

The Battle of Plattsburgh:

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Our Place in History

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WHEN THE BATTLE OF PLATTSBURGH OCCURRED

OVERVIEW:

During this lesson students will learn when the Battle of Plattsburgh took place during the War of 1812, its place in the history of the United States and how long the battle lasted.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will understand when the Battle of Plattsburgh took place within the War of 1812 and the history of the United States.
2. Students will interpret a timeline to answer questions about the Battle of Plattsburgh.
3. Students will create their own timeline of the events that occurred in the Battle of Plattsburgh.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: On Lake Champlain in the summer of 1814, military activities increased. The British were gathering their troops just north of the border. They were under the command of General Sir George Prevost. Build up of the British troops was made possible because of the victory over Napoleon. These veteran troops were shipped to Canada; by August 1814 approximately 16,000 soldiers had landed.

The Americans were also building their defenses. Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough and a work crew were building their naval fleet in Vergennes, VT. An army of 5000 soldiers was located in Plattsburgh under the command of Gen. George Izard. They began to build fortifications on Cumberland Head and on the peninsula between the Lake Champlain and the Saranac River south of Plattsburgh.

In August, the War Dept. in Washington sent Gen. Izard to Sackets Harbor with 4000 of his best men. They felt this was where the main British attack would be. However, Gen. Izard knew the British were building up their troops just north of Plattsburgh and tried to delay his departure from Plattsburgh. On Aug. 29 th, Gen. Izard departed with 4000 of his best men for Sackets Harbor. He left Gen. Alexander Macomb in command with 3400 soldiers, only 1500 of whom were effective fighting men.

Gen. Prevost and the British troops began to gather in Champlain on September 1st. Macomb ordered all American forces to delay the British advance in order to prepare Plattsburgh.

For additional information go to Lesson Plan 3.

ACTIVITIES:

1. In pairs or groups, the students will be given a date for the time periods on the time line. Then they will do research to create a picture of the event that occurred on that day. They also need to write a paragraph that explains their picture and what is happening that day in history. After they have completed this part of the activity, the class will then create a large timeline with their pictures in the hall.
2. Students will be given a timeline (attached) and will have to answer questions based on the information on the timeline.
3. Journal Activity – students will create an authentic looking journal entry based on an event on the timeline of the Battle of Plattsburgh. They will choose a historical character (Prevost, Macdonough, Macomb, Aiken’s volunteer) and write a journal entry as that person would have during that time in history.

Biographical Information available in other Lesson Plans

4. For the eleven areas on the timeline, students will create dioramas of the event that occurred on that day in history. The dioramas will be displayed in chronological order.
5. Students will create a picture book on the Battle of Plattsburgh, Gen. Macdonough, or Gen. Macomb. They then will present the book to a primary class and include an activity sheet for follow –up (coloring sheet of the Saratoga).
6. Document Based Questions and Essay – constructed responses for primary resources.
 - A. Letter from Betsy Delord
 - B. Impressment Picture
 - C. Map of the Battle of Plattsburgh
 - D. Timeline
 - E. Essay question

Grade 4 Document-Based Questions:

The Battle Of Plattsburgh

Historical Background: By August, 1814, the Americans and the British increased their preparations for the upcoming land and naval battle in Plattsburgh.

Writing Task: Write a well-developed essay about the Battle of Plattsburgh. Be sure to include:

- What the Americans and British were fighting over
- Who were some of the key figures in the battle
- Why Plattsburgh was an important battle in the War of 1812
- Where the battle took place
- Response of local civilians

Document 1 from *Love & Duty (1987)*

Families in Plattsburgh packed up their belongings and left the area. Many took shelter in Peru, Betsey and her baby Frances went to Albany to stay with relatives. The following is a letter that Henry Delord received from Betsey.

Waterford 26 Aug. 1814

Dear papa,

I received your letter three days ago. Was happy to hear from you, but am anxious on account of news you give. I tremble for the fate of Plattsburgh. Do write often and let me know. Your Dear Daughter is very well and growing more and more interesting. She says papa most sweetly and is growing fat. I have been very busy putting Frances in short close, and I have got [her] a pair of shoes. Im in hopes she will walk before you come. I'll write from Albany. Im anxious for the time you will join us.

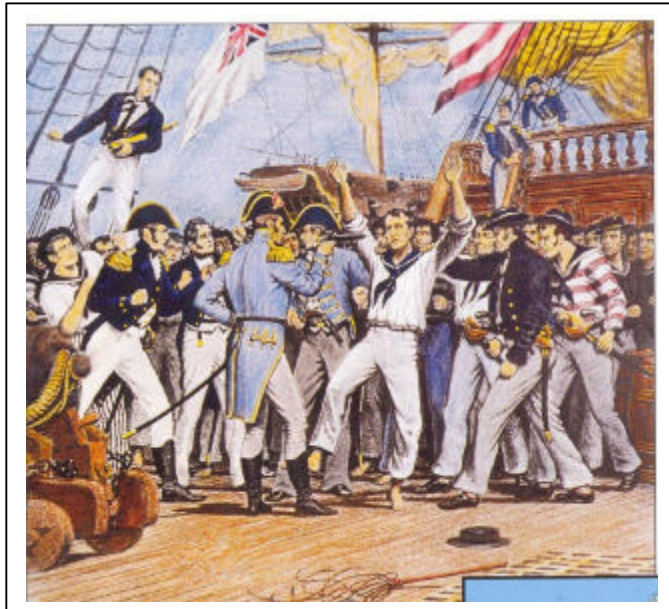
Yours sincerely, B. Delord (15)

1. Why is Betsey away from her home and husband?

2. Describe why Betsey fears for the fate of Plattsburgh.

3. When was this letter written?

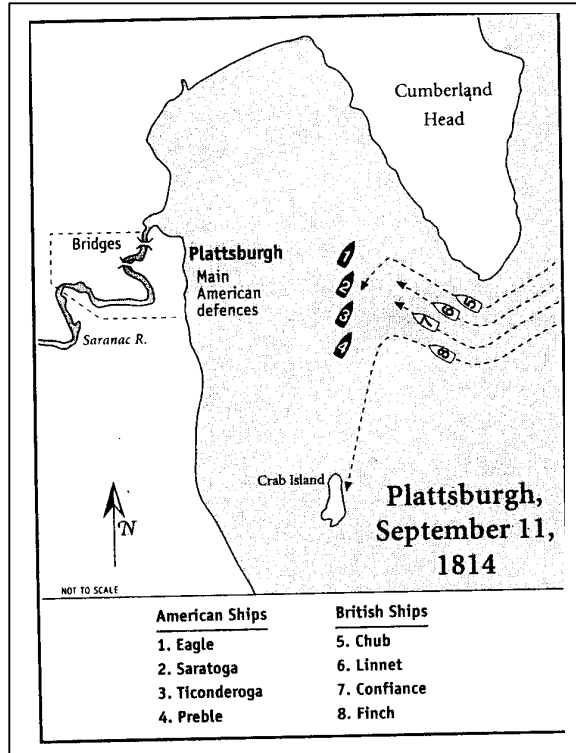
Document 2 Impressment picture from *The War of 1812*



1. This picture shows the British impressing American seamen. Why was this a cause of the War of 1812 according to this document?

2. How did the British impress American seamen into serving in the British Royal Navy?

Document 3 from *The Incredible of War 1812* (1965)



1. What naval force lined their ships into formation first? Why might have this been an advantage for them?

2. How did the U.S. troops prepare to defend Plattsburgh against the British?

The Battle of Plattsburgh 1814

Aug. 29

Dec. 24

Gen. Izard marches
Treaty of Gent
Troops to Sackets Harbor
signed

Sept. 2

Plattsburgh
civilians flee

Sept. 4

Prevost & British army
march to Dead Creek
(Municipal beach)

Sept. 6

1st skirmish
@ Beekmantown
Corners

Sept. 7 - 10

Many skirmishes
& preparation occur

Sept. 1

Prevost & British
Troops move into
Champlain

Sept. 3

Aiken's volunteer
form in Plattsburgh

Sept. 5

forces on both
side prepare for
battle

Sept. 6

Prevost and troops
take over many homes
in Plattsburgh

Sept. 11

Naval battle
occurs on
Lake Champlain

NAME _____
Battle of Plattsburgh

Questions to use with the timeline.

1. When did General Izard leave the Plattsburgh area?

2. On what day was the War of 1812 officially over? _____

3. What event occurred first, the naval battle on Lake Champlain or the British take over the homes in Plattsburgh?

4. Based on this timeline, when did the first skirmish on land take place?

