Raids on the Talbot Settlement, 1814

Elgin County's first settlers arrived near this spot in 1809. By the time the War of 1812 broke out, these settlers had been on the land for only a few years. Outside of occasional militia service, the war had little impact on their lives until the fall of 1813 when the British lost the Battle of Lake Erie and withdrew to Burlington Heights.

For most of the following year, settlers in this part of the province were subjected to American raids led by traitorous locals such as Andrew Westbrook from Delaware. Several visits were made to the Port Talbot area by raiding parties seeking plunder and captives most notably Colonel Thomas Talbot. Talbot commanded the area's militia, and spent much of the war in the more densely populated Long Point region where he could keep in touch with other militia commanders.

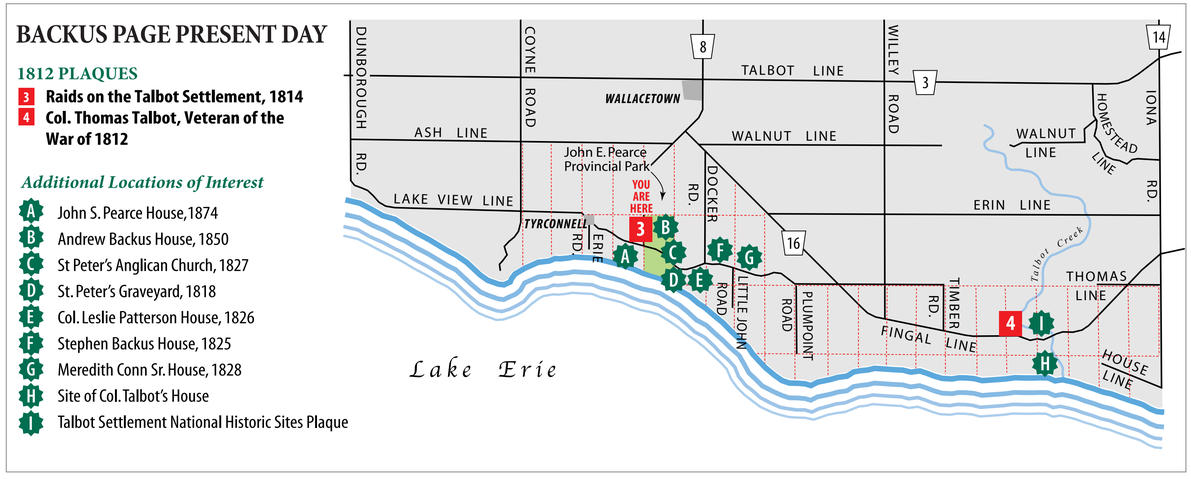
All males aged 16 to 60 were required to bear arms for the Crown. Leslie Patterson, among those who arrived in 1809, was commissioned a Captain in the Middlesex Militia. He looked after Talbot's farm when the Colonel was away. Only once was Talbot home when a raid occurred. The Americans appeared while Talbot was out in the fields and Patterson was able to convince the raiding party that he was the man who looked after the sheep. He escaped that day and never was captured during the war.

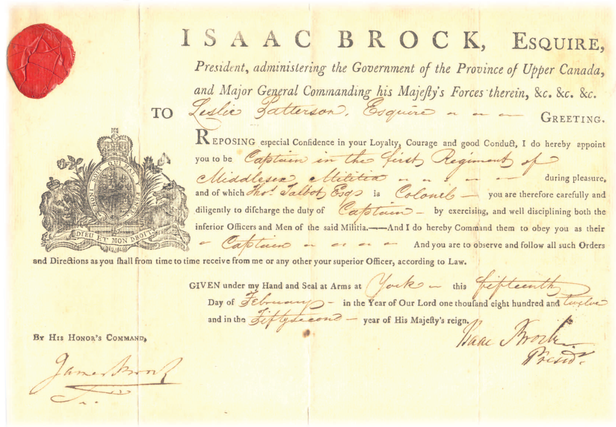
Settlers like Patterson and his neighbours further east on the Talbot Road suffered through a series of raids during the last year of the war losing stock and field crops as well as personal property and household goods. Even so, they managed to cope and were eventually compensated to some extent.

The war slowed the settlement of the area but didn't dissuade the settlers from continuing to build their farms. A rapid influx of new settlers and eventual prosperity occurred in the years following the war.

Stephen Backus House, c. 1825

Captain Patterson House, c. 1825





Leslie Patterson's commission as Captain in the Middlesex Militia signed by General Sir Isaac Brock, 1812.
~ Elgin County Museum

Based on the surviving compensation claims from Captain Leslie Patterson, the Port Talbot area suffered at least five raids during 1814:

May 20
A raid by 30 men, led by Andrew Westbrook, a resident of Delaware who had joined the Americans "Having failed to find Col. Talbot at home they retired with such loot as they could hurriedly gather."
From C. O. Ermatinger, *The Talbot Regime*, 1904

August 16
A raid Led by Capt. Walker.
"…came to Port Talbot to plunder the Colonel's property and seize him. The Col. was in the house but fortunately made his escape. Col. Burwell and several other respectable inhabitants were carried off."
From C. O. Ermatinger, *The Talbot Regime*, 1904

September 8
In a raid led by Captain McCormick, Patterson loses two sheep, two handkerchiefs and a window sash.
His claim is found in *Taken and Destroyed: The War of 1812 Losses Claims London and Western Districts Upper Canada* by Glenn Stott and Carol Hall.

September 20
A raid led by Westbrook again.
"Burnt the mills and other building belonging to Col. Talbot together with the houses and barns of Col. Burwell and several others, thence extending their depredations sixteen miles down Talbot Road taking all the horses and pillaging the houses of every article of clothing, and destroying such furniture as could not be conveniently carried off."
Col. Talbot's petition to the Loyal and Patriotic Society, October 24, 1814

November 17
A raid led by General Duncan MacArthur (future Governor of Ohio), after which Patterson claimed compensation for a heifer, cotton, knives and spoons.
From *Taken and Destroyed: The War of 1812 Losses Claims London and Western Districts Upper Canada* by Glenn Stott and Carol Hall.

Colonel Talbot greets the Storey, Pearce, Patterson and Backus families, on the shore at Port Talbot, 1809.
~ An artistic rendering by Peter Rindlisbacher, 2003

Visit all of Elgin County's 1812 Plaques

1 **Burning of the Mills, 1814**
Memorial Park
8650 Furnival Road • Port Glasgow, ON

2 **Brock's Creek, Elgin County in the War of 1812**
McColl Cemetery
24724 Talbot Line • West Elgin, ON

3 **Raids on the Talbot Settlement, 1814**
Backus-Page House
29424 Lakeview Line • Wallacetown, ON

4 **Col. Thomas Talbot, Veteran of the War of 1812**
32109 Fingal Line • Wallacetown, ON

5 **Col. Mahlon Burwell, Veteran of the War of 1812**
St. Stephen's Anglican Church Graveyard
33105 Fingal Line • Dutton-Dunwich, ON

6 **Col. John Bostwick, Veteran of the War of 1812**
Christ Anglican Church Graveyard
283 Colborne Street • Port Stanley, ON

7 **McArthur's Raid, November 11, 1814**
140 Talbot Street • St. Thomas, ON

8 **Quakers Escape the War of 1812**
Sparta Community Hall
46272 Sparta Line • Sparta, ON

9 **McArthur's Raid, November 10, 1814**
Richmond West Cemetery
53714 Heritage Line • Bayham, ON

ROUTE 1812

For more information on the War of 1812 at www.elginhisotricalsociety.ca
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