

The War of 1812

After the Great Britain and France went to war, British ships frequently harassed American trade ships in the Atlantic. They disrupted America's trade and impressed American sailors. Because of desertions in the Royal (British) Navy, Britain needed more soldiers. As a result, they forced Americans to serve in their navy. They justified impressment by claiming that because American sailors were once British, they were always British.

On June 22, 1807, the British ship *Leopard* stopped the U.S. ship *Chesapeake* off the coast of Virginia and demanded permission to search the ship for British deserters. When the Americans refused, the British attacked the American ship killing three sailors and wounding 18 more. After the attack, the British Navy announced their intention to search all American ships.

In response, Congress passed the Embargo Act of 1807, which put a complete stop to all foreign exports, and stopped all imports. The point of the Embargo Act was to punish the British and French until they began to respect the authority of the US. However, American merchants were also punished because they were stopped from exporting. In 1809, Jefferson signed the Non-Intercourse Act which repealed the Embargo Act and opened foreign trade to all countries except France and Great Britain. The Non-Intercourse Act proved impossible to enforce, and was replaced with Macon's Bill Number 2 in 1810. Macon's Bill Number 2 allowed for the resumption of trade with all nations.

Napoleon I of France said he would respect U.S. neutrality between England and France, if the U.S. did not trade with England. James Madison, the new Republican president, agreed and suspended trade with England. Pressured by War Hawks, Madison called up 100,000 militiamen for six months service for the purposes of declaring war on England.

Despite poor preparation, weak military, a central government that was not taken seriously in the northeast, and opposition from the Federalist Party, the war began. It started off poorly as U.S. forces were beaten in several attempts to invade English forts in Canada. Furthermore, Britain had staged a powerful naval blockade along much of America's Atlantic coast, preventing any trade. On August 19, 1812, British forces and their Native American allies invaded and took the fort at Detroit, Michigan. U.S. Naval forces managed a victory against Britain off the coast of Nova Scotia. Nevertheless, the blockade remained in place.

On September 10, 1813, the US Navy under General Oliver Hazard Perry won a major victory over British forces at Lake Erie. Because the American victory closed off British navigation of Lake Erie, British forces left Detroit. The retreating British and Indian forces were then engaged at the Battle of Tippecanoe along the Thames River in Indiana. General William Henry Harrison and US forces beat the enemy on October 5, 1813.

Despite the mounting American victories, English forces had defeated France in Europe. The British victory made available large numbers of troops and supplies which were sent to America in 1814. Nevertheless, setbacks continued for Britain. Their southern campaign was defeated by Andrew Jackson's bloody victory over Creek Indians at Horseshoe Bend, Alabama and set the stage for a massive battle at New Orleans. In August of 1814, however, many British forces sailed through the Chesapeake Bay and landed in Maryland. British forces beat American resistance at Bladensburg, Maryland, and quickly took the American capital – Washington. On August 24-25, British forces burned Washington to the ground. Despite the bombardment of Baltimore, Maryland, which resulted in Francis Scott Key writing the Star Spangled Banner, American forces resisted. On September 11, 1814, American forces defeated the British at Lake Champlain and stopped a large-scale British invasion from Canada.

After the defeat at Lake Champlain, and because American trade with a defeated France was no longer an issue, Britain decided to abandon the war in America. On December 14, 1814, US and Britain signed the

Treaty of Ghent which ended the war and called for the abandonment of British forts along its northwestern frontier.

Despite the Treaty of Ghent, word of the war's end failed to reach all areas. General Andrew Jackson, a band of pirates, and several armies of free black men, Kentucky militia, and Louisiana militia defeated the much larger British forces at the Battle of New Orleans. At the end of the battle, American casualties numbered 71, while British had over 2,000. Despite the fact that the war was over, if New Orleans had not fallen into US hands, England may not have honored the Treaty of Ghent, and would not have surrendered New Orleans.

The War of 1812 did not solve all issues between Britain and America, but did create economic growth, a stronger sense of nationalism (known as "the era of good feeling") and brought the country closer together.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Which of the following is FALSE?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. British ships forced American sailors into their Navy because they needed soldiers in their war against France.b. British ships forced American sailors into the Navy because American sailors were ONCE British.c. In 1807, 3 Americans were killed when they did not join the Royal Navy.d. In response to the killings, the British passed the Embargo Act of 1807 to punish the Americans.2. Which bill or act allowed for the resumption of trade with Great Britain and France?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Embargo Act of 1807b. Macon's Bill Number 2c. Non-Intercourse Actd. Treaty of Ghent3. Who opposed America's involvement in the War of 1812?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Franceb. The Federalistsc. The Republicansd. James Madison4. According to the passage, what was America's first significant victory in the War of 1812?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Bladensburgb. Detroitc. Lake Eried. Horseshoe Bend | <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. As a result of the American victory at Lake Erie, the British....<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. evacuated Detroitb. invaded Detroitc. blockaded the Great Lakesd. British and Indian allies defeated the US at the Battle of Tippecanoe.6. Which of the following was an effect of the British victory over France in Europe?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. The Americans defeated the British at Baltimore.b. Tecumseh was killed.c. The British had a new supply of soldiers and weapons.d. The British proceeded to win battle after battle.7. Francis Scott Key wrote the Star Spangled Banner after witnessing the bombardment of this city.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Baltimoreb. Washingtonc. Bladensburgd. New Orleans8. Which of the following events happened last?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. The Battle of Tippecanoeb. The Battle of Lake Eriec. The British invasion of Detroitd. The British evacuation of Detroit |
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