

NOAA Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System

First Landing Buoy

Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail Highlights

In the early 1800s, the young United States of America was politically independent from Britain, yet severely hampered economically by Britain's insistence on unfavorable trade restrictions. Most dramatically, the British Navy periodically captured and impressed American sailors into service on British ships denying thousands of American citizens their freedom. By June 1812, overall discontent with Britain's actions had grown so strong that the United States declared war.

In 1812, the Chesapeake region was a significant hub for trade, commerce, and government, which also made it a strategic target for the British military. The British entered the Chesapeake Bay in early 1813 and sustained a military presence until early 1815. No other theater of the war suffered as many skirmishes, battles, and raids as in the Chesapeake.

The First Landing buoy is near Cape Henry, an important landmark for the entrance of the Chesapeake Bay and distinguished by the Cape Henry Lighthouse, completed in 1792. Cape Henry served as the southern end of the British blockade of the mouth of the Bay.

In February 1813, the British conducted a raid on the Cape Henry lighthouse, taking meat from the keeper's smokehouse. The *Wilmington American Watchman & Delaware Republican* published this account of the raid ten days later:

A band of veterans from Admiral Warren's squadron landed at the lighthouse on Cape Henry and with the most undaunted heroism attacked the pantry and smoke house of the keeper, captured his hams, mince pies and sausages, leaving not a link behind! --- after when they effected their retreat in the greatest good order and regularity to their ships, with flying colors, without the loss of a ham!

The National Park Service's Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail commemorates the people, places, and events of the War of 1812 in the Chesapeake. Several NOAA CBIBS buoys are located along the Star-Spangled Banner Trail.