

The War of 1812



Impressment Strains Neutrality



France and Britain were fighting each other (Napoleonic Wars)

British sailors often deserted their ships for American ships b/c our pay and conditions were better

impressment:
forcing sailors to work on ships and/or fight for another nation

the British demanded the right to stop US ships, search for British sailors, and force them back into service

many times the sailors they took were actually US citizens, not British

USS Chesapeake

(June 1807)



US warship *Chesapeake* headed for Mediterranean was stopped by a British ship, the *Leopard* the commander of the *Leopard* demanded to board the *Chesapeake* to search for British deserters the *Chesapeake* refused and the *Leopard* fired, killing 3, wounding 18, and capturing 4 British “deserters”

Americans clamored for war, but Jefferson knew we couldn’t win a war and therefore didn’t call Congress into session until tempers cooled

Embargo Act (1807)

Jefferson thought Britain and France were so dependent upon US goods that they’d stop violating our neutral rights if we threatened to cut off trade with them

Jefferson passed the **Embargo Act**, which forbade any US ship to sail for any foreign ports

caused some suffering for Britain, hurt France very little, and was disastrous for the US exports fell from \$198 million in 1807 to only \$22 million in 1808 (!)

smuggling flourished between US - Canada w/secret runs to Europe

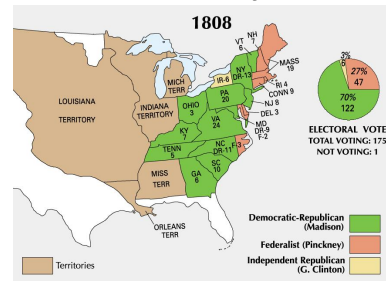
irony: Jefferson sent US militiamen to the Canadian border - they searched people’s houses w/out warrants, which violated the Bill of Rights he had so strongly argued for (!)



Other Attempts at Neutrality

James Madison elected President in November of 1808

“Father of the Constitution”
Jefferson’s Secretary of State



Non-Intercourse Act

just before leaving office in the spring of 1809, Jefferson had Congress repeal the Embargo Act and replace it with this

banned trade w/British or French but allowed trade w/rest of world

still didn't force Britain or France to respect the rights of American ships

Macon's Bill #2 (1810)

Madison challenged France and Britain: whomever agreed to respect the neutral rights of the US could trade w/us and we'd cut off trade w/the other nation

Napoleon responded first - promised to respect the US

US cut off trade w/Gr Britain but French continued to seize US ships (Napoleon = LIAR!)



War of 1812

War Hawks

young Republican Congressmen (mostly from Western and Southern states) who wanted war w/Britain, mainly for land (Canada and Florida)

US declared war on England in June of 1812

thought it would be an easy win: WRONG

US army = only about 6,000 soldiers scattered throughout the frontier

top commanders too old for warfare, no single commanding general, no overall strategy

Madison asked states for militia to join army; many in NEngland refused, calling it “Mr. Madison’s War”



some wins (Commodore Perry in Lake Erie, Harrison at the Battle of the Thames)

Napoleon forced into exile in 1814

British then concentrated on their war w/US

14,000 experienced British soldiers invaded NY from Montreal

outnumbered 3 to 1, American soldiers near Lake Champlain drove back the British (YAY!)

Sept. 10, 1813: Oliver Hazard Perry's message to William Henry Harrison after the Battle of Lake Erie:
"We have met the enemy and they are ours."

Battle of Baltimore

August 1814, British landed 14,000 soldiers at Chesapeake Bay

US had burned York (now Toronto), the Canadian capital, in 1813

in retaliation, British troops destroyed the Capitol & burned the White House

British turned back at Fort McHenry in Baltimore



CAPTURE AND BURNING OF WASHINGTON BY THE BRITISH, IN 1814.



A VIEW of the BOMBARDMENT of Fort M'Henry. *Painted by the British, and taken from the Observatory across the Bay, on the 13th of September, 1814. The British Fleet, under the Command of Sir George Cockburn, was in the Bay, and the American Garrison, under the Command of Major George Armistead, was in the Fort. The British Fleet, under the Command of Sir George Cockburn, was in the Bay, and the American Garrison, under the Command of Major George Armistead, was in the Fort.*

An artist's rendering of the battle at Fort McHenry, September, 1814, where Francis Scott Key was inspired to write "The Star Spangled Banner."

Battle of New Orleans



Dec 1814: 10,000 British soldiers met 4,500 US in New Orleans, LA (mouth of the MS River)
Andrew Jackson in command; used anyone who'd fight, including convicts, African Americans
promised same wages as white soldiers; 2 all-African American battalions fought
American forces sheltered behind cotton bales killed 2,000 British soldiers before they surrendered
(greatest American victory of the war, unfortunately 2wks after treaty signed to end the war)

Hartford Convention

New England merchants opposed to the War of 1812 met in December 1814
 drew up list of 7 constitutional amendments to increase the political power of New England
 also discussed (but did not agree to) seceding from the Union
 their representatives arrived to Congress just as they were hearing about the victorious Battle of New Orleans and the terms of the Treaty of Ghent (peace treaty ending the war)
 gave up and went home

Explanation of the cartoon:

In the center kneels secessionist leader Timothy Pickering praying, "I, Strongly and most fervently pray for the success of this great leap which will change my vulgar name into that of my Lord of Essex. God save the King."

Above him, a man representing MA, pulls two others (RI and CT) toward the edge. RI: "Poor little I, what will become of me? this leap is of a frightful size -- I sink into despondency."

CT: "I cannot Brother MA; let me pray and fast some time longer -- little Rhode will jump the first."

MA: "What a dangerous leap!!! but we must jump Brother Conn."

Across the water sits George III with arms outstretched: "O'tis my Yankey boys! jump in my fine fellows; plenty molasses and Codfish; plenty of goods to Smuggle; Honours, titles and Nobility into the bargain."



On the left, below the cliff, is a medallion inscribed with the names of Perry, McDonough, Hull, and other heroes of the War of 1812 and decorated with a ribbon which reads, "This is the produce of the land they wish to abandon."

Treaty of Ghent



Delegates from both sides met in Ghent, Belgium to work out a treaty.

The Treaty of Ghent (Dec. 1814) was really just an **armistice** (a cease-fire).

Both sides simply agreed to lay down their arms. No land or valuables were given or taken. The main issue of the war, impressment, was even left unmentioned.

The importance of the war came in what the Americans won... respect. America showed it'd fight at the drop of a hat, even against the strongest nation in the world, and go toe-to-toe. Although the U.S. didn't win land or money, it won credibility in other nation's eyes.

New war heroes had emerged—Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison would both become president.

Nationalism was born: patriotism and sense of national pride. The feeling of national unity was at its highest point yet.

For America, Europe was off of her back and Americans began to focus on America and to look westward.