



Foundation Document Overview

River Raisin National Battlefield Park

Michigan



Contact Information

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Purpose



River Raisin National Battlefield Park preserves, commemorates, and interprets the January 1813 battles of the War of 1812 and their aftermath.



Significance

Significance statements express why River Raisin National Battlefield Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- **Battle for Supremacy or Survival:** River Raisin National Battlefield Park reflects the multinational battle for supremacy or survival in the Old Northwest during the War of 1812, which included the United States, tribal nations, and the British Empire.
- **Remember the Raisin:** The Battles of the River Raisin resulted in the largest number of American fatalities during the War of 1812. Following the battles and aftermath, “Remember the Raisin” became a rallying cry that galvanized the fledgling nation, helped unify the cause for war, and influenced U.S. policy regarding tribal nations.
- **Le Choc Des Cultures:** River Raisin National Battlefield Park reflects the many different cultures (including tribal nations, French habitant, American, and British) involved in the land campaign of the Old Northwest during the War of 1812.
- **Tecumseh’s Confederation Realized:** The combined forces of Tecumseh’s Confederation demonstrated their strength and power on the battlefield at River Raisin, leading to recognition as a significant military force during the War of 1812. Tecumseh’s Confederation united many tribal nations to defend their lands and ways of life against Western expansion and the threat of change—a struggle that continues to evolve.
- **Hull’s Corduroy Road:** Rare corduroy road remnants of Hull’s Trace are located about 14 miles north of the core of the battlefield. The 200-mile-long Hull’s Trace between Urbana, Ohio, and Fort Detroit was constructed by American troops under the command of General William Hull as a supply route. Portions of the route built through marshy tracts were shored up with a series of logs placed horizontally. These became known as corduroy roads. The road was a thoroughfare for troops entering and exiting Frenchtown for the battles.

Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

Fundamental Resource – Archeological Evidence and Research.

- River Raisin National Battlefield Park protects archeological evidence, which has the potential to yield information important to our understanding of the historic events that took place at this site. Numerous investigations, testing, and research have already identified the likelihood of a rich archeological record that requires the stewardship and protection of the park. This archeological evidence includes the possible development of collections associated with the battles of River Raisin.

Fundamental Resource – Battlefield Landscape.

- The land owned and managed by the National Park Service consists of core areas of the battle site where the historic events of January 1813 took place. Key features within the existing park boundary include Mason Run and access points to River Raisin. The physical location of the battles of River Raisin provides an opportunity for stewardship and interpretation.

Fundamental Value – Areas of the Battlefield Landscape outside the Park Boundary.

- The larger extent of the battles of River Raisin includes landscape features and geographic locations that are not currently owned or managed by the National Park Service. These areas are of value to understanding the full significance of events at River Raisin. These areas include, but are not limited to, Plum Creek Crossing, South Otter Creek Crossing, Stony Creek Crossing, Sandy Creek Crossing, La Plaisance Bay Landing, and the “corduroy road” section of Hull’s Trace.



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- The strategic location and abundant resources of the Old Northwest made Frenchtown (on the banks of the River Raisin) a battleground for national supremacy. The interests of many nations led to violent conflicts with dramatic and profound consequences that reshaped North America. Out of this violence came a lasting peace for some but not for all, prompting reflection on how best to craft lasting conflict resolution.
- Vast natural resources and transportation routes lured past generations and continue to attract people today to the River Raisin region. Tecumseh’s Confederation united many First Nations people to defend their lands and ways of life against Western expansion and the threat of change—a struggle that continues to evolve. The powerful demonstration of Tecumseh’s alliance resonated across colonized North America, influencing the outcome of the War of 1812 and who we are today.
- The Battles of the River Raisin represent far more than military engagements among the British Empire, the United States of America, and Tecumseh’s Confederation; the battles represented a violent convergence of cultures, languages, traditions, and political policies. Families and alliances were fractured by the warfare, and groups such as the Metis Society, were fragmented and changed forever. The cultural continuum at this historic site has relevance to modern-day efforts toward implementing cultural diversity.



Interpretive Themes continued

- Like the interstate highways of today, Hull's Road was a reliable means of transportation in the region, which had strategic importance for all sides in the War of 1812. Control of this corridor was vital to those living in the Old Northwest and those who sought to hold supremacy over the region. Remnants of the corduroy road segment survive to this day, giving visitors the opportunity to experience a tangible connection to the past worthy of preservation.
- The phrase "Remember the Raisin" means something different to all who hear it. In its 1813 usage, it served as a rallying cry for Americans for recruiting and revenge; for the British and First Nations people, it was fear mongering wartime propaganda. Today, these words serve to remind us of the battlefield, to honor the loss; to reflect on the ways the war could have been averted; to confront our own mortality; and to recognize the price paid by all participants—in human life, cultural heritage, monetary fortunes, and future potential—all in a belief in the righteousness of the war.

Description

River Raisin National Battlefield Park covers roughly 40 acres in Monroe, Michigan. River Raisin is the site of the devastating January 1813 battles of Frenchtown (the city known today as Monroe) that occurred during the War of 1812. The battles typified the conflicting interests central to the war, but in the end, the killing and ransom of unprotected U.S. prisoners galvanized the United States. The resulting rallying cry, "Remember the Raisin," spurred the United States in successfully retaking the Northwest Territories. The visitor center provides orientation to the battlefield site, displays about the War of 1812, and interactive exhibits. Historic markers, a short walking trail, and a picnic shelter representing a historic barn structure from the time of the battle are at the park. Located 40 miles south of Detroit and 20 miles north of Toledo, the park is in close proximity to the western shores of Lake Erie. This strategic location played a significant role in the historic events and battles that took place along the banks of the River Raisin.

