

GREATER JEFFERSONTOWN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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February Meeting

Dr. James Wheeler will have a presentation entitled "Honoring Their Valor." The talk will center on the men and women in uniform, especially in aviation, who fought in conflicts during WWII in which his aviator father made the ultimate sacrifice during the D-Day Normandy invasion. His talk is in conjunction with the Jeffersontown Historical Museum's next exhibit that features Dr. Wheeler's many aircraft and other related models he built, his pictures, and memorabilia. After the presentation all are invited back to the museum to view the exhibit.

Dr. Jim Wheeler is a native Western Kentuckian who was born in Owensboro and lived in Calhoun until he was six years old. His family later moved to Morganfield, Kentucky.

He was starter for three years on the Morganfield High School football and basketball teams and ran track, as well. His football coach, Bill Dawson, played for Bear Bryant at UK and was a WWII veteran who piloted a Higgins boat ferrying Marines into Iwo Jima.

Jim married his high school sweetheart, Leta. They both graduated from Western Kentucky University. Leta taught school at Fairdale, Kentucky, while he attended school at the University Of Louisville School Of Dentistry. When he graduated, they moved to Hardinsburg, Kentucky, where Jim practiced dentistry in that small farming community for 32 and 1/2 years. Their son, Gene, is now a Family Practice physician in Jeffersontown at Baptist Health Care.

Both Jim and Leta love to travel and have been to Normandy, France, five times researching his Dad's flight of D-Day, June 6, 1944. They have been to the Battle of the Bulge battlefield in Belgium, as well as too many sites in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Austria, and England. Jim started making model airplanes early as a young boy. They were wooden at the time. He has built hundreds of models of military aircraft, tanks and some ships, plus a few dioramas of WWII battles. He started researching his Dad's mission in the early 1980's.

April Meeting

Anne Bader and her crew at Corn Island Archeology have been excavating the Beecher Terrace site in downtown Louisville. Since this is the one of the oldest areas in Louisville, they have unearthed some amazing objects. Anne is going to tell us all about the area's history - maybe more than just Beecher Terrace.

2019 Meeting Times

Working with the Jeffersontown Library following are the dates and meeting times for 2019. What we are trying to do is to give our members who have fulltime occupations an opportunity to enjoy meeting presentations.

Meeting Times at 1:00 P.M. - February 4, April 1, October 7, December 2

Meeting Times at 7:00 P.M. - June 3, August 5

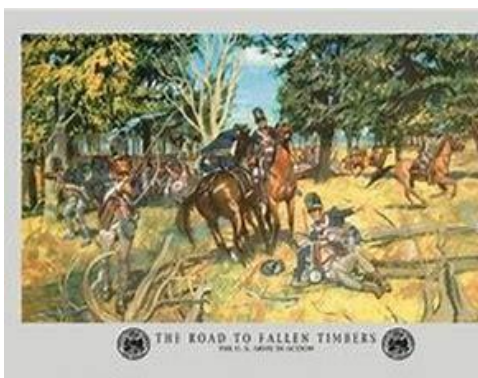
October 2018 Meeting

Jim Homberg, Archives Curator for the Filson Historical Society, presented **“Half Horse – Half Alligator: Kentuckians in the War of 1812.”** A lot of people don’t know that Kentucky provided more fighters to the conflict than any other state.

Jim started out reminding us that the Filson Historical Society was started in 1894, and is Kentucky’s largest privately supported historical society. For members most of the society’s programs are free, with a minimal charge for non-members.

During his presentation Jim shows pictures of letters written by Kentuckians that are in the Filson’s archives.

Kentucky provided more fighters to the conflict than any of the other states and Kentucky suffered more casualties than all the other states combined. And when you considered other wars the United States was involved in, the Civil War, both world wars, the number of casualties in the War of 1812 was pretty low – only about 1800, with Kentuckians being about 1200, sixty percent, of those killed. So more Kentuckians fought and died in the war many historians rate as a stalemate.



In the western frontier, the Revolutionary War that ended in the 1780s in the east, was a twenty-year war lasting until 1794 that ended with the the Battle of Fallen Timbers, about twelve miles southwest of Toledo, Ohio, where Gen. “Mad Anthony” Wayne defeated the Indian Confederacy under Miami Chief, Little Turtle. The Treaty of Greenville in 1795 brought a level of peace and stability to the territories of southern Ohio, Indiana and further into Kentucky where settlers began to flow in.

But the war in the west really didn’t stop. Friction on the frontier continued to increase with all the settlers moving in forcing Indians off their land, clearing forests, decimating the game the Indians depended upon, plus the growth of trade and economic expansion posed a threat to Great Britain’s interests in the west. The British were just north in Canada and considered the Americans a threat to the fur trade the British had established with the Indians in the upper Mississippi and Great Lakes.



The British ruled the seas and in the early 1800s they were engaged with France in the Napoleonic War. They needed seamen and started stopping and boarding American merchant ships at sea impressing any sailor they deemed to be British deserters, causing great friction between the two countries and is probably one of the the greatest reason for the War of 1812.

The British had not surrendered all their forts after the Revolutionary War and were paying the Indians to stir up trouble by attacking settlers as they traveled out of Kentucky and taking American scalps, a practice the British had started in the 1760s. Kentucky acted as a funnel into the west as people passed through the Cumberland Gap or floated down the Ohio River on their way north into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, west into Missouri, and south to Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama.

The first battle of the 1812 war was the Battle of Tippecanoe, near West Lafayette, Indiana on November 7, 1811 in Battle Ground, Indiana between American forces led by Governor William Henry Harrison of the Indiana Territory and Joseph Hamilton Daveiss, commander of the Kentucky Militia against Indian forces led by Shawnee leader Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa (commonly known as "The Prophet"), leaders of the Indian Confederacy of various tribes who opposed settlement of the American west. The Prophet passed

himself off as a psychic, who prophesied great things for the Indians if they stopped the Americans from encroaching on their lands. As tensions and violence increased, Tecumseh, who was the brains of the Confederacy, left to go south to recruit the Creeks to join the Confederacy and Harrison took advantage of his being away and marched with an army of about 1,000 men to attack the Confederacy's headquarters at Prophetstown, near the confluence of the Tippecanoe River and the Wabash River. Daveiss was killed in the attack and the Americans, suffering more casualties than the Indians, had to retreat. However, the Indian Confederacy was shaken. Tecumseh had to return to try to repair the damage done by The Prophet allowing the Indians to be drawn into a questionable battle.

The Filson has a letter written before the battle to his wife by Clark County, Indiana militiaman, John Drummens, telling her how much he loved and missed her and their kids. He was killed in the battle. Jim had a picture showing the letter and how it was addressed.

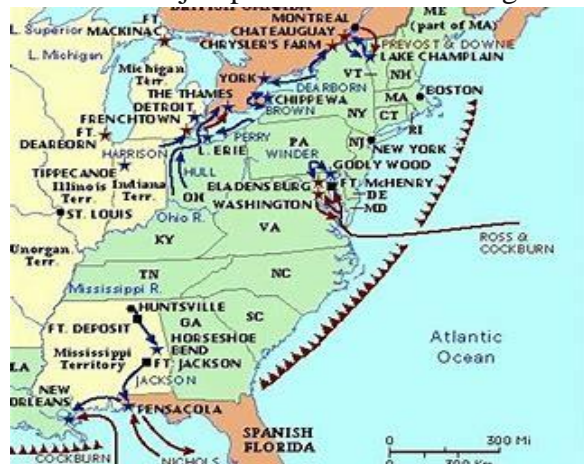
British aggression and arrogance rubbed Americans the wrong way. Stephen Ormsby, born in Ireland in 1759 and Kentucky Representative to the Fourteenth Congress, wrote to Thomas Joyes, a Kentucky militia Captain at the Battle of New Orleans and an early mayor of Louisville, and to James B. Campbell, Kentucky attorney and Commander of US 11th and 19th Infantry in the War of 1812, mortally wounded at the Battle of Chippewa, Canada in July, 1814, and to Robert Pogue, Mason County, a company commander of the Kentucky Mounted Militia at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, letters saying these affronts just cannot be tolerated, we can't stand for all this, we can't be pushed around by the British, we have to defend ourselves, what choice do we have than to go to war.

Hawk and Dove – President James Madison was a little of both. He realized Britain was a world power with an unmatched army and navy and war with Britain was a risky move. Kentucky's Henry Clay on the other hand was a war hawk. He felt that the United States needed to assert itself and he was thinking of all the territory, meaning Canada, that could be gained. Clay and another powerful hawk and later Louisvillian, William Preston, who lived in Virginia at the time, wrote to Madison pushing for a declaration of war.

But wars are fought by armies and the United States was woefully out manned and out gunned by the British, who at the time were engaged in the European Napoleonic War. But the US started raising an army, mostly state militias instead of a standing army. Raising an army means reams of paperwork for enlisting personnel, requisitioning supplies and clothing the men. Kentucky put out requests to its citizens asking for clothing and even shoes for soldiers. A newspaper article described how the new uniforms would look. To pay for the needs of its new militia, Kentucky placed a heavy tax on distillers.

Under heavy pressure President James Madison finally signed the declaration of war on June 18, 1812. Kentuckians jumped onto the war wagon with gusto. Henry Crist of Bullitt County wrote an impassioned

broadside of what Kentuckians needed to do. “Our country appears to be at this moment in a perilous situation, nothing but a vigilant display of patriotism by its citizens of its contiguous parts can save the whole extent of its northern and western frontier from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi from the invasion of British and savage hostility.” Further on he says everyone needs to come and muster together and support the country and they can't fail to volunteer. He ends with, “Sons of Kentucky, you are called to the Standard of your country, the good of the nation, the genius of freedom, and the voice of your departed fathers invite you, rise and defend your inheritance like the descendants of worthy sires.”



And rise up and volunteer they did. A reported statistic hard to believe, five out of six Kentucky males of military age volunteered to serve in the war – some 25,000 soldiers, more than any other state. Not every Kentuckian fought in the theaters of the war, many were told to just stay at home. Not all the regiments were needed.

On the map above you can see the major theaters early in the war were in Ohio and New York, then around Baltimore and Washington, D.C., and in 1814, in New Orleans. Kentuckians followed the action.

Early in the war things did not go well for the US. The British had taken Fort Mackinac and Gen. William Hull thought that Fort Dearborn, near what is now Chicago, could not be held, so he ordered fort commander Captain Heald to destroy arms and ammunition, give any excess goods and supplies to friendly Indians, then evacuate the fort and march to Fort Wayne. Hull sent some militia and some Miami Indians to assist and to guard the evacuees. The British and resident Potawatomi agreed to give safe passage. As the Americans were leaving the fort the evacuees were attacked by the Miami and Potawatomi Indians. In the attack, some of the Native Americans charged the wagon train that contained the women and children and their provisions. The wagons were defended by the militia, as well as the fort physician, Van Voorhis. The officers and militia were killed, along with two of the women and most of the children. Others were taken prisoner. In his report Captain Heald reported his losses at 26 regulars, all 12 of the militia, two women and twelve children killed, with the other 28 regulars, seven women, and six children taken prisoner. Some of these were later released.

William K. Beall, owner of a large plantation just north of Newport, KY was on his way to join Gen. Hull in Detroit while Gen. Hull, who was terrified of the Indians, and his Army of the Northwest had marched to Detroit. Beall traveled toward Detroit on a packet boat, along with Hull's son, who was carrying some of Gen. Hull's personal belongings, most importantly, some of Hull's military plans and correspondence with the Secretary of War.

While steaming up the Detroit River, the British captured the boat and took Beall prisoner and while in captivity Beall kept a journal. In it he wrote his own critique of General Hull, especially regarding his reluctance to attack the British at Amherstburg, which Beall knew was poorly defended should an attack be mounted. The journal also provided glimpses of key figures on both sides, including Tecumseh. Beall wrote, "I have seen the great Tecumseh, he is a very plain man rather of middle size, stout features had a noble set of features and an admirable eye. He was always accompanied by 6 chiefs who never walked before him." However, Beall shared Hull's view of the First Nations as savages who could never be trusted and should only be feared. Beall went on to fight at New Orleans.

Thomas Todd wrote to his son, Charles Todd, who was on the staff of William H. Harrison, knows that Hull's position at Detroit is critical, and knows the British are getting ready to attack. But Harrison is on his way to Detroit, and all Hull has to do is to just hang on and he would be OK. But before Harrison gets there, Hull surrenders. All Hull can envision is the savage butchering and scalping by the Indians. He is in the fort when the British fires a carronade into the fort, and the man standing next to him has his head taken off by a cannon ball. Hull loses his nerve and surrenders the fort without firing a shot.

John Allen, a colonel in the 1st Kentucky, in Harrison's army, heard about the surrender and wrote his wife, "listing the disasters suffered at the hands of perfidy and treachery" of Hull. Allen went on to march to the River Raisin.

Aaron Gregg, a poet with the 16th Kentucky, wrote songs and poetry of the day, penned a scathing poem about Hull: "Let William Hull be courted null, And let him not be named, Upon the rolls of valiant souls, Of him

we are ashamed, For his campaign was worse than vain, A coward and a traitor, For paltry gold his army's souls, Who brought the Speculator (The British)"

Indian campaigns in Indiana and Illinois were good and bad; James Campbell wrote reports on them. Charles Scott, a Kentucky governor before the war, Nathaniel Hopkins, James Campbell, and Zachary Taylor were all Kentuckians, who were commanders in the Indiana and Illinois Indian battles. Taylor was commander of the first Fort Knox just north of Vincennes in Indiana, later a hero in the Mexican War, and rode that to the Presidency in 1848.

Harrison moves to retake Detroit. To do this he divides his army into two columns, he takes one and the second, he gives to James Winchester, of Tennessee, to reclaim Detroit. But Winchester isn't much of a general and after some success, he loses his nerve. In letters to his Quartermaster General, Thomas Bodley, Winchester complains that objects for his comfort have not arrived and he needs them badly. He shows little concern for the battle readiness of his soldiers, most of whom had never even been in a small skirmish. What he did have, were about 300 skilled Kentucky militia under Col. John Allen. When they reach Frenchtown, south of Detroit, Winchester stays about a mile to the rear in a farmhouse, not on the line leading his troops. After initial success of driving the British and Indians out of Frenchtown, mostly due to the Kentuckians, the British and Indians regroup and attack. Winchester's army regulars begin to collapse on the right flank, but the Kentucky militia holds and thinks they are doing well. The British and Indians continue around the regulars flank to the farmhouse and Winchester surrenders, leaving the Kentuckians essentially surrounded. More than 500 are taken prisoner.

Following the loss at Frenchtown, comes the massacre at the River Raisin, where about eighty captured Kentuckians among the injured prisoners left when the rest were marched to Fort Malden, are slaughtered by the Indians. The British had promised no harm would come to the wounded, but they were unable to control the Indians who swept through the cabins housing the wounded, robbing, scalping and killing the prisoners. The ones not killed died in the burning cabins set afire by the Indians.

The massacre at the River Raisin becomes a rallying cry for Kentuckians for the rest of the war.

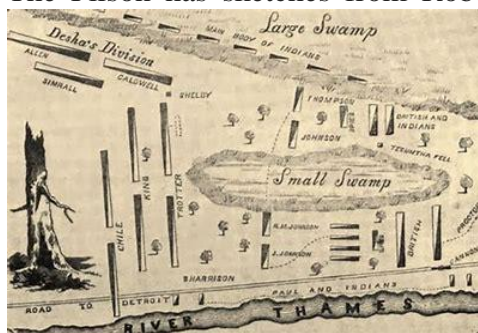
Letters from Levi Wells to Isaac Gwathmey, and Thomas Bodley to James Morrison, before the battle, saying they didn't have a good feeling about going into it, and post battle letters from George Trotter to John Hardin, and John Rhea to Isaac Shelby saying, what happened here? We thought we had things in hand. John Allen (Allen County) was killed in the action, Bland Ballard (Ballard County and Blandville, KY) was wounded and captured, but was eventually returned to Kentucky. He became a legislator and represented Shelby County for many years. Ballard was the survivor of two massacres. Besides at Raisin River, on March 31, 1788, he was a survivor of the Tick Creek massacre in what is now Washington County, Kentucky, in which his father, stepmother, two brothers and a half-sister were killed.

Thomas Hart to Gwathmey and James Campbell to Shelby questioned how Frenchtown and Raisin could have happened. They turned to Isaac Shelby, Kentucky's first governor and again during the 1812 war, who puts out a letter calling on all militiamen to rise to the cause and remember the River Raisin. This would have caused a large influx of volunteers.

Shelby, William Whitley, and Simon Kenton raised an army and joined Harrison on the march on Detroit. The Kentucky contingent included Matthew Jouett, famous Kentucky painter, who was the paymaster and lost a payroll and spent the rest of his life repaying the army for the loss. Joseph Bush, another Kentucky painter, wasn't in the army but he painted portraits of many of the veterans.

Detroit is taken by Harrison and the Kentuckians, on Lake Erie Oliver H. Perry defeats British forces and takes control of the western end of the lake, essentially surrounding Detroit by land and water, catching the British off guard in Canada with the American army right in front of them.

The Filson has sketches from Robert Breckinridge McAfee's orderly book describing his service under William H. Harrison and Louisvillian, Col. Richard M. Johnson, during the War of 1812, for the campaign into Canada, and the Battle of the Thames and the Battle of the River Raisin. The drawings show the troop movement and Perry's ships on Lake Erie. Kentuckian, Major General William Henry's journal also has sketches for the Battle of Thames River, also known as the Battle of Moraviantown in October 1813.



The Americans defeated the British and Richard Johnson is said to have killed Tecumseh during the battle, but there is no proof one way or the other, as Tecumseh's body is never really identified. Johnson rode his fifteen minutes of fame to the vice-presidency under Van Buren in 1837. There are many different prints of Johnson's encounter with Tecumseh. MG Henry supposedly brought Tecumseh's pipe home from the campaign – it is in the Filson collection. Again, there is no real proof except for Henry family written records.



In May of 1813, at the Battle of Fort Miesg in northern Ohio, sixteen year-old James Y. Love wrote detailed letters home to his family in Kentucky, about the defense of the fort, how the British and the Indians kept mounting attack after attack, and about how bodies were piled two and three deep in the trenches around the fort.

Major George Croghan, son of Locust Grove's George and Lucy Croghan, gained national recognition for his defense of Fort Stephenson in northern Ohio from the attack of British Gen. Procter and the Indians. Harrison feared Procter's larger force would over run the fort and ordered Croghan to destroy the fort and withdraw. Croghan insisted that his 160 man garrison could hold the fort. Harrison agreed to let Croghan defend the fort, but still fearing the worst, he moved all of his other forces ten miles away from Fort Stephenson. Croghan and his men held, Croghan comes out a hero and is promoted to lieutenant colonel, and has long career in government service.

Following the victories on Lake Erie and at Thames River the war moved south to New Orleans where Andrew Jackson gains his fame and rides it to the US presidency in 1828.

A faction of the Creek Indians, known as the Red Sticks, so named for the color of their war stics, had broken away from the Creek/Muscogee Confederacy and allied with Tecumseh. On August 13, 1813, the Red Sticks attacked Fort Mimms in now southern Mississippi, killing hundreds of women and children who had been promised safe passage out of the fort. Like the Dearborn and River Raisin massacres this set off a call to arms and Gen. Jackson quickly raised a 5,000 man army of Tennessee militia, regular army, Creeks, Cherokee, and many Kentuckians, especially when he reached New Orleans. After several battles through the South, Jackson defeated the Red Sticks at the Battle of Horsebend; from there he goes down to Florida, and then to New Orleans.

The British landed an 8,000 man force under General Edward Pakenham and marched on Jackson at New Orleans. The British already held the upper Mississippi in Wisconsin and the territory around there, so they

thought if they took New Orleans, they could move up the Mississippi and claim everything west of the river. The British also felt taking the Mississippi would put them in a very good position in negotiations that had already begun in Ghent, Belgium, with Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams. Everyone had also figured out nothing was really being gained by this conflict.

By this time Kentuckians were moving out of the northern theater and heading south. Capt. Thomas Joyes kept a journal as he moved down the Mississippi with General Thomas. His journal, in the Filson archives, is one of the few firsthand accounts describing the chronology and hardships of the trip from Louisville to New Orleans in the winter of 1814 of three regiments of Kentucky militia, approximately 2500 men, from the falls of the in barges and flat boats. By the time they reached New Orleans all the commanding regimental officers had surrender their commands and left.

In the Filson archives is the hand written Soldier's Poem author unknown, written just before the battle. Here are a few lines: "O Lord wilt thou protect us now from threatened evil fear, Stretch mercy's hand over freedoms land and strike our foes with fear. Thoust made us free and still from Thee our daily blessings flow...". They were praying for God to be on their side.

David Weller wrote his brother Samuel before the battle on January 6, and after the battle on the 13th. They were behind fixed rampart positions that included cotton bails, while the British, after slogging through miles of swampy marshland to get to the battlefield, made a frontal assault in typical old European fashion, some carrying ladders to mount the ramparts.



Needless to say the British were mowed down. In a letter that is stained and partially burned, David tells his brother how they were marched down to the river positions and how the British came in wave after wave to a point that later waves had to walk on their fallen comrades. He goes on that the British had taken one of the American flanks across the river, and Jackson had sent him and some 300 other Kentuckians to retake the position, which they did. He wrote he was sure in the final battle report the Kentuckians will be singled out with many praises. His company had taken about fifty prisoners and had lost only one man who was shot in the head, splattering him with blood, "making him as bloody as any butcher."

David continued in his letter, that after the Kentuckians rejoined Jackson's forces on the New Orleans side of the river, they heard explosions south of the city. British leader, Gen. Pakenham and his second-in-command were both killed in battle while on horseback by grapeshot from Jackson's earthworks. Pakenham remounted his horse and was fatally wounded. With other ranking officers dead or wounded, the British soldiers having no orders to advance further or retreat, stood out in the open and were shot apart with grapeshot. The American losses are reported as between eight to thirty killed and up to fifty wounded. British losses are reported as 2,000, with about 300 killed.

The battle was fought after the Treaty had been signed on December 24, 1814. News of the signing had not even reached back to the United States. At the end of the war the British were actually in charge of more American territory than the Americans of British territory. President Madison signed the treaty and the US senate ratified it on February 16, 1815.

When the bicentennial of the War of 1812 was celebrated, government bureaucracy and people not knowing what was going on, and not knowing their history, shown brightly. States that took part in the war were to be

invited, but Kentucky was never invited to participate. Whoever looked at the map, saw where the fighting took place, and invited the states around them. A lot of Kentuckians raised Cane, descended on Mitch McConnell's office, some of whose staff were involved, and told him this needed to be fixed, which he did, and Kentucky was invited. But the celebration was not much at all.

Battles such as at Fort McHenry and the burning down of Washington aren't covered here because not many Kentuckians were known to fight in those theaters.

During the War of 1812, the British suffered about 1,160 killed in action and 3,700 wounded; 3,321 British died from disease. American losses were 2,260 killed in action, 1,200 of those were Kentuckians, and 4,505 wounded. At Frenchtown alone, 400 Kentuckians were killed in the battle and another eighty in the massacre following the main battle. Americans who died from disease is not known, it is estimated that about 15,000 died from all causes directly related to the war. Canadian militia forces or losses among native tribes are not known.

Deaths from disease in early prolonged wars were usually greater than battle deaths. Most experts agree casualties in the Civil War number about 620,000, some say up to 700,000. The guess is more people died of diseases, 420,000, than from combat, 200,000. These casualties exceed the nation's total loss in all its other wars, from the Revolution through Vietnam.

European fighting methods were used all the way to and through WWI. In a battle in July 1916, the British lost 60,000 in one day. In the two-day Civil War Battle of Shiloh, April 1862, a total of 20,000 Americans were lost, which at the time was more Americans lost in all American wars up to that time. It took American generals, Grant, Sherman, and Lee almost to the end of the Civil War to figure out fighting in lined ranks was lunacy, as they were seeing 10,000 to almost 20,000 soldiers mowed down a day.

GJHS on Facebook

Thanks to Anne Bader GJHS is now on Facebook and Facebook.com. Please look at all the pictures of Jeffersontown she has put on it.

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