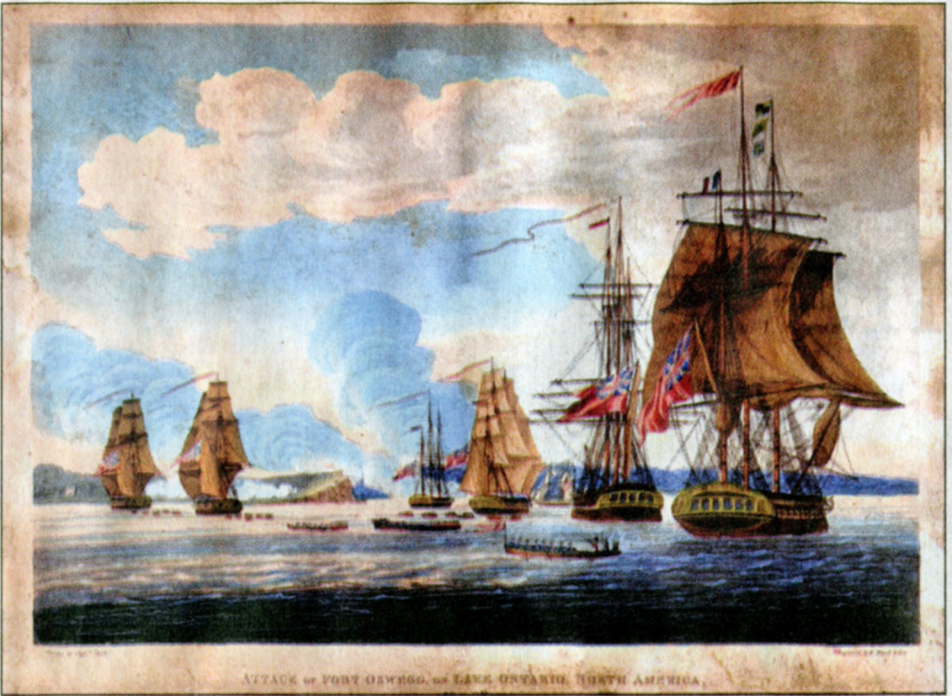


## LOCAL NEWS



ATTACK ON FORT OSWEGO, 1812. LAKES ONTARIO, NORTH AMERICA.

Submitted by Paul Lear

**MAY 1, 1814** attack on Fort Oswego. This is from an etching by Robert Havell, London, done in May 1815, from the collection of Library and Archives of Canada.

# Ad Hoc Strategy To Mark War of 1812

## Local folks step up when state backs down

**By Debra J. Groom**  
Staff Writer

Oswego County and the state are moving forward with plans to commemorate the War of 1812, even without a state commission to help.

A total of 31 historians, re-enactors and educators met in Albany in the last month to discuss how the War of 1812 — often called the Forgotten War — will be remembered in 2011 and especially in 2012, the 200th anniversary of the war's start.

Kelly Jordal, of the Oswego County Office of Community Development, Tourism and Planning, said the group knew that without a state commission, they needed to band together to ensure there is a proper tribute.

"All of these people have a vested interest in being sure the War of 1812 is commemorated," she said.

In September, Gov. David Paterson vetoed the creation of a War of 1812 commission, which would have coordinated and promoted events through 2015.

Jessica Barrett, speaking for the governor, said then that Paterson vetoed all bills that did not include funding in the budget. The veto meant sites across New York still can commemorate the war, but must do so without promotional help from the state.

So far, Oswego County is planning a daylong symposium on the war on April 2. The location has not been decided.

The symposium will include local historians, Fort Ontario Site Manager Paul Lear and people from area museums to discuss the importance of Oswego County to the War of 1812.

Among other presentations, Lear said he

will talk about the Battle of Oswego; Gary Gibson, of Sackets Harbor, will discuss the water supply route from Schenectady to Oswego and Sackets Harbor; and Matt MacVittie, of the Onondaga Historical Association, will discuss local militia in the war.

Jordal said the group at the Albany meeting decided to ensure programs are developed that educate people about the War of 1812 and promote economic development through tourism.

She said the group wants to have written material ready before commemorations begin, so that anyone interested in the war can plan vacations around the events.

Lear said Lake Ontario, the Niagara Frontier and the Plattsburgh-Lake Champlain areas in New York state were key locations in the War of 1812.

He said Sackets Harbor was the primary naval base, pointing out "if we had lost that, we would have lost New York." Fort Ontario protected the supply route to Sackets Harbor.

He added, "whoever controlled Lake Ontario had control of the war." This led to the importance of Fort Ontario and the Battle of Oswego in 1814.

And while most people remember learning about the burning of Washington and the Battle of New Orleans, he said the Battle of Plattsburgh was "the most important battle of the war," as the Americans kept the British from reaching Albany and then New York City.

"If the British had controlled Albany and New York City, it would have split the United States in two," he said.

Contact Debra J. Groom at [dgroom@syracuse.com](mailto:dgroom@syracuse.com), 470-3254 or 251-5586.