

Battle of St. Leonard Creek

"Thus, we have beat them and their rockets, which they did not spare...The moment the enemy ran off, we moved up the river, so that thanks to hot and cold shot, the blockade is raised." - Joshua Barney, quoted in American & Commercial Daily Advertiser, June 29, 1814.

During the War of 1812, dramatic events took place on JPPM grounds. The British had controlled the Chesapeake Bay since the beginning of the war. In an attempt to open the Bay, a flamboyant ex-privateer, Commodore Joshua Barney, assembled a rag-tag fleet of eighteen small gun boats, barges, and sloops and headed down the Bay in June of 1814. Barney's Chesapeake Flotilla clashed with the British on June 8 – 10 and again on June 26th in the Battle of St. Leonard Creek. The battle, which is the largest naval engagement in the history of Maryland, took place where the Patuxent River meets the mouth of St. Leonard Creek, right off the shore of JPPM.



The naval engagement was supported on land by American Army, Marine, and militia units, including a gun battery which was located on JPPM property. Both the land units and the flotilla engaged the British, and hundreds of shots per hour were exchanged between the two forces. Archaeological evidence of the battle has been discovered on JPPM grounds in the form of cannonballs, musket shot and other military artifacts. Eventually the British retreated and Barney's fleet was able to escape from St. Leonard Creek.

[Exhibit: FARMERS, PATRIOTS and TRAITORS: Southern Maryland and the War of 1812!](#)

Imagine foreign troops have invaded your community. Some say that these troops have no business being here, but others are helping them by serving as spies or navigators—whether because they believe in their cause or because they are afraid, it is difficult to say. What would you do? Fight them in hopes of keeping your farm and family intact? Join them and pray that you have chosen the winning side? Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum's new exhibit, "FARMERS, PATRIOTS and TRAITORS: Southern Maryland and the War of 1812" forces visitors to ask themselves these questions, while learning about a conflict that is so important to Maryland's history. The exhibit, located in JPPM's Exhibit Barn, is open 12:00 - 4:00 PM every Tuesday. Additional times can be requested at the Visitor Center or by calling to schedule a tour. **Please call 410-586-8501 or email jef.pat@maryland.gov for more information.**

Along with informative panels, the exhibit features artifacts and images that help bring the exhibit to life such as an antique musket, and a short film providing additional War of 1812 facts. - (While visiting, check out the antique farm equipment on display in the Barn.)

[Local Figures](#)

Several noted figures in the War of 1812 were tied in some way to the JPPM property, including John Stuart Skinner, farmer, journalist, and owner of Point Farm during the War; Joshua Barney, the commander of the Chesapeake Flotilla; and Charles Ball, one of at least three African American crew members of the Flotilla and a Calvert County native.

[Archaeology of the Battle of St. Leonard Creek](#)



Both terrestrial and underwater archaeology surveys have been conducted in and around JPPM, searching for artifacts from the Battle of St. Leonard Creek. Some of these artifacts are conserved and curated in the MAC Lab.

[1812 Video Vodcasts by Partnership with JPPM and Mill Creek Middle School](#)

During the 2013/14 school year JPPM embarked on a new project in partnership with Mill Creek Middle School. Working with teachers Jackie Sass and Mark Taeschner and a group of 24 students, we set out to produce video podcasts--or vodcasts--focusing on the War of 1812. The students worked hard all year meeting with historians, theatre professionals, media specialists and visiting 1812 sites. They determined the focus of their vodcasts, completed research, wrote scripts, acted, and edited the film. We are so proud of the work that they completed and invite you to watch the results of their efforts.