

Hunter College - CUNY
Department of Geography
Nature of New York

Optional Exercise 12: Military Geography of NYS

Check One: For grading For extra credit

Due no later than the Final Exam.

PURPOSE: This exercise explores the nature of the relationship between the physical landscape and places in NYS that have important military significance in American history.
THIS EXERCISE IS NOT COUNTY-BASED.

INTRODUCTION:

In the mid-1700s New York became part of a struggle for global superiority between Britain and France that spread from Europe and to America. During the Revolutionary War, New York was the site of over one-third of the battles fought between American and British forces, with the Battle of Saratoga being turning point. Any geographic analysis (site and situation) helps us to understand how existing characteristics become strategically important when placed within the context of the culture, economy, politics, military exploits and the technological ability of the people at a specific point in time. Consult the French and Indian War, American Revolution and War of 1812 maps on the course homepage in addition to the web pages listed on this exercise. Look at the location of forts and battlefields in light of their ***geographic site and situation***. Why was the place important? What relationship did this place have to the larger region? How did control or the ability (or inability) to pass through an area influence history? What was the purpose of the alliances between the Indian nations and the French or English and later the Americans?

Visit the following web sites. Focus on the nature of **site and situation** at historically significant locations for the time period. Surf through the various links. View the photographs. Read the descriptions.

- a) www.hudsonrivervalley.org (click on **SITE INDEX** on the side bar, then **THEMES**; **AMERICAN REVOLUTION**, then **AMERICAN REVOLUTION LINKS** at the bottom of the page).
- b) <http://www.nysparks.com/historic-preservation/heritage-trails/revolutionary-war/default.aspx>
- c) www.historiclakes.org/contents.htm (click on the **lake names** and **images**; scroll to bottom).
- d) http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/rev1812/primary_sites.htm - War of 1812 sites
- e) <http://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov/Warof1812/> - NYS Museum on-line exhibit
- f) http://nyindependencetrail.org/trail_2.html - French and Indian War sites.

These web sites have links to other web sites, some of which are listed on p. 2.

ASSIGNMENT:

1. a) From **each** of the following areas below, select **one** militarily significant site located within it:

AREA 1 - Lake Champlain-Lake George-Saratoga

AREA 2 - Lower Hudson Valley-New York City

AREA 3 - Niagara Frontier-Lake Ontario-Mohawk Valley

- b) For the site selected within Area 1, Area 2 and Area 3 **describe in detail the geographic importance of each site as a battle location or strategic defensive location of a fort within the context of its place in history** (the French and Indian Wars or the American Revolution or the War of 1812). **NOTE:** You will provide one description for each of the three areas.
- c) Print and attach a **map of the battle site or defensive location** to each description (**provide 3 maps total**). *Be sure the map is readable and shows the strategic location being discussed. Annotate the map by hand if necessary.*

Some other useful web addresses:

<http://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov/Warof1812/> -NYS Museum on-line exhibit

http://www.fortwiki.com/Fortress_West_Point - West Point

<http://www.fwhmuseum.com/> - Fort William Henry Museum and Restoration

<http://www.hudsonrivervalley.com/documents/109744hudsonrevolution2-pdf> - Hudson Valley National Heritage Area

<http://www.nyhistory.org/exhibitions/battle-brooklyn> - Battle of Brooklyn (also called the Battle of Long Island)

<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/exhibitions/war-1812> - War of 1812

<https://parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/> - NY state historic sites (SHS)

<https://parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/20/details.aspx> - Fort Ontario SHS

<https://parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/21/details.aspx> - Oriskany Battlefield SHS

<https://parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/28/details.aspx> - Fort Montgomery SHS

<https://parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/34/details.aspx> - Crown Point SHS

<https://parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/7/details.aspx> - Sacketts Harbor Battlefield SHS

<https://parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/8/details.aspx> - Stony Point Battlefield SHS

<https://www.fortticonderoga.org/> - Fort Ticonderoga

<https://www.niagaraparks.com/visit/heritage/old-fort-erie/> - Old Fort Erie (Canada)

<https://www.nps.gov/gate/index.htm> - Gateway National Recreation Area (NY Harbor)

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/warof1812/index.htm> - War of 1812

<https://www.usma.edu/museum/SitePages/West%20Point.aspx> - West Point Museum

www.historiclakes.org/towns/whitehall_gallery.htm - Lake Champlain/Lake George

www.nps.gov/fost - Fort Stanwix National Monument

www.nps.gov/npnh/index.htm - National Parks of New York Harbor

www.nps.gov/sara - Saratoga National Historical Park

www.oldfortniagara.org - Old Fort Niagara

www.revolutionaryday.com/nyroute5/oriskany - Oriskany Battlefield