

First Invasion of the United States: War of 1812

“Strange and illogical affair”

“War of division within the USA as much as a clash of nations”

-June 1, 1812 James Madison asked Congress to declare war on Britain

-First time U.S.A. declares war since the American Revolutionary War

-Causes of the war:

1. British did not honor U.S.A.’s neutral rights
2. British impressments of U.S.A. sailors
3. British interfering with U.S.A.’s right to trade on high seas
4. British incitement of the native population

-Viewpoints of the war:

1. Federalists opposed the war; will hurt trade/economy
2. Democrat-Republicans favored the war; known as War Hawks

-Preparation for the war:

1. Americans not prepared
 - lack leadership
 - lack soldiers
 - no real naval force – will rely on privateers
2. British prepared (at this point, still fighting France in Europe)
 - well trained
 - well equipped
 - experienced leadership
 - determined soldiers

-War fought from 1812-1814 (3 years)

-Major Events:

1. General William Hull led the American army from Detroit into Canada; Hull, fearing a massacre by the Native Americans, surrenders Detroit to the British
2. Oliver Hazard Perry (Battle of Put-in-Bay) – American victory; Americans gain control of Lake Erie
3. Battle of Thames – American victory; Tecumseh is killed weakening the alliance between the British and the Native Americans
4. York – Americans burn British parliament buildings
5. The Creek War – Andrew Jackson led American victory at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend
6. “Old Ironsides” – Constitution (frigate) destroys two British vessels (Guerriere and Java) – boost in American morale

7. Attack on Washington, D.C. – British/French war ends allows Britain to send additional troops to America (also strengthens the British blockade of American coastline); Americans not prepared to defend city; British burn Capital and White House in retaliation for burning York; Dolley Madison saves portrait of Washington and other valuable documents
8. Baltimore – Americans prepared this time; Fort McHenry holds and Americans win battle; Francis Scott Key writes the Star-Spangled Banner” – song becomes the national anthem in 1931
9. Plattsburgh (Battle of Lake Champlain) – Key city on lake; American victory; British retreat to Canada and decide was is too costly and unnecessary
10. The war ends – Treaty of Ghent signed in December, 1814; Agreement was just for peace – did not change borders, no mentioned of impressments, neutral rights are a dead issue
11. Battle of New Orleans – Did not know about the peace treaty, thus battle was fought after peace was declared; Decisive American victory; Jackson becomes a hero

-Effects of the war:

1. Americans felt a new sense of patriotism and a strong national identity
2. Britain began to treat the United States with greater respect