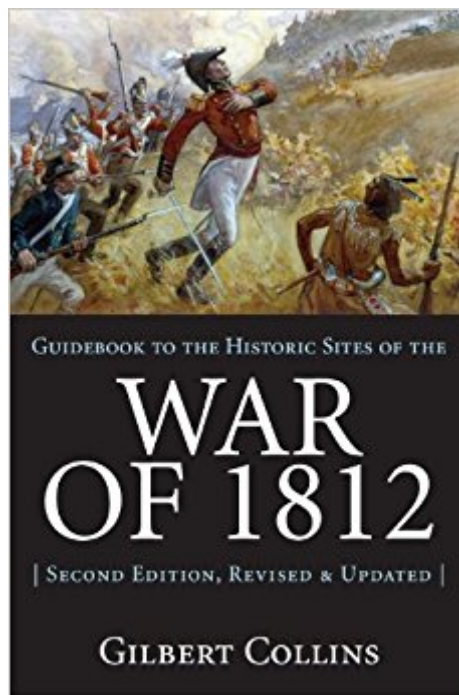


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Guidebook To The Historic Sites Of The War Of 1812: 2nd Edition, Revised And Updated



Synopsis

There have been guidebooks to military sites before, but no other book has covered the War of 1812 in its entirety. This well-illustrated updated edition covers more than 400 historic sites of the War of 1812, both well-known and obscure, in both Canada and the United States. The author has used old pen and ink drawings from the last century to give a "then and now" feel to the book. Curious to know what is at the site of the Battle of Queenston Heights? Besides giving readers a detailed history of the events that occurred at the sites, the author describes what they have to offer visitors today, be it a historical plaque, historic house, or major interpretive centre. This book is a handy tool for both travellers and historians. It remains the only book on the market offering a comprehensive guide to nearly all of the sites in our last war with the United States.

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Customer Reviews

"Those people inspired to visit sites connected to the conflict will find no better general guidebook than this one." (The American Review of Canadian Studies)"He has done a public service in encouraging renewed appreciation of the importance of preserving the memory of a war that brought honour and shame in full measure. Readers will discover a wealth of anecdotes and stories." (Gord McNulty The Hamilton Spectator)"This neat field guide highlights 30 areas in both the United States and Canada where there are significant sites, incidents, battles, ruins, plaques, ports, forts, monuments, graveyards, statues, et.al." (Sun Times)"Of all the guidebooks on the War of 1812, this is the most complete." (Wesley B. Turner CBRA)"This book is a handy tool for both travelers and historians. It remains the only book on the market offering a comprehensive

guide to nearly all of the sites in the last war between the United States and Canada. –
(<http://rwa-books.blogspot.com/2009/02/guidebook-to-historic-sites-of-war.html>)

Includes more than 400 historic sites, both well-known and obscure, in both Canada and the U.S.

Since this is the only guidebook to the War of 1812 that I have read, it's impossible to compare it to any others that may be out there. Having said that, I have seen some similar books on the Civil War and the American Revolution and this book does not hold up to any of those. However, I still have to recommend this book to anyone with an interest in visiting sites related to the War of 1812. The Good: The book breaks down the sites by region and gives a nice little synopsis on why the site is important, what happened there, and what's left to see there. The Bad: The maps are almost worthless. I know the author mentions towards the front of the book that they were not intended to guide you to the various sites, but that doesn't excuse their lack of quality. I still like the layout of the book and how sites are labeled with symbols specifying what you can see there. I recommend this book and will not go so far as to give a back-handed compliment of, "well, there's nothing else out there, so this is better than nothing."

For various reasons, the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain to lay claim over Canada is sometimes referred to as a forgotten war. There was no well known American president involved such as George Washington, nor was there a popular general involved such as Ulysses S. Grant to capture the imaginations of the American people. Many Canadians feel military accomplishments have never been a focal point in our national conscience, but the War of 1812 was the bloodiest conflict fought on Canadian soil and was an essential event in forming the foundation of the Canadian identity. The war between Great Britain and France was more vital, especially on a global scale, mainly because Canada was just a small British colony with a few hundred thousand inhabitants. But for those living here, the War of 1812 was a pivotal moment in history. The War of 1812 provided Canadians with a woman who became a national icon, and whose name would become synonymous with chocolate - Laura Secord; the war would also produce Canada's first war hero, General Isaac Brock, whose victories and death inspired a nation. Amateur historian and Ottawa native Gilbert Collins visited many of the sites of the War of 1812 without the intention of writing a book but, as he says in the preface, there was no adequate guides for those like him with an interest in the War of 1812, so Collins took it upon himself to rectify the situation. In detailing these attractions, Collins has included more than 380 historic sites and

markers, 28 maps and dozens of illustrations. The book also includes a chronology of the war, and is a handy tool for both the traveller and the historian. This guide is a welcome addition to the collections of both the serious scholar of the war and the amateur historian. The many sites are listed according to region, and to Collins' credit, the book ventures beyond Canada's involvement in the war. More depth is given to sites in Canada, but American sites are also well covered. In order to locate sites in their present locations, a map and symbols are given for each region, which indicate what a visitor might expect to find from a small plaque commemorating a battle, a large statue honouring a person or the remains of a long gone fort. Collins also uses photographs to show the locations as they are today and, for an added touch, even includes sketches by another amateur historian Benson Lossing, who, like Collins, visited the War of 1812 sites back in 1860 without the benefit of a guidebook. A brief summary of events and participants is included for each site. Some entries are longer than others but are always informative. The real detail is in the lesser known events and people because Collins assumes his readers will know the major players, and in places, he skims them a bit in favour of the smaller things such as the Hoople's Creek skirmish in Ontario. The current status and modifications to many of the sites are also indicated and show how the places are being preserved when possible but also that many are lost forever with nothing but a small marker to indicate the significance. Another bonus in the updates is the inclusion of modern day finds such as the accidental discovery of the ship General Hunter. The General Hunter was captured by the Americans at the Battle of Lake Erie in 1813 and its wreck ended up buried on a beach in Southampton, Ontario until it was discovered in 2001. Brock's service in the Battle of Queenston Heights gave Canadians their first true war hero. When Brock was alive, he was a hero to the Canadian people and his soldiers, and when he was killed defending Canada, he became a legend. There are countless streets and parks named after him and he is even the namesake of a city: Brockville, Ontario. There is ample coverage of both Brock and The Battle of Queenston Heights along with information on what a visitor will find at the site today including a walking tour of the battleground with markers containing relevant facts. Also placed high atop Queenston Heights is Brock's grave and monument. Brock's monument is visible from kilometres away, including the American side of the river. The plume of Brock's hat is 185 feet above the ground, making it taller than any of the columns raised to honour Horatio Nelson or Napoleon. This book is definitely for the historian out for a road trip or someone looking for some general information on the battles, people and places of the War of 1812. It is not detailed enough to be used as an academic resource but it was never intended to be. If you're a Pierre Burton wannabe and have any interest in a War of 1812 driving tour of Eastern Canada or the United States, this comprehensive book is a must.

Sites are listed from the War of 1812 according to region. A map and symbols are given for each region, in order to locate sites and present locations, as well as indicate what a visitor might expect to find. Use of photographs and postage stamps is an added enhancement. A brief summary of events and participants is included for each site. Current status and modifications are also indicated. The book is written by a Canadian, who fairly even handedly relates events. Most depth is given to sites in Canada, but American sites are well covered. The only major missing location in the USA is Pensacola. Otherwise EVERYPLACE is covered well.

While occasionally uneven in its listings (i.e. some areas covered in great detail a few like the Delmarva region are glossed over and Florida is ignored), the book is the best I've seen on the subject. Collins tries to cover everything and in the end comes close. This is a great help on any battlefield trips.

Historical documents, especially those drafted in time of war, often suffer from the ignorance or outright bias of the authors, based on their individual opinions. A ship's log is factual. Two American ships were lost August 8, 1813, when a squall bursts directly over them and they hit bottom within minutes. During the War of 1812, armies clashed from Canada to Louisiana, navies from the Great Lakes to the high seas. On Lake Ontario, a survivor from the ship 'Scourge' told his story to a young writer who had been aboard a merchant ship with him earlier, James Fenimore Cooper. 'Scourge' was originally a Canadian merchant vessel called 'Lord Nelson' and the figurehead at the mast showed one of history's greatest naval heroes, Admiral Horatio Nelson, a heroic Britisher whose likeness in all its majesty in a pose like Napoleon. The 'Hamilton' had been an American merchantman named 'Diana' with the figurehead of a beautiful statuesque goddess beneath her bowsprit. When found at the bottom of this lake, the anchor was raised clear of the hull by passing its line through a cathead that protrudes from the ship's bow. "Ah, la, la, magnifique! Charmante! Fantastique, mon ami!" Ned Myers, the survivor, told his old friend, "The past, I have related as faithfully as I have been able so to do. The future is with God." James Fenimore Cooper's account, the 19th century classic of this shipwreck, thus making the two naval vessels "Ghost Ships," is called NED MYERS; OR A LIFE BEFORE THE MAST.

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