

**MAJOR-GENERAL
ROBERT ROSS**

AND THE ANGLO-AMERICAN WAR OF 1812

Gordon Lucy



‘Ross Monument’ (or Obelisk) in Rostrevor, County Down. It is located on virtually the exact spot where General Robert Ross had planned to build his new home if he had returned safely from his the Anglo-American war.

Picture by Gerard McGivern

Teachtaireacht ón Chathaoirleach

Cuireann an leabhrán seo, ar shaol Robert Ross agus ar an Chogadh 1812, leis an sárobair atá déanta ag Comhairle an Iúir agus Mhúrn mar a bhí agus ag Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin a tháinig sna sala uirthi. B’fhear de bhunadh Ros Treabhair é Robert Ross.

D’eagraigh an Chomhairle dhá Chomhdháil i Ros Treabhair cheana féin inar pléadh an Cogadh 1812 idir an Bhreatain agus Meiriceá. Rinneadh dearmad ar an fheachtas seo in Éirinn mar gheall ar Chogaí Napoléon fud fad na hEorpa i rith an ama sin. Tógadh an oibilisc iomráiteach i Ros Treabhair, cois Loch Cairlinn, sa bhliain 1826 in ómós don Mhaorghinearál Robert Ross, mar chomóradh ar a bhuanna i mBaltimore, Meiriceá. Sa bhliain 2008, rinne Comhairle an Iúir agus Mhúrn athchóiriú iomlán ar Séadchomhartha Ross.

Is ceann scríbe ar leith é Ros Treabhair do chuirteoirí go Contae an Dúin, agus iad ag tabhairt aghaidhe ar a leithéid d’Fhéile Faiche na bhFidléirí agus ar áiseanna turasóireachta agus acmhainní nádúrtha an cheantair seo idir sliabh is cladach.

Mar chéad Chathaoirleach Chomhairle an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le gach duine a raibh baint acu leis an leabhrán seo go háirithe an stairí Gordon Lucy a chuir comhthéacs agus ord ar na fíricí stairiúla agus ar na barúlacha éagsúla sa dóigh is go bhfuil siad ar fáil d’achan duine. Tá súil agam go leanfaimid ar aghaidh ag foghlaim ceachta ón stair agus go dtabharfaidh muid modh agus urraim dár laochra.

Comhairleoir Naomi Bailie

Cathaoirleach Chomhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin

Message from the Chairperson

This booklet follows on the fine work by officers of the previous Newry and Mourne District Council and the now new Newry, Mourne and Down Council on the life of Rostrevor’s own Robert Ross and the War of 1812.

Two conferences – organised by the council in Rostrevor, with international visitors and speakers have revisited the subject and discussed the opposing views on the War of 1812 between Britain and America. The War was much forgotten here in Ireland and overshadowed by the Napoleonic Wars that raged through Europe at the time. The glorious obelisk in Rostrevor to Major General Robert Ross was erected in 1826 along the coastline and hails Ross victorious in Baltimore in America. The Ross Monument was fully restored in 2008 by the then Newry and Mourne District Council.

Rostrevor situated on the shores of Carlingford Lough is a wonderful destination for many visitors to County Down, visiting Fiddlers Green and other local festivals in the area.

As the first Chairperson of the new Newry, Mourne and Down Council, I would like to thank everyone involved in this book and especially the work of historian Gordon Lucy for contextualising the historical information and reflections in an orderly manner for all to consume. I hope that we shall continue to learn from our history and look back at our heroes with reverence and deference.

Councillor Naomi Bailie

Chairperson of Newry, Mourne and Down Council

The Ross Monument – 2015

©William McAlpine



Foreword

Rostrevor, situated at the foot of Slieve Martin, is an idyllic County Down village with spectacular views over Carlingford Lough and the Cooley Mountains beyond.

Robert Ross, the subject of this publication, is almost certainly Rostrevor's most famous son. His niche in world history is secure as the first (and to date only) soldier to capture Washington DC and as the man who burned the White House. Ross was also the first commander to defeat a full US army in the field.

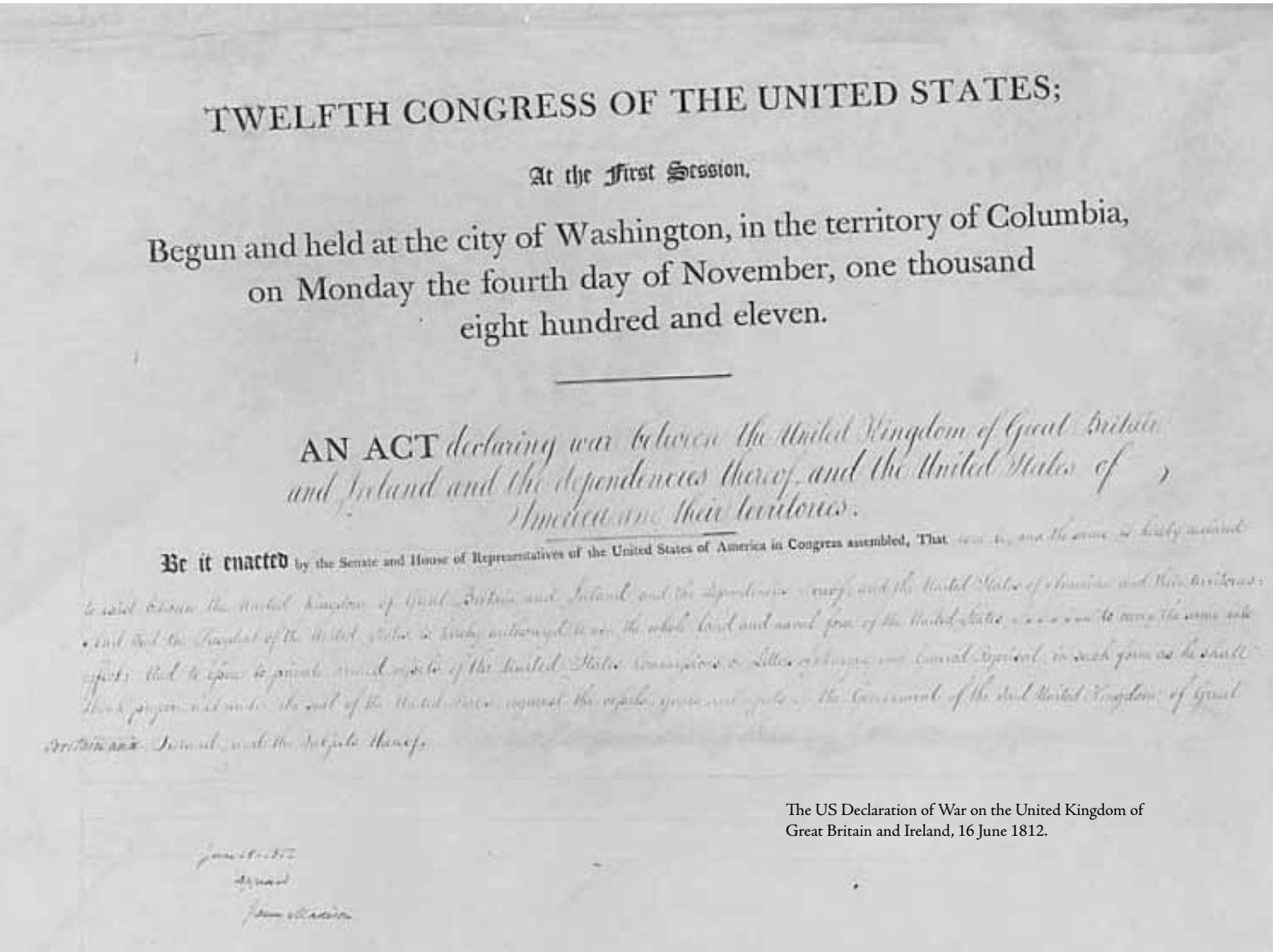
Ross was a soldier who combined caution with courage. He was immensely popular with his men because of his willingness to share their hardships and to fight alongside them in the thick of battle. A colleague said of him that he could not be 'a better man nor a more zealous officer'. Ross also commanded the respect and admiration of his opponents because of his unfailing courtesy and chivalrous conduct. One of the leading physicians in Washington paid tribute to Ross's 'consummate modesty and politeness'.

In 2008 Newry and Mourne District Council restored the impressive Ross Monument, a 100-foot granite obelisk, close to the shoreline of Carlingford Lough. Since then, Rostrevor has successfully hosted two international conferences which have examined the significance of the War of 1812 and Ross's pivotal role in it. These events have stimulated renewed interest, from local people and visitors alike, in the life and legacy of Rostrevor's most famous son.

Andrew Kernaghan

Introduction

The Anglo-American War of 1812 must count as one of the most unnecessary conflicts in world history. Certainly, the last major battle of the war in which Andrew Jackson (who in 1829 would become the 7th President of the United States) defeated Major-General Edward Pakenham, the Duke of Wellington’s brother-in-law, at New Orleans on 8 January 1815 was wholly unnecessary¹. The war had been brought to a close a fortnight earlier by the Treaty of Ghent on 24 December 1814.



The US Declaration of War on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 16 June 1812.

Causes of the War

British Trade Restrictions

The United States had declared war on the United Kingdom on 16 June 1812. The ostensible cause for the US declaration of war was a series of trade restrictions (primarily preventing vessels of neutral countries entering French-controlled ports) introduced by Britain to impede neutral trade with Napoleonic France with which Britain was at war. The restrictions were not specifically directed at the United States and there was no intention on the part of the British to antagonize their former colonies. However the United States contended that the restrictions were contrary to international law.

Impressment

The Americans also objected to the impressment (forced recruitment) of US citizens into the Royal Navy. Between

1808 and 1811 the United States claimed that over 6,000 Americans had been ‘impressed’.

Alleged British Support for the Indians

Another major source of American anger was alleged British military support for American Indians on the western frontier who were waging war against the United States. In his address to Congress on 1 June 1812, James Madison, the fourth President of the United States, blamed the British for ‘stirring up the warfare just renewed by the Savages on our extensive frontiers; a warfare which is known to spare neither age nor sex, and to be distinguished by features peculiarly shocking to humanity’.²

Lack of American Unanimity

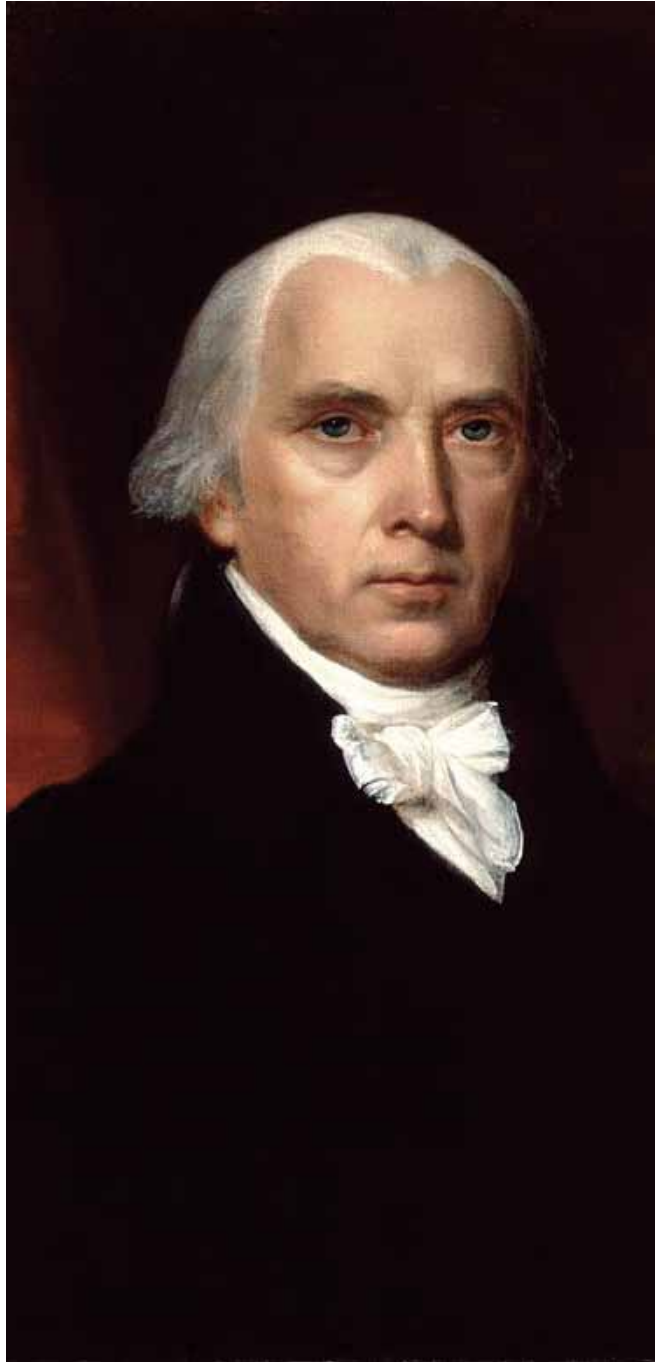
Americans were far from united in declaring war on Britain. The House of Representatives (the Lower House) endorsed war by a margin of 79 to 49 and in the Senate



Impressment: a Royal Navy practice, reflecting the size of the British fleet and its substantial manpower demands.

¹ Andrew Jackson (1767-1845), nicknamed ‘Old Hickory’, was the first president to be elected from west of the Appalachians. Unlike his predecessors, he was not born to great privilege and was the first president to be born in a log cabin. As the founder of the Democratic Party, he was the first president to found a modern political party. He was the first president to expand the role and powers of the presidency, so much so that his opponents bitterly denounced him as ‘King Andrew I’. Jackson was the first (and remains, arguably, the greatest) of a long line of Ulster-Scots presidents. The 7th President’s parents hailed from Boneybefore, near Carrickfergus, County Antrim.

² James Madison (1751-1836) was President between 1809 and 1817 and is often regarded as the ‘Father of the Constitution’ because of his role in its drafting. The War of 1812 became something of a nightmare for Madison because the United States possessed neither a sufficiently strong army nor financial system to wage such a war; as a result, he afterward supported a stronger national government and a strong military, as well as the national bank, which he had previously opposed.



(the Upper House) 19 Senators favoured war while 13 did not. Voting was largely along partisan lines: Republicans supported a declaration of war, although not unanimously. Federalists, on the other hand, were uniformly opposed to war.

The division within Congress was reflected in the wider country. The western states were enthusiastic for war. President Madison and politicians such as Henry Clay of Kentucky and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina strongly advocated the invasion and annexation of Canada. Contrary to what we might expect New York and New England shipping interests were opposed to war. They took the hard-headed view that while the harassment of American trade hurt their business, war would halt it entirely.

Astonishingly, between 15 December 1814 and 5 January 1815 a series of meetings took place in Hartford, Connecticut, at which some New England politicians hostile to the war would appear to have contemplated secession from the United States.

James Madison, by John Vanderlyn
(The White House collection).



The Unnecessary War

The most obvious respect in which the Anglo-American war of 1812 was unnecessary lies in the fact that Lord Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary, had removed the United States' principle *casus belli* (a Latin expression meaning 'an act or event that provokes or is used to justify war') by announcing a relaxation of the British restrictions six days before the US declaration of war³.

Both the War of 1812 and the Battle of New Orleans were in large measure the product of the limitations of early 19th-century trans-Atlantic communications. It took five weeks for news of Britain's repeal of trade restrictions in 1812 to reach the United States. The Treaty of Ghent was signed on 24 December 1814 but news of the peace treaty only reached the United States on 12 February 1815.

Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh,
2nd Marquess of Londonderry, by Thomas
Lawrence (The National Portrait Gallery,
London).

³ Along with William Pitt the Younger, the Prime Minister, Viscount Castlereagh (1769-1822), the Chief Secretary for Ireland, was the principal architect of the British-Irish Union of 1801. At the War Office he radically reformed the British army and, against stern opposition, advanced the career of the future Duke of Wellington. Between 1812 and 1822 Castlereagh was British Foreign Secretary. He constructed the great coalitions which ultimately defeated Napoleon. At the Congress of Vienna he helped redraw the map of Europe in such a way as to lay the foundations of one of the longest periods of peace in modern European history.

The comparative strengths of the Two Sides

Naval Strength

The Americans had a small and underfunded navy but manned by young and professional officers who were eager to fight and experienced volunteer sailors. The US Navy possessed only thirteen vessels and no ships of the line (huge ships with massive fire-power). However the US Navy possessed three 'super-frigates'. These ships carried more men (up to 450), more guns (up to 54), more armour, and more sail than ordinary frigates. 'Super-frigates' could outrun and out-manoeuver ordinary frigates.

The Royal Navy was the largest and most powerful in the world but many of its ships were not exactly 'fighting fit'. Even after the Battle of Trafalgar the French still constituted a threat and Britain's global responsibilities meant the Royal Navy was overstretched. Many crews were poorly trained and understrength and many of the ships were poorly designed and constructed of inferior timber.



The Battle of Fort Detroit by Peter Rindlisbacher



Lake Ontario Engagement by Peter Rindlisbacher



Military Strength

The US Army had an authorized strength of 35,600 but at the outbreak of the war had only 13,000 men at its disposal. During the course of the war the United States called out some 450,000 civilians to serve as part-time militia. The British initially committed 5,200 men to the conflict but by late 1814 Britain had more men under arms in North America than it had in the Peninsular War against Napoleon.

The British possessed superior military leadership to the Americans and better trained troops. Most American generals were around 60 years' old and owed their appointment to their service in the American Revolution and their political allegiance. Major-General Henry Dearborn is a good example. A veteran of Saratoga, Valley Forge and Yorktown, he had been Secretary of War in both of Jefferson's administrations and was 61. He was to enjoy minor successes at the capture of York (now Toronto) in April 1813, and at the capture of Fort George in May 1813 but his command was, for the most part, ineffective.

The United States could draw on the support of a population of 7.5 million whereas the population of British North America was only 500,000. Upper Canada, which was the immediate object of American territorial aggrandizement, had only a population of between 70,000 and 80,000. In demographic terms the advantage lay very much with Americans. Furthermore, the fact that British supply lines extended to either the West Indies or across the Atlantic conferred another advantage on the Americans.

Major-General Henry Dearborn by Gilbert Stuart
(Art Institute of Chicago).



War Aims of the Two Sides

American War Aims

The Americans had two objectives, both essentially territorial. First, they sought to conquer Canada and this fact explains why the bulk of the fighting took place along the Upper Saint Lawrence River and in the Great Lakes region. American forces invaded Canada on eight different occasions. The Americans only succeeded in occupying British territory for even a short period on one occasion. Secondly, the Americans wished to eliminate the ability of the British and the Indians to block western expansion (or what would be called 'Manifest destiny', term coined by John O'Sullivan in the 1840s).

Additionally, in his recently published *The Weight of Vengeance: The United States, the British Empire, and the War of 1812* - Troy Bickham, suggests that the United States was seeking to challenge Britain's dominance of the Atlantic world.

British War Aims

The British did not intend to reconquer the United States. On the contrary, Britain's war aims were purely defensive. The British wished to retain Canada and to end the ability of the United States to threaten her North American possessions. As the war developed, British may well have wished to avenge the sufferings of the Canadians and to redraw the Canadian-American border. The British also wished to 'humble' the Americans (or to 'give them a good drubbing'). However in *The Weight of Vengeance* Troy Bickham advances the thesis that Britain feared the rise of its former colonies and that the British government sought to use the War of 1812 to curtail America's increasing maritime power and its aggressive territorial expansion.

The Early Stages of the War

On Land

For the greater part of the war the American war effort was ineffectual and rendered so by inadequate preparation, poor generalship, untrained troops and unresolved logistical problems. American invasions of Canada in 1812 and 1813 resulted in humiliating defeats. In a letter to William Duane, an Irish-born politician and lawyer from Philadelphia, dated 4 August 1812, Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, had rashly predicted that the conquest of Canada would be 'a mere matter of marching'.

In a speech on 29 April 1962 to honour recipients of the Nobel Prize from the western hemisphere John F. Kennedy told his guests that they constituted 'the most extraordinary collection of talent, of human knowledge, that has ever been gathered together at the White House, with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone'. He continued by observing that 'the third President of the United States' could calculate an eclipse, survey an estate, tie an artery, plan an edifice, try a cause, break a horse, and dance the minuet'. Jefferson was a polymath but his undoubted genius did not extend to military matters.

In 1812 the Americans attempted to attack Canada from both ends of Lake Erie but were repulsed at Detroit in August and Queenstown in October.

The American invasion of 1813 under the command of Brigadier General Zabulon M. Pike requires closer scrutiny because of subsequent events.

Pike and his men captured and plundered York (now Toronto) during their five-day occupation. He himself was killed by flying rocks and debris when the withdrawing British garrison blew up its ammunition magazine as Pike's



Thomas Jefferson by Thomas Sully
(The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia).



The Reverend John Strachan (subsequently the first Anglican Bishop of Toronto)



The Battle of Lundy's Lane, 25 July 1814. Painting by Alonzo Chappe (The New York State Military Museum).

troops approached Fort York. The Americans set fire to the Legislative Assembly and seized the Parliamentary mace of Upper Canada (now southern Ontario) and took it back to Washington. President Franklin Roosevelt returned the mace in 1934 as a goodwill gesture. The Printing Office, used for publishing official documents as well as newspapers, was vandalized and the printing press was smashed. Empty houses were looted on the pretext that their absent owners were serving in the militia. Canadian homes were looted regardless of their owners' status. The Reverend John Strachan (who was to become the first Anglican Bishop of Toronto) rescued a woman who was about to be shot by Americans looting her home. Strachan's own pregnant wife was assaulted and robbed by a gang of American soldiers. The conduct of the American troops and their ill-treatment of Canadian civilians did not endear the Americans to King George III's Canadian subjects.

The last American attempt to invade Canada ended in July 1814 with a British victory at Lundy's Lane, near Niagara.

American Naval Victories

American humiliations on land were offset by naval victories. On 19 August 1812 Captain Isaac Hull, commander of the frigate *USS Constitution*, encountered the British frigate *HMS Guerriere* approximately 400 miles southeast of Halifax, Nova Scotia. He successfully engaged the *Guerriere* and pounded her to a wreck. The engagement took place shortly after outbreak of the war and was an important victory for American morale. It also demonstrated that the small US Navy was a worthy opponent for Royal Navy. The *USS Constitution* is preserved in Boston Harbor.

In September 1813 Oliver Hazard Perry secured another

naval victory in the Battle of Lake Erie⁴. Nine vessels of the US Navy defeated and captured six vessels of the Royal Navy, the first time in history that an entire Royal Navy squadron had ever surrendered. The American triumph ensured American control of the lake for the rest of the war and enabled the Americans to regain Detroit.

The land war focused on the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay and New Orleans. Here we are principally concerned with the Chesapeake Bay campaign conducted by Major-General Robert Ross in the summer and early autumn of 1814, the highpoint of which was the British occupation of Washington and the burning of the Capitol and the Executive Mansion (normally referred to today as the White House) and several other public buildings.



Isaac Hull

⁴ Oliver Hazard Perry (1785-1819) entered the US navy in 1799. He reported his famous victory with the famous message: 'We have met the enemy and they are ours.' He died of yellow fever on a mission to Venezuela. His mother came from Newry.



The USS Constitution engaging HMS Guerriere by Michel Felice Corne (US Naval Academy Museum)



The USS Constitution in Boston Harbour where it is preserved.



Portrait of Oliver Hazard Perry, painted by Gilbert Stuart (The Toledo Museum of Art).

The Early Career of Robert Ross

Robert Ross was born in 1766 in Ross-Trevor (now Rostrevor), County Down. The Ross family were of Scottish descent but was socially and politically Anglo-Irish. Robert's father was Major David Ross, who had distinguished himself in the Seven Years' War (1756-63). His mother was the half-sister of the Earl of Charlemont, one of the leading Irish politicians of the second half of the eighteenth century. Robert Ross, David's brother and Robert's uncle, was a long-serving member of the Irish Parliament, representing Carlingford between 1768 and 1776 and Newry between 1776 and 1799. The MP's father and grandfather had also both served in the Irish Parliament.⁶

Robert, the future soldier, graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, and joined the Army. During the wars against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, Ross saw significant action in Spain, Egypt, Italy, and the Netherlands. He was thrice wounded. On two occasions his wounds were severe. For his conspicuous gallantry, leadership, and heroism, he was awarded three Gold Medals, the Peninsula Gold Medal, a Sword of Honour, and he received the thanks of Parliament.

Although a strict disciplinarian who drilled his men relentlessly, Ross was extremely popular with his men because of willingness to share in the hardships of his soldiers and fight alongside them in the thick of battle, a fact evidenced by his three wounds. By 1812 Ross was a Major-General.

The following year Ross was sent to serve under Wellington in the Peninsula War and commanded



A portrait of Major General Robert Ross (The Military Society of the War of 1812).

⁵ Although *The Dictionary of Irish Biography* states that Ross was born in Dublin, *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* is silent on where Ross was born.

⁶ Robert Ross (1701-69), his father, had been MP for Carlingford between 1723 and 1768. Robert Ross (1679-1750), his grandfather, had been MP for Killyleagh between 1715 and 1727 and for Newry from 1727 until his death. As Robert Ross (1729-99), the MP for Carlingford (1768-1776) and Newry (1776 – 1799) died unmarried; the future Major-General was his heir and inherited his property.

his regiment at the battles of Vitoria (21 June 1813), Roncesvalles (25 July 1813) and Sorauren (late July 1813). Ross was almost fatally wounded in the left side of his neck at the Battle of Orthez (27 February 1814). A fortnight later Ross made light of the wound in a letter to his brother-in-law: ‘You will be happy to hear that the hit I got in the chops is likely to prove of mere temporary inconvenience’. Elizabeth (usually referred to as Ly), Ross’s much loved wife, rode on horseback through the snow from Bilbao across the Pyrenees to look after him and nurse him back to health in the village of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, on the French side of the mountains. Ross had just returned to service when he was given command of an expeditionary force to the United States. Ross promised Ly, distraught at the thought of further separation, that it would be his last campaign and so of course it proved to be.

Ross’s Orders

On 23 May 1814 the Earl Bathurst, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, gave Ross his instructions. He was ‘to effect a diversion on the coasts of the United States of America in favour of the army employed in the defence of Upper and Lower Canada [southern Ontario and Quebec respectively]’.

Ross’s ‘force was not intended for any extended operation at a distance from the coast’. Ross was not expected to take permanent possession of any captured district.

Finally, he was instructed that ‘if in any descent you shall be enabled to take such a position as to threaten the inhabitants with the destruction of their property, you are hereby authorized to levy upon them contributions in return for your forbearance.’⁷ However the United States government’s munitions, harbours and shipping were

⁷Ross did not choose to raise such a levy.

either to be taken away or destroyed.

As we will see, Ross carried out his orders to the letter. *In his History of the United States during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*, Henry Brooks Adams, the great American historian, noted Ross’s troops ‘showed unusual respect for private property’.

Prelude to the Attack on Washington

During July-August 1814 George Cockburn and his Royal Naval Squadron has been raiding the eastern seaboard of the United States. He was joined by a force of some 5,400 British veterans, commanded by Ross. These troops had been released from the European conflict by the end of the Peninsular War. On 19 August 1814 Ross and his troops landed near Benedict on the Patuxent River in southern Maryland. Ross and troops then began to advance on Washington, some 40 miles away.

Bladensburg

On the 24 August at Bladensburg, Maryland, Ross encountered a numerically superior American force commanded by Major-General William H. Winder. Winder’s force consisted of 6,500 militia men and 400 sailors and marines.

In his book *Seapower in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, Alfred Thayer Mahan, the celebrated American naval theorist, historian and geo-strategist, wrote that the American force at Bladensburg corresponded very closely to [Thomas] Jefferson’s ideal of a citizen soldiery, unskilled but strong in love of home, flying to arms to oppose an invader; and they had every inspiring incentive to tenacity, for they, and they only, stood between the centre and heart of national life.



Major-General William H. Winder by Charles Balthazar Julien Fevret de Saint-Mémin (The Library of Congress).



A re-enactment of the Battle of Bladensburg, in August 2014, showing British line infantrymen advancing.

Mahan’s account went on to point out:

The position they occupied, though unfortified, had many natural advantages; while the enemy had to cross a river which, while in part fordable, was nevertheless an obstacle to rapid action, especially when confronted by the superior artillery the Americans had.

Yet Ross’s advance guard of 1,500 men routed the American force which fled in panic and disarray, so much so that the battle became known as the ‘Bladensburg Races’. As usual, during the battle Ross led from the front and had his horse shot from under him, though he was not wounded. American losses were 100 killed and wounded. A further 100 were captured. The British sustained 294 casualties. The American historian Daniel Walker Howe has described Bladensburg as ‘the greatest disgrace ever dealt to American arms’.

The American militia fled through the streets of Washington, less than nine miles away. Only the American sailors and marines under the command of Commodore Joshua Barney acquitted themselves with honour.



Commodore Joshua Barney, circa 1800.

Washington

Later that day the British entered Washington virtually unopposed. President Madison, along with the rest of the federal administration had fled.

Ross sent a party under a flag of truce to agree to terms, but they were attacked by partisans from a house at the corner of Maryland Avenue, Constitution Avenue, and Second Street NE. Ross had a second horse shot from under him. Chester Bailey, an American eye-witness, claimed one British soldier was killed and another three were wounded. This was to be the only resistance British troops encountered. The house (from which the attack was launched) was burned - the only private house to suffer that fate - and the Union Flag was raised above Washington.

The British set fire to the Capitol (seat of the Senate and the House of Representatives), the Library of Congress, the Executive Mansion (or White House), the US Treasury and other public buildings. The Americans themselves set fire to the Washington Navy Yard, founded by Thomas Jefferson, to prevent capture of stores and ammunition, and the 44-gun frigate *Columbia* which was then under construction. For whatever reason the British spared the Marine Barracks, a decision often assumed to have been a chivalrous tribute to their exemplary conduct at Bladensburg.⁸

The spirited conduct of Dolley Madison, the President's wife, provides a stark contrast with that of the American political and administrative elite. 'The First Lady' stayed in the Executive Mansion long after government officials (including her own bodyguard) had fled and is credited

⁸ Commodore Barney was captured at Bladensburg. According to Mary Barney, the commodore's daughter-in-law and biographer, Ross and Cockburn addressed the commodore 'in the most polite and respectful terms, offering immediate assistance, and the attendance of a surgeon'. Ross said: 'I am really very glad to see you, Commodore.' To this Barney replied: 'I am sorry I cannot return the compliment, General.' Ross smiled and paroled him. This meant that Barney was allowed to go where he wished subject only to the proviso that he had to give his word that he was still technically a British prisoner until an exchange could be made of him.



The Burning of Washington, 1814 (The Library of Congress).



The British burn the Capitol, a mural by Allyn Cox in the US Capitol.



Dolley Madison, painted by Gilbert Stuart (The White House Collection).



The Lansdowne portrait of George Washington, painted by Gilbert Stuart (National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution).

with saving several historic paintings, notably the Lansdowne Portrait, a full-length painting of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart, and various important artefacts. Mrs. Madison was eventually prevailed upon to leave the Executive Mansion only moments before British troops entered the building. There the troops found the dining hall set for a dinner for 40 people. After consuming the banquet, they took souvenirs (including one of the president’s hats) and then set the building on fire.

The British occupied Washington for approximately 26 hours and then returned to their ships.

After the British had departed, Margaret Bayard Smith, the American author and a pillar of Washington society, generously acknowledged that despite the firing of public buildings, the British troops had behaved most politely, and that they had paid for all provisions.

Dr James Ewell, Barbara Suter and Elias Caldwell, could offer similar testimony with respect to Ross’s humanity and impeccable conduct. Ross had enjoyed the hospitality of Dr Ewell, Washington’s foremost physician and another pillar of Washington society; had had supper with Barbara Suter, an elderly lady whose two sons were serving in the US forces; and spared the home of Elias Caldwell (when British troops found cartridges and cartridge boxes stacked on their premises). Dr Ewell explained that Caldwell was the commander of a company of American volunteers and he only been doing his duty. In 1817 Dr Ewell recalled: ‘On my observing to general Ross, that it was a great pity the elegant library had been burnt with the capitol, he replied with much concern, “I lament most sincerely I was not apprised of the circumstance, for had I known it in time, the books would most certainly have been saved.”’

⁹The Brookes of Colebrooke in County Fermanagh are an Ulster family with a remarkable record of military service. For the Brooke family military service was as natural as breathing. Arthur Brooke (1772 -1843) had served in the 44th Foot and commanded the 1st Battalion in Sicily in 1809 and at the capture of Ischia. He had also served in Egypt in 1801 and received from the Sultan the gold medal of the Order of the Crescent. In 1814 he was in command of the Battalion in America where it was brigaded with the 4th Foot. Colonel Arthur Brooke was in Command of the Brigade and his brother, Colonel Francis Brooke, CB, was commanding the 4th Foot. Arthur Brooke retired as a Lieutenant-General and a KCB. Twenty-six Brookes served in the Great War (1914-18) and 27 in the Second (1939-45): twelve of them died in action. The family also provided the United Kingdom with Alan Brooke, 1st Viscount Alanbrooke, its ‘Master of Strategy’ (as his statue in Whitehall describes him) and Chief of the Imperial General Staff for the greater part of the Second World War.

Arthur Brooke, Ross’s second-in-command, confided to his diary:

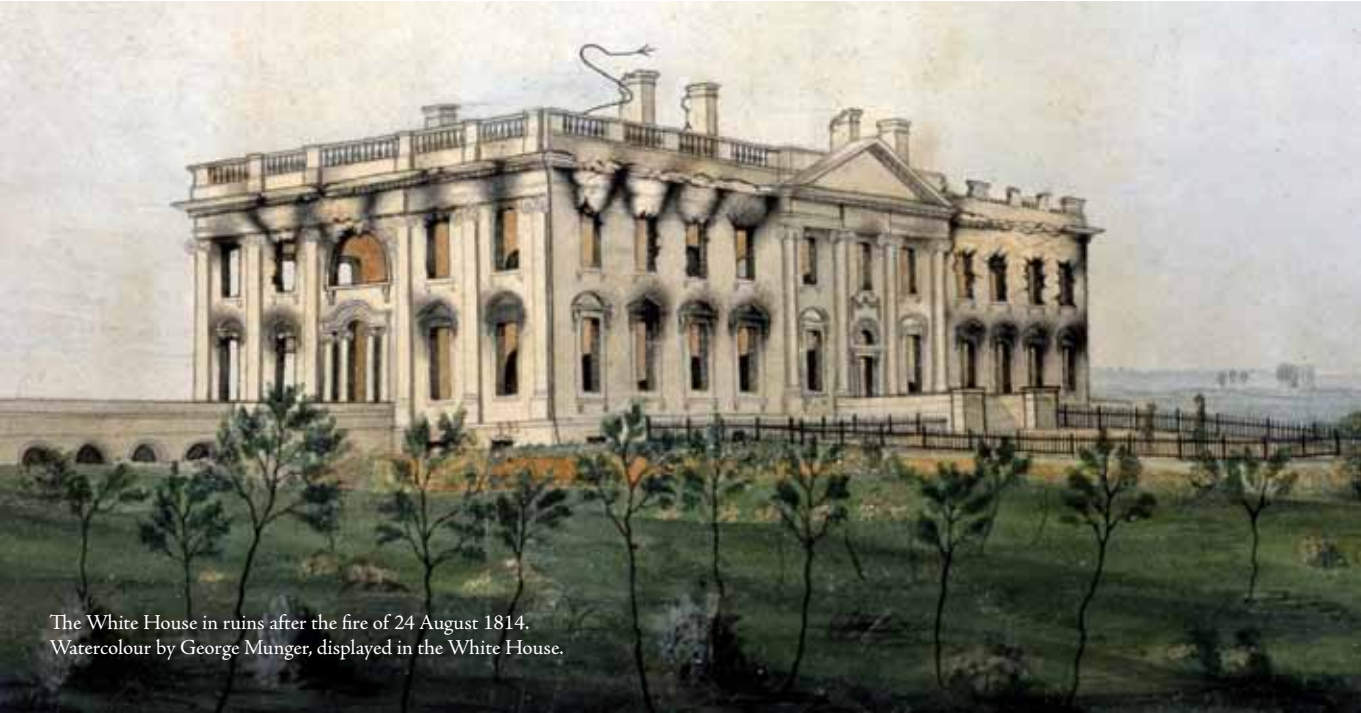
We could scarcely believe the Americans (from their immense population and well-trained artillery) would tamely allow a handful of British soldiers, to advance thro’ the heart of their country and burn and destroy the capital of the United States.⁹

The Executive Mansion sustained extensive damage. Only the external walls remained and, except for portions of the south wall, most of these had to be demolished and rebuilt because they had been weakened by the fire and their subsequent exposure to the elements. Unfortunately, there would appear to be no substance to the myth that the Executive Mansion was painted white to conceal the scorch marks. The Executive Mansion had been painted white since its construction in 1798.

Ross deplored the destruction of the city and wrote to Ly in a letter,

Dated 1 September:

I trust all our differences with the Yankees will shortly be settled. That wish is, I believe, very prevalent with them. They feel strongly the disgrace of having had their capital taken by a handful of men and blame very generally a government which went to war without the means or the abilities to carry it on ... The injury sustained by city of Washington in the destruction of its public buildings has been immense and must disgust the country with a government that has left the capital unprotected.



The White House in ruins after the fire of 24 August 1814. Watercolour by George Munger, displayed in the White House.

Washington in 1814

According to the historian Anthony S. Pitch in the journal of the White House Historical Association in 1988:

The American capital was nothing more than a gawky embryo of the city it aspired to be. Only fourteen years had passed since the capital had moved from Philadelphia, and the population had grown to little more than 8,000, one-sixth of whom were slaves. The clammy expanses of the Potomac were still almost barren and certainly bleak. The Attorney General Richard Rush described

Washington as ‘a meagre village with a few bad houses and extensive swamps’. Augustus John Foster, who would be promoted from junior diplomat to the last British minister to the United States before the two countries went to war, lamented his posting to ‘an absolute sepulchre, this hole’. It was so coarse, woebegone, and lacking in refinement that in another letter home Foster wailed, ‘luckily for me I have been in Turkey, and am quite at home in this primeval simplicity of manners’.

Why did the British Burn Washington?

The Americans have always regarded the British raid on Washington as retaliation for Brigadier General Zebulon Pike's burning of York (the capital of Upper Canada, in the spring of 1813).

Actually the British attacked Washington for 'it's likely political effect' rather than mere retaliation for York. By attacking their enemy's seat of government, the British were anticipating the Prussian soldier and military theorist Clausewitz's understanding of the relationship between political objectives and military objectives in war, as set out Clausewitz's military treatise *Vom Kriege* (published posthumously in 1832 and translated into English as *On War*): 'Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln' (War is merely a continuation of politics by other means).

Reaction to the Burning of Washington

James Monroe, US Secretary of State (who became the fifth President of the United States in 1816), railed against British conduct:

In the course of ten years past the capitals of the principal powers of Europe have been conquered and occupied alternatively by the victorious armies of each other; and no instance of such wanton and unjustifiable destruction has been seen.¹⁰

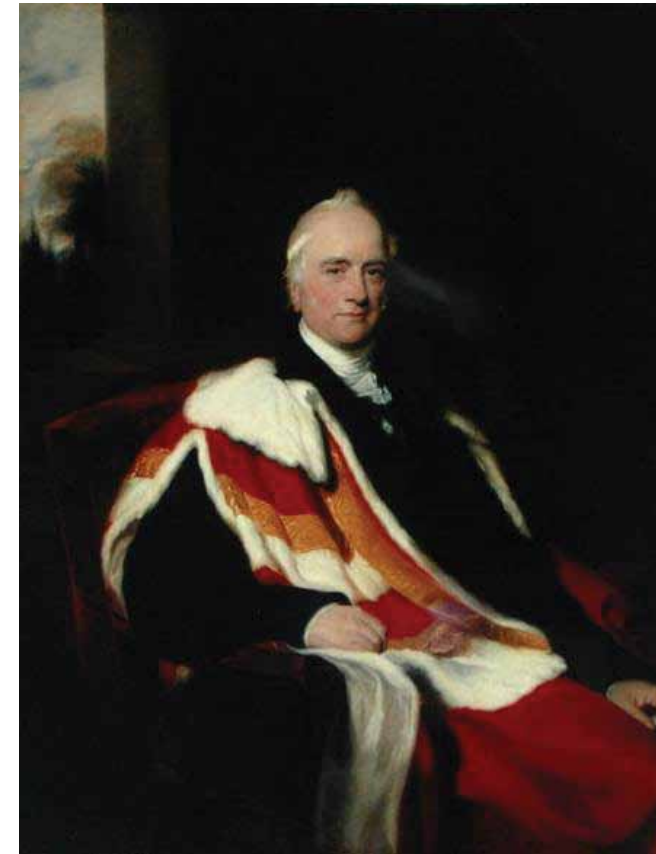
Monroe's observations found echo in the House of Commons in London. Samuel Whitbread, a Whig politician and a leading critic of Lord Liverpool's Tory



Government, deplored what had happened in Washington. Whitbread claimed that the British had done 'what the Goths [had] refused to do in Rome'. Nevertheless he exonerated Ross and praised his conduct:

It was happy for humanity and the credit of the Empire that extraordinary order upon that occasion had been entrusted to an officer of so much moderation and justice.

Nicholas Vansittart, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, also praised Ross:



Nicholas Vansittart, 1st Baron Bexley, by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

While he[Ross] inflicted chastisement in a manner to convey in its fullest sense, the terror of British arms, the American themselves could not withhold from him the mead of praise for temper and moderation with which he had executed the task assigned to him.

The Earl Bathurst, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, told the Duke of Wellington that 'the conduct of Major-General Ross does credit to your grace's school'.

Lord Castlereagh, the Foreign Secretary, regretted that Ross had not more troops at his disposal and thought:

The capture and destruction of Washington has not united the Americans; quite the contrary. We have gained more credit with them by saving private property than we have lost by the destruction of their public works and buildings.

The reconstruction of the White House

Reconstruction of the White House began in early 1815 and was finished in time for President James Monroe's inauguration in 1817. Reconstruction of the Capitol did not begin until 1815 and it was completed in 1864. Thomas Jefferson sold his extensive personal library to the government to restock the Library of Congress.



The White House 2014. Picture by James Kernaghan

¹⁰ During the War of 1812, James Monroe (1758- 1831) served both as Secretary of State and as Secretary of War. He succeeded Madison to the presidency and was the last president who was a 'Founding Father of the United States' and the last president from the so-called 'Virginia dynasty'. He is famous for promulgating the Monroe doctrine (in his annual message to Congress in 1823) that 'the American continents ... are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for further colonization by any European power', though existing colonies were not to be interfered with.

Baltimore

Although he was not keen on doing so, in September 1814 Ross mounted a raid on Baltimore, then the third-largest city in the United States. Ross landed his troops 16 miles from the city, while the Royal Navy attacked Fort McHenry, guarding the city's harbour.

This time, the British encountered stiffer and more determined American resistance, the military commanders in charge of the defence of the city, having made careful preparations unlike their Washington counterparts.



The cannon at Fort Henry, overlooking Baltimore harbour.

The American militia men, defending the city from behind entrenchments, on this occasion acquitted themselves well and succeeded in repulsing Ross's force, mortally wounding Ross.

Ross was hit apparently hit by a sniper's bullet which passed through his right arm and entered his chest; he died within hours. Neither historians of the battle nor local lore agree who fired the fatal shot or even what it was (various accounts suggest a rifle ball, others a musket ball; they were different). The view most favoured in Baltimore is that one of two teenage apprentices from Baltimore, Daniel Wells

and Henry G. McComas, were responsible. This tradition is imperfectly corroborated by a monument erected above their graves in 1873 because the inscription falls short of claiming that it was one of them who actually shot Ross.

Ross died while being transported back to the ships. Captain Crofton, one of Ross's aides, recorded the General's last words as: 'O! My beloved wife and family ...' the general's body, wrapped in a Union Flag, was carried back to the fleet in a small rowing boat. The body was stored in a barrel of Jamaican rum and shipped to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he was buried on 29 September 1814. Ly, who only heard of her husband's death in late October, was shattered by the news.

Arthur Brooke, Ross's second-in-command, succeeded to the command.



The Battle Monument, Baltimore, located in Battle Monument Square on North Calvert Street between East Fayette and East Lexington Streets in Baltimore.

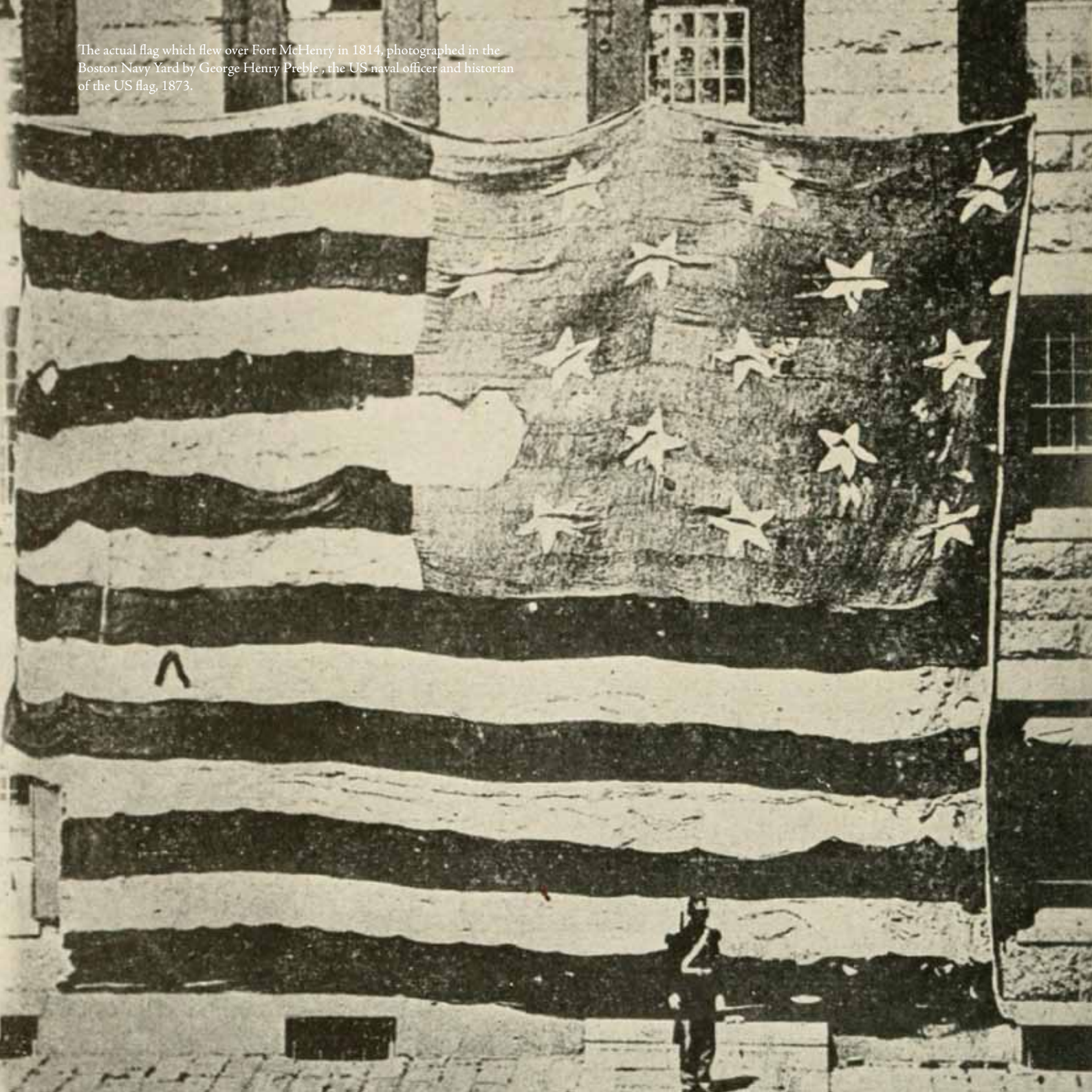


The death of Major General Ross during the Battle of Baltimore by an unknown artist. Ross is depicted being held up by his subordinates.



Major General Ross's grave, the Old Burying Ground, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The actual flag which flew over Fort McHenry in 1814, photographed in the Boston Navy Yard by George Henry Preble, the US naval officer and historian of the US flag, 1873.



Fort McHenry, Francis Scott Key and ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’

Fort McHenry was critical to the city’s defence. The ships of the Royal Navy were unable to pass Fort McHenry and penetrate the harbour because of its defences, including a chain of 22 sunken ships, and the American cannons. The Royal Navy could not get close enough to Fort McHenry to inflict serious damage to the fort. The limited range of the American cannons in the fort meant very little damage was done by either side on each other before the Royal Navy, having depleted its ammunition, ceased the attack and withdrew on the morning of 14 September.

Francis Scott Key, a Washington lawyer who had come to Baltimore to negotiate the release of Dr. William Beanes, found himself aboard a British ship during the bombardment. Observing an American flag still flying from Fort McHenry, patriotic pride inspired Scott to write a poem entitled ‘Defence of Fort McHenry’. The poem subsequently became the lyrics of ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ which more than a century later became the American national anthem.

The tune was that of a popular British song written by John Stafford Smith for the Anacreontic Society, a men’s social club in London. It also bears an uncanny similarity to a tune played by the 27th Regiment of Foot (subsequently the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers) in the eighteenth century. Fort McHenry was named after James McHenry, a surgeon and later Secretary of War under President Washington, who originally came from Ballymena, County Antrim.



The Bombardment of Fort McHenry by the British Fleet.



A replica of the 15-star, 15-stripe ‘Star-Spangled Banner’ which flies over Fort McHenry today.

Major-General Ross and His Place in History

In his book *The Art of War* (published originally in French in 1838 as *Précis de l'Art de la Guerre: Des Principales Combinaisons de la Stratégie, de la Grande Tactique et de la Politique Militaire*) , Baron de Jomini, the Swiss-born French general, strategist and military thinker, described Ross's achievement as an 'extraordinary' undertaking:

The world was astonished to see a handful of seven or eight thousand Englishmen making their appearance in the midst of a state embracing ten millions of people, taking possession of the capital, and destroying all the public buildings – results unparalleled in history.

While Jomini contrived to exaggerate both the population of the United States (which was about seven million rather than ten million) and the size of Ross's army (which consisted of less than 5,000 men rather than 7,000 or 8,000), neither of these slips detract in any way from Ross's achievement.

Major-General Robert Ross was the first (and to date only) soldier to capture Washington, a feat which eluded even great Robert E. Lee and the legendary Army of Northern Virginia fifty years later. Admittedly, Lee probably would not have wished to burn the American capital. Ross was also the first commander to defeat a full US army in the field.

There is a very fine memorial (dating from 1821) by Josephus Kendrick to Ross in the south transept of St Paul's Cathedral in London.



The Ross memorial, St Paul's Cathedral, London

The inscription on the memorial reads as follows:

*DEDICATED AT THE PUBLIC EXPENSE TO THE
MEMORY OF MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT ROSS,*

*WHO HAVING UNDERTOOK AND EXECUTED
AN ENTERPRISE AGAINST THE CITY OF
WASHINGTON, THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA,*

*WHICH WAS CROWNED WITH COMPLETE
SUCCESS, WAS KILLED SHORTLY AFTERWARDS
WHILE DIRECTING A SUCCESSFUL ATTACK
UPON A SUPERIOR FORCE*

*NEAR THE CITY OF BALTIMORE ON THE 12TH
DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1814*

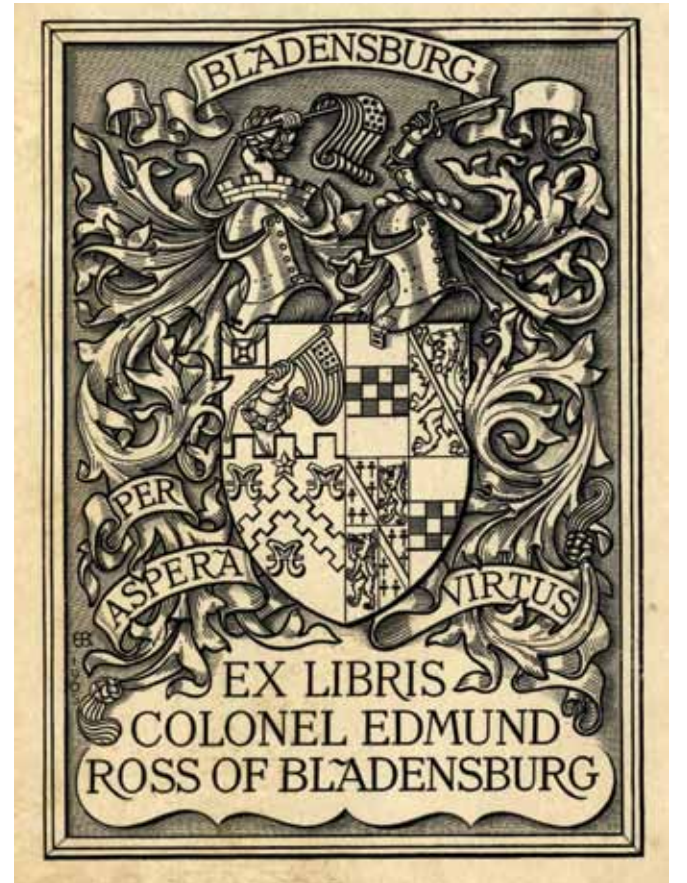


'The Ross memorial' in Kilbroney Parish Church, Rostrevor, County Down.

There is also a memorial erected by the officers and men of the 20th Regiment of Foot, whom Ross had memorably led to victory at the Battle of Maida in July 1806, in Kilbroney Parish Church, Rostrevor.

Ross is also commemorated by a 100 foot granite obelisk erected in 1826 near his birthplace at Rostrevor.

Neither General Ross nor his immediate descendants were knighted or raised to the peerage. However, as an augmentation of honour, the Ross family's coat of arms was granted a second crest in which an arm is seen grasping the stars and stripes on a broken staff; and the family name was changed to Ross-of-Bladensburg.



Bladensburg Coat Of Arms - Bookplate – depicting the Ross of Bladensburg coat of arms. The bookplate belonged to Colonel Edmund Ross (born in 1849) who lived at Fairy Hill, Rostrevor

Newry and Mourne Museum Collection

The Treaty of Ghent

Talks began in the Flemish city of Ghent in August 1814. Although both the British and the Americans realised the futility of the war, a previous Russian attempt at mediation had failed in 1813.

By the autumn of 1814 the Americans were more amenable to peace. President Madison was deeply concerned at the cost of the war. The US Navy was blockaded in port and much of the army had not been paid for nearly a year. A treaty offered an unexpected escape from disaster.

The British too were concerned at ‘prodigious expense’ of the war and this propelled the British government towards a settlement. The Treaty of Ghent was signed on 24 December 1815.

Both sides abandoned territorial ambitions. Britain renounced any claims to Maine (for example) and the United States gave up its claims to Canada. Thus nothing was gained or lost by either side.

The treaty also provided that certain boundary disputes between Canada and the United States were to be referred to arbitration commissions, and both the US and British governments agreed to use their best efforts to abolish the international slave trade.

Curiously, it said absolutely nothing about two of the key issues that started the war—the rights of neutral American vessels and the impressment of American sailors. However both issues were largely rendered redundant by the defeat and abdication of Napoleon.

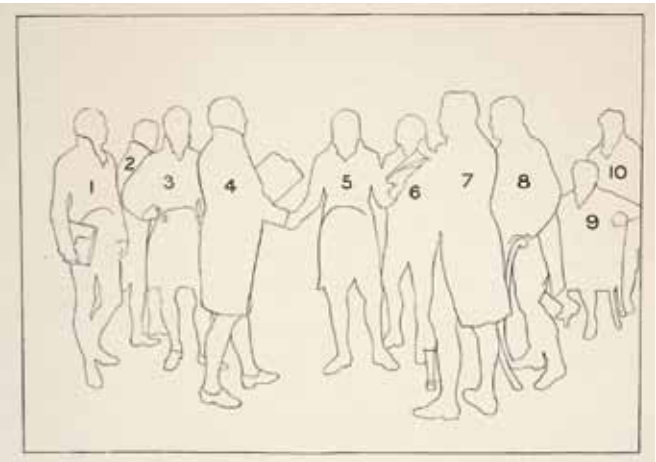


The signing of the Treaty of Ghent by Sir Amédée Forestier (Smithsonian American Art Museum).

Of the treaty, the Canadian historian Pierre Berton concluded:

It was as if no war had been fought, or to put it more bluntly, as if the war that was fought was fought for no good reason. For nothing has changed; everything is as it was in the beginning save for the graves of those who, it now appears, have fought for a trifle:... Lake Erie and Fort McHenry will go into the American history books, Queenston Heights and Crysler’s Farm into the Canadian, but without the gore, the stench, the disease, the terror, the conniving, and the imbecilities that march with every army.¹¹

News of the treaty took almost two months to cross the Atlantic and did not arrive in time to prevent the Battle of New Orleans.



- British Delegates**
- 1. Anthony St. John Baker, Secretary
 - 2. William Adams, Plenipotentiary
 - 3. Henry Goulburn, Plenipotentiary
 - 4. Admiral Lord Gambier, Chief Plenipotentiary
- American Delegates**
- 1. John Quincy Adams, Chief Plenipotentiary
 - 2. Albert Gallatin, Plenipotentiary
 - 3. Christopher Hughes, Secretary
 - 4. James A. Bayard, Plenipotentiary
 - 5. Henry Clay, Plenipotentiary
 - 6. Jonathan Russell, Plenipotentiary



A replica of the table on which President Madison signed the Treaty of Ghent. Madison signed the treaty in Kentucky because the White House in Washington was unavailable due to Major General Ross’s visitation in August 1814.



Plaque at a building in Veldstraat, Ghent, where the American diplomats stayed and one of the locations where the treaty was negotiated. It was located at the retail ‘Esprit’ store on Veldstraat 47. It was placed there by the United States Daughters of 1812, a patriotic American organization with the remit of ‘preserving and increasing knowledge of the history of the American people.’

¹¹ The Battle of Queenston Heights (13 October 1812) was the first major battle in the War of 1812 and was a British victory. It was fought between United States regulars and New York militia forces led by Major-General Stephen Van Rensselaer, and British regulars, York volunteers and Mohawks led by Major-General Isaac Brock, and Major-General Roger Hale Sheaffe, who took command when Brock was killed. At The Battle of Crysler’s Farm (11 November 1813) a British and Canadian force defeated a superior US force, obliging the Americans to abandon the St. Lawrence Campaign, their major strategic effort in the autumn of 1813.

The Battle of New Orleans

In the autumn of 1814 the Royal Navy moved south to attack the Gulf Coast, arriving at Mobile in September. The aim was in part to relieve American pressure on Canada and (perhaps to a lesser extent) to seize the lower part of the Mississippi River with a view to using it as a bargaining chip in negotiations. Americans feared that the British were intending to rouse the Indians of the South and take over the Spanish colonies of east and west Florida.

The assault on New Orleans had to await the end of the hurricane season. By December the British had assembled some 7,500 troops. Preliminary actions went well for the British. Andrew Jackson, the American major-general, sent a small flotilla of gunboats to guard one of the approaches to the city but Royal Marines in small ships' rowboats attacked them on 14 December and captured them all.

The British succeeded in landing near the city with the help of Spanish and Portuguese fishermen. On 23 December Andrew Jackson mounted a combined land and naval attack on the British camp but the Americans were repulsed. On 28 December the British made a reconnaissance in force against Andrew Jackson's line. They very nearly succeeded in breaking one of the American flanks.

On 1 January 1815 the British bombarded the Americans in an attempt to take out their guns but they had insufficient ammunition to do so. American artillery inflicted considerable damage on the British positions in return.

The British commander at New Orleans was General

Edward Pakenham, the Duke of Wellington's brother-in-law. However compared to Wellington, Pakenham was 'rash and none too clever'.¹²

On 8 January Pakenham foolishly mounted a frontal assault on the American earthworks outside the city but he had failed to bring up scaling ladders. Those troops who were not mown down in the open by American artillery were picked off as they clambered ineffectually on the shoulders of their comrades.

The battle was a very one-sided affair and a stunning American victory. The British loss nearly 300 men (including Pakenham and two other generals), with another 1,200 wounded and hundreds more taken prisoner or missing. The Americans repulsed the British attack at the cost of only thirteen dead. A further 39 Americans were wounded.

Andrew Jackson attributed his victory to God's Providence: 'It appears that the unerring hand of Providence shielded my men from the powers of balls, bombs and rockets, when every ball and bomb from our guns carried with them the mission of death.' Surveying the battlefield as the cannon smoke lifted, John Coffee, a Tennessee friend and confidant of Jackson's, thought 'the slaughter was shocking'. Living British soldiers who had hidden beneath their fallen comrades' red coats rose from the heaps of corpses, prompting Jackson subsequently to recall: 'I never had so grand and awful an idea of the resurrection as on that day.'

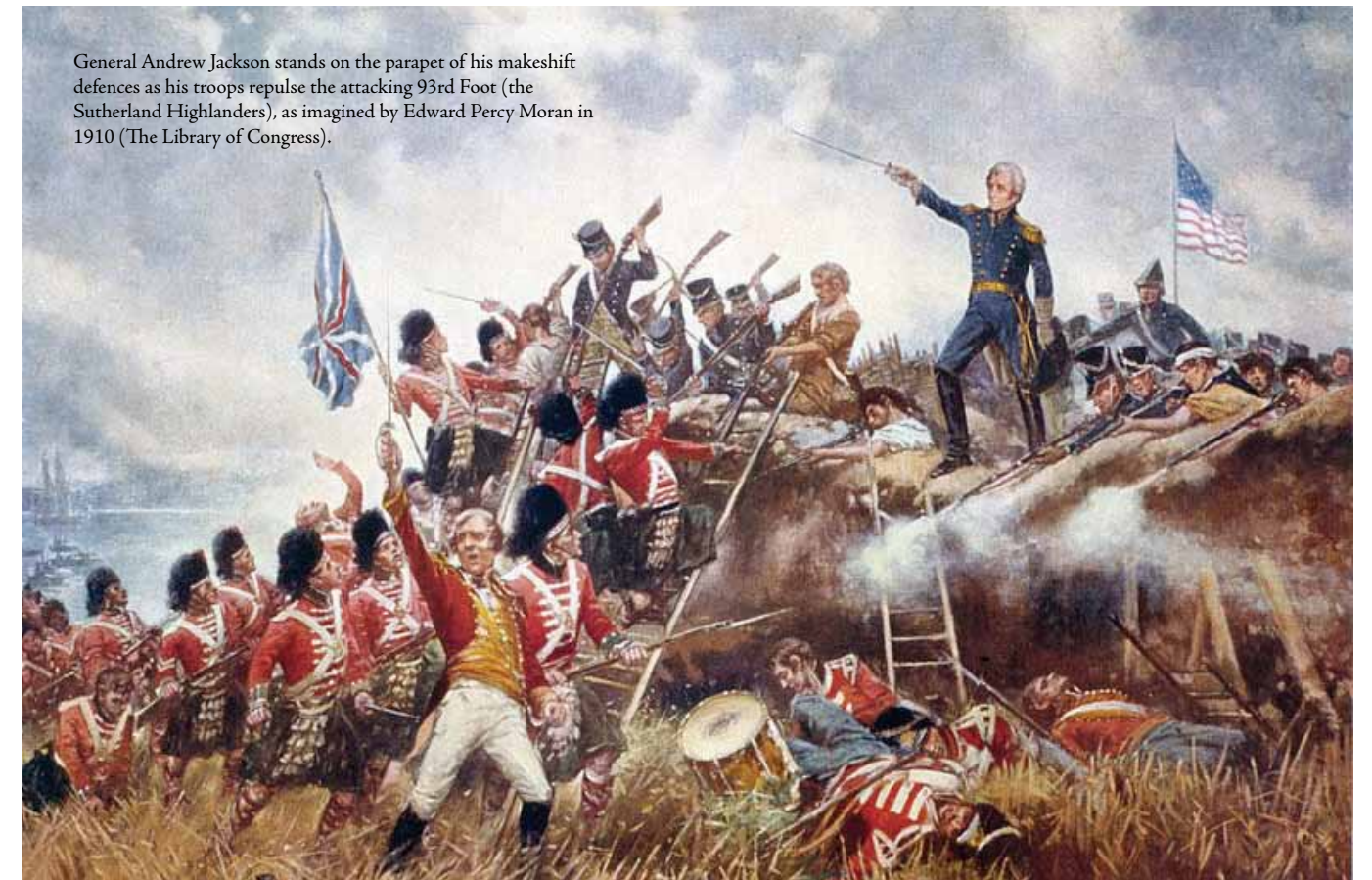
David Reynolds, the British historian, is correct in observing that 'the Battle of New Orleans was 'sweet revenge' for the burning of Washington. By obscuring a succession of American failures, the battle allowed the

Americans to end the war on an unexpectedly 'triumphant note' and enabled them to feel good about themselves.

The Battle of New Orleans made Andrew Jackson a national hero and set him on the road to the White House.



The death of General Pakenham at New Orleans by Felix Octavius Carr Darley.



General Andrew Jackson stands on the parapet of his makeshift defences as his troops repulse the attacking 93rd Foot (the Sutherland Highlanders), as imagined by Edward Percy Moran in 1910 (The Library of Congress).

¹² Edward Pakenham (1778 -1815) was educated at the Royal School, Armagh, and was MP for Longford in the Irish Parliament between 1799 and 1800. He served with Wellington in the Peninsula War and in September 1814, Pakenham, having been promoted to the rank of Major-General, accepted an offer to replace Major-General Ross as commander of the British army in North America.

The Significance of the Anglo - American War of 1812

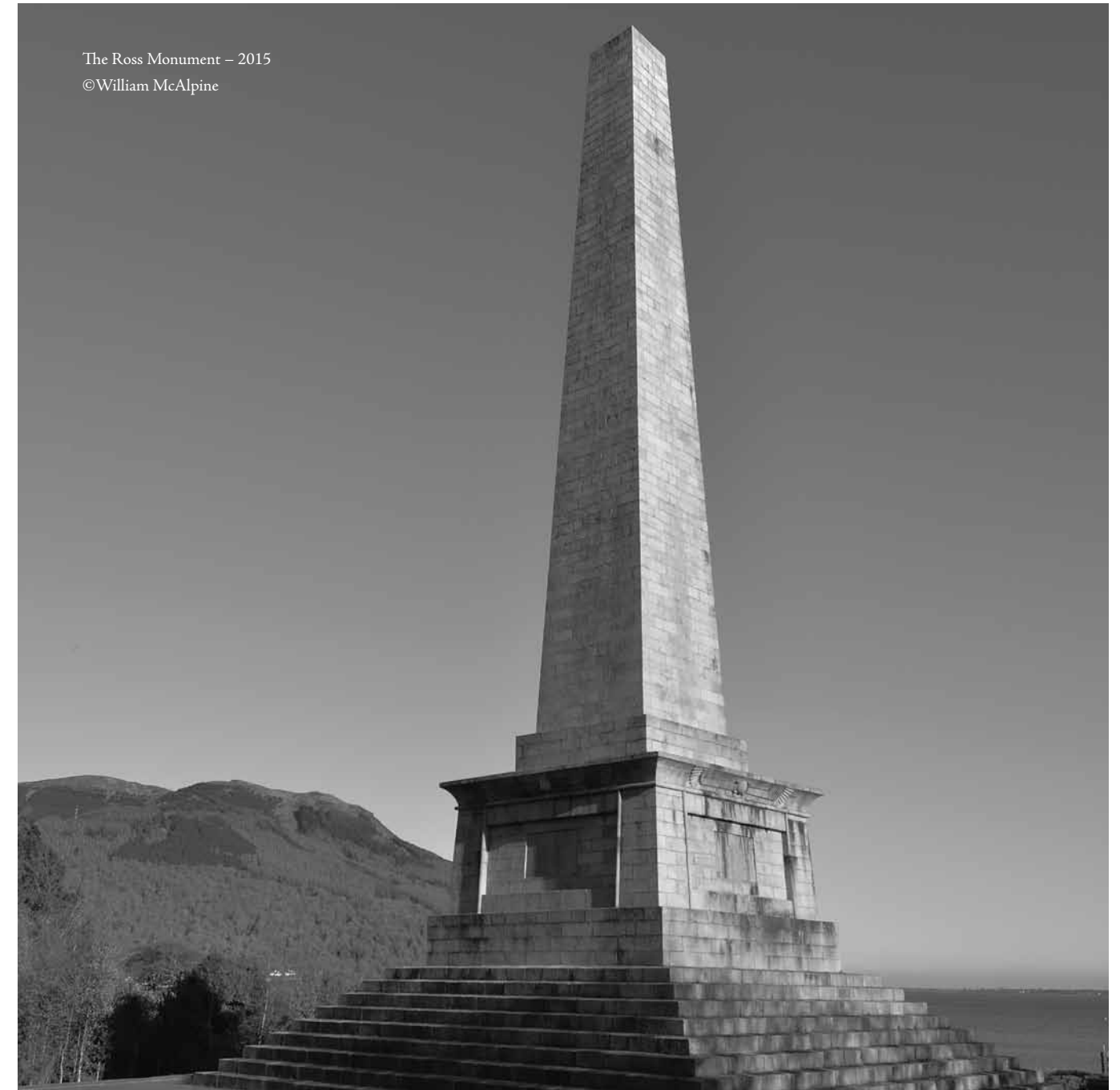
The American Perspective

For the most part, the war from an American perspective had been a disaster on the battlefield. The war was redeemed in American eyes by Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans and a succession of naval victories. Americans also like to think of the War of 1812 as the Second War of Independence, although the British had no desire to take back their former colonies. As we have already noted, despite their many setbacks, the war enabled Americans to feel good about themselves.¹³ This is nicely evidenced by James Monroe's reaction to the text of the Treaty of Ghent. The US Secretary of State, incensed that the name of Great Britain and its negotiators consistently appeared before those of the United States in the text, solemnly lectured the British diplomat who conveyed the treaty to him: 'The United States have acquired a certain rank amongst nations, which is due to their population and political importance and they do not stand in the same situation as at former periods.'

The British Perspective

The War of 1812 does not figure prominently in the British understanding of the past because both in duration and scale it pales into comparative insignificance when compared to the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. Furthermore, it was a war which the British did not wish to fight. Castlereagh was relieved to be free from what he described as that 'millstone of a war'. It was not a war of his choosing. John Bew points out in his recent biography of Castlereagh, that Castlereagh was 'the first British Foreign Secretary to emphasise the community of interests which might emerge between the two nations'. He believed that there were 'no two states whose friendly relations were of more practical benefit to each other'. After the Treaty of Ghent, Castlereagh enjoyed extremely cordial relations with John Quincy Adams (who was to serve as the sixth President of the United States from 1825 to 1829) and Richard Rush, successive US ambassadors to the Court of St James. Finally, in light of the so-called 'Special Relationship' which exists between the United States and the United Kingdom, the war is slightly embarrassing. When President Obama welcomed David Cameron to the White House in March 2012, the President teased the Prime Minister by reminding him that two centuries earlier his fellow-countrymen had 'really lit the place up'.

¹³ The description 'Era of Good Feelings' was first used by Benjamin Russell, in a Boston Federalist newspaper on 12 July 1817 and has been used by historians since to denote the period in American political history that reflected a renewed sense of national purpose and desire for national unity in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars.



Suggested further reading:

Books

- ✦ John Bew, Castlereagh: Enlightenment, War and Tyranny (London, 2011)
- ✦ Troy Bickham, The Weight of Vengeance: The United States, the British Empire, and the War of 1812 (Oxford, 2012)
- ✦ Carl Benn, The War of 1812 (Oxford, 2002)
- ✦ Kathleen Burk, Old World, New World: The Story of Britain and America (London, 2007)
- ✦ Andrew Lambert, The Challenge: Britain Against America in the Naval War of 1812 (London, 2013)
- ✦ Jon Meacham, American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House (New York, 2008)
- ✦ Tim Pickles, New Orleans 1815 (Oxford, 1993)
- ✦ David Reynold, America, Empire of Liberty: A New History (London, 2009)
- ✦ Peter Snow, When Britain Burned the White House: The 1814 Invasion of Washington (London, 2013)

Articles

- ✦ W. A. Maguire, ‘Major General Ross and the Burning of Washington’, Irish Sword: The Journal of the Military History Society of Ireland, vol. 14 (Winter 1980), pp. 117-28.
- ✦ Valerie Pakenham, ‘Sir Edward Pakenham and the Battle of New Orleans’, Irish Sword: The Journal of the Military History Society of Ireland, vol. 9 (1969-70), pp. 32-7.

Archival material

Those interested in archival research might wish to visit the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland to consult:

- ✦ Arthur Brooke’s MS diary of the campaign , D3004 (the original diary is in the Ulster-American Folk Park, Omagh)
- ✦ Robert Ross’s Papers and letters, D2004

Author

Gordon Lucy was educated at Portora Royal School, Enniskillen, and Queen’s University, Belfast. He has recently contributed a new introduction to Andrew Hamilton’s Actions of the Enniskillen-men (2014). He is the author of The Ulster Covenant (2012) Schomberg (2004) and The Great Convention (1995). He has co-edited (with John Erskine) Varieties of Scottishness (1995), which examines the relationship between Ulster and Scotland. He also compiled and edited (with Elaine McClure) The Twelfth: What it means to me (1997) and Remembrance (1997). He is an occasional contributor to the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and the News Letter.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to those helped with this booklet and project -

- Stephen Campbell
- Noreen Cunningham, Newry and Mourne Museum,
- John Erskine
- James Kernaghan
- Seth Linder, Kilbroney Community Association (Rostrevor)
- Regina Mackin, Newry, Mourne and Down Council
- William McAlpine
- Ursula Mhic An tSaoir, Newry, Mourne and Down Council
- Treasa Mhic Aoidh Bhuí, Newry, Mourne and Down Council
- John McCavitt
- Gerard McGivern, Newry, Mourne and Down Council
- Shane McGivern, Newry and Mourne Museum
- Briege McNally, Newry, Mourne and Down Council
- Catherine Thewissen, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium
- Matthew Warwick, Ulster Scots Community Network

Editing and design layout by Andrew Kernaghan,
Newry, Mourne and Down Council

This booklet has been produced with the assistance of the

- ✦ Arts Council for NI
- ✦ Ulster-Scots Community Network

Front Cover image Family Portrait of Major-General Robert Ross by unknown Artist,
courtesy of Stephen Campbell, Rostrevor

Back Cover image c.1841 supplied by Gerard McGivern



Reservoir & Monument of General Wolfe



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
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