

## The War of 1812

- I. President **James Madison** drifts towards war
- A. Madison inaugurated in March, 1809
1. "Virginia dynasty": Madison was third in a line of four Virginia presidents between 1789 and 1829 (after Washington and Jefferson, before Monroe)
  2. Strongly Jeffersonian in his views
- B. **Macon's Bill No. 2**: adopted by Congress in 1810 to replace Non-Intercourse Act of 1809.
1. **Non-Intercourse Act of 1809** (passed at end of Jefferson's presidency) was due to expire within a year.
    - Provision: U.S. would trade with all other nations except Britain and France
  2. Purpose of Macon's Bill: entice Britain or France to repeal shipping restrictions
    - The U.S. would maintain its embargo against the nation that didn't sign on.
  3. Napoleon agreed. secretly hoped that the U.S. would go to war with Britain
  4. Madison reluctantly accepted Napoleon's commitment and gave the British 3 months to end restrictions or the U.S. would restore non-importation
    - a. Britain demanded that the U.S. withdraw its restrictions on Britain until France had withdrawn all their restrictions on U.S. shipping.
    - b. Napoleon had no real intention of honoring the agreement.
- C. **War Hawks**
1. A deeply-divided Congress met late in 1811 (Republicans still in control)
    - a. Differed from past Congresses: new young leaders from the South & West emerged
      - i. Strongly nationalistic
      - ii. Wanted to prove themselves through a war with Britain; sought the same glory their fathers had in the Revolutionary War.
    - b. **Henry Clay** (from Kentucky) elected Speaker of the House
    - c. **John C. Calhoun** elected as a representative of South Carolina

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## 2. **Battle of Tippecanoe, 1811**

- a. Western war hawks sought to wipe out renewed Indian resistance against white settlers in the western wilderness.
    - The Shawnee Confederation posed the biggest threat
  - b. Two Shawnee twins brothers, Tecumseh and the Prophet, had organized a confederacy of all tribes east of the Mississippi.
    - i. Tecumseh a noted warrior and perhaps most gifted organizer of Amerindians in U.S. history. Believed in fairness between tribes in selling and purchasing land that belonged to all Amerindians.
    - ii. Americans thought British were aiding them.
  - c. **General William H. Harrison** repelled a surprise Indian attack at **Tippecanoe** (in present Indiana) on Nov., 1811.
  - d. Significance: Essentially ended the Indian threat in the Old Northwest
    - Further spurred westward expansion; Indians pushed further west.
3. War Hawks pushed for the U.S. to attack Canada
    - a. Sought to remove further Amerindian threats
    - b. Canada seen as vulnerable to attack as Britain was preoccupied with Napoleon.
  4. Southern expansionists desired Spanish Florida, Britain's ally.
  5. War hawks also outraged at British impressment and Orders in Council that prevented U.S. agricultural products from reaching Europe.

### D. Daniel Webster, Federalist from New Hampshire, spoke against entry into the war.

1. Spoke eloquently on behalf of New England manufacturing interests that would suffer from a British blockade
2. Webster had ghost written many of John Marshall's opinions.

### E. U.S. declared war on Britain in June, 1812

1. Representatives from pro-British New England as well as the mid-Atlantic states opposed the war.
2. Why did U.S. fight Britain when France had also assaulted U.S. ships?
  - a. War Hawks pushed Madison toward war
  - b. Traditional Republican (Jeffersonian) partiality toward France
  - c. British impressments and arming of Amerindians.
  - d. *Chesapeake-Leopard* Affair (1807)
  - e. Lure of conquering Canada: timber, fishing, fur trade.

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- F. New Englanders hindered the U.S. war effort.
  - 1. Believed British actions were exaggerated; still disliked France
  - 2. New England merchants were still profitable before the war.
  - 3. Opposed acquisition of Canada which would add agrarian states (Jeffersonian).
  - 4. New England investors probably lent more money to Britain than to U.S.
  - 5. New England farmers sent huge quantities of supplies and foodstuffs to Canada, helping Britain to invade New York.
  - 6. New England states refused to permit their militias to serve outside their states.

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## II. War of 1812

### A. Overview

- 1. Small war: 6,000 Americans killed or wounded; mostly Canadians fought Americans, very few British.
- 2. One of America's most poorly-fought wars on land.
  - a. Nation militarily unprepared for war
  - b. Attack on Canada a complete failure.
  - c. Washington, D.C., burned by British
  - d. British nearly won large territories in the New York and New England.
- 3. National disunity: Federalists undermined war effort (Hartford Convention, 1814)
- 4. American victories
  - a. U.S. Navy out performed the Royal Navy on the Great Lakes
    - i. Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry defeated the British Navy on Lake Erie
    - ii. General William H. Harrison defeated the British at Thames
  - b. British failed to take Ft. McHenry which protected Baltimore
    - i. Inspired **Francis Scott Key** to write the "**Star Spangled Banner**"
    - ii. **General Andrew Jackson** emerged as a national hero
      - i. **Battle of Horseshoe Bend**: defeated the Creeks
      - ii. **Battle of New Orleans**: U.S. inflicted a devastating defeat of the British
  - c. **General Andrew Jackson** emerged as a national hero
- 5. **Treaty of Ghent (1814)**: the war ended in a stalemate
  - a. Both countries agreed to stop fighting and restore conquered territory
  - b. No mention of pre-war grievances
  - c. U.S. retained the right to fish off the Canadian coast
- 6. America gained respect diplomatically and militarily
  - The war was later dubbed "Second War for Independence"
- 7. Fall of the Federalists

- a. Mainly due to opposition to the war
- b. Resulted in a temporary reduction of sectionalism
8. Large Amerindian losses during war: vast areas of forested land north of the Ohio River.
9. US industry stimulated by less dependence on British goods; spawned the industrial revolution in America

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*Note: Some of the content below pertains to military history. Ask your teacher how much military history you need to be responsible for. Some teachers will require that you know military history. Other teachers may skip over it. As usual, focus on material in bold or that is underlined.*

- B. The U.S. was unprepared for a major war
1. Economy hurt by the Embargo Act and non-intercourse
  2. Charter for National Bank expired in 1811, at a time when it was needed.
  3. Regular army inadequate; supplemented by poorly trained militia.
  4. Britain possessed the best navy in the world.
    - a. British blockaded U.S. Atlantic ports for most of the war which hurt U.S. shipping and caused significant opposition to the war.
    - b. Jefferson's "mosquito fleet" was inadequate.
- C. U.S. attack on Canada was a strategic failure
1. Americans falsely believed Canadians would easily crumble but 80% of Canadians in Ontario were post-Revolution Loyalists.
  2. If U.S. had concentrated on Montreal, Canada would have fallen
- D. Fight for the Great Lakes
1. British navy couldn't penetrate past Niagara Falls; naval arms race resulted in Great Lakes.
  2. Oliver Hazard Perry built a fleet of ships on the shores of Lake Erie in 1813.
  3. Captured a British fleet in the Battle for Lake Erie in September, 1813.
  4. Retreating British army defeated by General William Henry Harrison at Battle of Thames in October.
    - British Brigadier General Tecumseh killed
- E. By 1814, Napoleon was defeated and Britain concentrated on North America.
1. British prepared for an invasion of New York along Hudson River Valley.
  2. Thomas Macdonough defeated a stronger British fleet near

Plattsburg on Sept. 11, 1814. (Similar to Saratoga during Revolutionary War)

3. British forced to withdraw back to Quebec.
4. Profoundly affected the ongoing negotiations in Europe to end the war.

F. Washington, D.C. was burned by the British in August 1814

1. British set fire to most public buildings including Capitol and White House.
2. Retaliation for U.S. burning the Canadian capital at York.
3. Madison and his aides forced to flee into the surrounding hills.

G. British fleet was driven off at Fort McHenry, near Baltimore

1. Attacking British army also forced to withdraw.
2. Baltimore was a center for U.S. privateers.
3. **Francis Scott Key**, watching bombardment of Baltimore as a prisoner aboard a British ship, composed the **Star Spangled Banner**
  - Became an important symbol of U.S. nationalism after the war

H. Jackson was victorious in the Southwest and at New Orleans

1. British strategy in addition to Canada and the Atlantic coast was to take the U.S. Gulf Coast and New Orleans.
  - a. Mississippi Creek Amerindians (known as Red Sticks) launched a preliminary campaign by attacking Fort Mims, near Mobile, Alabama; 400 Americans were killed
  - b. General Andrew Jackson retaliated by attacking a Creek village and killing 300 warriors in the **Battle of Horseshoe Bend**.
    - Largest Indian massacre in U.S. history.
2. A British naval force of 47 ships defeated an American force of five ships in a naval battle preceding the Battle of New Orleans.
  - Significance: Bought time for Jackson's army to fortify New Orleans.
3. **Battle of New Orleans**, Jan 1815: British launched a foolish frontal assault.
  - a. Jackson commanded a 7,000-man force of sailors, regulars, pirates, Frenchmen, free blacks & militiamen from LA, KY and TN.
  - b. Over 2,000 British casualties in 1/2 hour compared to about 70 Americans.
  - c. Ironically, battle was unnecessary: Treaty of Ghent had been signed two weeks earlier but the two armies didn't get word until after the battle.

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- A British victory in the battle most likely would have resulted in Britain changing the terms of the treaty to the detriment of the U.S.
4. Battle of New Orleans resulted in tremendous American pride and nationalism.
    - a. Jackson became the hero of the West (elected president 13 years later)
    - b. Most Americans believed New Orleans campaign had won the war.

#### I. Naval Battles

1. The only fleet battles were fought on the interior lakes since the U.S. didn't have enough large warships to challenge Great Britain at sea.
2. American ships were more skillfully manned, however.
3. In a few months, Britain lost more warships against the U.S. than against the combined French and Spanish forces.
4. U.S. privateers more effective than the U.S. Navy (as in the Revolutionary War)
5. British manufacturers, merchants, & shippers put strong pressure on Parliament to end the war due to U.S. privateers' damage of British shipping.
6. Britain responded with a crushing blockade along America's coast and by landing raiding parties almost at will.
  - a. U.S. economy was crippled.
  - b. U.S. treasury was bankrupt.

#### III. Hartford Convention, 1814

- A. New England Federalists and some Republicans were adamantly opposed to the war.
  1. Almost succeeded in defeating Madison in the 1812 election.
  2. As war dragged on, New England extremists were more vocal.
- B. **Hartford Convention** (Dec., 1814 -- Jan., 1815)
  1. Attended by MA, CT, RI, and partially by NH, & VT.
  2. Purpose: Discuss their complaints and seek compensation for losses during the war.
    - Immediate goal was to secure financial assistance from federal gov't due to Britain's blockade of New England ports.
  3. A minority of radical delegates urged secession; were outvoted by moderate Federalists
  4. Convention recommended amendments to the Constitution
    - a. Repeal the 3/5 Compromise in order to reduce Southern influence in the House of Representatives.
    - b. Require 2/3 vote for an embargo, admission of western

- states to the union, and declaration of war.
- c. Limit the term of the President (to avoid a Jeffersonian dynasty)
  - d. Deny naturalized citizens (who often were Republicans) the right to hold office
5. Delegates from Massachusetts traveled to Washington, D.C. with their Hartford demands.
- The Battle of New Orleans and the Treaty of Ghent made their pleas moot, and made the Federalists look like defeatists
- C. Hartford resolutions were the death knell of the Federalist party.
1. 1816, Jeffersonian candidate James Monroe crushed his Federalist opponent.
  2. Exaggerated rumors of treason hurt the Federalist party.
  3. Until 1815, there had been more talk of nullification and secession in New England than in any other section, including the South.
    - The flouting of the Jeffersonian embargo and the crippling of the U.S. war effort were the two most damaging acts of nullification in the U.S. prior to the events leading up to the Civil War.

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### Terms to Know

President James Madison Macon's Bill #2 War Hawks Henry Clay John C. Calhoun Battle of Tippecanoe Shawnee Confederation Tecumseh The Prophet William Henry Harrison	Daniel Webster War of 1812 Francis Scott Key, <i>Star Spangled Banner</i> Andrew Jackson Battle of Horseshoe Bend Battle of New Orleans Treaty of Ghent Hartford Convention
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## **Essay Questions**

*Note: This sub-unit is a low probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 1 question has come in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.*

1. Analyze the factors that led to the War of 1812 between the U.S. and Great Britain.
2. To what extent did the United States "win" the War of 1812?

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