

# PIRATES: A great story about pirates on Grand Manan Island, NB!

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*Where there is water, there were pirates. Has it really changed?*

## AMERICAN PRIVATEERS AT GRAND MANAN DURING THE WAR OF 1812

Accounts of American privateers at Grand Manan during the War of 1812 are given by J. G. Lorimer and Lorenzo Sabine, writers who had first-hand information. Lorimer wrote as follows:

"In the American War of 1812, Grand Manan, from its isolated position, became a favourite rendezvous for privateers and piratical crafts [*sic*], and British cruisers had many an exciting chase to catch them.

On one occasion an American privateer entered Grand Harbour and seized a vessel in Bonny's Brook while quietly riding at anchor. ... the privateersmen, having caught one vessel, felt eager for another, and ... pounced upon [the] schooner *Sally*, owned by Wooster and Ingalls, who...anticipating a visit from the Yankee privateers, had removed a plank from [the] ...bottom, which of course rendered the craft altogether unseaworthy. The privateers attempted to repair damages, but failed in the attempt, and Wooster and Ingalls were left in possession. ...

At another time Seal Cove was favoured by a visit from one of those privateers, who, calling on Joseph Blanchard, haughtily demanded a supply of potatoes. Blanchard refused to comply with the demand by telling the Captain of the privateer that as he was a British subject now, he would not afford succor or feed the enemies of King George. 'However,' said he, pointing to the potato field, 'there are the potatoes, and if you are rascals enough to steal them — you must dig them.' It may have been the plucky spirit evinced by Blanchard, that saved him from further aggressions. ...



On another occasion, a British cruiser chased one of those privateersmen so hotly that the privateer ran ashore on the western side of the island; the crew escaping to the woods and finding their way to Seal Cove, stole a large boat from Alexander McLane; and, as is supposed, landed safely at Cutler, Me."

The last of the foregoing incidents appears to concern the privateer named the *Weazel*, an account of which is given by Sabine as follows:

"Some of the privateers were, ...no better than pirates. Of this description was the '*Weazel*,' commissioned by the collector at Castine, commanded by Edward Snow of Hampden, Me., a preacher of the gospel, whom I knew as a boy knows a man. On the 9th of June, 1813, this minister went to Beaver Harbor, N. B., robbed the house of Captain H. Young of fifteen barrels of sugar, the clothing of the family, and even the children's toys. The owner was absent, and no resistance was made. The same night, Snow captured a small vessel bound from St. John to St. Andrews. News of these infamous exploits reached Campobello the next day, when two boats were fitted out, and sent in pursuit. They recaptured the vessel, chased Snow to Grand Manan, and drove him and crew to the shore, and, one man excepted, into the woods. Prior to this affair, the British cruisers in the Bay of Fundy had never interrupted American fishing boats in their pursuits; but Captain Gordon of the '*Rattler*' now ordered them off, and gave notice that such as were found beyond certain prescribed limits would be captured and destroyed.