

MILITARY GEOGRAPHY

An Historical Geography of NYS: Strategic Location

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Military Geography

- Exercise 12 (REQUIRED) explores the interrelationship between the physical landscape and places in NYS that have important military significance in American military history.
 - French and Indian Wars
 - American Revolution
 - War of 1812

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Landforms and Elevations

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Inland Corridor

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French and Indian Wars

Conflict between England and France for control of North America.

The New York Colony was strategically located between the French and English territories, allowing the easiest and shortest passage between Canada (St. Lawrence R valley) and the Atlantic seaboard.

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Fort Niagara – a player in 3 wars

The fort played an important role in the struggles of France, England, and the United States to control the Great Lakes region and also helped shape the destinies of the Iroquois (Six Nations) peoples.

The French established a fort in 1659 on a bluff overlooking the mouth of the Niagara River.

Britain gained control of Fort Niagara in 1759, during the **French & Indian War**, after a 19 day siege.

The British held it throughout the **American Revolution** yielded it to the U.S. in 1796 by the treaty.

During the **War of 1812** Fort Niagara was captured by the British (1813). It was returned to the United States in 1815 at the end of the war.

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Strategic Passages

- Geography (*terrain, weather, climate and culture*) plays an important role in planning and execution of battle plans.
- The location of routes and passages as well as bottlenecks and areas of unimpeded movement have always been important. Control of these areas have been the goal of strategists.
- **Among the most important strategic sites in America in the 1700s are 3 sites in NYS:**
 - the **Oneida Carry** at Rome,
 - Fort Ticonderoga** between Lake Champlain and Lake George
 - the **Gorge of the Hudson** at West Point.

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Strategic Passages

Oneida Carry at Rome

Fort Ticonderoga between Lake Champlain and Lake George

Gorge of the Hudson River through the Hudson Highlands at West Point

Oneida Carry

THE ONEIDA CARRY
ca. 1755

Future Site of Fort Stanwix

Fort Williams

Fort Craven

To Fort Bull
1.2 miles

North

0 1 2 Km
0 1 2 Mi

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Site of Ticonderoga

The site of **Ticonderoga** was considered a strategic position because it controlled the route between **Lake Champlain** and the **Hudson Valley**.

It was important to the Iroquois, the French, British and Americans.

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Site of Fort Ticonderoga

Lake George

Lake Champlain


La Chute River

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Site of Fort Ticonderoga

12

Site of Fort Ticonderoga



Control of this site meant control of all travel between Canada and New York Harbor.

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NY and the American Revolution

July 4, 1776 the *Declaration of Independence* is signed in Philadelphia.


Great Britain controlled the seas. The Royal Navy quickly blockaded all primary colonial ports and controlled coastal traffic.

August 22-30, 1776

Battle of Long Island (Brooklyn) for control of New York Harbor

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NYC and the American Revolution




NYC was quickly secured by the British and remained under British control throughout the Revolution.

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NYC and the American Revolution

The Battle of Long Island was fought across Kings County (Brooklyn) from Gravesend Bay to "The Heights" to the ferry crossing at the original village of Brooklyn.




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Battle of Long Island



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NY and the American Revolution



About one third of all battles of the American Revolution were fought on New York soil.

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Oriskany Battlefield

40 MILE ROUTE TAKEN BY GEN. BURGoyNE AUG. 6-8 1777 FOR THE RELIEF OF FORT STANWIX. THE BATTLE OF ORISKANY AUG. 6, BETWEEN BURGoyNE'S MEN AND GEN. HERKIMER WITH HIS INDIANS WAS THE TURNING POINT OF THE REVOLUTION

Considered to be a significant turning point in the War of Independence, the **Battle of Oriskany**, fought on August 6, 1777, has been described as one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

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What Happened?

- **Burgoyne never made it past Saratoga.**
- Meeting much militia resistance as his force moved south, dealing with bad weather, and running low on supplies, Burgoyne was forced to surrender after the second battle of Saratoga.
- This defeat convinced France to join the war on the American side.

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Battle of Saratoga

American victory at Saratoga is considered one of the most important events that changed world history.

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The Aftermath

- After the **Battle of Saratoga** (1777), only the area south of Bear Mountain, including NYC, remained under British control.
- The New England Colonies were linked to the Middle and Southern Colonies via inland routes. Food and manufactured goods were exchanged.
- Only one other battle (1779) was fought in NY.
- Revolutionary War ends in 1781.

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War of 1812

THE WAR OF 1812: Major Northern Campaigns

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War of 1812

THE WAR OF 1812: Major Northern Campaigns

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Niagara Frontier - War of 1812

Military outposts along the Niagara Frontier.

The map shows the Niagara River and Lake Ontario region. Key locations marked include Ft. Niagara, Queenstown, Lewiston, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, and Grand Island. An inset map shows the broader regional context. A small landscape photo shows a view of the Niagara Falls area.

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War of 1812

This historical map details the operations at Sackett's Harbor in May 1813. It shows the harbor, Sackett's Harbor, and various military positions and structures. Labels include 'BRITISH CAMP', 'FORT TOWNSEND', 'SACKETT'S HARBOR', 'FORT PIKE', 'HOSPITAL', and 'FIELD TO BARNHILLVILLE'. It also shows 'HORSE ISLAND' and 'NETTING OF THE WINDMILL'.

Sackett's Harbor, NY was the site of the principal American shipyard and naval base on Lake Ontario. The British crossed Lake Ontario in an attempt to capture it but were repulsed by the Americans.

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War of 1812

The images show: 1) 'FORT OSWEGO, 1737' - a historical drawing of the fort. 2) 'War of 1812 battle depiction' - a painting of a battle scene with ships. 3) A painting of a harbor with several sailing ships. 4) A modern aerial view of the site with a black arrow pointing from the battle depiction to it.

Fort Oswego, NY guarded the mouth of the Oswego River which was a route into central New York.

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War of 1812 Battle of Plattsburgh

The painting depicts the Battle of Lake Champlain, showing ships on the water and soldiers on the shore. The map shows the region including New York, Vermont, and Lake Champlain.

- **The Battle of Plattsburgh** (Battle of Lake Champlain) in September of 1814 ended the final British invasion of the northern states during the War of 1812.
- The Americans were able to use the victory to **demand exclusive rights to Lake Champlain**, deny the British exclusive rights to the Great Lakes and to any territorial gains made against the New England states during the war.

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