

# War of 1812



**Cannon used on an American gunboat during the War of 1812.**

Few periods of Alexandria's history have been more tumultuous than the War of 1812. During the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Great Britain's interception of American ships, impressment of U.S. seamen, and support of Indian aggression along the American frontier exacerbated its poor relationship with the United States. On June 18, 1812, President James Madison issued a Declaration of War against the British.

Fearing occupation by British forces, several townspeople met with Secretary of War John Armstrong on March 21, 1812, about preparing a defense for the District of Columbia, which at that time included Alexandria. President Madison and General William Winder were also apprised that unless funds were expended for Alexandria's defense, the town would be at the mercy of the British. Although the Common Council and area banks provided secured loans to the Federal government for the region's protection, when General Winder inspected Alexandria on July 25, 1814, he declared the town was inadequately defended.

In August 1814, British ships sailed up the Potomac, and Alexandria's militias were ordered to cross the river and take up post near Fort Washington, Maryland. They took with them nearly all the arms belonging to the town, leaving Alexandria defenseless. Soon after, realizing the dire situation, the militias retreated to the Virginia countryside and the commander of Ft. Washington blew up the fortress, sealing Alexandria's fate. On the morning of August 28, 1814, a local committee rowed south to meet British Captain James Gordon to request terms of surrender.

After positioning his fleet to attack the town, Capt. Gordon offered terms which called for the removal of naval supplies, ships and agricultural commodities from the port. The town council acceded to the demands, and for the next five days the British looted stores and warehouses of 16,000 barrels of flour, 1,000 hogsheads of tobacco, 150 bales of cotton and some \$5,000 worth of wine, sugar and other items. On September 2, the British weighed anchor and made their escape.



On Christmas Eve 1814, American and British peace commissioners signed the Treaty of Ghent, formally ending the War of 1812.

↔ Shopping 🛍️

↔ Dining 🍴

← Jones Point Park 🏰  
7 BLOCKS

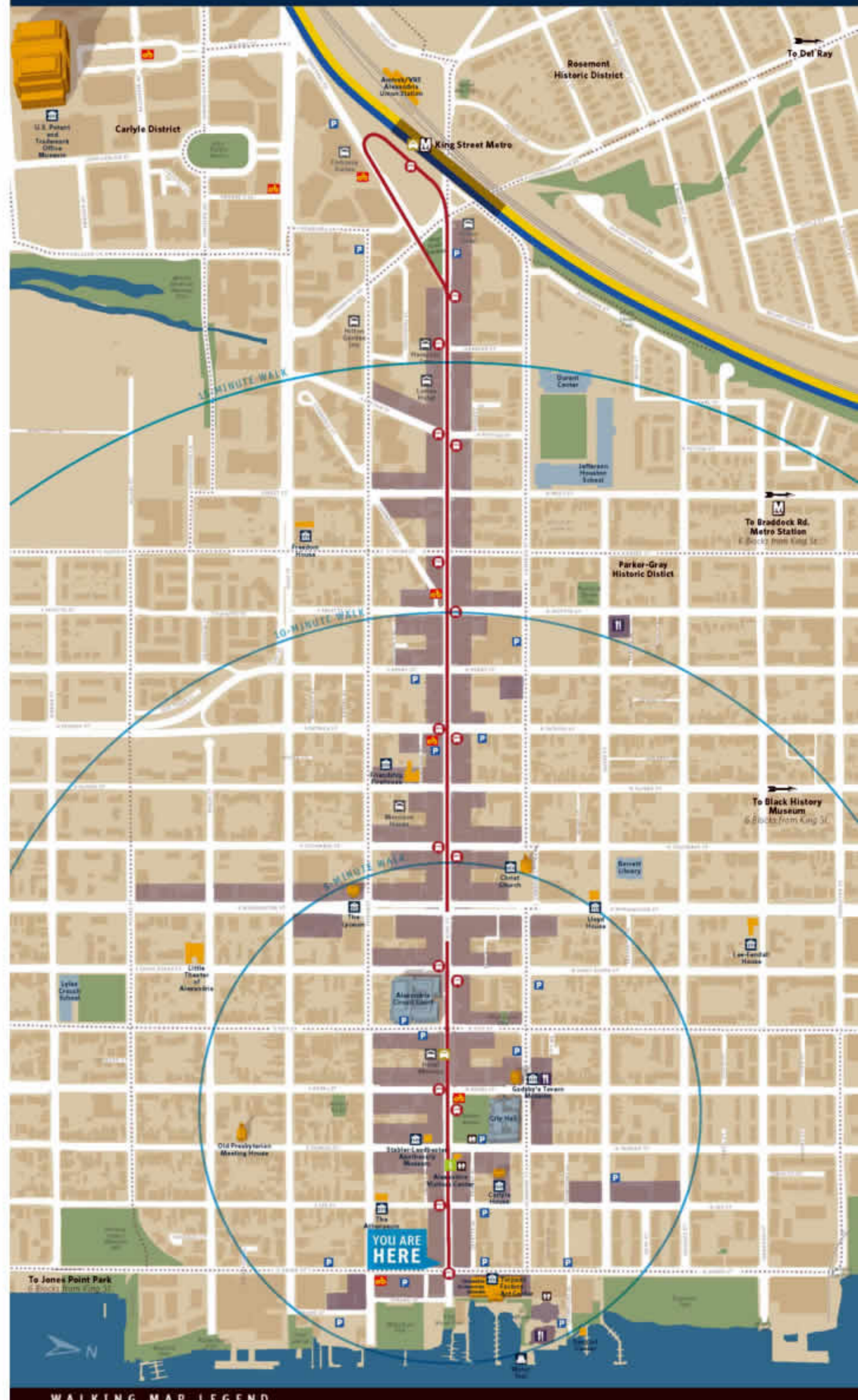
→ Founders Park

→ Archaeology Museum 🏛️

→ Torpedo Factory

→ Water Taxi 🚤

↑ King Street 🚇



**WALKING MAP LEGEND**

- 📍 Information
- 🅅 Public Parking
- 🏠 Museum
- 🏪 Shopping & Dining
- 🌳 Park
- 🚇 King Street Trolley Stop
- 🚕 Taxi Stand
- 🏨 Lodging
- 🚴 Bike Route
- 🏞️ Public Parks
- 🚇 MetroRail Station
- 🚰 Water Taxi
- 🚲 Capital Bikeshare
- 🚶 5-minute walk (1/4 Mile)
- 🏰 Visitor Attraction
- 🏛️ Civic Destination