



Kentucky's War of 1812: Newport Barracks

The Kentucky Historical Society's historical marker 599 commemorates the Newport Barracks, which was a military prison during the War of 1812.

Built in 1804 at the juncture of the Licking and Ohio Rivers, the Newport Barracks was an arsenal and recruiting ground. When the War of 1812 erupted, the area quickly became a staging ground for U.S. troops.

In 1813, Kentucky soldiers assembled at the Barracks prior to invading Canada. Led by Kentucky governor Isaac Shelby, these troops defeated British soldiers and their Indian allies at the Battle of the Thames on Oct. 5, 1813. As the war continued, the Barracks became a large prisoner-of-war camp. By 1814, the post contained more than 400 British prisoners.

After the War of 1812, the Barracks was used as a recruiting station. During the Mexican War, it was a major recruiting area for volunteers. Activity again peaked during the Civil War, when the Barracks was a hospital and prison for pro-Confederate civilians.