

The Republic Grows and Strengthens

Expanding our Country Westward

As we've learned, in 1800 the United States' border only reached the Mississippi River. Many foreign powers had already claimed lands west of the Mississippi. Spain had missions built on the California coast. Russia and Britain had settlements in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Following their defeat in the French and Indian War, France had given the area between the Rockies and the Mississippi, known as the **Louisiana Territory**, to Spain. But in a secret treaty in 1800, Spain returned this region & New Orleans to Napoleon, the new leader of France who had emerged at the end of the French Revolution.

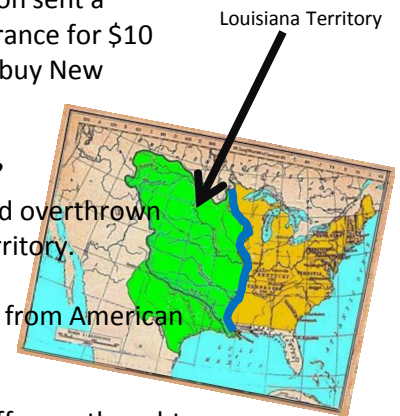
The Louisiana Purchase

Americans in the Northwest Territory wanted to be able to ship their goods down the Mississippi River so they could access ocean-going ships in New Orleans, but the river had been controlled by France, then Spain, then France *again*. Americans living in the Northwest Territory were urging President Jefferson to go to war with France to win the rights to use the river and port city.

In a desperate attempt to try to avoid going to war with a country he liked, Jefferson sent a *dispatch*, or message, to Napoleon, offering to buy the city of New Orleans from France for \$10 million. TJ was surprised to receive an offer in return—would the US be willing to buy New Orleans *plus* all of the Louisiana Territory for only \$5 million more? Heck yes!

Why in the world did France want to get rid of its land?

- Because the slaves on Haiti, a French colony, had successfully revolted and overthrown French control. This made the French uneasy about controlling foreign territory.
- Because France needed cash after the expensive war with Britain
- Because they didn't want to have to worry about protecting New Orleans from American attempts to take it over



Despite being unsure if the president had the Constitutional power to buy land, Jefferson thought this land would be very important for American farmers. So in 1803, he effectively doubled the size of the United States for around 3 cents an acre (for comparison, the average price for an acre of land in Bremer County is \$8,600 per acre.)

Lewis and Clark – Jefferson's Google

No one really knew what this new part of our country looked like. Some people hoped that there'd be an east-west river that flowed all the way to the Pacific Ocean – the good ol' Northwest Passage, remember that? What they didn't realize, of course, was that the Rocky Mountains stood in their way. Jefferson appointed Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to lead a team to explore, find a water route if one existed, record the animals and plants they encountered, and establish good relationships with Native groups.



About 40 men left St. Louis in 1804. In North Dakota, Sacagawea's family joined them. She was a 17-year old Native woman who spoke Shoshone and Hidatsa, and her husband spoke Hidatsa and French. A captain on the journey spoke French and English. This completed the language cycle. Sacagawea gave birth on the journey, and the presence of a baby and woman in the group showed tribes that they were not a war party. They eventually reached the Pacific Ocean in Oregon in November of 1805. They returned to DC in 1806, bringing to Jefferson all sorts of new knowledge about our country.



Zebulon Pike was a different explorer who tried going south from St. Louis. He traveled towards Colorado, and saw Pike's Peak (naming it for himself) from 150 miles away. He turned south, and followed the Rio Grande River, which was in Spanish territory.

Causes of the War of 1812

Since the end of the Revolution, many Americans had wanted the US to enter into the wars in Europe. Washington, Adams, and Jefferson all managed to keep us out of the foreign conflicts. But eventually, we were drawn into a second war with Britain in 1812.

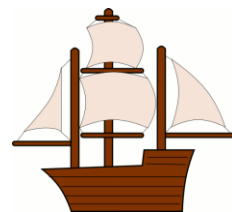
There were two main causes of the war of 1812.

1) Messing with our Shipping and our Sailors

While France and Britain were at war with each other, we happily kept trading with both powers. In 1805, Britain started intercepting our ships that were headed to France. They knew that if our ships arrived, France would get supplies it needed to fight the war. France responded by passing laws that used privateers against American ships. Americans were in a catch-22: we couldn't help nor ignore either country.

Britain also was arresting private American sailors at sea and forcing them to work on their ships. By 1812, over 6,000 sailors had been forced into **impressment**.

Jefferson tried to stop the problems by simply refusing to trade with foreign countries; this is called an **embargo**. After all, if we're not trading, our ships can't get attacked. However, if we're not trading, it *also* means our merchants and farmers don't make any money. This turned out to be a horrible plan, and it hurt the US economy much worse than it hurt our foreign neighbors.



2) Supporting Native American Resistance

American settlers were swarming into the Northwest Territory. A Shawnee chief, Tecumseh, swore to stop the loss of Native American land. He took a lesson from the patriots, and tried to unite several tribes to fight against America.

However, Tecumseh's Shawnee tribe was defeated in 1811 by William Henry Harrison (future president) at the Battle of Tippecanoe. Tecumseh had been away, trying to recruit other tribal leaders.

After finding his tribe had been defeated, Tecumseh took his remaining warriors and moved to Canada, where the British government promised them support.

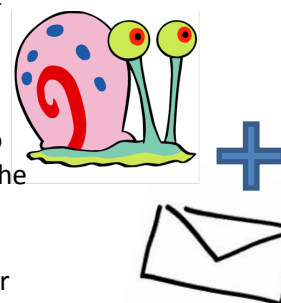


The only known portrait of Tecumseh painted while he was living

Many Americans were afraid of what would happen if the British helped the Natives. Some even suggested America take over British Canada. These people who argued for war were nicknamed "**War Hawks**." To this day, people who argue in favor of the use of force are often giving the descriptor of "hawk" or "hawkish." Those who oppose force are sometimes called "doves."

War of 1812 – Our Second War with Britain

Americans were increasingly fed up with the British meddling in our affairs. They continued to make life difficult by pestering us at sea and encouraging Native Americans to rise up against the US.

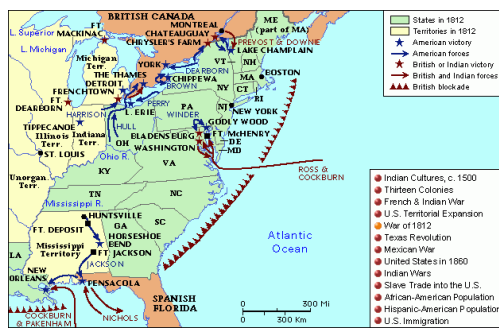


Britain, however, realized it did NOT want to fight with the US. It was already involved in a war with France. They sent a letter to the president, promising to stop bothering American ships, but the letter arrived too late – Congress declared war on June 18th, 1812, at the request of President James Madison.

Phase One From 1812 to 1814, Britain **blockaded** our coast with ships; they restricted their war effort to fighting on water, since they were still at war with France and needed their land forces to be in Europe.

Great Lakes They did try to take over the Great Lakes, but we beat them in battle on Lake Erie. Oliver Hazard Perry [sidenote: do you think that was really his middle name?] commanded a US ship that flew the flag that read "Don't give up the ship." When his ship was completely annihilated in the battle, he grabbed the flag and a rowboat, rowed himself to another American ship, and proceeded to take out two British ships. The British eventually retreated into Canada.





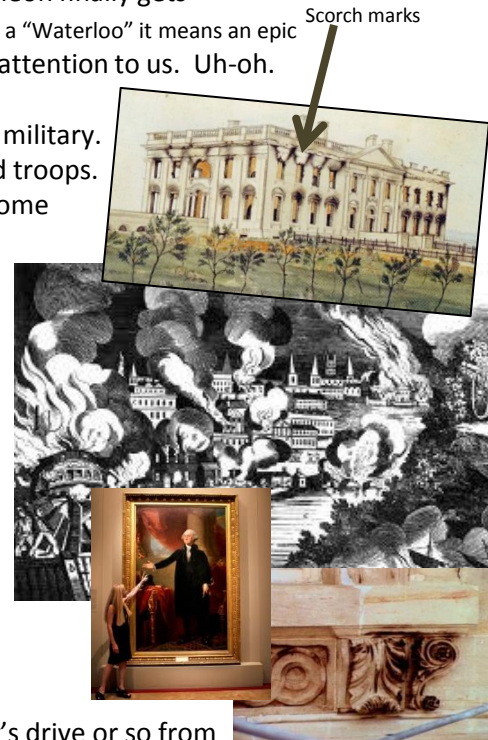
ATTACKS ON ALL SIDES

You can see the British blockade along the Eastern and Southern coasts, as well as the fighting in the Great Lakes region, upstate New York, and near New Orleans.

Phase Two In 1814, Britain's fight with France was nearly over. (Napoleon finally gets defeated at the famous Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Today, if someone's experienced a "Waterloo" it means an epic defeat – and Waterloo, IA is named after this battle!) So Britain could now turn their full attention to us. Uh-oh.

Before 1812, the Democratic-Republican presidents had weakened the military. The Navy had only 16 ships, and the army had only 7,000 inexperienced troops. However, we were able to win several key victories—but not without some embarrassing losses.

Burning of DC The most embarrassing was in August of 1814, when the British easily sailed up the Potomac and attacked Washington, D.C. They set fire to the White House and the unfinished Capitol, along with many other buildings. Dolly Madison, the president's wife, stayed in the White House until the Recoats were just outside the city; her husband was off with the army. She ordered several important trunks full of Constitutional Convention documents, special antiques, and, most famously, the Gilbert Stuart painting of George Washington be carried away to safety. Both buildings had to be rebuilt.



Scorch marks discovered after stripping paint off some stone decoration in 1992

Star-Spangled Banner Baltimore's Fort McHenry is only an hour's drive or so from DC, so that's where the British attacked next. An American named Francis Scott Key was being held prisoner on a British ship. After a night of intense fighting, he peered out his porthole and saw the huge American flag still flying over the fort. He took a famous tune (actually a British tavern song) and rewrote the lyrics—what came out was the Star-Spangled Banner, which became our national anthem in 1931. *Think about the lyrics – do they now make more sense?*

The British next tried to cut off New England from the rest of the colonies, but failed at the Battle of Lake Champlain in upstate New York.

The original Star-Spangled Banner is on display at the American History museum in DC. It has been restored, but many pieces were taken out over the years by souvenir-hunters. It is quite huge →



Battle of New Orleans In January of 1815, Andrew Jackson fought back against a large British fleet that had tried to overtake New Orleans. This made Jackson a hero (he later becomes president). Amazingly, the British lost 2,000 men in

the fight, whereas the Americans only lost 71 men. Unfortunately, this battle was unnecessary, as the Peace Treaty of Ghent had been signed two weeks earlier. It had taken several weeks for the message to reach the armies in New Orleans. The war was over.

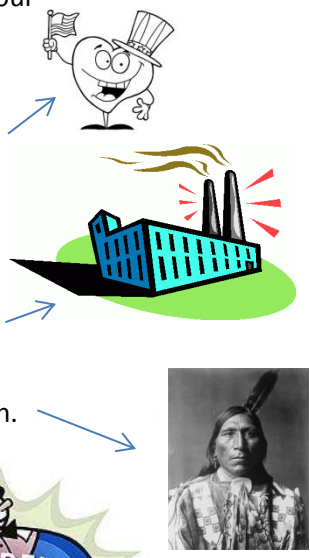
Effects of the War

The war was, in a way, a waste. The treaty left most things the way it had been before the war.

- ❑ No territory switched hands
- ❑ None of the trade problems we had with Britain were solved.
- ❑ There was no clear “winner,” other than the fact the war had been fought on our soil and now, fighting would stop.

There were many Unintended “Positive” Consequences...

- ❑ Increased our sense of national unity and patriotism. It was like what happened after 9-11– if they had cars back then, they’d all had red-white-and-blue magnets on them and little American flags.
- ❑ Because the British blockade meant we couldn’t trade with the world, our manufacturers and factories had to grow and provide goods . This helped our economy and set us up to begin the Industrial Revolution.
- ❑ It broke Native American resistance, who had sided with the losing side – again.
- ❑ Gave America confidence that our country might just survive after all



Tensions mount on the Lewis and Clark expedition.



More tension on the Lewis and Clark expedition.