

A Year of Women

Lost in history: Women in War

Fact #4: School teacher, Elizabeth Barnett, saved Gananoque from an invasion in 1838. Barnett was born in the United States, but taught and resided in Gananoque and married a Canadian man. While visiting the U.S. on that fateful February evening, she overheard a plan to invade Canada. The next morning she traveled by horse & cutter, crossing ten miles of the frozen St. Lawrence River, and warned unsuspecting Gananoque citizens.

Teaching Points

1. The Aroostook War (1838-39).
2. The roles of General Winfield Scott and William Lyon MacKenzie in the conflict.
3. The Webster-Ashburton Treaty and its impact.
4. The geography of the Northern Boundary with Canada and the strategic importance of Fort Henry.

NY Learning Standard(s)

ELA 2, 3, 4; SS 1, 3; Arts Theater 1

Discussion Questions

- 1a. Who wanted to invade Canada and why?
- 1b. Describe the qualities of character that Elizabeth Barnett may have portrayed as she risked her life for this cause.
- 2a. How did the Treaty of Paris (1783), which ended the Revolutionary War, cause another conflict?
- 2b. What roles did General Winfield Scott and William Lyon MacKenzie have in this conflict? Who had the most successes?
- 3a. What was the importance of Fort Henry?
- 3b. Did Barnett ever receive any recognition for her actions?

Activity Extensions

1. **Monologue:** Write a monologue using Elizabeth Barnett's character. Clearly depict her thought process as she overhears the planned attack on Gananoque, to the journey across the St. Lawrence River, and finishing with her announcement to the Gananoque citizens.
2. **Essay:** Prepare an essay for social studies class that takes the side of Maine or New Brunswick in the Aroostook War and explain the reasons for your position in the conflict.
3. **Map:** Create a map that clearly depicts the geography of the Northern Boundary between Canada and the U.S. as it is today.