence during the destruction of the U.S. capital city and the near capture of the U.S. President. The Royal Marines served in every region of land conflict, except the extreme North West while continuing their traditional role in every naval action.

Robert Davison,

“The War of 1812: The Laboratory of Sea Power.”

The War of 1812, despite largely being a sideshow of the Napoleonic Wars, was a conflict that helped to define two North American nations. Not only was this war useful to nationalists on both sides of the border at the end of the 19th century but it also served as a great laboratory for naval officers and for amateur and professional strategists to expound 'truths' or 'principles' of sea power. Presumably the war showed the critical importance of naval power centered on battle fleets. The memory of the war, illustrated through the efforts of writers like Alfred Thayer Mahan and others became a great boon for the propaganda of navalism and the efforts at re-inventing the American Navy.

The naval War of 1812 was one of tremendous importance to the development of doctrines of sea power particularly at the end of the 19th century when the United States Navy was in the process of re-creating itself as a blue water force. The War provided a great laboratory to provide lessons on the "proper" naval force for America. In the decades that followed, the literature of the War of 1812 followed many of the trends in American naval policy.

Jane Errington,

“In the Midst of War: Keeping Hearth and Home, 1812-1815.”

Most accounts of the War of 1812 concentrate on the battles and campaigns of the conflict. We often forget, however, that while colonial and British leaders were working out how best to deploy their relatively meager forces, most living in the midst of this war were concerned about finishing planting or wondered if the conflict might bring more - or less - business or were preoccupied with keeping hearth and home. Using reports in the press, various diaries and journals, and military reports, "In the Midst of War" explores the North American "home front" of the War of 1812, and particularly how colonial women coped with the vicissitudes of a conflict that often came to their doorsteps. Maintaining the daily rhythm of their lives was increasingly difficult amid rising prices, missing husbands and sons, and fears of invasion. But like the home front of other wars, victory on the battlefield between 1812 and 1814 depended on the ability and willingness of the civilian population – and particularly women – to maintain hearth and home, in any way they could.

Sarah Gibson,

“The Indian Act of 1830, an analysis of Indian-Crown Relations in the aftermath of the War of 1812.”

The British Indian Policy of 1830 refocused the Crown's relationship with the "Indians." The policy transferred the department to the respective civilian commands in Upper and Lower Canada. It replaced customary "gifts" with the tools of civilization. It settled Indian nations on lands "reserved" to them and promoted their "civilization" through an agricultural lifestyle, practical education and acceptance of Christianity. Historical memory and the academic historical community identify the British Indian policy as a key moment when the Indians lost their ability to negotiate as equals with the British Crown, in a policy revision initiated by the British for expedient and parsimonious reasons. This

paper, however, offers a different perspective. A close analysis of the correspondence of between colonial and imperial officials in 1827-30 reveals a process designed to preserve the British Indian ties represented by the Indian Department. That one "present" was exchanged for another, in and of itself, suggests that the policy revision was negotiated rather than expediently applied for self-serving reasons and it also suggests the Indians' continued influence upon British policy.

John Grodzinski,

“The Navy in Canada have made serious charges:’ Preparations for the Court Martial of Sir George Prevost.”

Histories of the War of 1812 mention that Sir George Prevost, the Commander-in-Chief and Governor of British North America in the War of 1812, was recalled in 1815 to face charges made against him by the Royal Navy, but none of these works provide a detailed account of how these events transpired and what followed afterwards. This paper will examine the charges submitted against Prevost by Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo, the preparations for the court martial against him and, in the wake of Prevost's premature death, the effect the unanswered charges have had on the historiography of the War of 1812.

Faye Kert,

“On the whole, I'd rather be in Philadelphia: Paintings, Prize and Precedent in the War of 1812.”

In July 1812, the ship *Marquis de Somerueles* was returning home to Salem with a valuable cargo when it was hailed by Captain Hickey of HM Sloop of war *Atalante*. Neither captain was aware that they were now at war, but Captain Hickey suspected the American of contravening the British Orders in Council. In Halifax, the *Marquis de Somerueles* and its Italian cargo were immediately proclaimed as prize of war and the judicial process began. The ship and cargo would have been condemned and sold within a few weeks if it hadn't been for 21 paintings and 52 prints destined for the new Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. The Academy's board of directors immediately petitioned Judge Alexander Croke of the Vice-Admiralty Court to restore the artworks to their intended recipient and he obliged. His judgement set a precedent for dealing with art as cultural property and has been referred to in cases ranging from the Elgin Marbles to Hitler's seizure of art from European collections during the Second World War. The prize case of the captured paintings is a fascinating story of culture and conflict.

Walter Lewis,

“The Treaty of Ghent and the Great Lakes Region.”

This paper probes the consequences of the Treaty of Ghent in the ten years following the war. The Treaty and the subsequent agreements redefined the interactions between American, British subjects and first nations in the Great Lakes region. From naval disarmament to frontier garrisons and related defensive works to military road construction and troop transportation, the possibility of a resumption of war was weighed against its costs. At the same time, negotiations with first nations for land rights and removals were actively pursued. In the background, the Treaties' Boundary Commissions defined the frontiers, while the admiralty created the first hydrographic charts. Finally the navigation acts began to be enforced from both sides of the border.

Michael McAllister,

“A Very Pretty Object: The Socially Constructed Landscape of Burlington Heights 1780-1815.”

Landscape is a way of seeing. It is a social construction. Land is viewed, used and transformed by the humans who inhabit it. The different worldviews of people provided the basis for what Burlington Heights could and should be used for. Following the cycle of scarcity and abundance, the Mississauga people using Burlington Heights were egalitarian, stewards of the land, finding in the natural features around them -- a spiritual potency which defined their place on the landscape. Following

the pattern of his merchant patrons, Richard Beasley built material prosperity as well as social and political influence, which he demonstrated by developing his property in picturesque style. Faced with the prospect of losing complete control of the Niagara Peninsula during the War of 1812, the British army occupied the Heights and exerted a tyrannical influence across a landscape that it considered as indefensible, devious and unhealthy.

Christopher McKee,

“Wandering Bodies: A Tale of One Burying Ground, Two Cemeteries, and the U.S. Navy's Search for Appropriate Burial for Its Career Enlisted Dead.”

The United States Naval Asylum (later the United States Naval Home) was built at Philadelphia in the late 1820s as a permanent residence for elderly and disabled long-service naval enlisted sailors and Marines many of whom were veterans of the War of 1812. It received the first residents in 1831. Given the ages of these men, deaths should have been expected. But when a Marine named Jacob Dehart died in 1835 the Asylum's commanding officers realized that no provision had been made for burials. In Dehart's case the authorities punted, securing a burial site for him in the cemetery of one of Philadelphia's churches. Confronted now with an obvious need to be prepared for future deaths at the Asylum, naval officials selected a site for a simple burial ground, with painted wooden headboards, not far from—and in full view of—the Asylum's main building. At least some of the elderly veterans found this highly visible reminder of the end of life disturbing. So, when the City of Philadelphia asserted its right and intention to cut a street through the part of the grounds occupied by the Asylum's cemetery, the 53 bodies buried there were exhumed in 1846 and moved to a new site over the hill and not visible from the residence hall. Although painted wooden headboards remained in use, the new cemetery moved away from the simple no-frills burial ground through landscaping and carefully laid out gravel walkways.

The Asylum's senior officer in 1846, Commodore Charles W. Morgan, confidently asserted that the new facility would meet the needs of a long future, but by the mid-1860s this cemetery was running out of space for additional burials. Equally problematic, it impinged on the site selected for a new naval hospital. To solve these problems the Navy purchased ten-plus acres of Mount Moriah Cemetery on Cobb's Creek in western Philadelphia County. Mount Moriah was a garden cemetery of the type being developed all over the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, with beautiful architect-designed tombs, winding roads, and elaborate landscaping. While the Asylum's portion of the cemetery did not fully embrace the garden-cemetery ideal, its layout anticipated the many national cemeteries that would soon be created for the Civil War dead, including marble headstones that replaced the painted wooden ones. Early in 1866 some 298 sailor and Marine bodies were disinterred and moved to Mount Moriah where—despite early fears of grave robbers visiting the rural site for the benefit of Philadelphia's medical schools and the recent decline of the private Mount Moriah Cemetery into ruins—they remain today.

In short, within thirty years the Navy had moved from an austere and functional burying ground for its long-service enlisted veterans to a landscaped and intentionally beautiful permanent memorial for these men who had given their active adult lives to their country's service. This presentation, taken from the social history of Asylum's nineteenth-century residents on which I have been working for a number of years, is richly illustrated with maps and photographs of the Asylum and its successive burial sites.

Peter Rindlisbacher,

“A Few Good Paintings: Contemporary Marine Art on the Great Lakes from the War of 1812”

Contemporary visual documents are essential in order to properly understand an historical period. The two and a half year War of 1812 on the Great Lakes was fought with great exertion, respective changes of fortune, at the mercy of wind and weather, in isolation, across great distances, and often under brutal frontier deprivations. These harsh conditions were not conducive for the production of

many marine artworks, so few pieces were produced and even fewer have survived. A survey of known contemporary works will be shown, with distinctions made between those created by eyewitnesses vs. distant populists, civilian vs. military artists, and highs vs. lows in terms of technical accuracy and artistic merit. Brief mention will be made of the modern scientific methods currently underway to analyse these early pieces. Certain works will be identified as particularly priceless records of the border war that so influences our international friendship today.

Victor Suthren,

“Conjuring The Past: The Navy's Colonial Sailor Program.”

When the Royal Canadian Navy's Directorate of History and Heritage received instructions to do what it could to assist in the Navy's observation of the War of 1812 Bicentennial, it had a ready-made tool at its disposal. Known as The Colonial Sailor Program, or CSP, the program had been in operation since 2005, staging a single major commemorative event in a different Canadian community each year. The largest of these was the colourful *Founding of The Royal Navy Dockyard 1759-2009* event, staged at Halifax, Nova Scotia. Timed to coincide with the visit of the Atlantic Tall Ship fleet, the event employed over 20 replica longboats and naval re-enactor boats' crews from Canada, the USA, the UK and Australia to mark the anniversary of the Dockyard's founding. With the advent of the 1812 Bicentennial, the Colonial Sailor Program offered an excellent and cost-effective tool to enhance public awareness of the naval aspects of 1812's legacy, while supporting activities of the modern RCN such as ship port visits as they marked the Bicentennial. A multi-year continuation of the CSP, beginning with the 1812 Bicentennial in 2012, will provide for continuation of its commemorative programming right through to 2015, utilizing the contracted services of selected naval re-enactors, sail training ships, and replica small boats. Events are planned for Niagara-on-the-lake in 2012, Kingston in 2013, Georgian Bay in 2014, and Northumberland Strait/Halifax harbour in 2015

Victor Suthren,

“Every Inch A Sailor: The Napoleonic Sailor in Fiction.”

In the years following the great struggle with France that lasted until 1815, several writers appeared who attempted to use the novel as a means of either depicting the Georgian naval world and its realities, or using it as a setting for literary plot lines. Most significant amongst these was the former naval officer Frederick Marryat, author of *Frank Mildmay* (1829) and, famously, *Mr Midshipman Easy* (1836), who in turn was following in the footsteps of arguably one of the first true writers of sea fiction, Tobias Smollett, who in the 18th Century wrote *Roderick Random*. The difficulty facing readers seeking true accounts of life at sea woven into fiction form was the tendency of seamen to not be writers, and few writers to be actually seamen. There were exceptions such as Captain Edward Howard and Captain Frederick Chamier, whose *Ben Brace*, the tale of a lower-deck hand in Nelson's navy, broke new ground in the accurate depiction of the sailor's world. A number of writers of the 19th and 20th centuries wrote about, or involved, the sea in fiction, notably Ballantyne, Low, Molineux, Brady, and James Fenimore Cooper, but it was not until the arrival on the scene of British writer C. S. Forester and his *Horatio Hornblower* series that a new level of accuracy and authenticity was reached in sea fiction. Since Forester there have been over a dozen writers who have brought the benefit of painstaking and accurate research---Dudley Pope and his *Ramage* novels foremost among them---to the writing of the naval novel in the age of sail, including Alexander Kent of the *Richard Bolitho* series, V. A. Stuart, and the prolific Patrick O'Brian of the *Aubrey-Maturin* series. New writers have emerged in recent years, such as Julian Stockwin, James Nelson, William White, Michael Aye, and Dewey Lambdin, and are contributing to the fictional depiction of the Napoleonic era, including the War of 1812, with varying degrees of success. Key to their future work will be whether the general decline in recreational reading will affect this unique genre of writing as well.

James Walton,

“The Forgotten Bitter Truth:’ The War of 1812 and the Foundation of an American Naval Myth”

This paper examines the role of the United States Navy in the War of 1812 and the ways in which the War of 1812 had a profound affect on shaping American attitudes towards their navy. It will contend that the main reasons the USN’s performance in the War of 1812 has been remembered positively was the fact that its successes stood in sharp contrast to many other American failures during the war and the way that the ship-to-ship combat of the war fit into an easily understood conception of war as a series of heroic single combats. American battles on the Great Lakes, such as the Battle of Lake Erie, also fit into a similar narrative. The USN had a successful War of 1812 in many ways, but it was simply overmatched by the much larger and more experienced RN. The dominant narrative of American naval performance during the War of 1812 has been one of success. Despite the fact that by mid-1814 the USN had been comprehensively defeated, the U.S. Federal Government was teetering on the edge of bankruptcy and the United States achieved none of its stated war aims in the Treaty of Ghent. This paper will focus on closely analyzing different historical accounts of American naval success in the war of 1812. These accounts will be scrutinized to examine changing American perceptions towards their navy. This analysis will aim to show that the War of 1812 was the decisive event that shaped American perceptions of the United States Navy.

Roy Wright,

“Communications on the St Lawrence and the Lakes: Indigenous Boating and Water Ways in Fur Trade and in War.”

Limited as it is, discussion of the role of indigenous peoples in the war of 1812 is nearly silent on the wartime consequences of their boating culture and their ways of using waterways to communicate and transport.

A contribution to this neglected historical area must begin with clear definition of the distinct ways that Algonquian and Iroquoian nations adapted their aquatic and nautical traditions to the fur trade to the concurrent colonial warfare of which the War of 1812 may be said to be the last. In contrast to the swifter bark canoes of the Northeast Woodlands (well described in Chappelle & Adney, 1964), the dugouts of Iroquoian [originally Caribbean] provenance could carry much greater loads and resist assault and wear over longer voyages, as long as demand for portaging was limited. Genealogical research on Militia Captain Louis Goudreau of Sault St. Louis [Kahnawake], later Boucherville, has led to reconstruction of the role played by the Iroquois voyageurs in communicating intelligence and transporting men and materiel in time of war. This is but an opening salvo in what must be a full assault on archival, ethnographic, and linguistic resources to answer the many questions which remain.

The Canadian Nautical Research Society – Société canadienne pour la recherche nautique wishes to thank most sincerely all those who have made this conference possible, and in particular:

